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Paula Nelson  
Brian Reeder  
Collin Robinson  
Johanna Vaandering

JOINT INTERIM TASK FORCE ON CLASS SIZES  
(HOUSE BILL 2928 (2015))  
State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

To: Members of the 78<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly  
Senate Interim Committee on Education  
House Interim Committee on Education  
Daron Hill, Legislative Administrator

From: Joint Interim Task Force on Class Sizes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

Re: Progress Report

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE JOINT INTERIM TASK FORCE ON CLASS SIZES  
AS REQUIRED BY HOUSE BILL 2928 (2015)**

**Background**

The Joint Interim Task Force on Class Sizes (Task Force) was established by House Bill 2928 (2015) and directed to study and report on the following:

- (a) Determine appropriate class sizes based on grade, types of students and subject area content.
- (b) Identify options to reduce class sizes, while taking into consideration:
  - a. The optimization of student learning outcomes and long-term impacts.
  - b. The enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of educational services to students at all grade levels.
  - c. The allowance of sufficient flexibility for individual school districts and schools in determining maximum class sizes, particularly within the confines of budgetary limitations.

- d. Cultural and historical appropriateness.
  - e. The incorporation of best practices for teaching students.
- (c) Identify the costs associated with the options identified under paragraph (b), above.
- (d) Submit this report by September 15, 2016.

**Task Force Activity to Date**

Appointments to the Task Force were not complete until June of 2016, rendering it impossible for the Task Force to complete its mandate by the report deadline in September. The members were able to meet ~~seven~~<sup>four</sup> times ~~between~~<sup>in</sup> July and ~~December~~<sup>August, and</sup> agreeing as to recommended class sizes and preparing this progress report in ~~December, when it is scheduled to sunset~~<sup>October. (The Task Force intends to continuing working on the remainder of its mandate through December 2016.)</sup>

At its meetings, the Task Force reviewed background materials, ~~and~~ heard public testimony on the impact of large class sizes on students, teachers, parents, administrators and communities, ~~and engaged in open discussion.~~

**Task Force Findings and Recommendations**

1. Appropriate class sizes and costs estimates to achieve reductions have already been determined by the Quality Education Commission as reported in the 2016 Quality Education Model (QEM). The Task Force wholeheartedly endorses the QEM and recommends the Legislature adopt and follow it.
2. Education is chronically underfunded and significant investment is required for course correction to undo systemic, interwoven, cumulative issues developed over decades. Crowded classrooms are one result, and an embedded, root contributor to these issues. The Task Force recommends the Legislature acknowledge these facts, follow the QEM, and make the investment needed to fund education appropriately: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Oregon Constitution requires funding at the QEM level, or in the alternative, a report explaining why not. The Task Force recommends constitutionally-required funding at the QEM level outright.
4. The Task Force appreciates that funds are not unlimited and recommends the Legislature consider all possibilities, and immediately redesign, redirect, and/or develop anew, sustainable, stable sources to fund education appropriately. The Task Force Further recommends prioritizing Oregon’s most vulnerable children. Task Force members agreed that appropriate class sizes have already been determined by the Quality Education Commission as reported in the 2016 Quality Education Model (QEM) as follows:

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*Elementary School, 340 Students:*

*Class-size average of 20 in kindergarten and 23 in grades 1-3*

*Class-size of 24 in grades 4-5*

*Middle School, 500 Students:*

*Class-size average of 22, with a maximum of 29 in core classes*

*High School, 1,000 Students:*

*Class-size average of 21, with a maximum of 29 in core classes*

Additionally, the QEM reported that reducing class-sizes to the recommended level in elementary schools could be achieved by dedicating \$361 million above current service level budgets to the effort.

This concludes the Executive Summary pursuant to ORS 192.245. This Executive Summary and the full Progress Report of the Joint Interim Task Force on Class Sizes are available electronically on the [Task Force's website](#) and through [Legislative Administration](#).

