

Submitter: Emily Henkle

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5015

March 28, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Education sub-committee,

My name is Emily Henkle. I am a parent of two children in 5th and 8th grade who attend Portland Public Schools (PPS). I am a proponent of public schools and spent 5 years as a PTA board member (including PTA President) at my children's K-8 school. My educational background includes training in public health, which has taught me the importance of thinking about prevention on a systems and population level.

I'm writing to urge you to support HB 5015 and fund public schools at the level of \$11.889 billion needed to support an optimal public education system (based on the 2022 Quality Education Model estimate), and not less than the \$10.3 billion needed to just to maintain current services (estimated by the Oregon Association of Business Officials).

I want to be clear, current funding levels are not sufficient. Too many children in PPS are struggling to read and do math at grade level, and attend schools that should be a stable/safe space but are not. We need a funding model that support an adequate number of teachers (classroom, special ed, art, music, drama), aides (reading support, paraeducators, recess and lunch), custodial, nursing, lunchroom staff, and counselors and mental health workers in our schools. Investing in our children through the public school system is the best thing we can do for them (and the state) long term. The "desirable" schools in PPS, e.g. those with more economically advantaged parents who are able to commit volunteer hours and \$, are able to fill in some of the gaps. I am part of a school community within PPS that raises \$200,000 every year to supplement FTE at our school. While a small portion goes into a central shared fund, this is not reasonable or equitable in a public school system. Oregon can do better.

Thank-you for taking the time to read my letter. I urge you to allocate \$11.889 billion to the State School Fund.

Emily Henkle, PhD, MPH
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