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

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

My name is Walt Davenport, and I am the Superintendent of Central Point School District 6. **I am writing today to express my strong support for funding the Farm to School Grant Program at \$12 million in the Oregon Department of Education’s budget.** This represents a modest 9% increase from the current service level, but it is critical to maintaining the impact of this program in our schools.

The Farm to School Grant Program provides essential funding that allows schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon-grown foods, implement hands-on farm and garden education, and access technical support for farm-to-school initiatives. Demand for this program far exceeds available funds—over \$15 million in requests were made during the last biennium alone. With rising costs of food, supplies, and staffing, this increase is necessary just to sustain the current level of programming.

In Central Point School District 6, we have seen firsthand how this program benefits our students and community. It teaches students about nutrition and wellness, strengthens our local food system, and directly supports Oregon’s farmers. At a time when over \$6 million in federal funding for local food programs has been cut, state support for farm-to-school efforts is more important than ever. Schools are more than just places of learning; they serve as vital community hubs, especially during crises like wildfires and the pandemic. This program helps ensure that we can continue providing fresh, nutritious meals to students while supporting local economies.

I urge you to include this critical funding in the Oregon Department of Education’s budget. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Oregon’s students and communities.

Thank you,

Walt Davenport  
Superintendent