

DATE: April 10, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Arnie Roblan, The Honorable Representative Barbara Smith
Warner Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Student Success
Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success

FROM: Carol Greenough, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: HB 2019

Dear Members of Joint Committee on Student Success,

First, thank you for the time and thought you have devoted to this process. If we pull this off, generations of Oregonians will owe you thanks.

As a clinical psychologist who worked in K-12 in a number of school districts in Oregon and as mother and mother-in-law to current teachers, I can speak to the change we have seen in the demands placed on teachers and school systems since measure 5 and to the increasing need for schools to be places of respite and healing in a difficult world. But you are hearing a lot about that.

Instead, I want to talk about my concerns about the training and resilience of our teachers. I think the plan that you have crafted is a masterful response to the volume of information you gathered from around the state about school needs. But, none of it will work if we don't have a strong cadre of thoughtful, respected, well trained and supported teachers. I fear the business community's current devil's bargain of possibly offering support for some increased revenue only if it is predicated on reducing teacher compensation is a slap at the very people we most need to support.

At every level, from the early childhood educator to the adjunct faculty teaching in University education programs we fail to compensate educators sufficiently. We are fortunate to have many good people working as educators. They go into education because it is a passion, not because it is a good way to make money. But, without the respect that fair pay reflects and the possibility to go home at night and not worry about the future, it is hard to maintain this passion in the face of the massive demands placed on teachers.

Oregon has historically paid its public school teachers fairly well, but only in contrast to the low pay scales of other states. I know that this is going a little beyond your current focus, but I urge you to actively repudiate the idea that our current educators are the key to solving the PERS issue, and emphasize the role that teacher support - in the form of both compensation and respect - plays in crafting a successful school system.

Thank you again for your service and attention,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.