



**Coalition
for the
Common
Good**

Testimony to the Joint Committee On Student Success Subcommittee On Revenue

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Dear Co-Chair Hass, Co-Chair Nathanson and Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success Subcommittee on Revenue,

For the record, my name is Trent Lutz, I am the Assistant Executive Director of Public Affairs with the Oregon Education Association.

The Oregon Education Association represents over 45,000 educators who serve more than 600,000 Oregon students. Our members include teachers, specialists, support staff, custodians, bus drivers, and community college faculty and staff from across the state.

I am here testifying because Oregon's classrooms are in crisis and we have an opportunity to improve conditions for our students this year.

Decades of disinvestment in education have resulted in unacceptable learning conditions for Oregon students. Oregon has one of the largest average class sizes in the nation, one of the lowest graduation rates in the nation, and one of the shortest school years in the nation. Students in our public schools face challenging learning conditions because there aren't enough resources, and the ratios and caseloads for school counselors and psychologists are much higher than recommended. Funding for career and technical education, art, music, and physical education are limited and programs have been cut at every level from early childhood to higher education.

Over the past three years, educators have shared more and more stories about extreme behaviors in Oregon schools. Student needs are going unmet and educators cannot provide safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environments for all with the resources they have. We're calling this issue "disrupted learning."

With such large class sizes and teachers stretched thin, without school psychologists, instructional assistants, and other supports, our students are falling through the cracks despite educators' very best efforts.

We know that in order to better serve all of our students, we need more resources.

We must increase onsite student supports, reduce class sizes and caseloads, and fully fund high quality professional development. None of these are easy fixes, and all require funding and systemic changes to education. But they are critically important to address disrupted learning.

Ultimately, Oregon's students pay the price of disinvestment.

That is why earlier this week, more than 4,500 educators, public school families, and advocates packed the State Capitol at the March for our Students to demand we address the issues facing Oregon students and increase school funding.

We all believe it's time for Oregonians to come together with new approaches to solve the entrenched, systemic issues at the root of this issue. The changes enacted must also move us away from former inequities and disproportionate impacts on students of color, students identified for special education and other historically underserved students.

We applaud the hard work of this committee and your bold action to address revenue reform.

To address the needs of our students and fully fund our schools following three decades of disinvestment, we believe that any revenue package passed by this committee should accomplish two things:

First, Oregon must make significant investment in the "billions" to fund education. This committee has spent hundreds of collective hours listening to students, parents and educators and have come up with a list of proposals that would cost well over \$3 billion.

Second, funds raised by a new revenue package must be tied to specific investments in education programs that we know our communities desperately need. Dollars need to go directly to Oregon classrooms so they can have an immediate and positive impact on reducing class sizes, adding supports and services for students, and restoring programs that have been cut.

The Oregon Education Association is a member of the Coalition for the Common Good because past attempts to solve some of Oregon's most pressing problems have not brought forth adequate solutions. For decades, our schools and essential public services have lacked adequate investments. The status quo in Oregon is both unacceptable and untenable.

We believe this Legislature is the right place for this inclusive, robust and critical conversation, and we are eager to work in partnership with this committee, leaders from across the state and our partners in the Coalition for the Common Good to make meaningful investments in Oregon's future.

Thank you.