

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 18, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and members of the Committee

I am testifying today in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million dollars. This represents a 9% increase from the current service level. This Grant program provides funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs and technical assistance for the farm to school community. This past biennium, there were over \$15 million dollars of requests for this funding. With increases in costs of food, supplies and staffing over the past few years, this modest increase is needed simply to maintain the current level of programming.

I support Farm to School because it brings fresh nutritious food from local farms into our schools. This is at an age when adequate nutrition is so essential for young children to fully grow and develop all their faculties.

I support this grant program because....

- **It builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities**
- **It builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy**
- **Over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, now more than ever we need to increase state funding for farm to school**
- **Supports schools as hubs for communities especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic**

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million. Thank you for your time.

***Philip Yates, Board Member
Rogue Valley Farm to School
Ashland, OR 97520***