

Submitter: Smyth Lai
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure: HB3221

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Walters and Reschke, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

My name is Smyth Lai, and I have two children who attend Portland Public Schools. Both students attended Scott Elementary and are now at Roseway Heights Middle School. I am writing in the hopes that you will support HB 3221.

In addition to the increase in operation costs, I have watched the educational and behavioral needs of students in my kids' schools grow over the years, particularly as a result of the pandemic. Many of our invaluable teachers, counselors, administrators and other staff are stretched thin and working beyond their capacity to provide the support that our kids deserve. I am concerned that the continued gap between general fund expenditures and the limit that school districts can collect will have a harmful impact on students in Oregon. My children love the teachers and staff at their school, and I'm so grateful that despite all the discord and stress in the world today that they are still eager to go to school each day. I worry that the overcrowded classrooms and their reports of students whose needs are too great for the staff on hand have become normal to them, when there is such potential for a more harmonious, fully-staffed and well-resourced public school experience.

The lack of sufficient funds also creates a scarcity mindset which has resulted in school communities working in isolation to problem solve budget shortfalls. If school districts are able to access the resources our voters have approved, we can focus on working together to improve the overall health of our public schools.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Again, I urge you to support HB 3221.

Sincerely,
Smyth Lai
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