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Subject: SUPPORT for HB 3427
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Please include these comments in the official record for HB 3427

Good evening! My name is Kristen Croft. I work in the Beaverton School District, where we educate over 40,000 students. I spent 8 years as a special ed assistant, and now I work in the special ed office processing paperwork. I am also the OSEA, Oregon School Employees Association Beaverton Chapter President. OSEA represents educators in classified positions—secretaries, assistants, custodians, bus drivers, and nutrition services workers, to name a few.

I have spent time in over 30 of our schools, at all grade levels, district-wide in specialized programs, as well as the mainstream setting. I have seen a lot.

The numbers of students coming in with social, emotional, behavioral difficulties are only increasing, as is the amount and level of academic material students are required to learn. Students are entering the school system unprepared for what is expected of them. This combination is a recipe for disaster—students disengaging, outbursts, and aggression—which leads to disrupted learning, and dangerous situations.

We need increased funding—class sizes are too high to provide students with the education and support needed to meet standards. Educators need more training to better support students in an environment that is constantly changing with ever evolving student needs. Students need to feel safe at school, and so do we.

The system is crumbling. We have to wake up and realize that we cannot achieve more with less!

Next year I will be starting my career as a teacher. I'm going in knowing the challenges I will face, because like so many others I understand that students need us to continue to believe in them. To quote Whitney Houston, "I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way."

Educators show students every day that they believe in them, and their future. Will you?

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*"We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give."*

-Winston Churchill

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