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To: House Committee on Education  
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist  
Re: House Bill 2739  
Date: January 25, 2023

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson, members of the committee:

On behalf of the OSBA membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2739.

The level of funding for Oregon’s primary and secondary public education system is the single largest allocation that the state makes every biennium. The \$9.3 billion allocation for the 2021-23 biennium is approximately two-thirds of all funding for public K-12 education in Oregon. The Legislature assumed the responsibility of primary funder of public education in the 1990s, and that legislative responsibility remains into the present day.

The way the state and advocates talk about education funding, and the calculation of the base amount of money to continue operations from one biennium to the next, is the calculation of Current Service Level (CSL). And the CSL calculation process, over the past few years, has been fractured. The reasons for the fracture are, essentially, differences of information between assumptions used by state budget writers, and the actual costs experienced by school differences.

None of this is to detract from the hard work of budget professionals. They work hard in the system they have inherited and deserve to be applauded. However, the process could be better. This is crucial because a CSL calculation that does not accurately reflect school costs does harm not just to the budget process, but also to Oregon’s students. Students, and the public, should be able to trust that the starting point for discussions on school costs is based on best information, delivered as accurately as possible.

HB 2739 would greatly improve the budget function of creating the CSL every biennium. It would allow for greater transparency across the process and would result in better information arriving at the Legislature.

Please support HB 2739.