



May 8, 2025

**Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction**

Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Letter of Support for antkwak Early Learning Center in Hillsboro**

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of the Forest Grove School District, I write in strong support of the \$2 million capital funding request for the *antkwak* Early Learning Center, an initiative led by the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESD).

This project is more than a building—it is a long-term investment in the well-being and academic success of children and families in Forest Grove, Cornelius, Dilley, and Gales Creek and across Washington County. Many of the children who will receive services at *antkwak* will become Forest Grove School District students. The foundation they build in early childhood will shape their readiness for school and their success for years to come.

As a district serving a diverse community with significant economic need, we see every day the impact of limited access to early learning. When students arrive in kindergarten without early literacy skills, social-emotional readiness, or experience in structured learning environments, they face an uphill climb from the very start. The *antkwak* Early Learning Center addresses these challenges directly by bringing together preschool, early intervention, child care, and family support services in one accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive setting.

This kind of integrated, community-based approach is essential to addressing Oregon's persistent opportunity and achievement gaps. It aligns with Forest Grove School District's strategic focus on early learning, equity, and partnership with families from the beginning of their educational journey.

We also recognize the leadership of NWRESD in convening partners, engaging the community, and designing a program that reflects both regional needs and national best practices. Early

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learning infrastructure is one of the most difficult investments to make—but also one of the most powerful.

We urge your full support for this funding request. The benefits of *antkwak* will be felt for generations—in the Forest Grove School District and beyond.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to Oregon’s children and families.

Sincerely,

Dr. Suzanne West  
Superintendent  
Forest Grove School District

