



Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
707 13th Street SE, Ste. 100
Salem, Oregon 97301
Phone 503-581-3141
www.cosa.k12.or.us

Date: March 26, 2025
To: House Education Committee
From: Morgan Allen, COASA
Subject: Support for House Bill 3149 with the -2 amendment

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COASA) and our 3,000 members statewide, we are asking for your support for House Bill 3149 with the -2 amendment. This bill will provide one additional year of funding for wildfire impacted school districts in the 2025-26 school year.

2020 Wildfire Impacts on School Districts - Background

In 2020, wildfires raged across Oregon and had devastating impacts for communities and families in their path. Our public schools were not spared, as many students' lives were upended by the loss of their homes and belongings. The displacement of families means lost funding for local schools as our state's funding formula requires funds to follow students.

Four school districts reported an initial collective loss of over 500 students enrolled due to wildfire-related impacts. These included:

- The Phoenix-Talent School District in Jackson County;
- The Santiam Canyon School District in Linn County;
- The Lincoln County School District, and
- The McKenzie School District in Lane County

Fortunately, the Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 4026 during the 2022 Session to provide funding stability **through the 2024-25 school year** for the impacted school districts and communities. And we greatly appreciate the Legislature stepping in to fill a \$5.1 million funding shortfall this Session for the current school year.

A One-Year Extension is Needed for Districts to Plan Budget Adjustments

HB 4026 allowed wildfire impacted school districts to use the higher of their pre-wildfire student enrollment in 2019-20 or current enrollment to calculate their State School Fund, Student Investment Account, and Measure 98/High School Success Funding through the 2024-25 school year.



Enrollments have not recovered in the almost 5 years since the wildfires. Enrollment estimates for next year still look grim:

- The Phoenix-Talent School District - down 370 students from pre-wildfire enrollment of 2590,
- The Santiam Canyon School District - down 39 students from pre-wildfire enrollment of 597,
- The Lincoln County School District - down about 100 students in one part of the district, and
- The McKenzie School District - down 30 students from pre-wildfire enrollment of 225.

While the districts understand that the Legislature cannot provide indefinite financial support, without one year of transition funding these school districts will be faced with significant budget cuts in 2025-26.

Budget Impacts Are Significant

For example, in the Phoenix-Talent School District, they estimate the following budget impacts next year without passage of HB 3149 with the -2 amendments:

- Estimated dollars lost due to loss of wildfire funding in the 25-26 school year for:
 - *State School Fund: \$5,719,781 (18% budget reduction)*
 - *Student Investment Account: \$428,367 (13% budget reduction)*
 - *High School Success/M98 \$125,891 (19% budget reduction)*
- For the Phoenix-Talent School District, the dollars lost due to expiration of wildfire funding are equivalent to:
 - *State School Fund dollars lost is the equivalent to 48 teacher positions or 30 school days.*
 - *Student Investment Account dollars lost is the equivalent of 4 teacher positions or 2.25 school days.*
 - *High School Success/M98 dollars lost is the equivalent of 1 teacher position lost or 1 school day.*

Please support House Bill 3149 with the -2 amendment to provide transition funding for our wildfire impacted school districts to give them time to plan appropriately for the long-term impacts on their school districts and communities.