



To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist
Re: Senate Bill 240
Date: April 21, 2021

OFFICERS

President
Maureen Wolf
Tigard-Tualatin SD

President-elect
Scott Rogers
Athena-Weston SD

Vice President
Sonja Mckenzie
Parkrose SD

Secretary-Treasurer
Patti Norris
Crook County SD

Past President
Kevin Cassidy
Baker SD

DIRECTORS

Sami Al-AbdRabbuh
*Oregon School Board
Members of Color Caucus*

Chris Cronin
John Day SD

Jackie Crook
South Coast ESD

Terry Deacon
Linn Benton Lincoln ESD

Katrina Doughty
Multnomah ESD

Libra Forde
North Clackamas SD

Linda Hamilton
Lane ESD

Kris Howatt
Gresham-Barlow SD

Greg Kintz
Vernonia SD

Melissa LaCrosse
Jefferson SD

Jesse Lippold
Salem-Keizer SD

Erika Lopez
Hillsboro SD

Brandy Penner
Newberg SD

Lori Theros
Klamath Falls City Schools

Dawn Watson
Phoenix-Talent SD

EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

COSA/OASE
Craig Hawkins

OAESD
Kelly Bissinger

State Board of Education
Kimberly Howard

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Green

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mary Paulson

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chairs Thomsen, and members of the committee:

On behalf of OSBA membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts throughout the state of Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to register concerns with SB 240.

Under current law, up to 3% of students in any school district may attend a virtual online charter school; when the population exceeds 3%, students must work with the district for permission to attend these schools. SB 240 would remove that 3% cap and would also make other changes that would enable online charter schools easier access to students in non-sponsoring school districts.

Charter school students are public school students. Charter schools are an important resource for public school districts. Generally, it is the school district that forms the charter with a non-profit company to form the charter school.

With that value acknowledged, SB 240 raises serious concerns. It is important that all students have access to an education that works well for them. However, it is crucial that public policy enable a stable system and adequate planning time for school districts. Because while it is important to recognize that some students would like to join the approximate 14,000 students currently enrolled in virtual charter schools, it is vital to recognize the potential impact SB 240 could have on the totality of the approximate 560,000 enrolled in public schools.

Because of the way public school funding is allocated under current law, removing the cap from virtual schools could move millions of dollars between schools and school districts. Many virtual charters are sponsored by small school districts, and in some cases the enrollment of the virtual charter school far exceeds that of the “bricks and mortar” enrollment in the rest of the district. Enabling swings of potentially hundreds or thousands of students and potentially millions of dollars between schools and school districts should not be done without careful consideration by policy makers.