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

I'm the mother of a third grade student in Portland Public Schools, the product of public schools myself, and I'm writing in support of fully fund our public schools to nothing less than the Quality Education Model, \$13.5billion.

The gaps the system has experienced for decades can never be made up, but we are at a critical inflection point where we must decide how our state's budget allocations will match our values. Right now, the gap between our verbalized values and the money allocated to public schools to live out those values is massive.

My child had 30 kids in her second grade classroom, with 2 children who had high behavioral needs requiring extra staff support most of the day. As a regular twice-a-week parent volunteer, I witnessed the disruption this had on the full class, the teacher, and the individual students with needs. On the days there was no extra support, the two students were quite visibly disregulated. This looked like disruptive verbal outbursts, dangerous physical outbursts, and a loss of critical learning time for everyone, not to mention emotional distress. Usually the assistant principal or one of our part-time educational assistants or counselor would come to help. However, not only are they not always available because they are putting out proverbial fires everywhere in the school, our EAs have already been cut from our budget for next year and our assistant principal position is on the cutting block too. If these roles aren't available, I cannot imagine the scenario a teacher with thirty 7- and 8-year olds would be in when they have a student with additional needs.

Our young people are suffering in a myriad of ways, ways they can't even fathom because they have never known what a "fully funded school" could provide for them. My daughter and all the 30 other kids in her classroom, the kids in her school, the kids in our system are our future leaders, problem-solvers, care-givers in an increasingly complicated world that needs their ideas. This is the age when they need the most support from skilled, empathetic teachers, counselors, administrators and para-educators. Failing them with too few skilled adults in the building now has huge implications for their individual futures and for our society. Oregon must do much, much better.

I ask that you advocate strongly for funding our public schools to the QEM level.

Thank you.