



Phoenix-Talent Schools

Excellence For Everyone

April 28, 2021

Hello Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brent Barry; I am the superintendent of Phoenix-Talent Schools, and I'm speaking to you today to provide an update on the impact of the Almeda Fire on the community that we serve, and the needs of our kids, our families and our community as a whole. For this testimony, I will focus my comments on the impact of ADM in our district and the dire need to remain whole in order to serve our kids and families.

I want to start with the reality for our families: more than 480 families who care for over 700 students in our district lost their homes. Those families have scattered to find support wherever they can: locally, that means many are now living with one, two, or even three other families at a single residence. OR they may be in an RV or Trailer that was generously donated OR they may be still in hotels. For others, their only available support is found out of the area, meaning a complete uprooting of their family. This is heartbreaking on many levels. We ask for the 3 districts impacted by fire, remain whole for a 5 year period, based on 2019-20 ADM numbers. This will allow our community to support students and families, remain consistent with staffing/programs and allow for more individualized academic/socio-emotional interventions.

There is no question, the past year has reiterated the fact that public schools are the centerpiece to communities throughout our region. This was never more evident than the hours after the devastating Almeda fire on September 8th, where we witnessed school personnel (and many others) provide outreach to fire victims who lost everything, staff connecting with every one of our students and asking questions of basic needs and this support continues every day, in helping families navigate housing challenges and providing a safe, enriching learning environment with many programs. In November of 2017, this community invested in the future of this district with the passage of a \$68 million dollar bond, and the state of the art project and facilities are nearly complete! In order for us to continue this support and not to allow the Almeda fire to traumatize our community for a 2nd time by eliminating staff, programs and/or school days , ADM security is vital.

We understand you have tough decisions you all have to make when it comes to serving all Oregonians and we thank you for your diligence in this process. For Phoenix-Talent schools, ADM security over the next 5 years will allow us to respond, recover and be fiscally responsive to our reality of the current housing challenge.

Grateful for the opportunity to share,
Brent Barry, Superintendent
Phoenix-Talent Schools

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