

Political History of Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden Program:

Updated, 9/15/2023

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Credits:

Documents about Oregon's F2S&SG history have been compiled and shared since at least 2010, by various members of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network Policy Working Group.

This version was first prepared in early 2017 by Kasandra Griffin, then of Upstream Public Health and then updated by Megan Kemple, Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network, and beginning in 2021 by Melina Barker, OFSSGN.

Concise timeline of Farm to School State Program Evolution in Oregon

2006: Oregon Department of Agriculture hosts first meet and greets between farmers and schools. Oregon Department of Education hosts first statewide gathering of supporters

2007: Oregon Farm to School And School Garden Network created
Legislature creates permanent, full-time Farm to School Manager position in Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

2008: Legislature creates parallel Farm to School and School Garden program (and associated staff position) in Oregon Department of Education (ODE)

2009: Advocated for creation of Farm to School Grant Program, but couldn't secure adequate funding to reach all school districts so no funding secured; but preserves both agency positions

2011: Legislature creates grant program, distributing money to school districts for Farm to School and School Garden programs; with \$200,000 in pilot funding¹

2013: January: After delays due to staffing, ODE awards Farm to School and School Garden grants to 11 school districts for Spring of 2013

July: Legislature expands grant funding by \$1,000,000 in "permanent" funds, bringing 2013-15 total to \$1.2M, and makes minor technical changes to program

September: ODE awards grants for Farm to School and School Garden grants to 19 school districts for 2013-15

2015: Legislature adds \$3.3 million in one-time funds, bringing 2015-17 total to \$4.5M, and makes several significant changes to the program

ODE conducts formal rule-making process regarding the education grants

131 School districts "opt in" to revised procurement grant program for 2015-16

ODE conducts rule-making process regarding education grants

2016: ODE awards education grants to 24 organizations

144 School districts "opt in" to procurement funding program for 2016-17 SY

2017: Legislature maintains \$4.5 million in grant funding

132 School districts "opt in" to procurement funding program for 2017-19 SY

ODE awards education grants to 22 organizations

2019: Legislature expands funding to \$15 million for the grant program with significant changes to the program

¹ All funding amounts are given per two-year budget cycle, aka "biennium"

2020: Mid-biennium state budget cuts (related to COVID) result in reduction of funding to \$10 million. All grant programs maintained, but reduced.

2021: Legislature provides funding at \$10.2 million. All grant programs are maintained, but the Equipment and Infrastructure Grant was not funded at the level proposed by OFSSGN and agencies.

2023: Legislature provides funding at \$10.65 million. All grant programs are maintained, and the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant was moved to be included in the Oregon Department of Agriculture Agency Budget at \$500,000.

Detailed timeline of Farm to School State Program Evolution in Oregon

Early 2006 and before:

- Prior to 2005, farm to school activities in Oregon were localized and championed by individuals and/or community groups

2006:

- Representatives Brian Clem (D-Salem) and Tina Kotek (D-Portland) are both elected for the first time
- Brian Clem sits on a tractor at the family orchard outside Hood River, wondering whether their pears ever make it to the adjacent school
- Michelle Markesteyn Ratcliffe (later Ecotrust) and Mel Rader (Upstream Public Health) are sitting next to each other at a meeting in which the concept of “Farm to School” is raised as an ideal way to improve nutrition for hungry kids while also supporting local agriculture. “We’re going to do that,” says Michelle to Mel.
- Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) sets up “speed dating” meeting for schools and Oregon farmers and food processors to meet and do business
- Oregon Department of Education (ODE) hires consultants to (1) conduct statewide needs assessment of sponsors to discern opportunities and barriers to farm to school procurement, and (2) a baseline school garden inventory
- ODE hosts cross-sector meeting to identify opportunities for working together to forward farm to school and school gardens

2007:

- Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network (OFSSGN) is created
- Brian Clem, Tina Kotek, Ecotrust, and Upstream work together to develop a proposal for a three-part “Farm to School and School Garden” program
- Coalition and legislative partners introduce three bills. The first two pass unanimously out of House Education committee but die in Ways and Means:
 - [HB 3307](#) - Create a position within the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) to ready the Oregon agricultural community to work with Oregon schools;
 - [HB 3476](#) - Create a farm to school program in the Oregon Dept. of Education (ODE) and reimburse school districts that utilize Oregon agricultural products; and
 - [HB 3185](#) - Provide grants to schools throughout the state to start or maintain school gardens.
- **Position at ODA is created through a “budget note,”** (attached to the agency budget for the biennium, [HB 5002](#)) which establishes “permanent, full- time Project Coordinator position (1 FTE) to link local agricultural producers with school food purchasers with the goal of increasing the amount of locally produced agricultural products consumed by school children”
- Chef Corey Schreiber, formerly of Wildwood restaurant, is hired as ODA’s Farm to School manager; works to support farmers selling to schools

2008:

- **Parallel program and position in Oregon Department of Education's Child Nutrition program created through [HB 3601](#)** during the 2008 (short) session.
- July 2008, Joan Ottinger hired for the farm to school program in ODE; works to support school districts in buying and promoting local foods
- Ecotrust begins pilot program with Portland Public Schools and Gervais School District testing impacts of a subsidy for local purchasing

2009:

- Advocates push to create farm to school and school garden grant program
- Request is for \$22.6 million, to fund 15 cents in "local boost" for every school lunch served and 7 cents for every school breakfast, plus fund education programs
- [House Bill 2800](#) passes unanimously out of committee but dies in Ways and Means due to poor economic conditions. (Same bill number is used again in 2011.)
- Positions in both state agencies are maintained
- Corey Schreiber leaves ODA

2010:

- Michelle Markesteyn Ratcliffe, formerly of Ecotrust, is hired as new ODA Farm to School manager

2011:

- Upstream Public Health publishes Health Impact Assessment (of proposed HB 2800) examining the potential health, economic, environmental and social impacts
- Ecotrust publishes "The Impact of Seven Cents" from pilot project, examining economic and health benefits
- Both show multiple positive benefits for students and communities
- **[HB 2800 \(repeat use of number\) passes! Funding is reduced from proposed \\$22.6 million to \\$200,000 pilot, but a grant program is created](#)**
- Joan Ottinger retires before grant program is launched, hiring freeze delays re-hire
- Food Corps (a national service organization, like Americorps or Vista but focused on food) starts operations in Oregon, hosted by Oregon Department of Agriculture (only state agency to host, nationwide)

2012:

- Rick Sherman is hired (mid-year, after state hiring freeze is lifted) to take over as ODE Farm to School and School Garden Coordinator
- ODE finalizes system for pilot grant distribution, applications are solicited, submitted and reviewed
- ODA launches "Celebrate Oregon Agriculture" campaign, in partnership with KATU Channel 2, which highlights Farm to School programs to mass audiences
- "Legislators to the Lunchroom" effort gets legislators out to see cafeteria and garden programs in action; reaching over 20 Oregon legislators

2013:

- January: pilot grant recipients are announced: \$189,000 distributed among 11 school districts for diverse cafeteria and education programs
- **Advocates lobby legislature for expansion of grant funding; eventually pass [HB 2649](#) and secure an additional \$1,000,000**
- Summer: New grant applications are solicited, submitted, reviewed & awarded: \$1.17 M distributed among 19 school districts for 2013-15 biennium

2014:

- Michelle Markesteyn Ratcliffe leaves ODA position; moves to Truitt Family Foods as their VP of Sales and Marketing
- Amy Gilroy (formerly of Oregon Public Health Institute) is hired at ODA

2015:

- **Grant program is revised and expanded, again: \$3.3M additional one-time funds awarded**
- Summer Celebration attended by all three legislative champions
- 131 school districts “opt in” to revised procurement program, each receiving approximately 3.5 cents per day per kid for local items
- ODE conducts formal rule-making process regarding the revised education grant process; which is eventually passed by the Oregon Board of Education

2016:

- Education grant applications are solicited, submitted, reviewed,
- Awards are made to 24 entities around the state including school districts, non-profit organizations, and one commodity commission (albacore)
- 144 school districts “opt in” to the procurement program for the year
- Oregon Department of Agriculture receives USDA Farm to School support services grant to support FoodCorps Oregon program

2017

- [HB 2038](#) Passes maintaining \$4.5 million in grant funds
- 132 School districts “opt in” to procurement funding program for 2017-19 SY
- ODE awards education grants to 22 organizations

2019

- [HB 2579](#) passes, **increasing funding for the ODE Farm to School Grant Program from \$4.5 million to \$15 million** and expanded the Grant Program in a number of important ways (outlined in policy evolution section below).

