



Oregon Connections Academy Parent Association (ORCAPA) represents a group comprised of Connections Academy's online schooling families and friends.

20 May 2013

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Subcommittee on Education,

As the Oregon Connections Academy Parents Association (ORCAPA), we represent the roughly 3400 students and their families enrolled in Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA). We are opposed to SB 761 as it is currently written.¹ We find yet *another* governance task force to be redundant and unnecessary.

During the 2009 legislative session, SB 767² called for a task force which published recommendations in December 2009³. During the 2010 special legislative session, many of the SB 767 task force recommendations, including governance and oversight issues, were passed as part of HB 3660⁴. That bill also included a directive to the State Board of Education to develop a proposed governance model. The August 2010 report "Online Learning"⁵ included various recommendations, several of which have already been adopted as law.

Near the conclusion of the 2011 legislative session, SB 994⁶ established another **Task Force on Virtual School Governance**. The resulting report⁷ recommends that yet another task force be convened, and no proposed legislation was prepared. They also recommended that the future task force scope be increased beyond what was prescribed in SB 994.

During all this time of meetings and studies, ORCA has been providing a quality education to thousands of students. Many of ORCA's transfer students arrive in their high school years, credit-deficient and ready to quit. Yet, even with those challenges, ORCA has shown a 10% increase in on-time graduations over the last year. Preliminary figures show that ORCA has an 80% graduation rate for students who attend all 4 years of high school. Additionally, OAKS testing shows ORCA students generally meet or exceed the scores from their counterparts in the traditional system. There has been no indication that ORCA has done anything except provide a dynamic, future-based option for Oregon's K-12 students.

Existing laws are providing sufficient governance while still allowing many students to flourish in successful online schools. Committing the additional time and resources, required by this bill, for yet another task force would be of little value. We respectfully request that you do not move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

ORCAPA Board Members:

Anne Marie Gurney, Jessica Cousineau, Preston Baxter, Mark Scarborough, Paula Foster, Lori Conklin

¹ <http://www.leg.state.or.us/13reg/measpdf/sb0700.dir/sb0761.intro.pdf>

² <http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/sb0700.dir/sb0767.en.pdf>

³ http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/commsrvs/online_learning_task_force_final_report.pdf

⁴ <http://www.leg.state.or.us/10ss1/measpdf/hb3600.dir/hb3660.en.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.cosa.k12.or.us/downloads/aboutcosa/FCMeetings/StateBoardOnlineLearningReport.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0900.dir/sb0994.en.pdf>

⁷ <http://library.state.or.us/repository/2011/201112201050412/index.pdf>