

February 23, 2015

Testimony regarding class size issues in the Hillsboro School District.

When considering the impacts of large class sizes, the members of the Hillsboro Education Association call upon the Legislature to consider the goals of the U. S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education*. That decision was directed toward racial desegregation, but sixty years later we have evolved to the point of understanding the inherent lack of equivalent opportunity for many of our students, whether they are English language learners, struggling due to inadequate family income, working with the supports of an Individualized Education Plan, a Behavior Support Plan, or accommodated through a 504 plan. Most of those inequities are exacerbated by our large class sizes.

In that Supreme Court decision the Court stated that public education in the 20th century had become an essential component of a citizen's public life. We know that the Legislators for the State of Oregon believe, as does the Hillsboro community, that our students deserve a public education system that builds the basis of democratic citizenship, normal socialization, and skills toward a successful future. Recent research confirms that we are most successful in these endeavors when we can build relationship with students and their families.

Senate Bill 290, the 2011 legislation that was a part of Oregon's waiver from ESEA, put educators on a path toward examining our practices, to determine what does and does not work for our students. In Hillsboro we have come face to face with the very real impacts of trying to reach each student. More important than a list of those deficits is the view we see when we step back, and we see the far-reaching consequences.

We know this is a complex issue, and we appreciate the proposal to establish a task force.

Respectfully Submitted,
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