

Submitter: Jill Franko  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Co-chairs Sanchez and Steiner, and members of the Ways and Means committee.

Thank you for your time this evening. My name is Jill Franko, and I serve on the Ashland School District board. I would like to add my voice to the chorus of testimony your committee has heard regarding the need to fund our schools statewide at \$10.3 billion.

If budgets only represented numbers on a piece of paper, this room would be empty. But those numbers in the State budget represent the heart and soul of our State. So what do we care about? Do we care if our children are being educated by too few teachers, outdated curriculum, or insufficient tools? Do we care about the children that walk through our school doors breathing a sigh of relief as they enter the one safe space they have in their day? Do we care about the kids struggling to catch up between scarce food or insecure housing? Do we care if we give our children a glimpse of hope or opportunity toward a real future? Do we mean when we say our future is in the hands of our children? If we do, then let's show them how much we believe in their future, in their ability to change where we are headed, and that starts with their education. Let's show them those numbers on paper are more than an excel spreadsheet, they are the ways and the means to bring a real future for not only every child in this state, but all of us adults as we depend more and more on their answers to humans greatest challenges that lie ahead. I know you're considering an allocation of \$9.9 billion. I beg of you to not make this grave mistake of underfunding what Oregonians see as our greatest hope, our children. Show them in numbers what they, our children, truly mean to all of our collective wellbeing. Show them we believe in what they can do and we believe that they are worth more than "just enough" they are worth investing in. Afterall, it's not just their future you are believing in; It is our future too.