

Submitter: Gina Gray
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3652

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gina Gray, and I am a teacher at Mt. Tabor Middle School in Portland Public Schools. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 3652, which would make class size and caseloads a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in all Oregon schools.

Mt. Tabor has seen significant staff cuts in the past few years. We lost 7 teachers and a half time counselor last year, and this year we are losing another 4.2 FTE directly from our teaching staff. While working at Tabor, I have had multiple classes of up to 40 students every single year. And because of our cuts, I now teach 6th grade Language Arts, 7th grade Math, and 8th grade Leadership. I am stretched thin with all of the planning and grading and intervention of so many subjects and grade levels, and the students are the ones who suffer because of that. This is why people talk about educator burnout. Every year I am expected to produce better and better results with more and more students and much fewer resources. It is an unattainable goal to help all students succeed in these conditions.

Previously, when I worked at a K-8 school teaching 7th and 8th grade, my class sizes hovered around 25-28. I cannot even describe how different the classes were in terms of student success, especially of those students who are just under meeting standards and just under reaching their goals on reading tests. In a class of 40, I have to spend so much time on behavior management and reteaching that I cannot give individual attention to those who need it most, or to anyone, honestly. In a class below 30, the difference is tangible and measurable. My most vulnerable students are hurt the most by large classes, and all students suffer because of lack of attention while too much of my attention is now turned toward behavior.

Our students deserve the best education they can get, and Oregon schools rank very low in the country in class size - we have the 8th highest class sizes in the nation! Everyone suffers because of this: students, teachers, supporting staff, and custodians. This bill ensures class sizes are able to be negotiated. It does not cost money or even require specific caseloads or class sizes, it simply allows for the conversation in fair contract negotiations.

I urge you to please support this bill, for the future of our students and the future of Oregon. Students do not have a chance at strong success without strong schools,

and surveys consistently show that reducing class sizes is a top priority for parents and our community so we can all have a chance at a strong future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gina Gray

Portland Public Schools Teacher