

March 24, 2013

Chair Gelser and the House Committee on Education:

We respectfully submit this letter in opposition of HB 2748 to the House Committee on Education for the Work Session scheduled on March 25, 2013.

We are an average American family of five. We have a second grader and two kindergarteners who attend Riverdale Grade School. Both of us are wage earners, and we saved to move to the Riverdale School District in 2012 for the benefit of our children. In the rhetoric around HB 2748, we hear that Riverdale is full of the super rich. We are proof that is patently false, and we are not alone.

Despite the fact that education is woefully underfunded statewide, Riverdale has found a way to offer an excellent program. Students have a 94% on-time graduation rate, and the schools consistently achieve outstanding ratings. We simply cannot fathom the reasons that the Oregon House would impose an existential threat to one of the state's best performing public school districts.

We would like the committee members to stop and consider what happens should HB 2748 move forward. Assuming the current 100+ transfer students were allowed to stay at Riverdale, Oregon would send another \$700k to the district. That would cover approximately half of the expenditure per student which would place Riverdale with a significant financial burden. Riverdale will likely have to lay-off teachers, cut programs, and not unlike Beaverton, Portland and Salem-Keizer, Riverdale will be unlikely to accept open enrollment transfers. This will only serve to decrease diversity in the district.

From Maryland to Montana many states allow districts to charge tuition for non-resident students. Some of the most successful public schools in the nation, such as Fairfax County, Virginia, charge similar amounts to Riverdale for students to attend. We fail to understand why Oregon would decrease the options available to districts in the name of a misguided open access experiment. The House Committee on Education should take a step back from rushing this ill-considered bill and commission a comprehensive study on open access.

HB2748 has the potential to ruin the education and community for Riverdale students and their families, while at the same time imposing additional costs onto the state education fund. Focusing on this bill is a waste of taxpayer resources. We urge you to put this on hold and examine real solutions to the problems plaguing our state's public school system. We need legislation to help all Oregon students.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiana Dixon

Martin G. Dixon