

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

My name is Emily Golden-Fields and I am a 6th grade English Language Arts teacher in Portland, Oregon. I am also a member of the executive board of Portland Association of Teachers. I am submitting this testimony to strongly support HB 3652, which would make class and caseload sizes mandatory subjects of collective bargaining in all schools in Oregon.

Depending on the year, I have caseloads of between 150 and 160 6th grade students. I have had classes of up to 40, where students have to crouch on the floor between desks or sit on the radiator during instruction. Students cannot access an effective, calm, safe education in large classes. And teachers cannot provide adequate feedback and work on plans of support with caseloads of this size.

An educator's role is not limited to providing direct instruction and managing student behavior in class, but includes assessing student learning, providing feedback, and, in tandem with caregivers, supporting the emotional, physical, academic, and mental health issues students face. It is simply impossible for us to support our students to the level of need with these overwhelming class sizes and caseloads. **Smaller classes=more personalized support and stronger schools.**

Oregon shamefully lags behind other states in addressing class sizes. Even Texas has class caps. In Texas, with the passage of Senate Bill 2081, middle and high school teachers have a cap of 20 students on average per class. I, on the other hand, have current class sizes averaging 28, which is low for Portland. I have coworkers with an average size of 35 students in middle school. Many high school educators have caseloads of 220+ students. We want to help students, we want to maximize learning. Give us a chance to finally address class size. If the legislature will not pass class size caps like in Washington, Texas, Arizona, or California, at least **let us fight for our students in our contracts.**

We cannot have quality, effective, and responsive public schools without class size and caseload caps. It is long overdue. For the good of our students, please make class size caps and caseload caps a mandatory subject of bargaining. Let us fight for the schools our children deserve.

Thank you,

Emily Golden-Fields
Portland Public Schools Educator
PAT Member

