



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Education Center
520 N.W. Wall Street
Bend, Oregon 97703-2699

April 11, 2019

Honorable Senators and Representatives:

Thank you for taking up the vital task of improving Oregon's public schools. Your visits to schools, conversations with countless individuals and groups, and public hearings have no doubt given you a good understanding of the challenges we face in K-12 education.

As elected members of the Bend-La Pine school board, we work daily to advocate for the students of our district. We can think of no greater cause to champion, but we are frustrated. Each day, over 18,000 children come to our classrooms to learn and grow. Students' academic requirements are a primary focus, but there are many other needs. Our district is actively working to improve physical security at our school facilities. We are deeply concerned about mental health challenges and youth suicide. We know many teachers experience disruptive behaviors in their classrooms daily.

With these demands in mind and despite a healthy economy, Oregon's investment in K-12 education continues to be anemic. We plead with you to make an immediate, permanent investment in our greatest resource: Our future. It's no exaggeration to say the need is urgent. A growing number of students have behavioral health challenges, traumatic experiences, disconnection, and learning barriers. They need more adults to teach, inspire, and connect with them. Oregon will not thrive in the future if our children are continually under-served.

The co-chairs' proposed budget, while more money than allocated in the last biennium, is a cuts budget, with most of the increase erased by costs we do not control. We strongly urge your support of the Student Success Act. This bill would finally allow us to invest in programs and personnel that will improve the way we serve and prepare our students to becoming thriving Oregonians.

Please be aggressive in funding education. We expect that you will insist on high standards, efficiencies and results; we want that, too. Our students must have funding that we can rely upon now and for the future. Vote yes on HB 2019.

Sincerely,

Andy High, Board Chair

Ron Gallinat

Peggy Kinkade

Dr. Stuart Young

Julie Craig

Carrie Douglass