

Chair — members of the committee, my name is Brook Cogan. I am here to ask you to fully fund our public schools. My son, Flynn, is currently a 1st grader at Lewis Elementary in SE Portland. The combination of last year's budget deficit along with declining PPS enrollment caused a huge loss of funding for our school.

As a result, 4 positions were eliminated this school year, including one of our two 1st grade teachers. Flynn, and his classmates went from a kinder class of 14 to a first grade class of 29 students. Walking into his classroom in August to see so many desks stuffed into one classroom was sobering. Kids who previously didn't struggle staying on task in their smaller kindergarten classrooms now have a hard time concentrating and even struggle to hear instructions with the constant hum of activity that so many kids in one classroom naturally creates. While their teacher is wonderful, there are simply too many students in the class for any one teacher to teach.

The cuts didn't stop there. We no longer have a social worker to support our students in need. We no longer have an instructional support specialist to work with students who need extra help to access their education. We no longer have a library assistant to support our librarian with ever-increasing class sizes and literacy needs.

This year, I joined the team of volunteers in the lunchroom to help serve food, clean tables, and open lunchboxes—all small tasks that ensure students are *actually* fed during lunchtime. From the lunchroom to the library, our communities are being asked to provide more time and more money for less student services all while watching staff and teachers be pushed to the brink with increased responsibilities and class sizes. How much more do our students have to lose before you act?

As a voter and a taxpayer in the city of Portland, I want to clearly ask our Senators and Representatives to fully fund public education in Oregon—our future depends on it. Thank you.