

3/4/2025

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

My name is Angela Bonilla and I am a Spanish Immersion educator and am proud to serve as the President of the Portland Association of Teachers. 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.

At Portland Public Schools, I have heard from educators across the district about the impacts of large class sizes and caseloads. We know that student needs after the covid closures have only increased. I hear from experienced teachers every day: "a class of 30 now is not like a class of 30 when I started years ago". Educator burnout is real. Excessive caseloads and large class sizes contribute to high turnover rates and negatively impact student learning, especially when we already have high needs for students post Covid-closures.

According to John Hattie's often quoted study, the highest impact on student learning and achievement is "Collective Teacher Efficacy" with an effect size of 1.57, "Potential to considerably accelerate student achievement." If .40 is one year's learning in one year's time, **collective teacher efficacy means students will show almost 4 years of growth in one year's time.**

Collective teacher efficacy cannot happen when teachers are burned out and feel ineffective because their attention is split 35 ways. **Collective teacher efficacy cannot happen when administration and leadership make decisions without considering teacher input.** Collective teacher efficacy cannot happen when we have to bargain language that either gives us more pay or more support for the larger the class. I have heard time and time again from educators: We don't want extra pay to do an impossible job. We want students to be able to learn, connect with me and each other. We need to be able to collectively bargain over class size.

We know our students learn better when they are in the right environment with individualized attention and support. Being able to bargain around class size and caseload means we can bargain for the tools to improve achievement. The chance to bargain around class size or caseload does not always translate to smaller classrooms, or more teachers, but what it does is open the conversation for what the environments in our classrooms are like. It means that educators can bargain for the support they need to do their jobs. It ensures that everyone's safety is a subject that is talked about in a meaningful way that results in progress.

HB 3652 does not require specific class size or caseload reductions—just a fair conversation in contract negotiations. As the leader of a teacher’s union, we are between a rock and a hard place: We want small class sizes but cannot bargain for them for everyone of our students. We want to push the district to be more transparent and collaborative with their funding, but we don’t have a fully funded QEM. We want to lobby our elected officials, but are too busy working hours and hours outside of our contract time to attempt to provide students the education they deserve. Making class size a mandatory topic of bargaining will give us the OPPORTUNITY to bargain for some relief, give us some hope that EVERY student will have a great public school.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass HB 3652 so that we can collaborate and bargain with school districts about class size, put our classrooms back on track and make sure that everyone’s needs are being met. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Angela Bonilla
President, Portland Association of Teachers