



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

KIT JOHNSTON • MARY STARRETT • DAVID "BUBBA" KING

535 NE Fifth Street • McMinnville, OR 97128-4523
(503) 434-7501 • Fax (503) 434-7553
TTY (800) 735-2900 • www.yamhillcounty.gov

Dear Mr. Winegardner,

On behalf of the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners, we are pleased to offer our strong support for the Northwest Early Learning Academy (NELA) and their request for \$1.5 million in funding through Business Oregon.

NELA represents an exceptional cross-sector partnership between A-dec, George Fox University, and Northwest Christian Church—bringing together business, higher education, and community stakeholders to address one of the most pressing challenges facing Yamhill County: access to affordable, high-quality childcare. Yamhill County is officially designated as a childcare desert, and the lack of available childcare remains a significant barrier to workforce participation and economic stability for families across our region.

The Northwest Early Learning Academy will provide approximately 200 new childcare spaces, directly supporting working families while strengthening local employers' ability to recruit and retain a stable workforce. Access to reliable early learning is essential not only for parents and caregivers, but also for the long-term health of our local economy. Projects like NELA help ensure that businesses can grow, employees can remain in the workforce, and children have access to high-quality early education during their most formative years.

We are particularly encouraged by the strong foundation already in place for this project. NELA has secured state, county, and local grant funding, received city fee waivers, and benefited from significant private investment from A-dec and George Fox University, as well as generous contributions from members of Northwest Christian Church. This level of shared commitment reflects broad community confidence in the project and its long-term impact. The project's receipt of the Innovation in Philanthropy Award further underscores its collaborative and forward-thinking approach.

The Yamhill County Board of Commissioners recognizes NELA as a critical investment in community wellbeing, workforce readiness, and economic resilience. We believe the requested Business Oregon funding will play an essential role in bringing this project to completion and ensuring its success for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. We strongly encourage Business Oregon to support the Northwest Early Learning Academy and their efforts to expand childcare access in Yamhill County and the greater region.

Sincerely,

Kit Johnston
Chair

Mary Starrett
Vice-Chair

David "Bubba" King
Commissioner

Approved by the Yamhill County Board of
Commissioners on 01/15/2026
via Board Order 26-015