DRAFT

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**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE JOINT INTERIM TASK FORCE ON CLASS SIZES  
AS REQUIRED BY HOUSE BILL 2928 (2015)**

**Introduction**

The following constitutes a full progress report from the Joint Interim Task Force on Class Sizes (the Task Force) as required by House Bill 2928 (2015). As detailed below, appointments to the Task Force were not completed until June of 2016. Despite an ambitious schedule, it was simply not possible for the Task Force to complete its mandate and submit a report by the September 15, 2016 deadline specified in the measure. This progress report includes ~~four~~ **two** parts: a Background section, ~~and~~ a section on Impacts and Stories as related by Task Force members and stakeholders, **a Conclusion, and Task Force Findings and Recommendations.** ~~Work will continue as identified below in order for the Task Force to make recommendations for consideration during the 2017 legislative session.~~

**Part 1 - Background**

**Task Force Establishment and Mandate**

In the late spring of 2015, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, House Bill 2928. That bill created the Task Force on Class Sizes (Task Force), described membership of 15, and directed the Task Force to do the following:

- (e) Determine appropriate class sizes based on grade, types of students and subject area content.
- (f) Identify options to reduce class sizes, while taking into consideration:
  - a. The optimization of student learning outcomes and long-term impacts.
  - b. The enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of educational services to students at all grade levels.
  - c. The allowance of sufficient flexibility for individual school districts and schools in determining maximum class sizes, particularly within the confines of budgetary limitations.
  - d. Cultural and historical appropriateness.
  - e. The incorporation of best practices for teaching students.
- (g) Identify the costs associated with the options identified under paragraph (b), above.

The measure further directed the Task Force to submit a report, including any recommendations for legislation, to the interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to education no later than September 15, 2016.

## Task Force Membership

House Bill 2928 (2015) required the Task Force to be comprised of 15 members, with four of those to be legislators appointed by the House Speaker and Senate President. The remaining 11 members were to be appointed by the Governor. The legislative appointments were completed by July, 2015. The Governor appointed 10 members in June, 2016. Shortly thereafter, the Task Force began meeting. The 14 members listed here operated as the full membership of the group:

Sen. Herman Baertschiger, Jr., Senate District 2  
Anne W. Bryan, Chair, Beaverton School Board  
Jessica Classen, Teacher (grades 9 – 12)  
Darin Drill, District Superintendent  
Rep. Jodi Hack, House District 19  
Gary L. Humphries, Teacher (grades 6 – 8)  
Krina K. Lee, Salem Keizer Education Foundation  
Jeffrey K. Matsumoto, Elementary Teacher, Forest Grove  
Rep. Susan McLain, House District 29 (Chair)  
Paula T. Nelson, Teacher (grades K – 5)  
Brian D. Reeder, Oregon Dept. of Education  
Collin A. Robinson, President, Oregon Parent Teacher Association  
Sen. Arnie Roblan, Senate District 5  
Johanna R. Vaandering, President of Oregon Education Association

## Task Force Meetings and Activity to Date

The first meeting was held on July 19, 2016. At that meeting, the members adopted procedural rules and elected Rep. Susan McLain Chair. The Task Force met ~~six~~three more times, on the following dates: July 27, August 2, ~~and~~ August 26, [October 25](#), [November 21](#), and [December 6](#), 2016. Those meetings included multiple informational hearings, public hearings and work sessions. The informational hearings served to inform the members, and included invited testimony from teachers, administrators, education experts, agency representatives and other education stakeholders. The public hearings provided an opportunity for anyone who might not otherwise have a chance to have input on the work of the Task Force; many teachers and other members of the public took advantage of the opportunity and submitted testimony. Finally, the Task Force used the work sessions to draft the outline for the basis of this final report, as well as to adopt the report itself.

The Task Force reviewed literature, expert testimony, and research findings on the impact of class size in two distinct phases. First, objective studies and expert testimony were reviewed. This information contained national-level, as opposed to Oregon-specific, information. Most of the information was based on a few data sources, most commonly the [Tennessee Study of Class](#)

[Size in the Early School Grades by Frederick Mosteller](#) in the 1990s, as well as studies conducted on efforts in California in the 1990s and early 2000s. The reviewed testimony and literature indicated that increased class size generally has a negative impact on almost all metrics tracked, including retention, achievement, engagement, teaching evaluations and teaching effectiveness. However, they also indicated that the negative impact was relatively small. The Task Force appreciated this block of information but did not find it to be particularly persuasive. Specifically, members indicated in hearings that the findings were inconsistent with their experiences as education experts, that the data sources were not similar enough to Oregon, and that the underlying data was gathered too long ago.

