

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 17, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary McMahon and OMB Director Vought:

We write today to express significant concern regarding news that the Department of Education (the Department) is withholding nearly \$6.9 billion in Congressionally-appropriated Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 state allocated-formula grants – including more than \$73 million in Oregon. This is Congressionally appropriated funding that school districts anticipated receiving on July 1, 2025. We request that the Department abide by the law and immediately release these funds.

On June 30, 2025, schools across the State of Oregon received notice that the Department is withholding funds across five Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title funds pending “further review”. This is funding that Congress appropriated under the following programs:

- State Agency Programs – Migrant Education (ESEA Title I, Part C)
- Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants (ESEA Title II, Part A)
- Grants for English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement (ESEA Title III)
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (ESEA Title IV, Part A)
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers State Grants (ESEA Title IV, Part B)

Any withholding of these critical funds will negatively affect the State of Oregon’s efforts to increase academic outcomes for all our students, particularly our multilingual and migrant education students. It will undermine successful initiatives to recruit talented teachers and retain them in our schools, and it will undermine the ability for students to be taught in safe and secure environments. Additionally, withholding funds that support student learning through summer and after-school programs will undermine Oregon’s efforts to help all students thrive in their education.

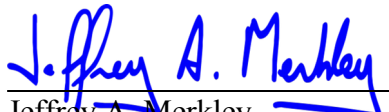
Oregon's school districts are dedicated and efficient stewards of federal dollars, leveraging funds from these five grant programs to improve student outcomes and serve Oregon's student population. For example, Neah-Kah-Nie School District in rural Tillamook County uses ESEA Title II, Part A dollars to fund literacy interventionists in their rural elementary schools so students struggling with reading, writing, and comprehension get targeted support. Without Title II dollars, Portland Public Schools, Oregon's largest school district serving more than 44,000 students, will lose the ability to provide critical professional development and support for teachers working in low-income schools with challenging student needs.

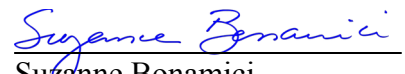
In addition, Hood River Valley School District uses a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant under ESEA Title IV to administer academic support in after-school programs at four Title I schools across this rural region. Similarly, Umatilla School District uses the funds for an after-school program that supports extended learning for roughly half of its K-12 students and provides an opportunity for the students to participate in robotics and a variety of STEAM-focused classes.

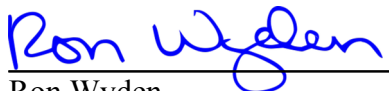
Withholding formula funds from these five critical ESEA programs will be devastating to the school districts in urban, rural, and frontier communities across Oregon. Our schools strive to plan efficiently and effectively and rely on the funds so they can deliver for Oregon's youth.


We respectfully demand that you abide by the law and immediately release this previously appropriated funding. Oregon's students are counting on you and so are we.

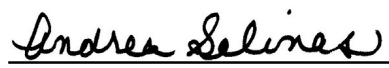
Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

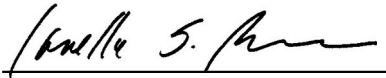

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Val Hoyle
Member of Congress


Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress


Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janelle S. Bynum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress