

Submitter: Annie Hodson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5516

Dear Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing to urge you to increase funding for the State School Fund beyond the proposed \$11.36 billion in SB 5516. As a parent of a first grader in Portland Public Schools (PPS), I see firsthand how critical adequate funding is to ensuring that our children receive a high-quality education.

Every morning, I drop my daughter off at school, watching as she eagerly runs to greet her friends and her teacher. First grade is a magical time—when curiosity is boundless, and learning is full of joy. She comes home excited to share what she learned about science, reading, and math, and I see how much her teacher’s dedication and creativity inspire her to love learning. But I also see the strain on her school—the increasing class sizes, the limited support for students who need extra help, and the concern from teachers and staff about what next year will bring.

The proposed budget, while an increase, still leaves PPS with a \$40 million shortfall, which means the loss of 220 teaching and staff positions. That’s 220 fewer caring adults in our children’s lives—fewer teachers to keep class sizes manageable, fewer support staff to help students who are struggling, and fewer counselors, librarians, and specialists who make a difference every day. Cuts like these don’t just impact numbers on a spreadsheet; they impact real children, including mine.

Beyond general education funding, I am deeply concerned about the ongoing underfunding of special education services. My daughter has classmates with special needs, children who rely on the support of specialists and individualized instruction to thrive. The 11% cap on special education funding leaves too many students without the services they require. These are kids with bright futures who deserve every opportunity to succeed, and right now, we are failing them.

Oregon has a chance to do better. I urge you to work toward a budget that fully funds our schools—one that prevents devastating cuts, invests in our teachers and staff, and ensures that all children, regardless of their abilities, have access to a quality education. Our kids deserve classrooms that are fully supported, not stretched to the breaking point.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Oregon’s students. I appreciate your consideration of this urgent matter and hope to see the legislature prioritize the

future of our children.

Sincerely, A Concerned PPS Parent