

Thank you, Co-Chairs, Senator Frederick, Representative McLain and Committee Members.

For the Record I am Mary Botkin, Director at Multnomah Education Service District, Position 3, Zone 2.

I am here today to ask that you consider a higher funding level that will more adequately meet the needs of our students in the Juvenile Justice system.

These students are the faces that elected officials like to talk about being in the School to Prison Pipeline. The pipeline that we all want to disrupt and, in time, eliminate completely.

I think it is important that you understand who these students are, what they face daily, and how we can work together to change their future.

These students come from a variety of backgrounds but most have several things in common:

- Poverty. Not the kind where you can't pay the phone bill. But the kind that leaves you with no food, no shoes that fit, no winter coat and worse no alternatives and no future.
- Homeless. The new term is Houseless. We use that term today because home may be a tent along the freeway, or shopping center, or in a car parked by a neighborhood park. Worse, it may just be the covered doorway of a business or the street corner.
- Trauma, brought on by domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol, mental instability, physical abuse or emotional turmoil and physical limitations.
- Gang activity, street crimes, gun violence or other harmful activities that led to involvement with law enforcement.
- The lack of strong leadership from an unstable home life or a lack of family intervention.
- These students are bright, resourceful, and gifted.

There are as many reasons as there are victims in and of the Juvenile Justice System.

The important question I and others like me have is not, WHY? It is, what now?? How can we save this young life? And, how can we make better decisions and provide choices that will turn these lives around.

At MESD we do this through our education programs. We provide educational services to students who have found themselves in the Juvenile Justice System, with counties and the Oregon Youth Authority, through YCEP and JDEP. Whether the student is housed at a local facility like Donald E Long or with the Oregon Youth Authority facilities we are the 2nd Chance Educational System for these students.

Our staff is amazing and resilient. They make meaningful changes everyday for students who had no future other than the prison system. We channel these students into an educational environment that makes no judgements on who they were. We simply look at and celebrate who they can be.

Our problem is simple. We just don't have adequate resources to do the things that need to be done for every student in our system. We need to be able to provide individualized programs that guarantee safety for the student, other students, and staff in order to achieve success for students.