

February 1, 2019

Members of the House Education Committee:

As a 25-year experienced substitute teacher and tutor for all levels of Kindergarten through twelfth grades, it wasn't until the introduction of the "No Child Left Behind" federal mandate that I noticed a significant difference in our children's enthusiasm for learning. Many students started "falling through the cracks," and it was at this point that I was asked to tutor a number of them, from early elementary to high-school seniors. Many students who were not successful with the tests started giving up, and their loss of self-esteem greatly affected their interest in learning.

Not long ago, in a Kindergarten classroom, two students came up to me at different times during that day and said, "I hate school!" Can you imagine five-year old children hating school when it is such a critical time for them to experience a "love for learning?" It broke my heart, not only to hear their cry, but to see how many other Kindergarteners were struggling with a curriculum that was more advanced than they could handle and how defeated they felt.

I came home and wrote a letter to the superintendent and school board members telling them of my experience that day, and I only received one reply from a member of the board asking for the teacher's name. Can you believe it? As if it were the teacher's fault.

Then last year, my best friend, a Kindergarten teacher of almost 20 years, quit teaching as she could no longer bear the stress that the new requirements had on her students. I also had one Kindergarten teacher exclaim to me, "We are teaching our children to fail at too young of an age."

The state of Oregon has struggled to fund public education far too long, and we always seem to rely on federal funding and assistance from special interests. Teachers who have taught as long as I have can easily see how we have failed our children over the past twenty years. We have gone from one standardized test to another, as well as changing the curriculum over and over again, trying to find an answer to our failing system.

HB 2318 is just the beginning of what needs to be done to strengthen our public education. We need to get back to trusting our teachers. It is they who hold the key to our students' success, not administrators, not board members and not special interests. Teachers see education as a service; these others look at it as a business. Teachers know each of their students and what is best for them.

Please, your support for HB 2318 is critical.

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