



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Ways and Means Testimony – Updated from previously submitted version

April 21, 2021

Good evening Co-Chairs Johnson, Rayfield, Steiner-Hayward and Members of the Committee,

My name is Guadalupe Guerrero and I serve as the superintendent for Portland Public Schools, Oregon's largest school district. I am here this evening to urge you to increase the proposed State School Fund to \$9.6 billion to ensure a no-cuts budget for K-12 in the '21-23 biennium.

We were grateful in 2019 when the Legislature passed the Student Success Act, making historic racial-equity centered investments in our students. With authentic community engagement at its core, the Student Success Act was intended to correct decades of disinvestment in our schools with a renewed focus on our most historically underserved students.

And then the pandemic hit, further exacerbating historic inequities, especially in our communities of color. What we know of the social and emotional toll is that it has been devastating for our students, staff, and community, but frankly we are just beginning to understand the magnitude of the impact.

For Portland Public Schools a \$9.1 billion State School Fund appropriation would leave our FY21-22 budget approximately \$22.5 million short of maintaining current services and programs. A \$22.5 million dollar budget reduction is the equivalent of eliminating 214 teaching positions or cutting 6 school days from our district calendar.

The State School Fund is still the foundation of district funding. High School Success and the Student Investment Account are targeted funding streams tied to specific goals. Federal funds allow schools to safely reopen and address the

added costs of operating and supporting students for the next three years. A \$9.1 billion state school fund would mean that our schools would actually receive less state funding next year than we are receiving this year, which is a huge step backward in our ability to serve students and diminishes the impact of the historic, equity focused investments the Legislature has made. We cannot claim to be making progress in addressing inequities if new investments simply replace stable funding.

After a year of closed schools and relying on distance learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that a number of residual impacts will remain. Increasing the State School Fund to \$9.6 billion will ensure that every school district and ESD in Oregon has foundational resources to meet all the complex needs our students will bring with them to our schools and classrooms as we recover from the past year.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Guerrero
Superintendent