

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

My name is Christine Bierman , and I am ELD Teacher at Gresham-Barlow 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.

In my case management of my ELD students in their core classes, I have observed the effects of large class sizes on student learning and engagement. These students struggle because they can't get the individual attention that they need—that all students need and deserve. Compound huge classes with this population's still-developing English, and these students fall behind. They don't ask their teachers questions. They are late with assignments. They don't have the opportunity to practice their English in an academic setting besides in my much smaller ELD classes. Class sizes for core subjects and PE need to be cut in half, if not by more, so that students such as these don't get lost in the throng of kids, and have a better chance of learning, progressing, and succeeding.

Teacher burnout is a real issue everywhere, and made particularly manifest this year at my building. Among our small teaching staff, one teacher took a long leave for stress while another developed a serious medical issue, also almost simultaneously requiring a long leave. While the linkage between a medical issue and class sizes might be questionable, the temporary loss of key staff also affected an already-stressed staff, possibly leading to another teacher's having to take multiple days off. These situations do have a trickle-down effect.

A teacher's working conditions are their students' learning conditions. The two are intertwined. Overly large class sizes negatively affect students' learning and teachers' wellbeing. Please support HB 3652. Let's get class sizes on the bargaining table!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Bierman
Gresham-Barlow School District