

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

My name is Kaitlin Peters, and I am Elementary Special Education Teacher at Beaverton School District . 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 Special Education teacher working in an elementary building, I have a unique role of support kindergarten through 5th grade students. I am working to support students impacted with disabilities and that have also never been exposed to school routines and are working to learn expectations of what it means to be a student. This learning can be more challenging for students with disabilities. Not having adequate caseload caps does not take into consideration the unique needs of each student on my caseload. In a recent bargaining session with Beaverton School District, the district bargaining team refused to agree to a hard cap. The proposed hard cap was 35 students, which seemed well within reason of what ONE educator SHOULD be expected to manage, however, even with the proposed hard cap of 35 students, the district refused to any movement of hard caps. As a local we were forced to accept "foot in the door" language that allowed for workload committees to be established and/or task force to be established. While this feels like progress, this is also creating more work for our already burnt out Special Education teachers by assuming additional responsibility to sit on a task force, attending more meetings etc It SHOULD NOT fall on the shoulders of our educators to come up with their own creative solutions, when district management REFUSES to even consider a reasonable caseload caps. Caseload caps will protect educators, by allowing them to prioritize student needs through adequate planning and prep time.

As a special education teacher, I have a deep understanding of what Oregon's most vulnerable students are facing in our public schools. It is my role to support a range of students experiencing disabilities. I am faced with the weight of constantly feeling like I am falling short and not providing enough of what my students deserve. I am forced to provide specially designed instruction in larger groups of students that don't provide them with the individualized attention they deserve. My instruction is interrupted by student behavior when we have students become significantly unsafe in the school setting. Students with disabilities deserve my individualized attention and caseload caps would ensure that Oregon's most impacted students have access to the individualized education and services they deserve.

I urge you for the sake of Oregon educators and students, please consider a Yes vote on HB 3652. A Yes vote on HB 3652 will ensure educators can provide individualized supports for Oregon's most impacted students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Peters
Beaverton School District