

I posted this on Rep Sara Gelser's Facebook page - as she opened up public discussion on that forum. I would like this entered as testimony against HB2748.

I don't live in the Riverdale District, but I do know this: Tuition students benefit the entire student body. This is no different than state colleges who charge more to out of state students. I don't see you introducing bills to stop that practice--or is that next? Why are you targeting with legislation a school that works? Why aren't you instead, turning every school in Oregon into a Riverdale?

Instead of dismantling one of the highest achieving public schools in the state, how about studying why it achieves at such a success rate? Perhaps the answer is what you yourself have already pointed out: resources spent and class sizes kept low.

If there is anything shady about this situation, one might think it's the way you are trying to ram this bill through on an emergency status. This bill is what smells bad, not a school district trying everything it can (face it parents--if it was your district you'd do ANYTHING for your children--wouldn't you?) So you are trying to fast track this bill, and now on Facebook, post a simplistic encapsulation of the situation so you can get lots of supporters waving pitchforks and lighting torches? This is not about equity. It's about money. Because the legislature does not want to pony up and fund all schools at the rate that Riverdale does, you want to kill Riverdale.

To my friends with students on the outside of this district, I implore you not to turn on Riverdale. As parents, we need to stick together. We need to insist that Rep. Gelser and all legislators answer this question: why isn't Rep. Gelser introducing a bill that funds every Oregon student at the level per student that Riverdale gets when it adds in these tuition dollars? Why aren't we lifting all boats, keeping all class sizes low, giving all schools this level of funding, instead of the seemingly never ending quest to dumb down successful education-- in the name of equity. How about equity by investing upwards, instead of equity by tearing down? If all schools were adequately funded (can someone say SALES TAX) then no district would need to ask for tuition students.

While Riverdale exists it is a pesky example of a high achieving school that does so because it keeps class sizes small and invests in its students at a rate higher than that of other students in the state (yes--with tuition dollars). Rep. Gelser will be reminded every day of how inadequate are the solutions being offered to all of our kids in this great State, of how inadequate the dollars are. Perhaps Rep. Gelser doesn't want that reminder out there, a reminder that works for kids every day. Perhaps that's why she wants to kill this high achieving school? To level the field in a downward direction?

Rep. Gelser says what Riverdale does is not fair. But I'll tell you what isn't fair-- under funding all students so they cannot achieve in the way that Riverdale achieves. What Riverdale does in their district works--so why aren't we making that investment for ALL students? This bill passes, our children outside of Riverdale will not be one spec better off. Insist that bills are passed that raise funding for every student up to Riverdale's levels, instead of punishing Riverdale for trying to give their students the best education possible.

Parents--my friends--demand success for all your children! Demand that Rep. Gelser spend her time on something that helps all children, instead of punishing children by killing something that already works.