

Teachers support Clackamas County Children's Levy

 pamplinmedia.com/ocn/57-opinion/482680-389315-teachers-support-clackamas-county-childrens-levy

Jenny Brauckmiller and Lindsey Lieber

Jenny Brauckmiller and Lindsey Lieber have both been health educators for about 20 years

As teachers we are asked to wear many different hats. It's safe to say that this school year we've added a few more hats. At times this can feel overwhelming. In spite of that, we show up every day ready to do our job — and do it well. The truth is that we all go into this line of work for very different reasons. Some of us have a love for a specific content area. Some of us enjoy speaking in front of large groups of people. Some of us just do it because we want to serve our communities. Most importantly — on top of all the valid reasons — we do it because we truly care about our students and their futures.

In normal times our schools can act as a refuge for the children and youth that enter our classrooms — a welcome change of pace from their home lives. This is especially true for students impacted by unspeakable acts of violence, neglect and abuse. But these are not normal times. Our students are now coming to us from behind a computer screen — making it more difficult to build the connections needed to identify these traumas. Even when our classrooms are filled with students, we know we can't do this alone. We truly believe it takes an entire community to support our children and youth.

That's why we're supporting the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy. This measure is specifically designed to serve Clackamas County's most vulnerable kids by funding qualified local service providers with a track record of success working with children and youth impacted by trauma.

As teachers, one of the hats we agree to wear is that of "mandatory reporter." That means if we suspect a student is in trouble, we are required to report it to the proper authorities. We don't take this responsibility lightly. Because of that, we want to be sure that when we seek support for one of our students, they have access to the services they need — services including emergency shelter for victims of child abuse; legal representation and advocacy; trauma-informed care; truancy prevention and educational achievement support; and peer-based mentoring. We also want to make sure that attempts are being made to prevent and end these cycles of abuse.

With these supports in place, we are confident that students who experience trauma can return to the classroom and focus on their academic achievement. We believe that every student — no matter their circumstances — should be given this opportunity. That's why

we are asking you to now more than ever show support for our community's children — our future leaders — by prioritizing their well-being, and ensuring they can reach their full potential.

The lesson is simple: the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy is a small investment with a big return for our kids. Please join us in voting yes by Nov. 3.

Jenny Brauckmiller is a parent and has been a health and physical education teacher in Molalla for 20 years; Lindsey Lieber has been a health educator for 18 years, 14 of which have been in Oregon City.
