

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

I am the parent of a first grader at Vernon K-8 in Portland Public School District and I implore the legislation to INCREASE funding for our students across the state. Oregon schools are chronically under-supported, leaving our kids behind. Every study shows that investing in early literacy and classroom supports sets students up for longterm success across all aspects of their lives: future school achievement, reduced crime and drug use, and better job prospects. This proposed budget does not keep up with inflation pressures and only maintains Oregon's under-funded status quo, falling short by nearly \$2.2 billion dollars from the state's only recommendations (per the Quality Education Commission). The recent report from the America Institute for Research shows that Oregon need to increase school funding AND be much more strategic about how those dollars are spent. Our students and schools are still playing catch-up from the COVID years and need additional investment to make Oregon schools meet the challenges of the future. As our state continues to struggle with attracting new businesses and residents, schools will make a difference in whether families choose to move to and invest in Oregon. I watch every day as teachers and administrators work mightily with the little they have to provide the best experience for our kids. It is time that we fully support our school system in order for our students to be successful in their education and lives.