

Submitter: Nicole De Lagrave
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Nicole De Lagrave and in addition to being a 5th grade teacher in PPS, in 2024 I had the honor of being named the Regional Teacher of the Year for Multnomah County. Additionally, I am a proud parent to two PPS students who I am privileged enough to have them with me at my small K-5 Elementary school. I am writing today to emphasize the importance of funding our public schools. When I was recognized in my community and nominated for Teacher of the Year, I was really quick to point out that what people were seeing wasn't just me, it was the work of a huge community that helped support my students. You see, being a small K-5 Title 1 school, we were super fortunate to receive additional Federal Funding that as a community we allocated to making sure we had instructional support for reading and math, we had a community agent that connected with our Vietnamese community, we had a bilingual EA, we had kindergarten teachers, we had behavioral support, an AP, and an instructional coach. We also had access to trainings and tools and supports. As a community we were able to do parent outreach and host celebrations that honored our diverse communities. We were able to provide snack and breakfast and lunch to our families. We were able to have mental health supports. We were able to support our students and families as a whole, seeing them as people with complex needs, and not just a number. I received the distinguished honor by the state for work that I could not do alone. I relied heavily on our team to make sure that all of our students had access to the best education and supports that we could possibly provide. We saw so much growth and achievement. Our school continuously spotlighted for these gains. I say this to you today because the proposed budget cuts have forced us to lose classroom teachers, educational assistants, behavior supports, community agents, instructional specialists, para educators, and office staff. Every single position that makes our school thrive, that allows students to flourish and grow and reach their potential, have been cut. The detriment to our community is unmeasurable. We are collectively grieving the implications that these cuts will cause. As lawmakers, who hold the future of Oregon in your hands, I implore you to fully fund Oregon Schools. Please hold corporations to account and make them pay their fair share in taxes so that they can help contribute to the very communities that keep them afloat. Please ensure that the money that is being allocated to schools goes directly to exactly that, the schools and the students and not getting lost in the administrative level. We don't need more or better paid district people. What we need are people in our schools that are ready to put in the hard work, that care about making change, that directly impact student growth. On behalf of my students, my children, my colleagues, and my community, please make sure that schools get fully funded. With respect, Nicole De Lagrave Proud educator, parent, and community member