

4-17-21

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Johnson, Rayfield, Steiner-Hayward and Members of the Committee,

My name is Heidi Sipe and I am the Superintendent of the Umatilla District. I am asking you to increase the State School Fund budget to \$9.6 billion.

A \$9.1 billion State School Fund forces tough budget reductions in a time when we need to be bringing forth the best opportunities for Oregon's students. In Umatilla, the difference between \$9.1 and \$9.6 billion is roughly \$500,000 or five teachers. Our staff have worked tirelessly since the start of the pandemic to protect learning opportunities for Umatilla students. We cannot consider doing less for our valuable, and vulnerable, students when Oregon is capable of more.

With the investment you've committed to summer learning, our District has launched plans for a six week summer school. At the elementary and middle levels, it will be a "screen free" experience intended to help students reignite their love of learning and build skills in a classroom setting after months of distance learning. We're combining that with day camp experiences and after-school care to provide opportunities for students from 7:30 am- 7 pm, Monday-Friday. High school students will have credit recovery as well as paid and unpaid internships available to help them graduate, and soar, after graduation. To pull this off, we've leveraged the funds you've committed with other sources. We're excited about the opportunity to help students reconnect with school and hopefully rediscover their love of learning. These opportunities would not be possible without funding.

Recovering from unfinished learning caused by the pandemic will not be possible in a few short months, we have to think forward into how we can reset the trajectories for students and build skills over a period of years so they can heal from their traumas, and receive accelerated and supportive learning opportunities to ensure they can graduate ready for successful futures. Budget cuts are not the way to start this rebuilding process.

The State School Fund is a promise to Oregon's future and we need to ensure we can continue to move forward, and not step backward, on funding for Oregon's schools. Thank you for your consideration of a \$9.6 billion base for education and your dedication to Oregonians.