



6148 SE Holgate Blvd Portland, OR 97206

May 9, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 5531 and Mt. Scott Youth Center

Dear Co-Chairs Girod, Nosse, and members of the Committee,

Mt. Scott Learning Center, a tuition-free, nonprofit, alternative high school in Southeast Portland.

For 30 years we have been successfully serving Portland-area students who previously struggled in traditional schools. Our daily attendance rate is 85-90 percent – and 91 percent of our students graduate on-time.

We are requesting the last \$1 Million dollars our school community needs so that we can break ground on the Mt. Scott Youth Center in the Spring of 2026.

This \$1 Million DOLLAR request represents 23% of the project's \$4.3 Million dollar total budget.

With a gym, kitchen, career training classrooms, and indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, the 5,500 square foot Youth Center will accommodate:

- consistent after-school and summer literacy programs
- youth recovery and addiction groups
- a warming center during extreme weather events, and
- an assembly and recreation space for students and the wider community

The project's \$3.3 Million dollars in matching funds includes:

- \$1.3 Million dollars in land purchased by Mt. Scott for the youth center site
- \$300,000 dollars in cash operating reserves, and
- Private funding sources and philanthropy

The project design is complete, final permits are in review, **the project is on-track to begin construction in the Spring of 2026,** and open in the Spring of 2027.

Southeast Portland legislators support the project, including Representative Chotzen, Senator Pham, and Multnomah County Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards.

Without support from the State of Oregon, building the Youth Center on schedule will require deep sacrifices to the operating reserves that stabilize our school. This would potentially risk operations that serve our students and their unique needs, including the 50 percent of our student population that receives Special Education services.

This ONE-TIME capital construction allocation will leverage Mt. Scott Learning Center's 77% Match of \$3.3 Million dollars – and help support the youth center's energy-savings goal of becoming a Net Zero building.

Thank you all for your consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,

Tom Dejardin
Executive Director
Mt. Scott Learning Center