The Task Force then reviewed testimony, stories and information provided by various Oregon-specific sources, mostly current and former educators and administrators, including teachers, principals and Task Force members working in the field. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provided information and reports based on their annual data collection. ODE also provided the work of the Quality Education Commission (QEC), as related to the Quality Education Model (QEM). This block of information indicated that while there was no single metric dramatically impacted by larger class size, there were many smaller negative impacts that combined to create a large negative impact. This negative impact was experienced by all who participated in the daily activities of schools, including teachers, students and administrators. The members of the Task Force found this information to be especially valuable and persuasive.

#### **Appropriate Class Size as Determined by the Quality Education Model**

House Bill 2928, directs the Task Force to “determine appropriate class sizes based on grade, types of students and subject area content.” The Task Force has determined that appropriate class sizes are already captured by the QEM and the work of the QEC.

From the Executive Summary of the [Quality Education Model 2016](#) Final Report:

*The Quality Education Model (QEM) was developed as a research and data-driven tool to evaluate educational practices and estimate the level of funding required to meet Oregon’s educational goals. The model provides information that promotes a more informed dialogue among policy-makers, educators, the public, and other stakeholders, using national research as well as lessons learned from the analysis of Oregon schools. The goal of the Quality Education Commission, which maintains and enhances the QEM and assists others using the model for policy analysis, is to promote a better-informed decision-making process that leads to better prepared students, a more equitable system, more successful citizens, and a more productive economy in the state.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Quality Education Model 2016 Final Report, (Quality Education Commission, 2016), 9.

The Task Force discussed the QEM recommendations, and an appropriate definition of class size. The members agreed that class size should refer to the number of students in a given course or classroom. Class size as such is different and distinct from student to teacher ratio, which is calculated by dividing the number of students who attend a school by the number of teachers in the institution. While both measures are important, the Task Force followed the direction of the enacting legislation to focus on class size.

The QEM includes models for school facilities identified as Individual Prototype Schools. “The Individual Prototype Schools incorporate what research and best practices have shown to be most important in improving student achievement and provide a level of resources that adequately promotes and sustains that goal.”<sup>2</sup>

The QEM recommends the following regarding class sizes in prototype schools<sup>3</sup>:

*Elementary School, 340 Students:*

*Class size average of 20 in kindergarten and grade 1*

*Class size of 23 in grades 2-3*

*Class size of 24 in grades 4-5*

*Middle School, 500 Students:*

*Class size average of 22, with a maximum of 29 in core classes*

*High School, 1,000 Students:*

*Class size average of 21, with a maximum of 29 in core classes*

Testimony heard by the Task Force indicates that most schools include class sizes above the recommended average. In fact, it is quite common; most Oregon students are in classes far larger than recommended:

- 82% of K-1 students are in classes with more than 20 students
- 72% of 2-3 students are in classes with more than 23 students
- 75% of 4-5 students are in classes with more than 24 students
- 95% of 6-8 students have at least one class with more than 22 students,  
and 53% of 6-8 students are enrolled in classes that are *all* over the threshold
- 95% of 9-12 students have at least one class with more than 21 students,  
and 45% of 9-12 students are enrolled in classes that are *all* over the threshold
- 73% 6-12 students have at least one class with more than 29 students (QEM max),  
and 9% of 6-12 students are enrolled in classes that are *all* over the maximum

Testimony also indicated that additional pressure at the higher grade levels resulted in even larger classes. For example, the desire to keep core class sizes smaller (below 22 students), often resulted in very large non-core classes, sometimes as great as 40 to 60 students.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

Because class size research has examined the impact of the difference between regular (22-25) versus small (13-17) class sizes, little is known about the specific impacts of class sizes as large as those that are typical in Oregon. The Task Force recognizes that Oregon has some of the largest class sizes and one of the worst graduation rates in the nation.

