



March 14, 2023

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Sosa, and members of the House Committee on Business and Labor:

As the Chief of Human Resources for Portland Public Schools, Oregon's largest school district, I write to ask for your support of House Bill 3205 to ensure that school districts have the necessary tools to attract and retain licensed educators, special education staff, and classified staff.

There has been a historic staffing crisis within Oregon's public schools as our education system continues to reel from the impacts of the pandemic. Portland Public Schools and school districts in rural and urban areas across the state have faced licensed teacher shortages, including special education teachers, along with shortages in administrators, bus drivers, custodians, and auxiliary staff.

Educators and classified staff who are serving in schools right now are working tirelessly on the frontlines to meet the needs of students whose learning was disrupted, who lost loved ones, who have had caregivers who lost their jobs and sources of income, and who all experienced social isolation to some degree over the course of the pandemic.

During the 2021-23 school years, PPS was able to provide every paraeducator, including new employees, a \$3,000 retention bonus, which was funded in part through House Bill 4030 (2022). PPS also provided referral bonuses to employees who referred candidates in specific job classifications during the 21-22 school year. These bonus programs helped our district retain employees and bring on new staff members, reducing many of our vacancies. It also enabled us to serve nearly 6,000 students through our 2022 summer programming.

Schools run on people — teachers and principals, but also bus drivers, custodians, educational assistants and front office workers. When our schools are at full capacity, we are able to support teachers, cultivate stable and healthy learning environments, provide more instructional support to students, and meet students' mental and behavioral health needs.



As we prepare for our summer 2023 programs and for the 2023-24 school year, we ask for your help in making sure that we have every tool available to recruit and retain staff. If we do not get enough staff to support our summer programs, we will not be able to serve all the students who would like to attend. Our ability to staff our programs and schools is directly linked to the quality of education we can provide to students. Please support House Bill 3205. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Reese
Chief of Human Resources