

Submitter: Erica Parsons
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB414

I'm writing today in support of SB414. As the parent of a public school kindergartener and a preschooler, I implore you: we simply must have Oregon schools meeting the highest standards for clean indoor air, especially while in the midst of a pandemic. Our children, teachers, and school employees should not have to learn and work in rooms with high CO2 levels, rife with airborne viruses like COVID-19, nor should the building be unsafe during wildfire/smoke season. Cleaner air means fewer sick kids and teachers, fewer absences, and improved learning outcomes.

Our school building happens to be brand new--it reopened after a total renovation in September 2022--yet its air filtration system is not sufficient or appropriate for an ongoing pandemic or a region prone to poor air quality. The school's HVAC system has MERV 8 filters, which do not filter viruses or wildfire smoke. I fear the air quality situation may be even worse at the rest of the aging school buildings in our large district. Attempting to discuss air quality with the school district and the principal has gone nowhere. They won't even respond to our request to install a portable HEPA filter in our child's classroom.

Individual students or employees should not be saddled with the responsibility to fight for clean, non-toxic air in a public school building. Best-in-class indoor air quality standards should be implemented at the state level and reviewed often to keep up with the best-available science and technology.

Thank you for your consideration.