

Good morning senators and representatives, my name is Becca Priddy, I'm a 7th grade special education teacher at Reynolds Middle School in Fairview. I've been teaching for 15 years. I'm here to share with you what it's like to work in our school, and ask you to please encourage Governor Kotek to increase the budget for education to meet the Quality Education Model. I'm also here to ask you to vote yes on HB 2953 and HB 2448.

I started working at RMS in 2011 when we had a thriving and successful school, but I've been through ups and downs. In 2021, when we returned from the pandemic students were struggling with academics and behavior like I had never seen before. Our school was shut down for two weeks due to fights and violence. Around this time we went through FOUR different principals and administrators. But slowly with so many people working hard, our school has made a comeback. We have invested in after school programs to help students with homework, we have an attendance liaison to help families get the support they need to make sure kids come to school. Our theater teacher has built an incredible drama program, and for the last year, every play has included students with disabilities. We have fantastic sports teams. We have community and parent nights. All of these activities have brought our school back to life. Our wrestling team is also inclusive, and happens to have two district champions as of last week, but unfortunately those students who just became district champions don't get to participate in the state championship because our district can't afford to send them.

Our district is experiencing a budget crisis. Despite all of the positives, teaching is still difficult. I spend around a thousand dollars of my own money each year on my special education classroom, on top of asking friends and family for donations. I have sometimes had to buy my own reams of paper to print IEPs and curriculum. Our building is old and has a lot of issues. The ceilings and windows drip when it rains. There is currently a tarp hooked to the ceiling in the hallway with a hose attached to divert the leaks in the roof to a trash can nearby. And this winter when we had a cold snap, my room was 48 degrees because the heat went out.

When I share what working at a school like this is like, people ask why I don't just go to some other school. It's because I love my students. Governor Kotek's budget proposal is two billion dollars short of the QEM and would result in over a 15% cut in my district. I've been through this before, I know the first things to get cut are EAs for our most vulnerable students, after school programs, sports, and even teachers. We have come so far, we have worked so hard for our students. I urge you to visit our school and other schools around the state. I personally invite you to my classroom. Please come and see what we are doing with our students, see what the current money is providing. Every teacher will tell you what we have now is not enough, but we are making do. We cannot afford *any* cuts. Fully fund public education.







