



Date: March 12, 2013

To: Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee
Co-Chairs Rod Monroe and Betty Komp and members

From: Hanna Vaandering, VP, Oregon Education Association

Re: SB 5519 [State School Fund]

Thank you co-chairs Komp and Monroe and committee members. My name is Hanna Vaandering, Vice President of the Oregon Education Association, representing 42,000 teachers, education support professionals, and community college faculty and staff throughout Oregon.

I am here today to thank you and the Ways and Means Co-chairs for your emphasis on prioritizing public education in the 2013-2015 budget. At 6.75 billion dollars, Oregon's public schools will lean toward stability after a long five years of devastating cuts.

In schools small and large, our students have lost beloved electives and activities, have said farewell to many teachers, counselors and librarians, and have suffered as large class sizes and ever-shorter school years have been the norm. Against this back drop, educators are expected to achieve ever more. Our funding and expectations have been misaligned for too long. The co-chairs' proposed budget will finally begin to turn this around.

For that, our members convey their gratitude.

As a member of the Oregon Education Investment Board, I have high hopes and expectations for all of our students. I wish for them success as our future doctors, teachers, welders, coaches, engineers and artists and happiness in whatever they decide to do. I believe in every student's capacity to learn and to grow. I know, as an elementary physical education teacher, that a meaningful investment in our children yields great dividends. That is why, after a long

winter of painful cuts, OEA and its members support SB 5519 as amended to the \$6.75 billion appropriation level.

I would not be honest if I said that this would fix all of our funding-related ills, however.

- In Astoria, this level of funding would allow for intervention and engagement in middle and high school venues, and will provide constancy.
- In Eugene, by contrast, \$6.75 billion will still leave the district with an \$11 million deficit, which will result in more staff layoffs, cut school days, class size increases, and/or program eliminations.
- In Bend, the co-chairs' target would enable the district to balance its budget with a full school year and no more staff and program cuts.
- But in Canby, this funding level will still leave the district short \$650,000. They anticipate a cut of up to seven teaching positions or six school days.
- In Harrisburg, \$6.75 billion would allow the district to maintain current staffing levels and eliminate furlough days. They even anticipate restoring their librarian, PE teacher, and technology coordinator.
- North Clackamas, by contrast, would still face a \$2.8 million deficit that could result in school consolidations, staffing cuts, and a school year that will be seven days shorter. North Clackamas has not had a full school year since 2009.

These are just a few examples of how different districts will experience the proposed funding level of \$6.75 billion. To be clear, it is a great start, but it is not what anyone would call fully adequate. According to the Quality Education Commission, a minimum of \$6.895 billion is necessary to put our students on a pathway to achieve our ambitious 40-40-20 goals. This is not that budget.

Nevertheless, we understand the tough job you have in front of you, with Oregon's still-emerging economic and revenue picture running short of hoped-for growth. We know that a fifth of our children experience poverty. We know that you must balance the needs of many worthy causes. And because of that, we ask that you make certain that a pathway exists to ensure that districts will have this turning-point funding for 2013-15.

Thank you so much for your time.