



Oregon School Employees Association

www.osea.org

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Senator Michael Dembrow
Representative Courtney Neron
Oregon Educator Wage Task Force

Co-Chairs Sen. Dembrow and Rep. Neron and members of the Joint Task Force on Statewide Educator Salary Schedules,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the interim report of the Oregon Educator Wage Task Force. I appreciate the time and resources the task force has invested to figure out how to improve the quality of state educator salaries and benefits so that, together, we can help educators afford to do the work they love – helping Oregon students learn.

On behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), a union representing more than 24,000 education employees across the state, I would like to say we are deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the state conversation about educator salaries.

When this task force was convened from Senate Bill (SB) 283, the conversation began with an acknowledgement that classified school employees are underpaid for the important work we do to keep our schools safe and functioning. I understood the group's intent was to investigate the benefits and challenges associated with creating better wages for licensed and classified educators, including the establishment of minimum wage floors for education workers who do a diverse range of jobs. OSEA supports the creation of a wage floor for classified employees. Our members work hard every day to create a safe and secure learning environment for our children, but many receive fewer benefits and are paid less than they would working in a fast-food restaurant. We applaud the state's goal to meet the needs of the education workforce in a comprehensive way that includes both licensed and classified educators.

However, given the information currently available to us, OSEA cannot support a shift to statewide collective bargaining for the workers we represent. Each of our chapters has autonomy. They bargain their own contracts, allowing workers on the ground to directly negotiate with their employer based on their specific needs. We cannot support any proposal that would undermine our collective bargaining power.

Furthermore, we are concerned that moving to a statewide bargaining model is a massive, sweeping change. It would take an immense level of time and effort to enact, with little relief in the short term to education employees – including those in critical positions Oregon school districts currently struggle to staff. In the long-term, we see little protections against future administrations eroding the good work being established now.

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the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*





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We remain hopeful that the task force will take a closer look at more areas of common interest, including re-examining cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) calculations and investing in early career pay raises. We are grateful to have a voice in this discussion and we appreciate all the hard work legislators, task force members and legislative staff have put into this task force and the interim report. However, the responsibility of having a voice at this table means we must reflect the concerns of our members, who are proud to negotiate their own contracts in their districts.

In solidarity with OSEA members, I oppose statewide bargaining for classified school employees at this time.

Thank you,

Sarah Wofford
OSEA State President

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