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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

In Oregon, the funding at proper levels of our K-12 schools is crucial. Public education in this state is asked to do more and more work, work as the primary educator of the states K-12 children, work as a social safety net, work with special needs children. Public schools are the bedrock of our communities. Funding has simply not kept up with the demands we are placing on our public schools. The governor proposed \$9.9 Billion for public education, that amount is being considered by the legislature. However education professionals and those who study the actual use of and demands upon our public school systems say that in order to keep current levels of service, \$10.3 Billion is needed.

Funding public schools at less than \$10.3 Billion dollars in the next biennium would be a net decrease in school funding, before legislative games and the corporate kicker would reduce the amount even further. Schools are already behind, Oregon school performance post pandemic is not rebounding like other states. Giving school districts funding that would meet less than current service levels does not mean belt tightening and creative math. It means school services will be impacted and cut.

In January, Governor Kotek told Oregon Public Broadcasting that in regards to school funding "I suspect we will have a robust conversation during the session about how we can get that number higher." It is time for that conversation. If schools are not funded at current levels, each District will be forced to try and implement the various educational and safety priorities passed by this legislature in addition to providing basic levels of service to each student with less funding that they had in the previous biennium.

It is often said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and each time expecting a different outcome. The State of Oregon, the Legislature, the Department of Education, the Governor's office... everybody says education should be fully funded however when the time comes to fund public schools for each biennium, we hear and see the same pattern of behavior. Less than current funding levels and poor student outcomes. And yet, so many in Salem expect a different outcome. The governor has many hopes set on literacy and early childhood educational programs this year. However, again without the funding it is doing the same thing and expecting a different result.

Oregon Public Schools rank in the bottom third of states nationally, according to the Oregonian. The state's overall weak financial contribution to schools as measured as a percentage of state gross domestic product devoted to K-12 schools is a significant

factor.

Fully fund education for the next biennium... \$10.3 Billion dollars. The only way to break this cycle is for the legislature to change it. Fully fund public education at \$10.3 Billion.