### **Cost to Reduce Class Sizes to Recommended Levels**

The Task Force concluded that the QEM provides accurate guidance for the cost of reducing class sizes. That report anticipates a \$1.992 billion “funding gap” for the 2017-2019 biennium based on current service levels. Of that amount, the QEM estimates that \$361 million would be required to reduce class sizes in elementary schools to levels recommended by the model.<sup>4</sup> While additional work is needed to determine costs for any specific methods recommended to reduce class sizes (as required by House Bill 2928), this figure provides a valuable baseline for future discussions. [additional language pending here]

### **Part 2 - Impacts and Stories**

The following represents the findings of the Task Force based on materials reviewed and testimony received:

Oregon’s class sizes have been far too high for far too long. According to the 2016 QEM, Oregon is still far from meeting our class size goals. In the short time that this Task Force has met, we heard numerous stories from teachers, parents, administrators, and community members. Each story exemplifies the various outcomes of large class sizes on parents, on students and on teachers. Every teacher wants every student to succeed, but when there are too many students in the room it becomes impossible to meet every need.

### **Relationships**

#### **Students**

The student-teacher relationship is central to the classroom setting. The number of students for which a teacher is responsible changes that relationship. It can be hard to have crucial one-on-one time with students when there is a larger number of students in the classroom. As hard as teachers try to connect, there is only so much time in each day.

The Task Force heard numerous examples of how teachers and students missed out on creating lasting relationships because there simply was not time in the day. Representative McLain was a teacher for 42 years. She mentioned one student in a class of over forty who said upon returning from an absence, “I didn’t think you would miss me.” Student engagement hinges on student-teacher relationships.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 57.



These relationships are central to education. Even in online schools, relationships matter. Sarah Coyle, an online and in-class teacher for the Hillsboro School District, testified before the Task Force. She teaches on and off line for Hillsboro School District, and offered this insight. The majority of students that participate online are more fragile than traditional students. She spoke about students who have mental and physical health issues, have working families, are working to take care of their families, or are parents. Even online, it is important that teachers create deliberate connections with students to provide support.

### Parents

Education happens beyond the classroom. It is important that teachers know their students and their home lives. Kristen Manning, a teacher in the Salem-Keizer School District, explained, “You see, as teachers, we do so much more than teach. We provide social services, family services, we love the children, we hurt with the children. We deeply care.”

As hard as teachers try, they cannot meet every parent or guardian. The more students in the classroom, the more parents or guardians to meet. Teacher Kathy Newman explained,

Another common casualty due to large class sizes includes our most important partners – parents/legal guardians. When I mention the 50% increase in student load . . . the thing to bear in mind is that 50% doesn’t just represent the student alone. Each student comes with their own system – parents (sometimes multiples), siblings, etc. So I try to communicate with and get to know each little system because I understand how each system has an impact on my students. Twenty-four or twenty-five systems are manageable – over thirty, not so much. The result? **Parents received less communication or the communication received was short** – or I focused on the ‘high-flyers’ – I had to cut out the “happy news” – there were fewer newsletters and class-wide communications or the communication happening was more one-size fits all, as opposed to individual follow up and verbal progress updates on individual students. Our children are missing out!

### Community

Our schools are a part of our community. Interactions between our students and other parts of the community are incredibly important in terms of educational field trips, job shadows, career fairs and other opportunities. Task Force member and elementary school teacher Jeff Matsumoto explained that community partners are less likely to invite a class of students to visit a facility if the class size is large. The ease of access to facilities is very different when there are fifteen students versus forty.

### **Absentee rates**

In [May of 2016](#) the [Chief Education Office issued Legislature passed House Bill 4002 to address Oregon's problem with chronically absent students. The resulting a](#) [Chronic Absenteeism](#)

[Report](#), identifying factors and recommendations to begin to solve this problem of chronic absenteeism. In a number of ways, a lack of positive relationships was linked to chronic absenteeism. The report identified large class sizes as a systematic barrier.

