



March 20, 2025

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs McIntire and Dobson, and members of the Committee:

We write to share our support for House Bill 2007 and identify some areas to strengthen this bill.

We appreciate Rep. Ruiz and Senator Sollman for drafting this legislation and for their commitment to ongoing and sustainable funding for summer learning in Oregon. We also commend the bill's focus on improving student literacy outcomes.

In Portland, we've seen firsthand how thoughtfully designed summer programs drive significant academic growth, especially among historically underserved students. Our summer programs serve thousands of students each year, consistently demonstrating remarkable outcomes, for example:

- **80%** of students participating in the elementary summer program maintained or improved their reading proficiency, and over **85%** maintained or improved their math proficiency.
- And **80%** of these students were previously in the lowest quartile of academic achievement.
- Our first-grade students alone showed **76%** improvement across foundational literacy metrics, with historically underserved students achieving gains comparable to their peers.

These outcomes are particularly significant given national research indicating that students typically lose two to three months of reading and math skills during the summer. By reversing this "summer slide," our programs contribute meaningfully to closing achievement gaps and setting students up for long-term academic success.

We know that high-quality summer learning is fundamentally about academic acceleration, opportunity, and equity. But this needs to be paired with enrichment, which we encourage to be considered an allowable use of the summer learning dollars. We know that the students who have the highest needs for literacy support in the summer can only attend and access that



instruction if we offer their families a full day of academics and high interest enrichment activities. Further, when rigorous academics are integrated with engaging extracurricular activities and social-emotional supports, students experience deeper, more meaningful learning in the summer months.

**In Portland, we've seen exactly this approach yield measurable, positive outcomes by partnering with community based organizations to lead engaging activities and make our program more accessible to working families.**

At Portland Public Schools, we've leveraged previous investments to develop and refine our award-winning nationally recognized program model, proven to support students in reaching grade-level standards. HB 2007 represents an opportunity to amplify our collective successes, foster statewide innovation, and significantly elevate the quality and impact of summer learning for all Oregon students. We respectfully ask for your support for HB 2007 and to amend the legislation to allow for broader uses of funding that empower us to create impactful, rich, joyful programs that are accessible to students.

We look forward to continuing to support this bill through the Ways and Means process. Last year, PPS did not receive any funding from the 2024 summer learning grant. We urge the Joint Ways and Means Committee to ensure that the funding formula for the grant is equitable and provides funding to the high concentrations of focal student populations across the state.

PPS is already preparing for our 2025 summer program with the audacious goal of accelerating student growth in literacy that propels them toward achieving grade level proficiency as measured by our district-adopted assessments next school year. We hope to leverage additional state dollars to allow us to serve even more students this summer. Please support HB 2007!

Thank you,

Darcy Soto  
Director of Learning Acceleration  
Portland Public Schools

Kristina Howard  
Chief Academic Officer  
Portland Public Schools