

Submitter: Sean Fowler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

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

3/21/2025

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 have benefited from this grant program through my school. I am a student of Ashland High School and I really enjoy the fresh lunches that I eat every day. For some kids school is the only time they have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and it is really important to keep giving kids fresh food. By giving kids access to fresh local food at a young age, it builds habits for healthy eating throughout the rest of their lives. We live in a time when so much unhealthy, unnatural "food" can be purchased for very low cost, and it is important to show kids a healthy alternative to the junk they may be inclined to put into their bodies.

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.

Sean Fowler  
Ashland, OR