

Hello,

I'm writing to voice my support of House Bill 3427 that will increase funding to education. I am a paraeducator at Westview, one of the largest high schools in the state, and this year I have witnessed firsthand the effects of underfunding education.

The most glaring effect of underfunding is overpacked classrooms. Most core classes I work in average between 32 and 36 students, but I have a coworker who teaches a social studies class of 44! Our science labs each have eight lab tables, which means that the max ideal number of students in a science class would be 32 (with 4 students assigned to a table), but one of our Freshman Physics classes has 36. Between the lab tables, desks, and lab materials, we often end up in a gridlock situation during labs where we can hardly move around the classroom.

Far more concerning than the space issue though is the impact that large classes have on our students. Student/teacher relationships greatly suffer when a teacher's attention is split across a greater number of students. Individual conferencing with students becomes a marathon event, and in-depth conversations must be kept to a minimum in the interest of connecting at least a little with every student in the class. In this environment, it's much easier for students to slip through the cracks and teachers to burn out.

For these reasons I am in strong support of this new legislation. How we educate our children determines how we move forward as a society, and our current circumstances leave me worried for our collective future.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kelly Simonsen
*Social Studies, Language Arts, and Science Paraeducator
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