

To Our Legislature Committee,

My name is Megan Schmidt and I am a high school counselor. My passion in life, based on my up-bringing, has always been to help young minds develop into the adults that they have dreams to be. This sounds idealistic, but what true educator isn't. I, first, want to comment on the 2012-13 school year.

I was an intern counselor, just finishing up her master's degree. My first experience in a middle school when the major cuts happened. My office was next to a math classroom. There is one period that sticks out in my mind. It is 7th period, at the end of a long school day, students are supposed to be learning math, but in a class of 52 students, yes, I said 52, how does anyone expect EVERY student to get the individual attention that they need and how is 1 teacher supposed to do that. Especially in a subject that has one of the highest Fail rates in high school. How do we expect, as the adults that are paying taxes and making these big decisions, to have these students find themselves, learn their academics and grow into their best selves? Those students graduated last year and they are going on to great things, however, what could they have become if they would have had even the slightest amount of more attention, concern, and care by adult individuals in the school? It is not that the adults didn't WANT to give that, but how is one single teacher EXPECTED to do that? The weight of a child's growth is extreme and if we are good educators, we take their growth personally.

I work at Mountainside High School, we are the brand new high school in Beaverton. I was also on the planning team. So, I take our school personally. I love my school. I love that my students are comfortable coming to the counselors and confiding in us about their struggles both personally and academically. We have been able in the last two years gain the trust of students, families, and educators that we have been able to bring into our school. Our school has heart! A part of our heart is the teachers that we have been able to bring on board. Unfortunately for us, a lot of them are brand new teachers. They will be the first to have to leave us because for some reason Oregon isn't consistent with their investments in our youth. I guess I truly just don't understand that. You, me, and everyone else on this earth were once STUDENTS. To make it even more obvious, we were once TEENAGERS! Let's not get started with all the support that our teens need. They are growing in a world that has the same issues that we did and then add the weight of the world through social media.

I will not go through all of the specifics because we all are aware. I just plead with you that our kids KNOW what is happening and they KNOW that money, in education at least, means that the people CARE about them and their future. Do we want them to invest in the next generation? We should do the same for them.

Please provide the resources in new teachers, relationships, mental health and everything that our schools should offer to each and every student...EVERY YEAR!

Sincerely,
Megan Schmidt