

March 27, 2023

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

As the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer of Portland Public Schools, we call on you to allocate \$10.3 Billion to the State School Fund through House Bill 5015.

Since the passage of Measures 5 and 50, insufficient funding for Oregon's schools has produced severe inequalities across our state. This is true for all districts, but large districts like ours at least have a greater variety of funding sources. Insufficient funding leaves thousands of Oregon children without high-quality preschool, well-prepared teachers and support staff, effective learning materials, and safe and healthy facilities. These features are essential for schools to support student success. These investment choices fly in the face of a large body of recent research that shows increasing school funding and strategic investments improve a wide range of student outcomes.

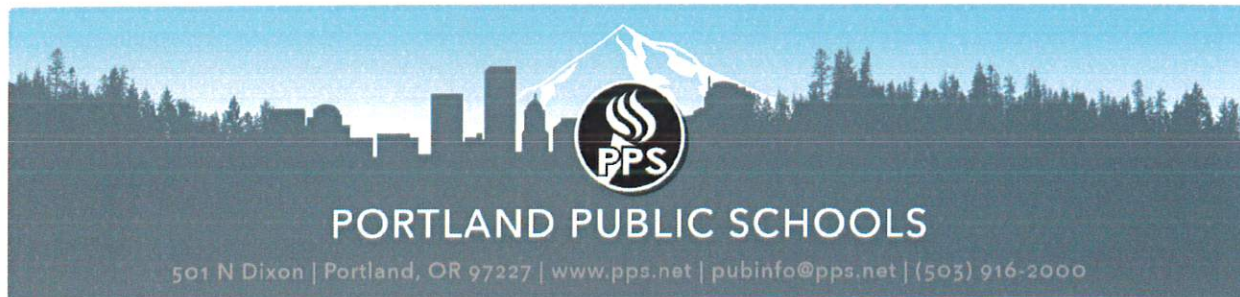
While we commend Governor Kotek and the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for proposing a \$9.9 Billion allocation to the State School Fund, **our students deserve more**. This is especially true as all districts face a triple challenge: one-time pandemic relief funds ending, growing mental and behavioral health needs, and pandemic-related learning gaps that we must close.

For PPS, a \$9.9 billion State School Fund investment over the biennium would represent:

- Roughly 369 teachers or
- 400 social workers or
- 827 Education Assistants

While it's just \$400 million more, a \$10.3 billion State School Fund would, over the biennium, fund:

- Roughly 615 teachers or
- 667 social workers or
- 1,379 educational assistants



We share your concern that money be thoughtfully and equitably spent. At PPS, our investments are aligned with our community's vision for our graduates, our Board's achievement goals, and our thorough strategic plan.

But ensuring that money is spent well and providing enough of it are two different matters. The absence of adequate funding and deep cuts to existing funding leave districts unable to develop or maintain the core elements of a quality education. As a result – and as we are seeing in our state's declining achievement data – Oregon students are shortchanged.

And when children are shortchanged, that decision reverberates. After years of underfunding education, people are leaving public education, our population is declining, our birth rate is dropping, and the number of children is stagnating. If this continues, our state will become undesirable for families. Our small towns know how that story ends, and you don't need to be affiliated with a child-serving entity to realize that is not what we want for our state.

If Oregon does not adequately fund our schools, the fate of another generation of students will be imperiled. The power and decision are yours: ensure schools have adequate funding, shortchange another generation of students.

To us, the choice is clear. You must fund the State School Fund at \$10.3 billion.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Guerrero

Superintendent

Portland Public Schools

Nolberto Delgadillo

Chief Financial Officer

Portland Public Schools