

Submitter: Andrew Yeoman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

Please remove the cap on this funding. Our neighborhood elementary school in NE Portland has significantly more special needs students now than when this cap was created. The funds to fulfill those responsibilities are now pulled from the school's general fund which diminishes other services.

My second grader had 30 kids in her classroom, with 2 children who have high needs requiring extra staff support most of the day. As a regular parent volunteer, I witnessed the disruption this had on the full class, the teacher, and the individual students with needs. On the days the students did not have extra support, the two students were quite visibly disregulated. This looked like disruptive verbal outbursts, dangerous physical outbursts, and a loss of critical learning time for everyone, not to mention emotional distress. Usually the assistant principal or one of our part-time educational assistants would come to help. However, not only are they not always available because they are putting out proverbial fires everywhere in the school, our EAs have already been cut from our budget next year and our assistant principal position has been cut but reinstated at the last moment each of the last 3 years. If neither of these roles are available, I cannot imagine the scenario a teacher with thirty 7- and 8-year olds would be in when they have a student with additional needs.

This funding cap absolutely must be removed so that services can be provided. This directly impacts the learning environment of every single child in the classroom.