

Submitter: Sarah Wexler
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5516

Dear Oregon Legislature,

Please support SB 5516- State School Fund. I have a first grader in the Portland Public Schools, and I volunteer in class weekly. I see how difficult it is for even the very skilled teachers to manage teaching classes of 26+ students to read, especially including students with special education needs. I grew up in another state (Virginia), and I've been disappointed with the level of school funding in Oregon. Our children deserve better. Without appropriate and adequate support from state funding, our students will continue to miss out on the educations everyone in Oregon deserves.

Adjusted for cost of living, Oregon is 31st in the nation for per-student-funding and Oregon spends \$1700 dollars less per student when compared to states such as Louisiana or West Virginia. [Source: Oregon PTA calculation based on data from the National Center on Education Statistics and the Council for Community and Economic Research]. As student enrollment has dropped and chronic absenteeism has risen, districts' cost per student have increased leaving limited financial room to invest in research-aligned, evidence-based interventions.

The budget proposals for the State School Fund from Governor Kotek and the Co-Chairs of Ways & Means don't invest in schools but rather maintain the inadequate status quo. Two independent groups of experts [Quality Education Commission and the American Institute for Research] have determined that Oregon needs to ****increase**** its school funding to achieve better outcomes for students.

I urge the legislature to give schools and students the resources they need. The current status quo is not working, and our kids deserve better.

Thank you for your attention.