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On Behalf Of: OSEA  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

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Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
SB 5056 - HB 5015

Good Evening. My name is Danika Van Wagoner and I work as a Behavior Support Specialist in the Corvallis School District. I am here today to talk about what the lack of funding in public elementary schools is going to do to our students and our future.

As a classified employee in our school district, I am here to represent the staff members most impacted by not supporting the \$10.3 billion budget for the State School Fund. In our district there are fifty staff members whose positions will be cut, and I am one of those cuts.

Many more roles in our schools are being cut with staff members being relocated, leaving huge gaps in the structure of our schools. I want you to understand the impact this will have on the lives of our students.

In the course of any given day, a student will interact with many adults beyond just their Classroom Teacher. These adults provide more than just a quick hello or shallow interaction. They fill a wide variety of roles that provide deep and meaningful impacts for our students. There are inclusion assistants who provide instruction for students who have lagging skills, especially as we continue to see the academic deficits post-COVID. These staff members not only provide much needed connections with these students, they help teach them everything from writing their ABCs to reading to math. Students are lost academically without the support of our IAs. In my building alone, we will lose nearly 40 hours a day of IA staffing.

The help our classified employees give go beyond the classroom and academics. As a Behavior Support Specialist, my work continues our effort to support the WHOLE CHILD. In my day I can support anything from helping students work out their friendship issues on the playground, to promoting healthy ways to regulate their minds and bodies in the classroom, to providing crisis support to students when they have become so dysregulated they leave the school building all together. These students lost years of important social and emotional growth during COVID. We have seen an increase in the support that is needed for them. In my building, this position will not exist next year. Who will help these students?

The answer to that is complicated. I know our staff. They will try. And they are

already spread too thin. Classroom teachers can not be expected to do it all. One counselor alone can not help every student that needs help with emotional regulation. Our office staff can't do their job in addition to being the health assistant, and help students with behavior needs when I am not there. The limited time the IAs have left will not provide enough time for students with lagging skills to catch up.

The impact of not supporting the State School Fund so that we can try to meet the QEM, reaches far beyond the fifty people losing their jobs in my district. The impact will be felt for years to come by all of us. Our children are growing up in trauma. Some of them only know what it is to live in a pandemic. They need support and we are barely providing enough now.

Can we find a way to support educators and students? Will you be brave enough to ask the hard questions, do the hard work and fight for our kids' future? Our students need a budget that accurately reflects what is needed so that all students can access their education and THRIVE not just survive.

Thank you.