

May 13, 2013

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

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 2747, and to encourage the Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development to reject the bill during the scheduled hearing and work session this week.

HB2747 severely curtails the information that a school district can request when admitting out of district students via a traditional transfer, open enrollment or tuition option. Thousands of students in Oregon seek choice to attend schools offering programs that best fit their interests, from IB and TAG, to art, music, sports and language. However, HB2747 may inadvertently limit their choices.

If HB2747 passes, school districts will not be able to determine if they can meet a student's needs in terms of space, staffing or programs. To best serve students, school districts must have access to additional information (transcripts, etc) to plan how to best support and finance requirements including remedial classes, TAG services, aide or monitors.

Unfortunately, since transfer decisions aren't made until late spring, when budgets are also due, this process would leave school districts scrambling to finance the programs required to meet the unknown needs of an incoming student body. This is especially difficult for small school districts like ours, which is sandwiched between much larger districts, and relies heavily on revenue from transfer students to stay afloat. We simply do not have the resources to absorb and accommodate those needs on short notice.

An additional concern is that HB2747 removes the decision-making authority from locally elected school boards and hired school administrators to best serve students transferring from one district to another. Students benefit from a two-way dialogue with schools to ensure the best fit and successful outcomes.

I am not sure what this bill is trying to solve. However, I fear that these issues will have the unintended consequence of making school districts close their doors to transfer students, thereby limiting the pathways so vital to school choice.

HB2747 is not in the best interest of students or school districts. Please vote no.

Thank you,

Tiana Dixon  
Portland, Oregon