

Dear Joint Committee on Student Success,

Dear Oregon Congresspeople, including the Joint Committee on Student Success:

I once lived in Ecuador, South America and was astounded at the prevalence of private schools in that country. It made me grateful that in Oregon we have such a strong commitment to public education. A commitment to public education is a commitment to equity and the belief that all children, regardless of socioeconomic status, legal status, or status of any kind, deserve a quality education.

It has been over 15 years since I lived in Ecuador and I now have twin, 4th grade daughters in Corvallis, Oregon. I am also a certified teacher and consider myself a steadfast advocate of public education. For this reason, nobody is more surprised and devastated than I am when I confess to you that I have considered pulling my own daughters out of Oregon's public school system.

The class sizes are too large to adequately meet students' academic, social and emotional needs. As a result of crowded classrooms, there is an overdependence on electronic devices. iPads and Chromebooks are a poor proxy for the teacher interaction a student requires for quality learning and individual growth.

Even more concerning is the climate of misbehavior in our schools. The behavior outbursts in the classrooms are more than just disruptive. They are traumatic for all involved, including other students and the teacher. How can students meet their full potentials when classrooms are faced with violence, destruction and room-clears?

Those who don't work in the schools may be unaware, but there is a serious crisis in our Oregon public schools. It has gotten to the point that veteran teachers who LOVE working with students are considering other employment options. The current classroom conditions are stressful and traumatic and we are losing some of our best, most passionate teachers. Teachers are generally a selfless, optimistic group of individuals, but even they have a bottom line for dignity and respect. For the sake of themselves and their own families, teachers can't, and shouldn't be expected to work in these conditions.

For the sake of our students, our teachers, and Oregon's future, please vote Yes for The Student Success Act, HB 3427.

Regards,
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