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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lane Education Service District and Southern Oregon Oregon Education Service District Receives Major Grant in Excess of 2.6 Million To Expand Career-Connected Learning Across Oregon

LANE COUNTY, Oregon - Lane Education Service District and Southern Oregon Oregon Education Service District (ESD) were recently awarded an excess of \$2.6 million in grant funding from the Oregon Department of Education through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) fund. With this new funding, Lane and Southern ESDs have partnered with the Mid-Willamette Educational Consortium to create and pilot Team Oregon Build, expanding upon the existing Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs already operating in these regions. The expansion encompasses areas impacted by recent wildfires, including the Southern Oregon Education Service District and Mid-Willamette Educational Consortium.

Team Oregon Build (TOB) is an innovative partnership between education, industry, state, and community to introduce youth to career pathways within high-wage and high-demand construction trades. Education and Community partners from three Oregon regions dramatically impacted by wildfire and homelessness launched this career-connected learning and disaster/crisis response initiative.

“Every aspect of Team Oregon Build is working towards a better future. CTE Construction teachers are receiving curriculum and material support, while students can see the connection from the classroom instruction to directly helping solve big community issues,” said Shareen Vogel, CTE Regional Coordinator, Lane Education Service District

“These students are the skilled workforce that our industry partners have been asking for. Through hands-on experiences in the trades, Oregon youth are gaining skills that go beyond any textbook or classroom course,” said Jesse Quinn, Director of Community Engagement, Lane Workforce Partnership



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“So far, what I have seen from our students is hard work and engagement; they are willing and want to learn,” said Keith Howard, Prospect Charter School CTE Instructor in Medford. “Just opens the door for opportunity; they learn about the different trades, and it expands their capabilities after high school.”

“Makes me feel proud and a sense of pride. You feel like it's going to do something good in life, and it just makes you feel happy knowing it's going to be there for a while,” said High School Senior Jonathan Cortez, who is attending the Willamette Career Academy in Salem.

“I enjoy working on Team Oregon Build because it builds more community around this area, and we really need that right now,” said Cassy Fisher, 8th grader at Briggs Middle School. “It also helps people in 8th grade can start committing to the community more before they're in High School.”

With the new funding, regions across the State will expand programming, doubling the number of participating schools from 19 to over 39, thereby significantly enhancing the program's reach throughout the state. More than 3,800 students across three regions will participate in hands-on construction projects, building transitional shelters and sheds as well as supplementary structures like garden beds, chairs, and picnic tables, gaining practical skills while contributing to their communities.

“The building is just a piece of it, and each student brings different skills to the table as they learn how to put this together,” said Kurt Hueller, CTE Instructor at Willamette Career Academy. “As we talk to people in the industry, swinging the hammer is just a piece of it; it's the customer service piece. It's delivering what you say you're going to deliver, showing up and completing something on a schedule and meeting somebody's needs is huge.”

“I loved working on these types of projects. especially to hear that it's going to improve someone's life and not just have them living out on the streets. It makes me feel happy for myself to see or drive by somewhere and be like, oh, hey, I built one of those,” said Matthew Duncan, a Senior also attending Willamette Career Academy in Salem.

“It's been a huge change for my life; it's my home, and I could never be more grateful,” said Laura Hart, Everyone Village resident. Hart is living in a home constructed by students.

“I plan on wanting to go there with my parents to show them what we did in the future,” said Fisher.

The Career Connected Learning Project investment aligns with the objectives outlined in the American Rescue Plan (Public Law 117-2), addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, particularly those from underrepresented subgroups. This initiative aims to mitigate the impact of lost instructional time while equipping students with vital skills for their academic and professional journeys.



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Team Oregon Build also collaborates closely with partners like the Workforce Talent Development Board, Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon Housing and Community Services. This teamwork helps provide students with real, hands-on experiences that aren't just educational but genuinely reflect the professional world. It's a fantastic way for students to learn practical skills while making meaningful connections with industry partners. By offering work-site simulations and hands-on learning opportunities, the project ensures inclusivity and fosters a sense of belonging among all participants. Through this regional work-based learning demonstration, students will:

- Engage in real-world problem-solving in construction projects.
- Explore various career pathways in design, architecture, construction trades, and disaster recovery.
- Develop talents and acquire skills for high-wage, family-sustaining careers.
- Contribute to addressing statewide and national challenges such as pandemics, wildfires, and the housing crisis.
- Experience a sense of belonging and connection through community healing and resilience initiatives.

Lane ESD and Southern Oregon ESD's receipt of this substantial funding underscores the commitment to providing students across the three identified regions with equitable access to quality education and meaningful career pathways. The project will not only address the immediate needs of students but also lay the foundation for long-term economic prosperity and community resilience.

About Lane Education Service District: Lane Education Service District (ESD) is a regional education service provider, dedicated to providing school districts in Lane County with a wide array of educational programs and services. As an essential partner in the education ecosystem, Lane ESD strives to improve student achievement and help them become integral members of their communities while promoting equity, excellence, and innovation in education for all students.

About Southern Oregon Education Service District: Southern Oregon Education Service District partners with local school districts to provide high-quality, cost-effective education services to the region. SOESD serves 13 school districts, over 100 buildings, 3,500 teachers and 52,000 students in Jackson, Josephine and Klamath Counties—a 10,600 square-mile geographic area.

About Mid-Willamette Valley Education Consortium: The Mid-Willamette Education Consortium is a regional partnership formed to promote career technical education and extended learning opportunities in the region. The schools in the region are organized into a consortium in order to better meet the needs of all students and to be able to collaborate together and leverage funding to improve the opportunities for all members.

About Lane Workforce Partnership: Lane Workforce Partnership is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and one of Oregon's nine local workforce development boards. Lane Workforce Partnership, the designated local Workforce Development Board for Lane County, Oregon, funds and delivers programs that empower job seekers to meet the current and future workforce needs of employers in Lane County. Programs and services are delivered through a network of local partners including employers, labor



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groups, government, community colleges, high schools, community-based organizations, and economic development.

Soundbites, b-roll and pictures included in this digital media kit – [CLICK HERE](#)
Team Oregon Build Website - [CLICK HERE](#)



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