

To whom it may concern:

The good old days weren't always good, but class size, enough teachers to staff enough class sections, safe school environments, etc. were definitely good. Over 23 years of high school classroom teaching I have seen the systematic starvation of public education. The effects of this malnourishment have been felt by parents, admissions officers, employers, and the children now being raised by my former students from only a few years ago. Like anything lacking proper funding, public education has been weakened and the negative results are used by those who would weaken it further using flawed logic: it's weak and terrible, so let's withhold the money until they "show us results." This is like starving an athlete, compelling him to compete, and then punishing the athlete with continued starvation after a poor performance. I have seen a massive shift in my job description from yesteryear. I am not only to do everything a teacher traditionally does, but I also have to receive and apply new trainings in culturally responsive teaching, student engagement, Erin's Law, copywrite infringement, inclusion, establishing relationships with students, and all forms of bias to name a handful of extras. Though I do not have first-hand experience with this last example, it is perhaps the biggest add-on in recent years: expectation that all districts will have kindergarten and pre-K programs while not receiving adequate funding to make that happen. Again, I'll be the first to acknowledge that these shifts are all necessary; however, they should be funded as they are adopted rather than being placed on our backs along with everything else we shoulder without adequate additional funding to ensure that original job foci (planning academic instruction, teaching, grading, reading, writing letters of recommendation, communicating with admin and parents, planning and helping to administer state mandated testing, and collaborating with colleagues.)

All aspects of our students suffer from a lack of funding. On a human resource front, there are loads of deficits that directly impact student safety on campus. From loss of individual contact with adults because of class size and counselor case-load, to bullying and harassment that go unnoticed due to the sheer number of students in a hallway, classroom, or cafeteria, to a complete lack of student discipline because we can't staff enough discipline managers to maintain and enforce a student code of conduct, we lose the battle every day to maintain a healthy school climate – the number one deterrent of school violence. On a materialistic front, I have to buy paper, pencils, notebooks, post-it notes, pens, staples, etc. every year just to keep my students working and moving forward while being able to write off a pittance in personal income taxes, and while Nike, Intel, Genentech, etc. enjoyed almost zero tax this year, I wound up paying \$500 in taxes to the state of Oregon. So, let's review: I teach for significantly lower wages than peers with the same or less education, training, and expertise in their fields; I go unemployed during summer (no chance to annualize my earning potential); spend hundreds of dollars on my students during each school year and hundreds more on Tax Day. Can you see why I am *Red for Ed.*?

Let's be clear, a better educated population is healthier, happier, and more productive. This is the return on fully funding education. The most important investment you can make – and in fact the most important retirement benefit that anyone could make when facing down

supporting the remainder of the baby boomer generation through state and federal taxation – will be fully funding education in the State of Oregon *now* to increase tax revenue. I appreciate your time in listening, but you'll get my vote and my vocal support (in addition to my appreciation) when you help to end the slow starving of public education in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Mario Ferrito