

Submitter: Bonnie Heather Bartos  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3652  
March 2, 2025

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

My name is Dr. Heather Bartos and I'm a middle school special education resource teacher. 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.

I was trained in California, and in that state, there's a caseload limit of 28, and if special education teachers go over that limit, they are paid more or given workload relief. I was in shock when I moved here and discovered that in Oregon, there is no such limit. It is magical thinking to assume that resource teachers are unlimited in their energy, time, and efforts. Many of my students have two to three special education meetings per year, all of which take time to schedule, plan for, hold, and then do the clean up paperwork afterwards. This is on top of all of the other job responsibilities. Fifty percent of special education teachers quit within their first five years.

Because caseload limits are not a mandatory subject of bargaining, our unions are limited in what they can do as far as negotiating caseload and class size caps. With higher caseloads, you get more meetings, but you don't get more days of school in order to hold them, and when you reach a certain number of kids on your caseload, there's just not enough days where teams are even able to meet, because specialists such as SLPs, autism specialists, and school psychologists are spread over multiple buildings. One year, when I hit over 40 kids, I had to go to my principal, show him my calendar, and ask him where he thought I could hold these additional meetings, because with all the staff development, holidays, and other school meetings, there were few opportunities available.

Please stop the practice of magical thinking in regards to caseload and special education teachers. Oregon has a serious teaching crisis in special education, to the degree that this year the legislature is giving us a one time stipend to thank us for our service. However, in the long run, caseload caps are the only reasonable answer that can support us in serving students with complex needs within legal timelines. I have taught for 24 years now with no caseload cap. I'd like to see it improve before I retire,

and I worry about the state's lack of ability to attract and retain good special educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote yes on SB 3652 and support special education teachers, students, and parents.

Sincerely,

Dr. Heather Bartos, resource teacher, Beaverton School District  
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