

Thank you for being willing to come out and show support for afterschool and summer learning. We have written some themes we believe to be key in emphasizing the importance of summer learning and afterschool. If we can share common messaging with legislators, this will help make sure they know we are working collectively and collaboratively to support Oregon's youth.

This is also a great opportunity to bring youth from your programs to demonstrate how Oregon's youth care about participating in afterschool and summer programs. Ideally, they would be able to share a good experience they have had in their program and what a difference it has made in their life. Each individual, youth or adult will have two to three minutes to testify, possibly shorter.

It will be important for each of us to draw from personal stories or things your program has experienced, particularly around the themes listed below. This will help to connect summer learning and afterschool to real life, showing how emotionally invested we are in the youth we serve. Additionally, making sure they are related to the key points will again, help to show that we are united across Oregon for funding afterschool and summer learning.

Key Topics to Support Afterschool & Summer Learning:

Literacy For Young Children

- Summer learning loss during elementary school accounts for two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading between low-income children and their middle-income peers by ninth grade.
- Most students lose two months of mathematical skills every summer, and low-income children typically lose another two to three months in reading.
- Elementary school students with high levels of attendance (at least five weeks) in voluntary summer learning programs experience benefits in math and reading.

Supporting High Need Middle Schoolers

- There is a lack of hands-on, engaging programs offered to middle school aged youth, particularly during the summer, which contributes to the growing gap between skills necessary for employment and skills youth have gained over their educational journey.
- Programs focused on reducing "summer slide" should be designed around the application of academic skills and employ social activities so that students reinforce academic concepts while building essential social and emotional skills at the same time.
- In Oregon, 72% of parents say that afterschool and summer programs reduce the likelihood of kids engaging in risky behavior. This is especially true for middle school age youth who are most likely to engage in risky behavior between the hours of 3-6pm.

Internships for High Schoolers/ Older Youth Employability Skills

- Without summer counseling and support, one-third of first generation college attendees fall victim to the "summer melt" and fail to enroll in the fall, even after being accepted.

- Waiting lists for summer youth jobs are in the thousands in most major cities, despite promising findings around reduced crime and mortality rates for participants.
- Employability skills like communication and critical thinking are among the most desired by employers, but evidence suggests a gap in those skills among young workers. To address this gap, the afterschool sector is finding ways to provide quality skill-building experiences outside of the classroom to create stronger connections to the labor market.
- Summer learning programs can also help children and youth develop and strengthen social and emotional skills – whether you want to call them 21st century skills, soft skills, or employer-desired skills — and gain job training and experience. There is relative agreement across frameworks that skills like critical thinking, communication, and decision-making are essential to success in college, career, and life, and these skills can be developed in quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

Community Based Organizations

- Summer learning provides opportunities for community volunteers, leaders, and aspiring education workforce and for connecting young people to positive role models in their own neighborhoods and communities. By forging partnerships, educators and community leaders can support youth development in ways neither could do alone.

Nutrition

- In 2013, 44% of children in the U.S. lived in low-income families, and approximately 20% of households with children experienced food insecurity or “a limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods,” at some point during the year. Food insecurity is more likely during the summer, when children have less access to meal programs.
- Summer meals are available through the federally funded Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to children in low-income areas during the summertime. Yet, in examining national participation in Summer Nutrition Programs, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) found that in July 2016, only 15 children received summer lunch for every 100 low-income students who received lunch during the 2015-2016 school year. Barriers such as the lack of access to meal sites and program awareness limit the children who benefit from these meal programs.
- In 2015 there were 2,066,023 free meals served in Oregon through the Summer Meal Service Program. This sounds like a lot, but only represents 1 in 5 children that utilize free or reduced price meals during the school year. Currently, 1 in 4 children in Oregon are considered food insecure and 53% of students are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. A recent civic data project using Oregon data showed that the effect of meal provisions in afterschool and summer programs in low-income communities reduced hunger at a regional level.

Drawing from personal stories to connect these themes on a personal level will be a great way to get our messaging across. If you need further assistance do not hesitate to reach out. Thank

you again for your willingness to share about the importance of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.