

Chair Wagner, members of the committee, my name is Rose Janusz and I am a Social Studies teacher at Happy Valley Middle School I am here to address the struggles our students face when they are expected to learn and grow in large classes where teachers have huge caseloads and how this topic needs to move to the forefront of our conversation when we come to the bargaining table.

I have been teaching in North Clackamas for 20 years and have experienced large class sizes for almost half of my career. Many of us believed that when the recession hit in 2008 that classes of 40 or more was a temporary problem that as soon as the economy improved we would see some relief. That has not been the case. The economy has improved but class sizes still remain too large and classes of 40 have been the norm for many of our students. When classes were around 28 students I could honestly say I knew every one of those students in my classroom I could truly see them grow academically from the beginning of our time together until they moved on to the next grade. I knew every students name first and last and could find ways to meet each student where they were when it came to their learning. This meant the student with an IEP, 504 or the student who just needed a little bit of extra attention could get the attention they needed. I had the ability to check in on them multiple times throughout the class and even the ability to work with small groups during class time. I use to plan fun engaging simulations for students to experience history. Many of my former students are now grown and have their own children and still remember fondly their middle school teachers and peers. I had strong connections with both my students and their families. Today this isn't the case.

Today because of the numbers simulations are few and far between, many times because of the inability to maneuver that many bodies without injury. Over the last couple years I have also experienced student behaviors escalate during these activities both verbally and physically. For the student with anxiety issues in class these activities might push them over the top, The crowd and the noise that come from this many bodies in one room can push anyone past their noise limit. I have to admit the noise level when you give 40 students a chance to discuss a topic with a peer can even make **me** anxious.

We know that positive connections with teachers is one indicator of student success. After losing a student to suicide last year and also having one student attempt suicide I know now more than ever and realize the power of the connection between a child and their teacher. This was one of the main reasons I became a teacher, to foster those connections. Today these connections are very difficult to make in a class of 40 or with 282 students especially when your teachers are anxious just because of the total volume of students. Middle school is a difficult time for most kids these relationships are important but when I have to buy a microphone out of my own pocket in the hope that the all students in my class will hear me and those in the front won't think I'm yelling at them this is unacceptable. Both students and educators want connections with each other. We need smaller classes to make these connections. We should have time to provide feedback to each child, during class time and not ask them to come before or after school so we can talk to them 1:1.

The reality is that students today are surviving not thriving in a class of 40. The students with the need for more teacher check in's for ADD, ADHD, Reading and Writing disabilities, Anxiety disorders etc. are not surviving. Relationships that I once formed with students are now a struggle. I have to admit after a long break when we return I forget some students names, this doesn't make the student feel valued or cared for and as an educator who does care, this breaks my heart. I believe that we as educators and community members wish for all students to be thriving not just surviving.

So what does 40 mean in numbers? It means your child in my classroom of 40 with a 70 min class period, if I divided my time equally among them and didn't actually instruct them in any lesson, your child would get 2 minutes and 15 seconds of my time. Although 15 seconds of that time might be me asking, "remind me what's your name again?". Connections matter and with these numbers all children, mine and yours are missing them.

The last two years my district took a step in the right direction when a schedule change at the middle schools in North Clackamas pushed many Social Science and Elective teachers numbers higher than they have ever been in the district. Class size and loads was negotiated and a MOA/MOU was agreed upon this at least helped me with compensation or time out of the classroom to grade the work of my 256 students. This year my numbers are greater but the MOA/MOU was not bargained for in our last contract. Is this the status quo? Is it ok to keep adding more students to classes and teachers loads? I hope you can see the answer is No

for my kids sake and for the all the students of Oregon this topic can't continue to be pushed under the rug when so much is tied to class size and class load.

Thank you for your time.