

Submitter: Corey Conant
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Greetings joint chairs and members of the committee, my name is Corey Conant and I have worked in the Warrenton-Hammond School District for 11 years as a High school wrestling and soccer coach, elementary classroom and PE teacher, and a chess club and assembly leader. I also serve as our local education association's co-president. Over the years, I have taught or have coached, most of the student in our small district and I want to express to you how incredibly resilient and tough a group of students they can be. Many students overcome great obstacles just to arrive at school. When they get to school, they deserve to have their school fully funded so that we can do our jobs and they can maximize their learning every day. In recent years, our student population has faced an increasing diversity of learning needs. They are still resilient, but needs are just that. From students requiring specialized support to those dealing with mental health challenges, our teachers and staff are working hard to provide the necessary resources and accommodations and we can't just rely on the kids to stay tough. The challenge of rising demands on our schools is self compounding as funding for special education services are capped but the needs continue to rise, it puts more strain on the teachers, making the job harder, which makes it harder to find teachers and the cycle continues. Additionally, many of our students are dealing with increasing hardships when not at school while Oregon students experience homelessness at a rate of around 4% of the population. In our district, the number is 17%. That's nearly 1 in 5 students, thats more than 150 students, not having their own place to sleep. How can we ask these students to fight that fight at home and then not fully fund our schools and the programs that support them? Our early intervention and special eduaction programs are the backbone of how we reach students with individualized needs. We must fully fund these programs and support our students who so desperately need our support. We can count on our students to be tough but we must also do our part at the state level to give our students the best future possible. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.