

Submitter: Bruce Kevan

On Behalf Of: OSBA Legislative Policy Committee Region 1

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5015

Testimony for House Ways and Means

I am Bruce Kevan. I serve on the La Grande school board and on the Legislative Policy Committee as the OSBA representative for Region 1. Region 1 includes the 34 school districts from the counties along the line the Oregon-Idaho border. Today I speak as both school board member and representative on behalf of the students, families and communities in our region

We are grateful for resources we have had that allow to serve our communities so well. In spite of COVID challenges we have moved forward, helping families help their students get the education they need to prosper in the future. We know that much of what we have been able to do is a result of resources made available by the State and the federal government. However, a big chunk of the federal resources is ending Next year, meaning districts have to make up the loss with State General Fund funds.

We are concerned for the impact of the proposed biennial General Fund on our schools and therefore our students, families and communities. We are very committed to providing quality, equitable education, but will be hampered if the \$9.9 billion General Fund proposal becomes reality, particularly considering the federal fund decrease. We know that to continue providing services at the current level will take \$10.3 billion. These would be the impacts around our region if the legislature does not reach that amount:

Staff cuts

Program reductions

Greater struggles with retaining staff

Greater struggles with maintaining facilities

Greater struggles to build technology capacity

In addition, there is, pending, additional legislation creating new learning initiatives and new expectations. New initiatives, like the Early Literacy proposals, are great but often mean new staff, training and materials. If these are paid for with

General Fund dollars, they reduce the resources available for maintaining current service levels. New expectations, like the suite of bills to tighten special education procedures, will certainly require new staff and lots of time. As with initiatives, we ask, “Are these expenses coming out of the General Fund or SSA or SIA pools, thereby distressing our ability to continue to provide CSL?” As the budget building process continues, please keep an eye on any proposals that increase costs, so the \$10.3 billion will be kept for maintaining Current Service Levels not paying for new proposals.

So, to summarize, our purpose is to serve our students, families and communities. The target is maintaining our Current Service Levels. The means to do this is \$10.3 billion. Let’s get all three.