



From the Desk of  
Rep. Margaret Doherty

*Margaret Doherty*

## Thank you for Supporting HB 5016 and HB 5047 to Edge Ever Closer to Fully Funding our Schools

OEA's 46,000 members are eager to see the K-12 budget and the HB 3427 companion budget for public education before you today. Thank you all for the work you are doing to ensure that our students, no matter their zip code or challenges, are well-served.

The QEM tells us that the State School Fund should be set at **\$10.7 billion** for the next biennium. Between the resources in HB 5016 and those allocated to K12 from HB 5047, the coming biennium will be just 9 percent away from that mark. Once the Student Success Act is fully operational, the biennial totals will get the K-12 budget to 97% of the QEM. For that, you will finally pay for full-day Kindergarten statewide. You will enable overcrowded classrooms to be much smaller. Our districts could restore the corps of elementary teacher librarians decimated in the last recession. This budget could enable districts to include extra staffing for our many students in trauma; provide a richer, more varied set of curriculum offerings – especially in rural districts; bring down caseloads for specialists such as counselors and social workers; and hire enough school nurses so that students once again are lucky enough to have a nurse in every school. For struggling students, districts could provide targeted help and summer learning. And the list goes on. While our state metrics of “accountability” and “student achievement” lag behind expectation, they have still outperformed the level that past investments have purchased. Imagine what our schools could do if adequately funded!

Because more than 50 percent of our students are from low-income households, because too many come to school bearing the weight of childhood distress, and because our hopes and dreams for them are nevertheless high, we are deeply appreciative of the Ways and Means legislators who found a way to add \$230 million to their initial State School Fund framework. The \$9 billion investment approaches current-service-level and will avoid painful cuts in most (but not all) districts.

Last week, many thousands of our members, along with parents, communities of color, and other allies, rallied and marched for our students during the May 8 Day of Action. There were 95 events held around the state, and the largest one, in Portland, drew a crowd of 25,000 people. We are part of the Red for Ed movement whose message to you is “It is the Students’ Turn Now”.

On behalf of these students, from preschool through the twelfth grade, thank you for investing in their futures. Vote **YES** for HB 5016 and HB 5047.



5/13/19