

Subject: Please do pass SB 819 and SB 820

Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee,

Tuesday, SB 819 and SB 820 will be before the Senate Committee on Education and I urge you to please pass these two measures which are important for ensuring an outstanding education for all of Oregon's public school kids.

I am parent of two children. One completed her education through Portland Public Schools and one is currently a student at Southwest Charter School. I'm a long time advocate for public education and come from a family of educators. My mother was a career long elementary school teacher, and my father is just finishing 32 years as an elected member of Clackamas ESD. I understand the need for us to build and maintain a diverse, vibrant and effective public education system to ensure the future prosperity of our State and its citizens. I currently serve as a board member of Southwest Charter School, so I also have an appreciation of what an outstanding education our teachers and staff provide for 42% (\$5,000) less per student than district schools (per the Chalkboard Project). Charter schools were allowed by the legislature as real world laboratories to drive innovation in public education. Equitably funding them ensures that they can continue to meet that charge. SB 819 requires no new revenue, and keeps faith with the taxpayers in ensuring public school funding follows each child to the school he or she attends.

Charter schools are also public schools, so access to them by all of our citizens is an important value to uphold. SB 820 would give our school the ability to ensure that we are equitably providing access to historically under served students. The richness of diversity that comes from creating a more inclusive school environment results in a better job of preparing our students to actively participate as citizens in our community.

I urge you to please pass SB 819 and SB 820. Thank you.

Brian R. Smith
Board Member
Southwest Charter School