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Oregon Leaders Announce $250 Million Summer Learning and Child Care Package for Kids

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Makes equitable investments in educational and child care programs to help Oregon children recover from challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

Salem, OR—Today, Governor Kate Brown, Senate President Peter Courtney, and House Speaker Tina Kotek unveiled a restorative $250 million Summer Learning and Child Care package to help students and children learn, thrive, and have fun this summer. Combined with up to about $75 million in federal funds, both in district matching funds and funding for the Employment-Related Day Care Program, as much as $325 million will be invested in summer learning and child care programs.

This past year, Oregon's children have been burdened by the educational, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of a worldwide pandemic, months of comprehensive distance learning, and more. The Summer Learning and Child Care package will create grants for enrichment activities, academic support, child care and

early learning programs. Investments will be made equitably for Oregon's Black, Indigenous, Tribal, Latino, Latina, and Latinx, Pacific Islander, and children of color, who have borne the disproportionate impact of the last year's challenges.

"The past year has been hard on Oregon kids and their caregivers––especially working mothers––in so many ways," said Governor Brown. "As COVID-19 recedes from our communities, it's time to bring back the summer enrichment programs that spark joy, foster creativity, and encourage healing for our children, who have persevered through adversities few generations have faced at their age. And, we must make sure families and children have equitable access to these programs, as we work to eliminate historic disparities that have been exacerbated during the pandemic."

"With students getting back into the classroom this spring, we have to facilitate a fulfilling summer for kids and their parents," said Speaker Kotek. "They are ready for it and they'll need more available activities. We are stepping up to encourage schools and community groups to meet the need. The summer is coming, let's get ready."

"This is good news for students and families," said President Courtney. "This has been a tough year. We need to get children back in classrooms, with their teachers and friends. We want young people to learn, get outside, and have fun this summer. The Legislature, working with the Governor, will make this happen."

These summer learning programs invest in communities that have been marginalized by historical disinvestment and are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Student success is impacted both by what happens in school and by factors outside of school. The investments in the Summer Learning and Child Care package will help address both students' academic needs and the critical social and emotional challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In rural and urban communities, students face challenges outside of school, access to stable housing, adequate medical and dental care, food insecurity, and exposure to violence. The impact of these challenges requires tailored programs that build trusting relationships, connection and care for children over the summer months, in the critical time between the end of this school year and the beginning of the next.

The Summer Learning and Child Care package makes five specific investments:

• Summer Enrichment and Academic Program Grants (K-8) – $90 million: These grants can be used by school districts and their partner organizations for a wide range of enrichment activities for all K-8 students. Activities can cover the entire spectrum of student interest for all age levels, including outdoor activities, performing arts, robotics, and other instructional activities. Programming may be inclusive of the enrichment, academic, and mental health support that students need. Culturally-specific and relevant opportunities must be offered to be inclusive of all children, including students who experience disability and those who do not speak English. Schools will be encouraged to partner with culturally-specific community organizations where they exist.

• Summer Academic Support Grants (High School) – $72 million: Comprehensive distance learning has created challenges for Oregon high school students, with a disproportionate impact on students of color. As schools work to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 so every student is safe at school, there will be some logistical challenges to returning high school students to in-person instruction. In many districts, they may be among the last students to return to classrooms. These academic support grants will be available to school districts to participate in a summer school program to help high school students who have fallen behind in distance learning classes recover credits from the past school year. This summer programming may also be inclusive of enrichment and social-emotional support.

• Summer Activity Grants – $40 million: Grants for community organizations will be used to provide enrichment activities for students, such as day camps and park programs.

• School Child Care Grants – $30 million: These grants will be used by Title I elementary schools and Tribes to partner with community-based providers to provide wraparound child care services––including health and wellness, mental and behavioral health, and nutrition services––for K-8 students participating in summer enrichment and academic programming. The funds will prioritize low-income, working families.

• Early Learning Programs – $13 million: These resources will be used to help Early

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Learning Division grantees to continue providing their services to Oregon kids through the summer months. The programs include Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, Preschool Promise, and the Early Childhood Equity Fund.

Additional details on the Summer Learning and Child Care Package are available here (https://oregon.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41b11f32beefba0380ee8ecb5&id=6dadc39658&e=8b2ce66d7f) .

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