

March 19, 2023

Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon

Re: Opposition to HB 5015 as drafted; Advocating for appropriation of at least \$10.3 billion for State School Fund

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Committee Members,

As the father of a second grader at Faye Wright Elementary in Salem, I am deeply concerned that another funding shortfall for Salem Keizer Public Schools will compound the learning deficits that COVID-19 has already caused for my family. Despite my best efforts over the past three years my daughter is not on track to meet grade-level standards for reading and math.

Additionally, it is clear that Oregon student proficiency in core subjects is broadly in decline from, what I would argue, were already very low proficiency rates (please see below Oregonian article).

"Across grades three through eight, just 39% of students scored as proficient at reading and writing last spring, down from the previous low of 51%, and just 28% scored proficient in math, far below the previous low point of 40%."

<https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2022/09/oregon-students-reading-writing-and-math-skills-plummeted-amid-pandemic-first-scores-since-2019-show.html>

As currently drafted, HB 5015 allocates \$9.9 billion for State School Fund. However, according to a recent Salem Keizer Public Schools (SKPS) presentation, a funding level of \$10.3 billion for the next bienium is necessary to maintain the current service level for SKPS. This is on top of the \$4 million budget short fall that SKPS experienced in 2021-2022 (<https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/budget/adopted-budget/>).

The pandemic, now receding, has broadly left children with educational deficits that will take significant effort and resources to ameliorate. One way SKPS has been attempting to boost educational outcomes for children is through a summer enrichment program. According to Superintendent Christy Perry, SKPS served over 8,000 students with their 2022 summer enrichment program (my own daughter included). This represents a vast expansion in service over what the school district could offer prior to 2021. Superintendent Perry "hopes" to be able to offer such programs broadly in the future. I think broad access to programs like this will give our children a chance to catch up.

The pandemic may be winding down, but the aftermath left is still impacting our children. I urge you to please support funding for public schools that will at least maintain current service levels, and, preferably, fund increases in instructional time.

Thank you for you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

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