

April 13, 2021

TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

FR: David Parker, Superintendent of the Forest Grove School District

RE: Testimony Supporting a State School Fund at 9.6 Billion

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner-Howard, Co-Chair Rayfield and all the members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. My name is David Parker and I am the Superintendent of the Forest Grove School District. I am writing here today to provide support for raising the state school fund to an amount that is at least at the current service level for most school districts in Oregon. That amount is currently 9.6 billion dollars as calculated by OASBO and COSA.

However, before I get there, I do want to say thanks for the unprecedented support the Oregon Legislature has been bestowing on K-12 education. The full funding of Measure 98 and the Student Success Act have brought an excitement and some optimism about how we may be able to evolve our educational system to better serve our students. We are incredibly excited to begin to implement these plans. While the pandemic has slowed this implementation, we are now poised to enact some real change. Your support is what has created this opportunity for us.

With this optimism, came the announcement of the Governor's Budget and the Co-Chairs budget of a State School Fund at 9.1 Billion dollars. This is 500 million dollars short of what school districts need to maintain their current service level. In the Forest Grove School District, a 9.1 billion SSF will mean a 1.3-million-dollar deficit in our operating budget. This will mean either a cut of 11 staff, or 6 school days, neither of which we can afford as we return from the pandemic.



As I have talked with legislators, many have mentioned the unprecedented support from federal stimulus monies, Measure 98 and the Student Success Act and that we have received enough money to solve these problems. The overall amount of money is enough to solve these problems, however, fully funding the current service level of the State School Fund has to be your highest priority. Not fully funding the State School Fund first, will in the end mean that eventually the grant funds will go away, and we will be cutting staff and school days from the school year, which is exactly what you should be avoiding right now.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of funding the State School Fund at 9.6 billion dollars.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Parker".

Dave Parker
Superintendent
Forest Grove School District
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