

April 16, 2025

**Testimony before the Ways and Means Committee
Legislative Policy Committee – District 15, 16, 17
Representing Wa County including: Banks, Gaston, Forest Grove,
Hillsboro, Sherwood, Tigard, Beaverton, and NWRESA**

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Gomberg and Girod, and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means,

Thank you - and your fellow legislators - for your commitment to our students across the state. After watching the entire American Institute of Research presentation to the Joint Committee on Education in February, I had a renewed appreciation for the countless hours our legislators spend on the dais, digesting an impressive amount of data, asking important questions, and doing so in a uniquely stressful legislative session. I am here today to highlight several priorities for our region that speak to the needs of students across the state.

We appreciate your dedication to raising the cap for Special Education funding and for increasing reimbursement costs for High Cost Disability. Were the legislature to fully fund high cost disability, just the Forest Grove School District would receive an estimated **\$2 million which could then be reinvested in the improvement of instruction** and student outcomes. These critical adjustments will significantly enhance the support available to students with diverse needs.

We also appreciate the recognition that the current Current Service Level (CSL) adjustments do not yet address the revenue shortfall impacting our ability to serve all students effectively. To preserve current service levels for students, we have been **deficit spending approximately \$6 million annually** for several years. The initial \$11.36 billion allocation is a significant step toward right-sizing the funding that our students deserve—funding that begins to reflect the high standards we know they can achieve. But like legislators in the Joint Committees on Education learned on February 26th, “It costs more to achieve more.”

We understand that there is no “magic pot of money” to address every need in this legislative session. Oregon never has, and this year is no different, fully funded education. You cannot evaluate the effectiveness of a system until it has been fully supported. We recognize the competing priorities across the state, including essential services like transportation and housing. In light of this, there is a way to make invested dollars go farther and impact students directly in the classroom right now.

Without additional revenue available, it is critical that the legislature ensures we are not burdened with additional financial and administrative mandates that could further erode the resources we are diligently allocating to improve student outcomes.

HB 3365, SB 847, SB 978, HB 3652 and SB 916 are just some of the bills whose impacts would necessitate adjustments to already limited budgets, and this would directly impact student funding and outcomes. HB 3365, for example, will require the purchase of new curricular materials and require time to develop new lesson plans and assessments. SB 916 and HB 3652 have the potential to cripple school districts financially and operations. These are just some of the multiple bills that would **draw resources away from classrooms; they are examples of bad policy.**

Despite the tireless work being done by school districts to stretch limited dollars across a statewide system, our schools will continue to face challenges—and, in many cases, they will remain unable to meet the needs of all students without sustainable and predictable funding, coupled with a larger discussion about the statewide educational systems that need to be modernized. ***Even with the proposed current funding increases, many districts will still experience budget constraints that limit their ability to provide the high-quality education that every student deserves.***

I encourage you to talk directly with your school districts and Superintendents to fully understand the impact of these bills. I am happy to be available to your staff to answer questions or gather information you may need to make sure your decisions are having the intended impact. Thank you again for your leadership and ongoing dedication to Oregon's students.

Kristy Kottkey

Chair, Forest Grove School Board

Legislative Policy Representative Region #15

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