

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Roadshow
May 2023

Chairs Sanchez and Steiner, my name is Tyler Scialo-Lakeberg. I am a teacher and serve as the President of the Salem-Keizer Education Association, representing over 2,700+ licensed educators, including teachers, counselors, teacher librarians, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and other specialists who work with Salem-Keizer students every day.

Everywhere in the world we talk about how COVID has changed us and how we do things differently in this post-COVID world. This is even more true for our students and schools. In this post Covid world we have students coming back into schools with increased stress, trauma, and learning loss. Think about our kindergarten and primary students, who spent the first few years of their life in COVID isolation and now they are learning how to socialize within a school setting. Many of these students have big emotions that lead to big outbursts. Other students are feeling behind as comprehensive distance learning was difficult for them and are now feeling like failures as students. In a nutshell, students coming back from COVID have needs that exceed our available resources.

With the influx of ESSER and other COVID relief dollars we have been barely getting by to meet student needs. However, this relief money is coming to an end, but the needs of our students remain. This relief money has enabled the district to hire more staff to help provide one on one care for struggling students. This included reading specialists, social workers, counselors, teachers, and other behavior supports. Without these additional supports our schools would have imploded. In addition, we were able to have school mentors working alongside teachers for best practices to help regain learning lost during COVID. Without an investment into our school funding, we will lose these added supports at our students' expense. This means higher class sizes, less support staff, and little to no staff to do critical academic and emotional interventions students need to be able to remain in school and have a hope of success.

Without an investment in the State School Fund \$10.3 billion for K12, all of the forward progress we have been able to make over the past year will go away. Please support a true CSL budget of \$10.3 billion for this biennium so our students and communities can have the strong neighborhood public schools they deserve.