

Submitter: Jennifer Detrick
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure: HB3221

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Walters and Reschke, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

My name is Jennifer Detrick and I am a parent who had to withdraw a child this year from Daniel Grout Elementary, ultimately due to Portland Public Schools not providing our child a free and appropriate education that he is legally entitled to according to his IEP. PPS has not funded the necessary aides, support staff, small group support that he (and many others) require for progress and the most minimal of success.

Our Special Educators have caseloads that are too high. They are stretched too thin. The tiered intervention system that PPS supposedly has to identify and remediate academic gaps in General Education is negligible at best, considering there are virtually no extra staff or aides hired or available to implement any consistent skill building with our struggling kids. Look at our state scores. Look at our graduation rates. This failure begins in Elementary school.

We are moving out of state. In the Midwestern district that we will be at, the elementary school is slightly smaller than Grout Elementary, but they have AT LEAST 5-6 more aides/para-educators than our current school. PPS must fund more staff.

PPS purchases brand new aspirational curriculums, then does not adequately fund the necessary professional development in order to successfully scaffold the materials for all learners, nor are there any aides or special education personnel with availability to do as the publisher explicitly lays out. For example, PPS paid for only 6 hours of a one time virtual professional development for Wit and Wisdom, a new English Language Arts curriculum which is described as challenging and rigorous. No time or money was available to adapt materials, nor has PPS provided our teachers with the resources to actually implement the publisher's own guidance for struggling learners within this curriculum choice. Our child cried at home over this new curriculum, he fell apart in the classroom daily, where small group learning has not been a logistical possibility and had nightmares over the academic demand as well as some of the content, which he spoke of as grim, dark, and uncomfortable. He is 9 years old.

We have one of the children fallen through the cracks of Portland Public Education, drowning, asked to learn through headphones on a chromebook, because it's

cheaper than the 1:1 student-facing support that he needs to learn in a full classroom and a frazzled educator.

This needs to be fixed. Portland Schools are going to lose quality teachers in these conditions. The teachers we've had, have worked hard and tirelessly, but were unable to support our son to the extent that they aspired to. If these teachers don't get more support, they too, will walk away from PPS.