

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

My name is Tara Carmichael, and I am a K-8 art teacher at Portland Public Schools. 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.

I teach art in a portable classroom, and my maximum number of students is 30 artists.

Smaller class sizes improve student outcomes. In inclusive schools, we manage large behavioral challenges. When you add significant behavioral issues to a class that includes average learners and TAG students, it becomes impossible to meet the needs of the average learner. These students are often pushed through the system without support due to the high demands of behavior management.

I once had a student throw a tub of paint, splattering two other students. I have dealt with chair throwers, table pushers, and trauma-based behaviors in half of my classes. Large class sizes exacerbate these challenges, making it impossible to create the meaningful connections needed to support students and manage behaviors effectively.

As an educator of 25 years, it is incredibly defeating to realize, yet again, that I never connected with the quiet student who has been stuck at the same learning level for three days—because I am constantly circling the room managing behaviors.

Because there is no additional funding for support staff in inclusion classrooms, we must support the majority of students by reducing class sizes so that everyone can learn.

I urge you to support HB 3652 to ensure all learners and educators have the support they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Tara Carmichael*

Portland Public Schools