In preparation for the report, the Chief Education Office interviewed parents, students and teachers about why students may be absent. Parents identified class size because smaller classes offered an opportunity for teachers to stay in touch better with families and provide additional one-on-one support. One mother shared her frustration by saying,

[My daughter] is not able to get [individual attention] sometimes, because there are so many students. She might be scared to ask a question or something sometimes, because they are just going to say, "We will get to the questions later," or the teacher is busy to where she doesn't have the time to sit down and actually explain something to her. She has to come home and I have to hear it later, that she is having challenges in math or something. Luckily, there are the afterschool programs, like [the culturally specific program she attends], helping her to work on that, because in the classes it is hard to get that explanation sometimes, because the teacher has to move on. One student has a question and then others have questions, too. Sometimes a teacher will make that time to answer that, but with the large amount of students, it is hard to get to everyone.<sup>5</sup>

The students interviewed for the Chronic Absenteeism Report complained of similar problems. Students were compassionate towards their teachers who were unable to manage classroom dynamics. They recognized that class size makes a teacher's job even harder. They said it would be "easier to learn with less people" and that large class sizes take their toll. One student explained what it was like to have twenty-eight students in a class, "I didn't even know everybody's name. Show up to class when the bell rings, this is what the work is, do the work and then go home. Then I started to just hate school."<sup>6</sup>

[\(Also in 2016, the Legislature passed House Bill 4002, directing the Department of Education and the Chief Education Office to jointly develop and implement a collaborative statewide plan for tackling chronic absenteeism, prioritizing pilot programs that use trauma-informed approaches. A report summarizing the plan can be found here. \[hyperlink\]\)](#)

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## Space

One of the most visible impacts of large class sizes is the physical limitations of putting too many students in one classroom. There are challenges associated with actual whole-class activities due to physical limitations of the room. Members of the Task Force shared that they have had to request desks for their rooms. One teacher, Gene Trowbridge, explained some

<sup>5</sup> Chronic Absenteeism Report, 56

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

limitations she has seen, "I often cannot have a traditional circle time; the room does not allow 30 wiggly 5 year olds to sit down safely together."

Teachers are not the only ones to notice the crowded space. Steve Frank submitted written testimony about his elementary-aged daughter's experience in school. She told him, "It's hard to walk around because there wasn't enough room" and "It would get really noisy really easily." These spaces are unwelcoming to students and counterproductive to a proper learning environment.

### **Resources**

Larger class size limits access to resources. Teachers testified that their students often have to share materials in the classroom, like books and other instructional tools. Teacher Kathy Newman testified about her experience:

The year my colleague and I had 36 and 37 students, when we got to the computer lab during our allotted time, several of the students had to double up with others. But, even if we had the infrastructure, students need time and individual attention to receive meaningful technology instruction and practice.

Ensuring that students receive proper technological training is incredibly important in our increasingly digital age. Our large class sizes make that job twice as hard. Doubling up on computers is only part of the problem. Large class sizes make it too dangerous for certain labs or projects. Many of the hands-on-projects that are central to science and engineering projects are not possible in large class size situations.

### **Safety**

Large class size changes the dynamic of a room. Of course the room is more crowded, but that atmosphere also affects the students. Teacher Kristen Manning explained how grumpy 5 year olds need their space. A seasoned teacher, Kathy Newman, explained why overcrowding in the classroom is dangerous:

In the past few years, we have (and I am told this is a statewide issue) experienced a large number of our youngest students with out-of-control behaviors. Behaviors that compromised the safety/learning of the class, the out-of-control student, and the educator – it is sad when "room clears" are not an uncommon occurrence. We are being told that this is due to the high number of students that have experienced or are experiencing trauma in their lives. The statistic we are recited is that 1 out of 5 students have experienced or are experiencing trauma in their lives. Some of these students act out. But many of them are the silent sufferers – students who internalize their trauma. When faced with large class sizes of 30 students -or more it is nearly impossible to

address the needs of these traumatized students – or even recognize who they might be. Unfortunately, the focus is on the explosive, or outwardly expressive child. But each time there is an uncontrolled outburst (a student throwing, screaming and crying, yelling profanities, threatening, hurting someone) in the classroom, those silent trauma victims are victimized again and again.

There are many components to safety. The physical component affect both teachers and students. Kathy Newman also shared her co-worker’s experience. She fell in a classroom two years ago and is still recuperating. Safety for all must remain a top priority in Oregon schools.

### **Ability to adapt to student need**

As the number of students in a classroom increases, the individual care decreases. Robert Havrilla was one of the first teachers to testify. Before testifying, he spoke with eight other teachers from most subjects taught at his high school. Robert spoke of how those teachers recognized that large class sizes changed their ability to recognize and adapt to students’ life circumstance:

With more students, **the needs of each student can get lost.** I have personally had the experience that I find out that I have a student who is homeless, has a parent in prison, a parent going to prison, are the only working member of their family, has been subjected to different types of abuse, harming themselves, or have learning challenges that have not yet been identified. I have found out this information later than I should, and there have been times I’ve found out too late. Why? With the focus on standards, the increased evaluation, and the large class sizes, there is just simply not enough time to quickly get to know each student as we should. The whole student should be our focus.

