

Dear Governor Brown, Senator Steiner Hayward, and Representative Helm,

I plead with you to adequately and sustainably fund public pre-K through high school education in Oregon. My three children and the state of Oregon deserve no less. Education funding has major problems in Oregon, and we elected you all as leaders over our state to address these problems.

Beaverton School District (BSD), where my three children receive their education, is in the middle of crafting our 2019-20 school year budget and the choices they must make are simply untenable. They announced today that the BSD is projecting a net deficit of \$35 million dollars, based on a \$8.97 billion state school fund for K-12 schools. This is simply unacceptable and highlights the importance of quickly finding a sustainable legislative solution to education funding in Oregon.

We have been here before and the effects are devastating. My oldest entered first grade in the 2012-13 school year, when BSD last dealt with budget cuts. Ridgewood Elementary School went from three first grade teachers to two and class sizes went from a manageable 24 to an absurd 36. Essential resources were cut. This cannot happen again.

Lack of funding, and cuts such as those experienced six years ago, creates a lack of opportunities for many vulnerable and otherwise middle-class children, it adds to stress for all families, and it gives employers reason to look elsewhere. There is nothing good that comes from inadequate education funding.

I understand that there is currently a bill before the legislature, HB 2019 based on the proposal from the Joint Committee for Student Success, which considers \$2 billion (per biennium) additional investment in education. This proposal would bring greater fairness to the state's tax system while raising additional revenue for schools. It would invest exclusively in pre-K through high school in a targeted way that ensures accountability of resources while protecting the current base. This is potentially a transformative moment for education. Please, legislators, do not let this bill go without it being passed.

I join with the message that Becky Tymchuk & Eric Simpson (Chair & Vice-Chair of the Beaverton School District Board of Directors) in their recent message to you, President Courtney, and Speaker Kotek:

"We ask that you make [HB 2019] a priority and ensure that our students both today and for years to come receive the education they deserve. Our students deserve a robust school year, lower class sizes, and greater diversity of learning options. Our students deserve a system that is funded in such a way as to be able to offer the necessary services and options for kids that will ensure their success in life. We know what can make a difference for kids and with your help we can make that a reality. The proposal from the Joint Committee on Student Success can finally break us from the cycle of cuts we have dealt with for three decades.

We stand ready to support all elected leaders that make the decision to ensure a brighter future with a long-term funding solution for Oregon students. We hope you will all join us in this choice."

Sincerely,

James Franklin Lanford

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