

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hilli Ciavarello, and I am an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher at Multnomah Early Childhood Program. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 3652, which would make class size and caseloads a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in all Oregon schools.

As a Early Childhood Special Education teacher my role entails traveling to preschools throughout Multnomah County, consulting and coaching preschool administrations and classroom teachers on how to create inclusive preschool settings that authentically include children with developmental disabilities and delays. Currently I have a caseload of 20 children, with varying service hours from 60 min to 120 min/week. It is beyond challenging to ensure that I am supporting children, teachers and their families when my caseload is this high. Special education requires individualization and as a result, the question of “why not decrease the service time per child?” is not an effective way forward. High quality, individualized intervention early in a child’s life is PROVEN to support children later in their academic and personal lives.

Educator burnout is real. As someone new to the field (under 5 years) I can tell you with 100 percent certainty that if caseloads are not dealt with in an effective way over the next 5 years, many will leave the field in search of more supportive work environments where their work with children feels more effective.

I urge the committee to support HB 3652, this bill will have a strong impact on children and their families for many years to come. VOTE YES on HB 3652—because every student deserves the attention and support they need to succeed!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hilli Ciavarello, hilli_ciavarello@ddsd40.org, Multnomah Early Childhood Program