



February 18, 2014

Re: Senate Bill 1538

To: State of Oregon Legislature House Education Committee

This letter is being submitted on behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color Education Justice Committee in support of Section 4 to SB 1538. The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) strongly urges the committee to support Section 4 as it is currently introduced. If, however, the committee is not in support of the proposed Section 4, then we would encourage you to vote no on SB 1538. We feel that Section 4 attempts to ensure that student of color, English language learners, and low-income students have access to alternative educational opportunities in their communities. Without these changes, the bill is a bad bill.

The mission of the CCC is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity. Formed in 2001, the CCC is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

The proposed amendments align with the overall values and commitments framed by the Governor's education priorities. Through the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), the state has prioritized closing the achievement gap for students of color, English language learners, and low-income students. To ensure we achieve our collective vision, we ask policymakers to support the programs and resources that will ensure our students succeed in school.

The opportunity to close the achievement gap and to enhance the educational opportunities for priority students in our state is now. SB 1538 clearly affirms prioritizing these populations by attempting to eliminate arduous barriers for students of color and their families to access charter schools. We strongly urge the committee to approve that 50% of available slots in charter schools are made available to historically, underrepresented students of color, English language learners, and low-income students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Inger McDowell".

Inger McDowell
Education Justice Manager

