



Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
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3/7/2019

TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education
FR: Craig Hawkins, Executive Director - COSA
RE: Testimony regarding HB 5015 and HB 5016

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Committee

During the 2019 session, for the first time in the nearly three decades since the passage of Measure 5 in 1990, the Oregon Legislature has the opportunity to seize on a convergence of once-in-a-generation conditions and make a transformational investment in our students, our schools, and the future prosperity of Oregonians. This is an opportunity that cannot be missed.

Thanks to a strong economy and Legislative foresight in forming the Joint Committee on Student Success, you now have a clear pathway to the K-12 investments needed to overcome decades of inadequate and unstable school funding and address Oregonians' top priority – high quality public schools. More importantly, you will be empowering our members to deliver on what Oregonians want for our students and their schools: higher graduation rates ... smaller class sizes ... greater student engagement ... culturally-responsive teaching ... supports to meet the needs of historically underserved students ... a more well-rounded education with art, PE and music and many other electives and opportunities ... safe and welcoming schools ... more learning time ... and more counselors, nurses and mental health specialists to support the needs of students.

We are committed to improving outcomes for each and every student we serve. But we need your help. We urge you to start the K-12 funding conversation at the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) level of \$8.97 billion for the State School Fund (SSF). The Current Service Level (CSL) calculation of \$8.77 billion is a cuts budget for K-12 and does not capture all our PERS costs or reflect the fact that school districts have year over year cost increases that must be addressed. The Governor's budget includes final PERS costs, adjusts for year over year cost increases, and explains why \$8.97 billion is the appropriate starting point for K-12 funding. From the GRB:

"The budget exceeds the \$8.771 million Current Service Level budget for the SSF...it adds \$15.7 million for final net PERS rates and an additional \$21.6 million for final gross PERS rates to the Current Service Level. Also, the 2017-19 budget was equally divided between the two years, and the 2019-21 Governor's budget acts as if it were unequally divided with the second year funded at 51 percent, not 50 percent. This results in an additional \$163.5 million."

Reducing the GRB's State School Fund allocation by \$200 million is the equivalent to cutting four days from the school calendar statewide or laying off over 900 teachers during the 2019-20 school year. In fact, a State School Fund budget of \$8.77 billion will ensure that many school districts across Oregon will begin sending out layoff notices in March (as required by law), and local Budget Committees will begin the painful process of planning cuts to staffing, programs and school days for 2019-20.

In Oregon's three largest districts the \$8.77 billion is actually a significant budget cut: \$15.2 million for Portland Public Schools, \$14 million for Beaverton, and \$14 million for Salem-Keizer during the 2019-21 biennium. And in many of the districts you represent, this would have significant impacts, including these projected budget reductions:

- Siuslaw School District - \$300,000 reduction in 2019-20
- Coos Bay - \$440,000 reduction in 2019-20
- Forest Grove - \$2 million reduction in 2019-20
- Central School District - \$500,000 reduction in 2019-20
- North Clackamas School District - \$2.8 million reduction in 2019-20
- Canby - \$750,000 reduction in 2019-20
- Lincoln County - \$490,000 reduction in 2019-20
- Sheridan - \$340,000 reduction in 2019-20

We know that you face tremendous fiscal challenges across the state budget. And many of those programs serve our most vulnerable students. But immediate cuts to K-12 will detract from the focus and collaboration needed to pass a revenue package that will help shore up budgets for vital public services across the board.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the Governor's K-12 budget recommendation of \$8.97 billion for the State School Fund and \$170 million for Measure 98 is the beginning point for 2019 budget discussions. And, more importantly, we stand ready to partner, assist and support your efforts to make long-term investments in our students and schools.

Additionally, we urge you to:

- Restore approximately \$6 million in budget reductions to Regional Programs that serve students who are deaf, blind, have traumatic brain injuries and other low incidence disabilities, and
- Invest \$75 million in our Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) programs to ensure there are adequate resources to serve our most vulnerable students and families from birth to age 5.