

My name is Jessica Juday, and I am a licensed music teacher at West Powellhurst Elementary School in Portland, Oregon. I have the privilege of teaching all the students in the school. I get to work with each class individually. Though I am experienced in teaching large groups of students, the large class sizes common in our district have hindered our ability to engage with students who need it the most. I can't even imagine how difficult it is for classroom teachers.

Smaller class sizes and caseloads must be part of negotiations on HB 3652.

At my school, music class is 40 minutes long. My largest class has 36 students. This gives me less than 2 minutes per child to engage with them personally. If you factor in the time it takes to give direct instruction, I have less than 1 minute per child to let them know they are seen and heard. If you factor in the sometimes unbearable behavior problems we are facing, some kids get ZERO minutes of 1-on-1 attention from me.

In music class, we practice playing a variety of instruments, and we often have to practice taking turns. I am blessed to have a large inventory of instruments, but instruments are expensive, and sometimes I have only a few of certain special instruments. It can take an entire class to let everyone have a turn. Even if we do games, it takes multiple classes to get through everyone, and our learning time is severely disrupted. No child deserves to be forgotten.

Children DESERVE our attention. Children are already faced with being exposed to profanities and room clears because other students who are struggling are not getting the attention and support they need to be successful. The adults we do have are spread so thin dealing with extreme behaviors that are unfortunately all too common in recent years. Students all over the state can barely read at grade level, and we are constantly being asked to DO MORE with LESS SUPPORT. When will students be given the attention they need?

Smaller class sizes would help remedy so many problems we face on a daily basis. In my seven years as a teacher, I have heard teachers ask for smaller class sizes over and over again. Teachers know best what students need. Smaller class sizes are vital to the success of our students, and this has been proven many times over. Please advocate not only for teachers, but for students all over the state, and negotiate for smaller class sizes and caseloads in Oregon.