

Hello, my name is Ian Ritorto, I'm a student at Roosevelt highschool in north Portland, and a PPS District Student Council Representative. Oregon schools need more money. This is something you've all heard a million times but I'm here to help you grasp the extent of the issue and what it means for students like me. At my school we have a "maker space", somewhere with 3d printing machines and other hands on tools that foster independence and practical skills in students. Last year it was cut as part of 30 million dollars of cuts district wide. This year PPS is being asked to cut an additional 40 million dollars from their budget, with an expected 6 full time employees being cut from my school. And the maker space isn't the only thing that's suffering because of funding. Yesterday, I had to go to three separate bathrooms because the first two were completely out of paper towels, this is a result of having critically understaffed janitors. This year they are cutting the AVID program at my school. A series of classes that teach kids study skills, how to build resumes, find jobs, submit college applications, and yes, even do taxes. A crucial resource for kids who may be behind in school or cannot learn these skills at home. At Ockley green, the middle school I went to, the school doesn't have enough money to repair the building, leading to ceiling tiles literally falling and injuring kids. From the students I've talked to, PPS middle schools in general also have an abysmal course offering and extracurriculars, with practically no ways for students to enrich their education. Oregon is already 44th in the nation in k-12 education, because of the state's inability to fix their funding issues, Oregon students are being given a skeleton of an education. While I absolutely agree that there needs to be broad curriculum overhaul in our schools, you cannot ignore the massive impact funding has had on our education system. Our education system is an embarrassment. The CSL is not enough. If Oregon doesn't figure out how to fund their schools, it won't be long before Oregon has one of the most uneducated workforces in the country, some would say we already do. You are failing our children. Thank you.