Aside from life circumstances, there are other individualized educational needs that can present themselves in any classroom. Teachers need the time to adapt to each student, to their learning styles and disabilities, to their personal backgrounds and home life. **[additional language pending here]**

### **Feedback**

Robert Havrilla’s conversation with eight of his colleagues revealed that class sizes affected all subjects in similar ways. He is a Social Studies teacher, but he also spoke with Math, Science, English, Art, PE, Advanced Placement teachers. The effects of large class sizes are clear; students receive less from teachers because they are spread more thinly. Robert described this with a detailed example:

Students are unable to get the timely and quality feedback necessary for sustained learning. Most of the teachers I talked to have the same class load as I, about 200 students. If my students write one paragraph, it will take me about two minutes to read that paragraph and assess what feedback is needed and another one to three minutes to give the quality feedback. There is no way for me to have those paragraphs completed to give students feedback the next day. If I am doing nothing else after school like preparing for future classes, helping students, taking care of responsibilities that go with being a husband and a father, it might take two to three days to write that feedback which goes against the need for prompt feedback for sustained learning.

Teacher Kathy Newman also spoke to feedback in her testimony. As a teacher with over 25 years of experience in classrooms of first through sixth graders, Kathy said:

Students need deep, meaningful practice and quality verbal and written feedback. They are learning how to do things in different ways with different expectations. The additional individual attention that is needed is probably not happening at a level that teachers or students find adequate. Our children are missing out!

#### **Student achievement**

##### Graduation rate

Oregon's graduation rates are among the worst in the nation. There are a number of measurable and unmeasurable ways that graduation rate is influenced by large class size. Absentee rates are a direct link. The Chronic Absenteeism Report states that chronic absenteeism as early as 6th grade negatively impacts high school graduation rates.

##### Test scores

The Task Force did not see direct evidence that larger class size lowers test scores. We did hear that large class sizes decrease one-on-one instruction time, hurt relationships, lead to sharing limited resources, and other factors that affect test scores. One teacher, Kathy Newman, warned that even if test scores were unaffected, test scores themselves are "a very narrow window into the experiences of students for that year."

#### **Teacher experience**

Teachers work in their profession because they are compassionate people. Large class sizes have a negative impact on teacher experience. Task Force member and teacher Jeff Matsumoto explained, "This is what keeps teachers up at night." Many teachers suggested that the feeling that they are not doing all they can for students leads to burnout.

Multiple members of the Task Force pointed to increased class size as a reason why their profession has a retention problem. Teacher Jim Maniback testified that stress and large class

sizes were the reason teachers left the classroom. Another teacher, Kristen Manning, that came to testify explained why,

[My son's] teacher was amazing. She was patient, kind, and worked much harder than she would have had to with fewer children in her care. She was admirable under pressure and her students got her best every day. However, if she continues to have those kind of numbers year-over-year, how much longer before she burns out? How much longer before we lose from our ranks an educational superstar?"

The increased workload is tiring. Many teachers testified that the workload increases that come with larger class sizes are exhausting. It means teachers stay late, work at home, and lose precious time with their own families. It means teachers are constantly working in high stress conditions.

When class sizes are reduced, the entire school benefits. Task Force member Darin Drill told his district's story. As Superintendent of Cascade School District, he saw the change in school culture. All staff were less stressed and happier to be at work. By reducing class sizes, Oregon can help teachers reach their full potential.

### **Equity**

Large classes have different impacts on different students. For those students that have involved parents with the ability to tutor their children, they can adapt to large class sizes. Unfortunately, many children do not have that opportunity. Mother and teacher Gene Trowbridge spoke to the task force about the difference in her children's class size. Her eldest had a kindergarten class of twenty-two students with an aide and her youngest, seven years later, had a class of twenty-five students with no aide. She brought up an incredibly valuable point. While her son's classroom experience was much more ideal, her daughter would be fine. Gene understood things could have been worse for her daughter:

We know that the students in higher income communities have resources and supports that children in poverty do not have, we have this opportunity to give these children additional supports through smaller class sizes.

