

From: Paula Robinson [<mailto:probinson@riverdale.k12.or.us>]
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2013 12:09 PM
To: Berkobien Rick
Subject: HB2748

Dear Rick,
Please forward this message to the Education Committee.

March 22, 2013

Dear Education Committee;

As an advocate for children and their families I speak against HB2748. As a parent of special needs children and grandchildren I have certain “credential” for my point of view, but that “credential” is greatly eclipsed by my 25 years experience in the field of education, specifically, Special Education and English Language Learners. Prior to my three years at Riverdale, the ten before I provided service as a highly sought after expert supporting Corvallis School District administrators, special education teachers, general education teachers, students, families and counselors. I created and facilitated the Benton County Student Threat assessment team which brought a different mindset to the county. That mindset shift was from severe disciplinary action to building strategic Student Support Plans that involved pulling together family and community resources. I have facilitated high level problem solving for hundreds of students who experience many different complex situations, disabilities and conditions. I have confidence that you could interview any of the students and families I have served and they will testify to my children first passion, skills, knowledge and ability to bring teams together on behalf of the student. I point this out because you must look deep inside in order to make a difficult decision. I trust you will look past political and personal agenda. As an educator I am **in support of Rob Saxton’s work and our current State Initiatives**. They are good for our state. HB2748 does not move us toward the target.

What does move us toward the target of exceptional education and what provides exceptional young people that will support the tax base to care for us all as we age are schools that work, now. Current research out of New York State confirms that what Riverdale provides is the future of education. Public Small Schools of Choice in New York have proven to skyrocket graduation rate, college acceptances and test scores. I implore you to replicate what works rather than tear it down. This is an issue of school funding, more than fairness. Take away what is in place, in the name of equity, and **no one in the entire state will notice**, except the children who come through Riverdale doors daily.

As a single mother raising children in poverty I know what poverty is like and the fight it takes to break out. There is a wide range of diversity, color and race in my immediate family and I understand what it means to break out of a Kansas City ghetto and rise above, for one example. For me, my son, my son-in-law and my daughter, most especially, it was education that provided the escape, the ability to transcend and break the cycle of poverty. I know firsthand the struggle. I understand the importance of education and the concept of equality. Additionally, and selfishly, I hope to have a thriving economy in Oregon when I am old. We must educate our young people exceptionally for this to happen.

Even though Riverdale is my employer and its students are “my” kids, I can say honestly that if destroying what Riverdale is able to provide would promote equity in education for Oregon, I would give pause, and be a supporter. My background has proven my resilience; I will be fine one way or another. The fact is the choice to attend Riverdale only benefits Oregon in a positive way.

In a reverse way our tuition families bring about a counter intuitive level of equity by providing diverse perspectives to the in district students who experience affluence. These in district children will become policy makers, land lords, and become responsible for many Oregon resources. I am proud to provide them an exceptional education among a diverse group of learners because this public school experience will influence their future decision making. Removing their choice to attend Riverdale High school, by cutting desirable programs, will simply put resources into private schools. I hope to continue to have the opportunity to influence their viewpoints and perspectives. This is good for our state.

Respectfully, I urge you to vote no on HB2748, knowing you are in positions to make decisions that build our state I trust your careful consideration. I voted for Rep. Gelsner when I lived in her district, knowing she has strong ideals, but **this bill does not hit the desired target that will bring about the change I believe to be your goal.** Support the Quality Education Model for funding for all children in Oregon, don't destroy what is working. Observe and replicate across the state the small school model, at least its principals. You are encouraged to visit and ask questions.

Kindly,

Principal Paula Robinson

4627 SW 29th Place

Portland, Oregon 97239

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Kindly,

Paula Robinson

Principal Riverdale High School

I spend five days a month in our classrooms supporting teachers and students, and as a result, am not always able to respond to emails daily. If you need to contact me immediately, please call Ms. Teeter at 503-262-4844.

www.riverdale.k12.or.us

The mission of Riverdale High School is to teach students to be thoughtful in their education, about each other, and for their community.