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March 20, 2013

The Board of Directors of the Coburg Community Charter School would like to formally comment on House Bill 2153, which proposes to set limits on the percentage of students enrolled in charter schools within a given district. We oppose the bill on both philosophical and practical grounds.

Philosophically, HB 2153 contradicts the underlying basis for Oregon's Open Enrollment Policy. Under that policy, a student may attend any school in the state in which space is available and the per-student funding follows the child to the receiving district. Under equalization, no district is solely responsible for generating the revenue for educating its students; under the Open Enrollment Policy, no district can assume that all students living within its geographical boundaries will attend schools within that district. Both of these principles, equalization and Open Enrollment, suggest that in the state of Oregon the welfare of the students is paramount. House Bill 2153 argues the opposite case, that the welfare of the district supersedes the welfare of the students.

From a practical perspective, Charter School law came into existence to foster innovation in education. Simply put, parents, teachers, and community members can create an educational model that, if it is legally and educationally sound, is worthy of implementation to provide options in education to the students of Oregon. Again, House Bill 2153 contradicts the intention of the law and the larger mission that was the foundation for its creation. Innovation and choice are intrinsic to the mission of charter education. House Bill 2153 seeks to limit both.

The 3% limitation applied to a district like 4j, which already has two charter schools with a combined enrollment of approximately 500, would grant that district

the right to decline any additional charter schools if it could demonstrate that the proposed schools do not "advance one or more educational goals identified by the school district board." School district goals, not the needs of students, would be the determining criteria. In such a scenario, it is unlikely that Coburg Community Charter School would have been granted a charter at all. After one year in operation, CCCS was deemed a "model school" by the Oregon Department of Education. Because of a shortsighted formula, the opportunity for outstanding programs like CCCS could be lost.

The Board of Directors of Coburg Community Charter School opposes House Bill 2153 because it limits the ability of students to choose the best educational opportunity available to them. It discourages innovation and it puts the interests of the districts ahead of the interests of Oregon's school children. Please put Oregon's children first and vote No on House Bill 2153.

Sincerely,

Janel McPherson, President

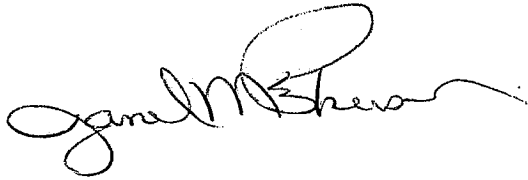
Mary Bauer, Vice-president

Leah Claypool, Secretary

Will Lewis, Treasurer

Mollie Smith, Charter founder and parent

Mindy Hayner, Charter founder and parent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janel McPherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.