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*Parkrose School District is an equal  
opportunity educator and employer.*

To: House Committee on Education

From: Karen Gray, Superintendent Parkrose School District

Date: March 20, 2017

Re: Support for House Bill 2693

Chair Doherty and Committee Members,

Written Testimony for HB 2693 Youth Transportation Initiative

This prepared written testimony is from Dr. Karen Fischer Gray, Superintendent of the Parkrose School District since 2007 and Board Chair Mary Lu Baetkey who has been on the Board of Education for the last four years.

For the last few years, the Portland Public School District has enjoyed having each high school student's TriMet Bus Pass paid for by a combination of their transportation dollars, TriMet and City of Portland. In fact, one million dollars per year from the City has been set aside for this purpose for years. High School students in PPS can go anywhere in the county they wish for free. The other school districts in Portland like Parkrose and David Douglas cannot. Neither can most districts in Oregon.

The students in the Parkrose School District qualify for more than 80% free and reduced meal rates and 67% of our students are students who are racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse. The need to get to and from school, to valuable employment, food shopping for their families and other reasons that make this bill very important. This opportunity will bring transportation options much needed by our most vulnerable families and students.

In this bill, school districts will be able to apply for grant funding in order to subsidize the Youth Passes in order to meet student transportation needs. With more Bus Passes in use, TriMet may even get the funding and inclination to expand bus service and bus frequency, something sorely lacking in East County. In the end, when students have a free Youth Pass, they can get to school on time, reduce tardiness and absenteeism which keeps them in class more often, making education so much more effective.

Please support HB 2693 the Youth Transportation Initiative. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen F. Gray".

Dr. Karen Fischer Gray  
Parkrose School District, Superintendent  
Portland, Oregon

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Lu Baetkey".

Mary Lu Baetkey  
Parkrose School District, Chair of the Board of Education  
Portland, Oregon



*Every child reads, thinks critically, and graduates ready for  
college and career.*