

**From:** [kekpdx@everyactioncustom.com](mailto:kekpdx@everyactioncustom.com) on behalf of [Kate Keller](#)  
**To:** [JCSS Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** April 11 Hearing - Supportive testimony for HB 2019  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 9:50:53 AM

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Dear Joint Committee on Student success,

I truly believe in public education. I am a constituent, with two elementary-aged children and a professor at OHSU.

I'm writing today because of the dismal state of the education system in Oregon. There is just no way that our children can be successful at school with the lack of funding from State. Our schools are in crisis and students need you to invest in education this year. This is what my children and students are facing:

1) my sons 4th grade class will have 33 kids next year. Our school (Markham elementary, PPS) recently came off title I funding, yet there was no transition funding and/or additional funds to help such schools. As such, there are not enough funds to support three 4th grade teachers so the Principal made the devastating choice to eliminate one of the 4th grade classrooms. Thus, 33+ kids per class next year.

The school still faces 32% free/reduced lunch, which is 3x the amount of other schools in SW Portland.

Additionally, we are the most diverse school in SW portland with 45% non-white students (2x any other SW school) and have 16% English learners (8x any other SW school). How will you support this school and their vulnerable student population?

2) As a Professor at OHSU, I volunteer to work with local area high school students through a program called Partnership for Scientific Inquiry, which exposes budding scientists to biology and working in a science laboratory. I was horrified last year that many sophomores and juniors in the class had not even had rudimentary biology classes. Due to lack of funding, PPS had made the choice to focus on physics and chemistry for those grades. How is Oregon going to produce the next wave of talented biologists if there is not enough funding to teach fundamentals in High school?

3) I didn't grow up in the US - I grew up in rural Scotland, where many students were economically disadvantaged. We had a class size of 17 - two of us went on to get PhDs and one became a veterinarian. That is the impact of small class sizes. When I moved to the USA, I quickly realized that Oregon students were graduating from college at the same level of biology as I completed in High school. Graduate students spend their first 2 years of grad school learning what I did as an undergraduate. The whole system is broken and without the lack of funds from the State, it will continue to get worse. Think about how your investment in k-12 education could impact college-level kids - if they could graduate sooner, they will graduate with less student debt.

I could go on, but I will leave it here with my strongest hope that you will listen and act to invest in our kids future. My children and students are counting on you.

Sincerely,  
Kate Keller  
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