

March 27, 2025

Written Testimony in Support of SB 5515 – Oregon Dept. of Education Grant-in-Aid Bill

To the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing today in strong support of SB 5515, which allocates critical funding to the State School Fund. As a single mother of a second grader and a recent graduate of medical school, I see firsthand how much our children—and their schools—are in need of support.

My son is a bright, curious, and compassionate child. He is currently reading at a first-grade level, and I suspect he may have dyslexia. He was just three years old when the pandemic hit, and like so many children his age, he missed key years of social-emotional learning and the development of executive functioning skills. I see the daily impact of these gaps, and I know that my son is not alone. Nearly every friend I have with children his age shares similar stories of struggle—whether it's academic, emotional, or behavioral. Our children are carrying the weight of unprecedented disruptions, and they need every possible resource to help them catch up and thrive.

This is why fully funding public education, including special education services, is so urgent. Our kids' learning needs are more complex than ever, and schools cannot meet those needs without adequate and sustained investment. Education is not just about academics—it is about building a generation of healthy, engaged, and capable citizens.

I urge you to pass SB 5515 and make the essential investment our children deserve. These kids are our future, and it is our responsibility to give them the foundation they need to succeed.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Oregon's students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Teresa Nicola, DACM, L.Ac.

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