

Submitter: Sheryl Hughes
On Behalf Of: educators
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1507

I am currently working as a special education paraprofessional in the School District. I also have just earned my elementary teaching license (hoping to find a teaching job for the next school year), and a parent of a Freshman in High School. In the last 10 years I have seen significant changes in students and schools. More and more students are experiencing trauma (homelessness, food insecurity, violence, ICE, etc.) , anxiety and depression, and learning disabilities. These issues have a large impact on school attendance, behavior issues, and classroom learning, and as we have witnessed reduced test scores. Compounding these issues is the continual Budget cuts resulting in fewer teachers, larger class sizes, and reduced support services. The elementary school I worked in last year lost 2 teachers, 1 health coach, half a counselor position, to special education assistant, and the wellness center (place where students work in small groups to learn coping skills for dealing with big emotions). They cannot afford to have any more cuts to their budget! The teachers were trained on a new, better math curriculum, but the school district couldn't afford to buy the curriculum. They had 37 students in 6th grade math in a room bursting at the seams! It is not sustainable now. More Budget cuts would be devastating. Our future depends on educated kids and right now we are failing them. Not only do we need to divest from the Federal government tax changes, but we need to find a stable funding base for schools, so teachers and staff can support students' needs. It is worth the investment in Oregon's future!