



## Oregon School Employees Association

www.osea.org

State Office: 4735 Liberty Rd S, Salem, OR 97302-5036

P: 800/252-6732, 503/588-0121 F: 503/588-8307

January 31, 2023

Senate Committee on Education

Sen. Michael Dembrow, Chair

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express strong support for Senate Bill (SB) 521 on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). As you know, OSEA represents more than 23,000 professional classified workers in all 36 Oregon counties and in nearly all levels of Oregon public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, ESDs, community colleges and special districts. As professionals and educators, OSEA members perform many of the vital duties daily that keep Oregon public schools safe and functional for students, administrators and teachers.

Oregonians have weighed in that the "Corporate Kicker" tax credits that used to go to corporate taxpayers are better invested in the education of Oregon's future workers and consumers. Unfortunately, because of misalignment between statutory and constitutional language, it's possible to follow the letter of the law without fulfilling its spirit. We've seen that on occasion, where a legislative choice has been made to use corporate kicker revenue *in lieu of* General Fund support for the State School Fund. This leaves Oregon's schools with no net gain, despite the Oregon Constitution saying, "additional funding for public education, kindergarten through twelfth grade."

SB 521 resolves this historic gap by matching statute to the constitutional language. That clarity will ensure that Oregonians know with confidence that the Legislature is acting as they directed. It's worth noting that identifying this as additional funding, as voters already have, is not any kind of windfall for public education, its advocates, or our students. This bill won't change the 30 years of disinvestment that preceded the Student Success Act, nor will it change the global pandemic that undercut the progress we all expected to see from the Student Success Act. As we move forward beyond the pandemic, our students and the educators across many professions who support them every day are seeing deeper and more numerous needs for mental, behavioral, emotional, physical and academic support than ever before. Many of our school buildings, in districts large and small, urban and rural, will continue to show years of deferred maintenance and issues that need progressively more desperate attention.

Our educators and school districts need stable footing so they can offer stable supports to our students. SB 521 will help establish that clear, stable footing, and OSEA encourages your support of Oregon's education workers and this bill.

Bob Estabrook, Government Relations Specialist

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Association of Classified School Employees (AACSE).*