

JENNY MCCLISTER

Portland, OR 97212

March 28, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Education Sub-committee:

My name is Jenny McClister and I am writing today to urge you to support HB 5015 whereby money from the state's general fund would be appropriated to the State School Fund to support public education in Oregon.

My family moved to Portland in June 2019 and enrolled our kids at our neighborhood public school, Alameda Elementary. Our younger daughter still attends Alameda. Our older son is now at Beaumont Middle School. Our kids have always attended public school. I attended public schools for my entire education – elementary school through law school, and very much value the public education system for my kids, all kids, and for the communities they support.

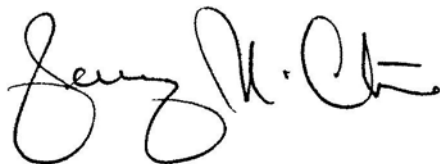
This past year, however, through my husband's leadership in Beaumont's Foundation, I learned about Oregon's inadequate budgeting and funding for public schools, at a time when my kids need the public school system more than ever. At this point, we are no longer optimistic about public education in Oregon, and we have started applying to private schools.

It is truly shocking and appalling that a state as progressive as Oregon could get away with consistently underfunding what is necessary to advance, let alone maintain, adequate support for public education in this state. Show me a thriving community that doesn't educate its citizenry. A healthy public school system is essential. It is table stakes for everything we strive for in this world. Without it, other problems will worsen and the downward decline will continue.

The 2022 QEM estimates that it will require a State School Fund investment of ~\$11.9 billion to achieve lasting educational gains for all students, but the Governor's Recommended Budget only proposes allocating \$9.9 billion to the State School Fund – a \$2 billion shortfall. This is a deep chasm, made worse by our emergence from a global pandemic. Not that underfunding public education was ever OK, but it certainly isn't any longer.

I urge you all to support HB 5015. Our kids, our students, and our communities deserve it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny M. McClister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jenny" being the most prominent.

Jenny McClister