

Good morning, members of the State Board of Education. My name is Lisa Zuniga and I am a Portland Public School parent and a leader and co-founder of the Portland Parents Coalition, a citywide coalition of parents who have been working for more than three years to reverse dramatic declines in instructional hours provided to students in Portland high schools. In the 2012-13 school year, 83% of Portland high school students, including my daughter, did not have a full school day and were forced to take late arrival, early dismissal, extended lunch or non-academic study hall without licensed staff. In terms of instructional hours, their schedules added up to 21 to 43 fewer days of instructional time than is required by state law.

Due to direct and sustained advocacy by Portland parents over two years, PPS eventually added more teachers, but continued to understaff the high schools and put up barriers to students taking a full day of class. This year, fewer than half of Portland high school students have a full day of school; more than 80% of seniors are in school part-time. It's no wonder students are showing up at community colleges needing remedial classes.

To be clear, this issue is not due to lack of resources. PPS chose an 8-period day and negotiated that teachers teach 6 of 8 classes; they also negotiated workloads limits with PAT. In addition to state funding, PPS has a very healthy local option and a local income tax that pays for art education in its K-5s. They've "found" about \$16M a year for the past two years – *after* the budgeting process – and they have a rich reserve.

As such, we applaud the review of instructional hours by Deputy Superintendent Saxton and the Board and the inclusion of the Parents Coalition in the recent task force discussion about new rules related to instructional hours and what counts as instructional time.

We welcome the opportunity to support a course reversal on this for Portland students, but also to expand the opportunity for students across the state. Our state's achievement numbers, graduation rates, and college degree and certificate rates all indicate that it's time for Oregon to embrace higher standards and more instruction for our students.

This is not a discussion about "seat time." That phrase needs to be banished from this discussion. This is about instructional time ... *engagement* ... the most important asset we have to offer our students if we want to improve student achievement and graduation rates.

We strongly commend the change in language, from districts just providing a "school calendar that meets the 990-hour minimum to a new standard – that students must be "scheduled" into a full day. Currently, districts are paid as if students had a full day of instruction even if they are only scheduled into a partial day of classes. Why should the

state pay a district for a full day of instruction when the vast majority of its high school students aren't getting a full school day and therefore not receiving 990 hours of instruction. Making this change will more accurately reflect what students are actually taking in terms of classes.

We would NOT, however, support language such as the "right to a schedule" as a replacement for actual scheduling in a class. We've already experienced what happens when districts feel they only have to offer and not actually schedule students. Such ambiguous language would give Portland the opportunity to discourage students from taking a full schedule or to understaff schools to indirectly limit access.

Nor do we support reporting by district averages. Portland currently has a range of 100% of freshmen taking a full day at some schools to fewer than 45% of freshmen in a full school day at other schools. Please add to the draft that the percentages be BY SCHOOL and BY GRADE LEVEL at the high school level. For districts with only one or two high schools, a district average may be adequate, but not in Portland.

We do, however, support flexibility for smaller districts or those in which a majority of the students travel more than an hour each way to get to school. We would also support allowing IEPs to define a full school day or another standard set by a SPED Parent Advisory Group in consultation with SPED teachers.

We also support adding time for parent teacher conferences, professional development, and inclement weather on top of the 990 hours. Portland Public Schools has the resources to pay for this. The Parents Coalition recommends financial support from the state to needier districts to provide this to students, especially districts that don't have local option levies.

We would like language added requiring districts to publicly share schedule data with the state and community so that students being provided the minimum 990 hours of instruction – please note, we would like it to be more – is transparent to students, parents, legislators, the State Board, and taxpayers.

We plan to participate in the process over the next few months and look forward to sharing with you the compelling data that shows how Portland students have been shortchanged, even as Portland has taken funds from the state as if they were meeting minimum state instructional standards for all high school students.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you to create a better policy around instructional time for students. Our students and students around Oregon will benefit from increased instruction and enforcement of the current minimum hours of instruction.