2020

- Mid-biennium state budget cuts (related to COVID) result in reduction of funding to \$10 million. All grant programs maintained, but reduced.

2021

- Legislature provides funding at \$10.2 million in ODE's Budget Bill [SB5513](#). \$10 million to ODE and \$.2 million to ODA (for the Equipment and Infrastructure Grant)
- All grant programs are maintained, but the Equipment and Infrastructure Grant was not funded at the level proposed by OFSSGN and agencies.
- Legislative champions indicate that this level of funding (\$10 million) is sustainable into the future, and expressed willingness to increase funding for EI Grant to closer to proposed level (\$1 million) pending evaluation results from initial grants.

2023

- Legislature provides funding at \$10.65 million. \$10.15 million in ODE's Budget Bill [HB 5014](#) and \$500,000 in ODA's Budget Bill [HB 5002](#) for the Equipment and Infrastructure Grant. \$250,000 of which was moved from ODE's budget and \$250,000 of which came from the General Fund
- All grant programs are maintained and the Equipment and Infrastructure Grant was increased by \$300,000 and moved into ODA's agency budget

Grant Program Policy Evolution

The 2011 version of the pilot grant program had these characteristics:

- Funds were distributed based on competitive grant applications, to school districts
- Grant funds awarded were to be 87.5% for food procurement and 12.5% for educational activities
- Procurement funds were to be used “up to 15 cents per student, per lunch”
- Funds could not be used to “supplant” prior purchases
- Procurement funds were for the purchase of products “grown or processed” in Oregon, which allows a lot of leeway
- Education funds are for “food-based, garden-based, or agriculture-based educational activities”

In 2013, the following changes were made:

- Allocation between procurement and education funds were changed to “at least 80% for procurement, and at least 10% for education”

In 2015, the following changes were made:

- Procurement funding was separated from education funding
- The split changed to 80% for procurement and 20% for education
- Procurement funding was switched from competitive grant process to “opt in” process, for all districts agreeing to follow rules and reporting requirements
- Prohibition on grant funds “supplanting existing purchases” was removed
- Limit of 15 cents per kid/meal was removed (simplifies reporting & claims)
- Limit of “for lunch only” was removed (simplifies use, reporting, claims, & storage)
- Education funding was left as a competitive grant application process, now open to school districts, non-profit organizations or commodity commissions
- Education programs criteria was expanded to include saying that programs should be “culturally appropriate for the students they serve”

In 2017 the following changes were made to the policy

- Expand entities eligible for Education grants to include: Education service districts; Federally recognized Indian tribes; Schools overseen by the Bureau of Indian Education; and Soil and water conservation districts
- Products purchased by a school district prior to participation in the grant program are no longer reimbursable, with some exceptions.

In 2019 the following important changes were made to the structure of the grant program.

- Created a new competitive Procurement grant to “encourage and sustain successful procurement efforts”
- Includes Head Start and other center-based early childcare and education sites
- Includes summer meal sites and provides additional funding for summer meals
- Provides infrastructure grants for producers who are ready to sell to schools; and
- Requires and funds technical assistance and program evaluation.

In 2023 the Equipment & Infrastructure Grant was added to the ODA Budget instead of being a transfer from ODE. This reduces delays and allows for advocacy to increase funding specifically for this program.

Politics

2007:

HB 3476 to create ODE position & grant program: Passes out of House Ed. committee, dies in W&M
[HB 3307](#) to create ODA position: passes out of House Ed. committee, dies in W&M
HB 3185 to create school garden grant program: no action

Initial chief sponsors were Tina KOTEK (a Portland activist coming from the perspective of hunger and children, with recent jobs at Children First for Oregon and the Oregon Food Bank) and Brian CLEM (a Salem businessman with a family pear orchard in the Hood River Valley), both then freshman legislators. Additional sponsors of any or all of the three bills in 2007 were: BARNHART, BONAMICI, BOONE, BOQUIST, BRUUN, BUCKLEY, CANNON, COWAN, DALLUM, DINGFELDER, C EDWARDS, D EDWARDS, GALIZIO, GARRARD, GILLIAM, GIROD, HANNA, HOLVEY, HUNT, KOMP, MERKLEY, MINNIS, NATHANSON, OLSON, READ, ROBLAN, ROSENBAUM, SCHAUFLE, SHIELDS, TOMEI, WHISNANT, WITT, Senator AVAKIAN

