



March 27, 2025

Co-Chairs Ruiz and Sollman, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

As the Superintendent and Board of Directors of Portland Public Schools, we call on you to appropriate \$11.4 Billion, as a minimum, to the State School Fund. We also urge you and your colleagues to commit to additional funding for Special Education, Early Literacy, and summer learning this session.

Since the passage of Measures 5 and 50, insufficient funding for Oregon's schools has produced severe inequalities across our state. Insufficient funding leaves far too many Oregon children without well-prepared teachers and support staff, effective learning materials, and safe and healthy facilities. These features are essential for schools to support student success.

While we commend Governor Kotek and the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for proposing over a \$11.36 Billion allocation to the State School Fund, **our students need and deserve more.** This is especially true as all districts face multiple challenges: pandemic relief funds ending, growing mental and behavioral health needs, PERS rate increases, and pandemic-related learning gaps that we must continue to close.

For PPS, a \$11.4 Billion State School Fund investment over the biennium, still means that we are anticipating a budget deficit of \$40 million, which will result in reductions in programs, services, and staff positions.

We share your concern that money be thoughtfully, equitably, and transparently spent. At PPS, our investments are aligned with our community's vision for our graduates, our Board's achievement goals, and our strategic plan.

But ensuring that money is spent well – and providing enough of it – are two different matters. The absence of adequate funding leaves districts unable to develop or maintain the core elements of a quality education. As a result Oregon students are shortchanged.



And when children are shortchanged, that decision reverberates throughout our communities. If the underfunding of education continues, our state will become undesirable for families. Instead, Oregon has an opportunity to reverse these trends by ensuring that all Oregon students have the opportunity and resources to succeed.

Strengthening our public education system also benefits our state's economy by meeting future workforce needs while improving the state's quality of life. Strong schools in Portland will keep and bring more families to Portland. Fully funding education is investing in the future of Oregon.

To us, the choice is clear. The State must fund the State School Fund at a minimum of \$11.4 Billion, lift the 11% cap on Special Education Services, and invest \$750 Million in Special Education Services, \$300 Million in the Early Literacy Initiative, and \$50 Million in Summer Learning programs. We also urge you to modernize the Quality Education Model and commit to funding education at the Quality Education Model (QEM) level to ensure that all students, regardless of zip code, have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive.

Thank you,

Superintendent Kimberlee Armstrong

Chair Eddie Wang

Vice-Chair Michelle DePass

Director Julia Brim-Edwards

Director Gary Hollands

Director Herman Greene

Director Christy Splitt

Director Patte Sullivan

Student Representative JJ Kunsevi