



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Brown, Carlson, Barofsky, McRae and Schlossberg  
FROM: Deborah Hart, Chief Financial Officer; Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer  
DATE: June 7, 2022  
SUBJECT: EWEB Education Grants and Private Schools  
OBJECTIVE: Information

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## **Issue**

This memo provides historical background and additional context regarding EWEB's education grant program for Board consideration on extending funding to private schools.

## **Background**

EWEB currently funds \$412,000 annually to the four public school districts in its service territory. The board has asked if private schools should be included as part of the education grant program.

In June 2019, General Manager Lawson provided the following response:

*Providing educational grants beyond public schools is a Board decision. Approximately 13% of Eugene students are private/home schooled according to LCOG data. Thirteen percent represents approximately \$51,000 relative to overall education funding, and there are 16 private schools in Eugene.*

When this question was raised again in 2021, Management provided this additional background:

*In 1995 the EWEB School District Education Grants Program was established with local districts to replace the "in-lieu-of-tax" payment that is allowed in Oregon statute. Prior to the pandemic approximately 13% of Eugene students were private/home schooled according to LCOG data. Thirteen percent represents approximately \$58,500 relative to the overall education funding for 2022. As of 2019 (again pre-pandemic) there were 16 private schools in Eugene. There are no funds allocated specifically for private schools in the 2022 budget.*

Grant funds allocated to the four school districts operating in EWEB service territory are administered through five-year contracts. In preparation for the 2020-2025 grant cycle, the Board requested more specificity to align the grant-funded programs with Board strategic priorities. The contracts now require grant funding to support at least one of following priority topic areas:

- *Cascadia subduction earthquake and household-scale emergency planning and preparation*
- *Water: local source, watershed protection, water quality and conservation*

- *Energy: Pacific Northwest power supply mix, options for the future and pros and cons of different energy technologies*
- *Climate change: science, expected regional impacts and carbon reduction strategies*

Contract amendments were also made to streamline grant administration processes following the retirement of EWEB’s education coordinator, a position that is no longer funded.

While private schools are not currently eligible for EWEB education grants, EWEB does offer access to grant funding for private schools through two other programs. 501c3 and educational facilities are eligible for [Greenpower grants](#) as well as the newly introduced [Electric Mobility Community Grant program](#) (five grants of up to \$25,000 each) funded by Department of Environmental Quality’s Clean Fuels Program. Awareness campaigns are underway to inform eligible organizations of this new offering.

### **Discussion**

Although the school grant program was established as a replacement for in-lieu-of-tax, as previously noted, providing education grants beyond public schools is a Board decision. Should the Board decide they wish to extend education grants to private schools, Staff and the Board would need to consider a number of issues including the following:

- Given the genesis of the educational grant program to replace “in lieu of tax” payments, what is the express intent of the Board for this funding?
- Depending on the goals for broadened access, would the Board want to consider other alternatives that could support this initiative outside the education grant program?
- How much funding would be allocated in total and to each school?
- Is this new funding or would it be deducted from existing education grant funds?
- The existing grant program was revised with minimal EWEB administration and oversight limited to reviewing four district-wide, year-end reports annually. Does the Board envision expanded administrative/staffing support from EWEB to extend this program to as many as 16 individual schools?

### **Recommendation**

Management is not making a recommendation at this time. The current education grant contracts run through August 2025. Staff has sent communications to encourage private, public charter, and alternative schools to apply for the e-Mobility Community Grant and Greenpower Grant programs.

### **Requested Board Action**

No action is requested at this time. Additional information and/or a scheduled agenda item will be provided upon Board request.