

## **SAMPLE WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

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

### **Date**

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez 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 and Oregon Department of Agriculture budgets. Oregon’s Farm to School Programs help schools and early childhood education programs purchase Oregon-grown foods, support hands-on farm and garden education, and provide essential equipment for food producers. These programs play a vital role in building strong local food systems and improving student health.

These programs work in tandem with School Meals for All (HB 3435) to expand free breakfast and lunch to every public school. The virtuous cycle of increased meal service through free meal programs allows districts to source even more fresh, local ingredients for school meals.

We support Farm to School because this grant has helped build skills for our 3rd and 4th-grade students during our weekly garden education classes. Our school has participated in field trips to local farms to learn about sustainability, wellness, and food growth and preparation. We know this program

- 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

We are asking the legislature to support:

\$12M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) budget  
\$1M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) budget

Fully funding HB 3435, School Meals for All

With the elimination of federal funding sources and the rising costs of food, supplies, and staffing, a modest increase in funding is crucial for the sustainability of this important program.

*Shawna Schleif*

*Phoenix Elementary School Principal*

*Phoenix, OR*