

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

My name is Troy Theriot, and I am High School ELA 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.

In my 24 years as an educator, I have seen the impact that class sizes can have on both students and staff. As a language arts teacher, I have had classes as large as 45 back in 2012-2013, and as small as 28 (mainly at the beginning of my career). Larger class sizes are logistically a nightmare to begin with. Having enough space and furniture to accommodate larger class sizes becomes problematic, especially in older schools. It is also extremely difficult to form strong relationships with so many students. Like an emergency triage situation, you typically try to find the most impacted students first, and then work your way through the roster when you can. Meeting student needs often seems like an impossible task. Last year, I had a class of 35 students, where at least half had SPED or ELD supports. Finally, with larger class sizes, giving timely feedback on assessments becomes difficult. As an English teacher that collects writing samples often, the bigger the case load, the bigger the work load.

Overcrowding hurts vulnerable students the most. As much as I try to meet every single student's needs in my classroom, it is really easy for many students, including those in high need, to slip through the cracks. The dilemma that most educators find out pretty early in their careers is that you try to support and reach as many students as possible, knowing that there will be some that get lost along the way. Even with smaller class sizes, this is still a possibility. With that being said, providing the smallest environment allowed by budgetary constraints is still the best thing that contribute to student success, unless students are chronically absent, which is a separate, but also concerning issue.

As a veteran Beaverton educator that has been frustrated by the roller coaster funding for education that has affected my district's ability to maintain smaller class sizes, I urge you to support HB 3652

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Troy Theriot  
Beaverton School District