

Submitter: Kendyl Glena
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

As a member of the Oregon School Employees Association, I support quality education for all Oregon's students – from early childhood through K-12 to higher education.

Please prioritize state investment for the following bills under consideration in your committee. Our schools need these funds to support existing programs for students, because they need us now more than ever for their social, emotional, behavioral, physical and academic health.

Classified employees support student needs every day. We deserve basic worker rights - like Just Cause protection, equal access to unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and critical provisions to mitigate on the job injury - including access to individual education plans and de-escalation training. In the final state budget, we need these core policies and investments to provide a quality education experience for all Oregon's students and families every day:

SB 283:

- Just Cause for classified employees (no fiscal impact)
- 20% Salary differential for those classified employees who support special education
- Study on minimum salaries

SB 489: Access to Unemployment Insurance for Classified Employees

HB 5015: Full current-service level K-12 State School Fund investment \$10.3 billion

HB 3198: Culturally appropriate early childhood literacy programing

I would also like to voice some of my own thoughts on these issues:

- Supporting the children is the way we plan for the future. As someone who works in the elementary level, I can see that the kids I am working with HAVE been deeply impacted by Covid, even if for them things like Covid, drills, masks and mental health talk is just a 'normal part of school'. For most of us, it isn't/wasn't and they will grow up with a fundamental part of their growing years been spent outside of school and when they are, seeing the adults around them more stressed than ever before.
- Supporting Classified employees is supporting the kids and the teachers. Without them, the adult:child ratios would be more than double and we are overwhelmed even with who we do have. The children benefit from having more support in and

around the classroom to model behavior, reinforce expectations, and lend an ear when it seems like the teacher can't listen when they have twenty others to take time for. This is just the classroom support, our food service and custodial staff do more than just work, they pour their hearts into caring for the whole child beyond academics.

Taking this support from the schools will weaken the support structures Administrators and teachers have in place to function more smoothly and to have flexibility when more people are out sick, or someone needs to take a mental health day. These employees deserve equal rights to unemployment, insurance and training programs to ensure they are safe at work. The people who go into, and stay in education are not in it for the money, but they do need to survive and it's hard to see my coworkers leave because they can't support themselves as well as they should doing the work that we all know is imperative to our societies growth.

Please consider the 'low level' education staff in upcoming legislation, not just the teachers. And please keep in mind the mental health impact we have all had from the past few years and recognize that many adults didn't do so well-how will our kids with their delicate, moldable brains be able to cope if we can't provide the funding to keep up with their needs?

Thank you for all that you do and for the opportunity to submit my comments.