

May 12, 2013

Dear Chairman Hass, Vice-Chair Knopp, Senator Beyer,
Senator Kruse and Senator Roblan,

First, and on a personal note to Senator Hass, thank you for encouraging constituents to express their ideas regarding the priority of issues in Oregon via the online questionnaire that I completed yesterday. I was honored to have the opportunity to express an opinion regarding issues of significance to Oregonians.

I am writing to you all to encourage the Senate Education Committee to defeat HB 2747 during your hearing this week.

Here is the dilemma: School districts are fighting every day to provide services to all students in their Districts with less-than-adequate funding. The news that Districts will receive 12 percent more in funding than last year for the next biennium is certainly good news; however, Oregon Schools are still woefully under-funded. While I applaud the Senate Education Committee's work toward serving the best interests of Oregon students, piecemeal policies such as those advocated in HB 2747 only serve to set Districts back.

Oregon law encourages Districts to offer transfers, open enrollment and tuition options for students seeking educational choice. I believe this is good practice, as there are many good reasons students seek a better "fit" for them – music, athletics, TAG, foreign language immersion, special educational services, school size – are all reasons families may seek to make a change for their children. This is a good thing, but the idea of "fit" is one that goes both ways. In addition to family priorities, school districts must have transparency to determine their ability to meet a student's unique needs, mainly from a resource standpoint – space, staffing, program. HB 2747 serves to eliminate that transparency and, potentially, to undermine schools' service opportunities overall.

Especially because a District receiving a new student becomes the resident District of that student forever, it is vital that the receiving District be able to have more information than this statute would allow. Public schools, especially (but not exclusively) in smaller Districts, walk a resource tightrope. Without District ability to ascertain and ensure that they can meet a student's need—whether it is accelerated math, foreign language, IEP/504 requirements, or other circumstances—nobody concerned is served to the level we must demand for our children.

Unfortunately, this bill serves neither the best interests of students OR of School Districts. Please defeat HB 2747.

Sincerely,

Jill Hall
397 Furnace St.
Lake Oswego, OR 97034
503/706-0766