



February 13, 2026

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Muñoz and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Phoenix-Talent School District strongly supports safe learning environments, reasonable class sizes, and meaningful collaboration with our educators. **However, HB 4011 moves these issues into mandatory subjects of collective bargaining in a way that creates significant fiscal and operational risk for school districts like ours.**

Under HB 4011 and the -1 amendment, class size, caseload limits, and student discipline standards tied to staff safety would become mandatory subjects of bargaining. In practical terms, if the district and the teachers' association cannot reach agreement, these issues could become part of a labor impasse and potentially grounds for a strike. This represents a significant policy shift, particularly for small, rural school districts.

Unlike prior versions of HB 4011 that focused primarily on class size and caseload, the -1 amendment expands the scope to include student discipline policies that have a direct and substantial effect on employee safety. Staff safety is critically important and remains a top priority for our district. At the same time, educational decisions must remain student-centered. This is especially true when working with students with disabilities, where supports, staffing, and behavioral responses must be individualized and aligned with federal and state requirements.

Staffing levels and discipline responses often require nuance and flexibility based on the specific student and situation. Broad formulas or contractual structures are not always well-suited to address the complexity of individual student needs. Expanding mandatory bargaining to include class size, caseload, and discipline standards across all schools could unintentionally limit a district's ability to make individualized, student-specific determinations. We have already seen how complex it can be to balance staff safety concerns with what is appropriate and legally required for a particular student. Preserving local flexibility is essential to maintaining that balance.

Phoenix-Talent has invested in explicit staff training, behavioral supports, and safety systems to proactively address these challenges. We continue refining our practices to improve both student outcomes and staff safety. Maintaining local discretion allows us to adjust staffing, supports, and discipline responses as student needs evolve, rather than shifting those decisions into contract mandates that may not allow for the same responsiveness.

Most importantly, this bill carries major budget implications at a time when districts are already under significant financial strain. School districts are not funded at a level that allows us to reduce class sizes or caseloads without making extremely difficult tradeoffs.

The State School Fund has not kept pace with rising costs for personnel, PERS, utilities, transportation, insurance, and required services. At the same time, districts face increased expectations around academic recovery, student mental health supports, special education services, and school safety.

If class size and caseload ratios are bargained below our current practice, compliance would require hiring additional staff and, in many cases, expanding facilities. Many districts, including ours, do not have the funding, available workforce, or physical classroom space to absorb those changes. Without new and sustained funding, such mandates would create significant and ongoing financial obligations, forcing reductions in programs, electives, career-connected learning opportunities, or other student supports in order to comply.

Phoenix-Talent School District is already working hard to provide a high-quality education and to support our educators while responsibly managing limited financial resources. HB 4011 imposes a one-size-fits-all bargaining mandate without addressing the underlying funding gap or the need for flexibility in serving diverse student populations.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your opposition to HB 4011.

Sincerely,

Brent Barry
Superintendent, Phoenix-Talent School District