



May 2, 2025

Capital Construction Committee:

I am writing to express my support for the funding request to complete the Meadowlark Early Learning Center in Gladstone, Oregon. This critical capital project, spearheaded by Clackamas County Children's Commission, will provide life-changing early education services to the Gladstone community and address long-standing gaps in childcare and school readiness opportunities.

The Meadowlark (Gladstone) Early Learning Center will house **six classrooms, four for infants and toddlers, and two for preschool-aged children**—and serve approximately **72 children** in total. With **\$4.16 million in federal funding** already secured through the Office of Head Start, this project is well on its way to becoming a cornerstone of early childhood development in our region. However, an additional **\$1.5 million** is still needed to complete the facility renovations and fully deliver these essential services.

This project is more than a building, it is a response to urgent community needs:

- It will provide **full-day, year-round early learning** to **72 children** through Head Start and Early Head Start.
- It will offer the **first and only Early Head Start services in Gladstone**, where there are currently no infant-toddler options available.
- It will replace part-day programming at the Gladstone Center for Children and Families (GCCF), expanding access to meet the needs of **working parents** with full day care at both sites.

The Meadowlark Early Learning Center will not only prepare children for academic success, will **empower families, strengthen the local workforce**, and help to **close opportunity gaps** in an underserved community. The benefits of this project will be felt for generations.

On behalf of those who care deeply about the well-being of children and families in Clackamas County, I urge your continued **advocacy and leadership** in securing the **remaining \$1.5 million** needed to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Brian Stewart

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