Teacher Jim Maniback made the same point that smaller class sizes benefit low income students the most. This point was reiterated by Task Force members and nearly every teacher that testified. Large class sizes disproportionately disadvantage at-risk-youth. Teacher Kristen Manning emphasized this point to task force members as well:

All children suffer with large class sizes. They all need more. But those who are most

vulnerable, those most likely to drop out later, those most likely to fall behind, our youngest students, they need reduced class sizes the most. They need a fighting chance at success.

Oregon's education system should include an equity lens; it should lift underprivileged children up. The state has developed and implemented programs that work towards that goal. Class size may be one of the most effective ways to address this problem.

#### Part 4 - Conclusion

House Bill 2528 (2015) required the Task Force to accomplish ~~three-four~~ things: determine appropriate class size, identify costs, ~~and~~ identify specific options for the reduction of class size, and submit a report with recommendations. As of the writing of this report, only the third task remains.

In the limited time available, the Task Force endorsed the recommendations of the Quality Education Model for Individual Prototype Schools (QEM) with regard to appropriate class sizes and the corresponding cost estimates to achieve recommended class sizes (\$361 million for elementary schools). The Task Force endorses the QEM and recommends that it serve as a baseline for future discussions.

Large class size is a systemic problem – a root contributor to other problems – and it requires significant investment to repair. It is embedded and interwoven with other challenges, creating a complex, *cumulative* negative impact across the breadth of the educational community: student/teacher, parent/teacher and student/parent communications and relationships suffer; opportunities for direct interactions are lacking or don't exist; opportunities to engage the community are lost; resources and teachers are stretched too thin and exhausted; students, parents and teachers experience anonymity, frustration and futility; large class size is linked to chronic absenteeism; safety is compromised; learning is compromised; achievement and test scores are affected; graduation rates are affected; and the list goes on.

Of particular concern to the Task Force is the disparate impact on Oregon's most vulnerable children: all the negative cumulative effects of large class size are compounded for children already disadvantaged and burdened by poverty, or race, or disability, or any combination of these. These are also the children who could benefit the most from education, which in turn would result in the greatest gains for society as a whole. [rewrite language pending]

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While the Legislature has taken steps to solve some issues in isolation, such as absenteeism and graduation rates, the Task Force strongly recommends that the State acknowledge that large class size is a systemic, integrated, root problem that should be addressed directly rather than by applying Band Aids to individual symptoms; that education is chronically underfunded and changing course demands significant, immediate investment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_; that all possible

funding sources and alternatives should be explored and developed without delay; that Oregon should prioritize its most vulnerable children; and that, so long as the state’s Constitution allows for an “out” in the form of a reporting requirement in lieu of adequate funding, education may never be adequately funded.

**Part 4 – Task Force Findings and Recommendations**

1. Appropriate class sizes and costs estimates to achieve reductions have already been determined by the Quality Education Commission as reported in the 2016 Quality Education Model (QEM). The Task Force wholeheartedly endorses the QEM and recommends the Legislature adopt and follow it.

2. Education is chronically underfunded and significant investment is required for course correction to undo systemic, interwoven, cumulative issues developed over decades. Crowded classrooms are one result, and an embedded, root contributor to these issues. The Task Force recommends the Legislature acknowledge these facts, follow the QEM, and make the investment needed to fund education appropriately: \$\_\_\_\_\_.

3. The Oregon Constitution requires funding at the QEM level, or in the alternative, a report explaining why not. The Task Force recommends constitutionally-required funding at the QEM level outright.

4. The Task Force appreciates that funds are not unlimited and recommends the Legislature consider all possibilities, and immediately redesign, redirect, and/or develop anew, sustainable, stable sources to fund education appropriately. The Task Force Further recommends prioritizing Oregon’s most vulnerable children. The Task Force recommends that work should continue, to identify specific reduction methods and costs of implementation; and that future activities and investments to that end should prioritize the most disadvantaged children.

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*We can do better. - Kristen Manning  
Our children are missing out! - Kathy Newman  
The whole student should be our focus. - Robert Havrilla*