

April 8, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

**We support a minimum \$10.3 billion, no-cuts budget for the State School Fund**

My name is Scott Overton and I represent Oregon PTA which is a volunteer led group with over 100 years history of advocating for children. We are here to support SB 5506 as the means to fund education in Oregon through the State School Fund but we encourage you to change the amount of money allocated to be a minimum of \$10.3 billion. This number represents the amount of money required to continue funding education in Oregon at the current level of service as determined by the Oregon Association of School Business Officials (OASBO). Since many of you have not been involved in the details from education, I did want to make it clear that the review done by the OASBO looked at actual negotiated labor contracts to determine labor costs and not a multiplier and the original budget used an unrealistic 2.9% inflation adjustment for non-labor expenses so this number is not pie in the sky but actual real costs for a no cuts budget.

I am sure you are aware that the past few years have increased student needs and presented unprecedented challenges for both students and schools. The third grade Reading levels in Oregon have dropped to a 20-year low, with more of our students experiencing anxiety, while adjusting back to in-person learning. This is certainly not a time to consider any cuts in school funding. We cannot afford to lose any staff or resources for the coming budget years. With the excellent professional educators and with proper support staff in resources in place I am confident that Oregon students can regain lost learning and move forward to assuring every child meets their potential.

I personally have seen that our students are struggling to regain their confidence in education. Large class sizes, lack of educational supports, staffing shortages in every area of the school: custodial, nutrition services, counselors, administration, educational assistants, special education services, and teachers themselves, all add to this problem. Schools with adequate funding will support our students, their needs, and our entire community.

We acknowledge there are many other items in this budget that provide important services for the health and welfare of our children which we also support. We encourage you to be bold and not conservative in allocating funds this biennium, but fully funding K-12 education is your constitutional duty!

Thank you for taking the time to listen to all the testimony presented today. It is essential to raise the allocated funding for the State School Fund to \$10.3B so we can meet the challenges that our students and schools are facing and see our truly succeed.

Sincerely,

Scott Overton – VP for legislation at Oregon PTA  
Contact information: [soverton@oregonpta.org](mailto:soverton@oregonpta.org)