

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 5015. As a parent of two elementary-age students and a school board member, I oppose this bill as drafted and **strongly advocate for an appropriation of at least \$10.3 billion for the State School Fund**. Anything less than this amount will not allow us to maintain current service levels. We will have to cut programs or lay off staff.

Ten years ago, our school district made the difficult decision to cut Physical Education due to a lack of funding. Thanks to the Student Success Act, we were finally able to bring back PE! SIA funds allowed us to hire bilingual family liaisons for each of our six schools, rebuild middle school Athletics, and add a middle school Art elective. We created a "teacher pathway" program to enable classified staff of color to pursue teacher certification, and expanded culturally specific mentoring for Black/African-American students. **All of these successes are now at risk.**

As a district of only 2800 students, our district administration is small and lean. **We have worked hard over the past two years to reduce costs wherever possible.** We refinanced our Bond debt, saving an estimated \$4.8 million. We obtained discounted bus passes for high school students, negotiating aggressively with TriMet for a cost savings of \$96,000. We issued two pension bonds totaling \$47.4 million; the present value savings over 20 years is estimated to be \$9.8 million.

**Serving 70% students of color, Parkrose is one of the top 3 most diverse districts in Oregon.** Our students live in neighborhoods that are troubled by gun violence, houselessness, and poverty (we are 72% low-income). Due to a lack of city infrastructure investment in East Portland, our students face transportation barriers and have to travel far for meaningful career education and internships. Yet our students are resilient and determined to succeed.



**Parkrose is proud to have four Student Representatives who participate fully on our school board.**

I'm sharing their photo here, because twice a month when our board convenes and reviews our budget, we are accountable to them.

We have to explain why there isn't enough funding for the education they deeply deserve.

*Hunter Napa'a, (from left) Justin Santos, Kennedy Phillips and Beni Berhe*

With them in mind, I urge you to appropriate \$10.3 billion for the State School Fund.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Durant  
Board Chair, Parkrose Board of Education  
OSBA Legislative Policy Committee, Position 17