2008:

House Bill 3601 creating Education position is sponsored by Committee on Elections, Ethics and Rules, at the request of House Interim Committee on Ed., whose members are: Chair BUCKLEY, Vice Chairs WHISNANT & KOMP, members CLEM, GREENLICK, HUFFMAN, KRUMMEL, LIM, ROBLAN

2009: Sponsors of HB 2800 (dies in W&M): CLEM, KOTEK; Representatives BAILEY, BOONE, CANNON, GARRETT, GELSER, GILLIAM, GREENLICK, HARKER, HOLVEY, KAHL, KRIEGER, MATTHEWS, NATHANSON, READ, ROBLAN, SCHAUFLE, SHIELDS, J SMITH, TOMEI, WINGARD

2011: Sponsors of HB 2800 (passes): CLEM, KOTEK; Representatives BARNHART, BOONE, DEMBROW, FREDERICK, GARRETT, HOLVEY, KOMP, MATTHEWS, READ, SCHAUFLE, J SMITH, Senators BONAMICI, DEVLIN, DINGFELDER, EDWARDS, JOHNSON, PROZANSKI, ROSENBAUM, SHIELDS

HB 2800 went through House Ag & Natural resources committee, which CLEM co-chaired with Republican Bob JENSON.

2013: Sponsors of HB 2649 (passes): KOTEK, CLEM, MCLANE; Representatives DAVIS, PARRISH, REARDON, UNGER (\$500K in HB 2649; additional \$500K in Christmas tree bill) HB 2649 went through House Ag committee, which Brad WITT chaired.

2015: HB 2721 sponsors: CLEM; Representatives GILLIAM, MCLANE (Clem forgot to ask Kotek but she still came to testify in hearing.) “Died” in W&M but is folded into SB 501 and SB 5507:

HB 2721 went through House “Land Use, Water & Rural Communities” committee, which CLEM chaired, and passed out unanimously

\$3.3 M in additional one-time funding awarded in “Christmas tree bill(s)”
(SB 501 made the policy changes we had requested in HB 2721, and SB 5507 allocated the funds.)

2017: HB 2038 sponsors: Sponsored by Representatives CLEM, SMITH DB; Representatives ESQUIVEL, HEARD, HOLVEY, KENNEMER, KENY-GUYER, KOTEK, LININGER, MARSH, MCKEOWN, NOBLE, NOSSE, PARRISH, SMITH G, SOLLMAN, WHISNANT, WITT, Senators HANSELL, MONNES ANDERSON

HB 2038 went through House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources which CLEM chaired, then on to Joint Ways and Means Committee.

The bill was passed by unanimous votes of both the House and Senate.

2019: House Bill 2579 Sponsored by: Representatives CLEM, POST, REARDON, SMITH DB; Representatives BONHAM, EVANS, FAHEY, GOMBERG, GORSEK, HAYDEN, HELM, HELT, KENY-GUYER, KOTEK, LIVELY, MARSH, MCKEOWN, MEEK, NERON, PRUSAK, RESCHKE, SOLLMAN, WILDE, WILLIAMS, WITT

HB 2579 went through House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use, which CLEM chaired, then on to Education Sub Committee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and then on to full Joint Committee on Ways and Means

The bill was passed by unanimous votes of both the House and Senate.

2021: Senate Bill 5513, ODE's Budget Bill, passed. Representative Clem steps down as legislative champion to make room for other champions. Representative Williams serves as legislative champion. Representative McLain secures funding in ODE's budget, but isn't willing to fund the Equipment and Infrastructure Grants at proposed level until further evaluation demonstrates impact.

2023: HB 5014 ODE's Budget Bill, passed. Included \$10.4 (\$250,000 to be moved to ODA budget) and HB 5002 ODA's Budget Bill included the Equipment & Infrastructure grant funding from ODE and an additional \$250,000 from general fund to fully fund POP 420.