



Senate Bill 820 Testimony

Kaaren Heikes - May 20, 2015 – House Education Committee

SB 820: Co-sponsored by Senator Arnie Roblan, Representative Betty Komp, Senator Mark Hass, Senator Jeff Kruse, and Representative John Huffman. Passed the Senate Education Committee 6-1 and the Senate Chamber 29-1.

Currently, age and grade are the only criteria public charter schools may use for admission are: age and grade. ORS 338.125(1c) and (3a):

- “Enrollment may not be limited based on race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, disability or the terms of an individualized education program, income level, proficiency in the English language or athletic ability.”
- “If the number of applications from students who reside in the school district exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, the public charter school shall select students through an equitable lottery selection process.”

SB 820 would allow public charter schools to use “weighted lotteries” for historically underserved students (defined as students who are at risk because of any combination of their race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, disability and geographic location).

- Such a weighted lottery would be considered an equitable lottery selection process.
- A “weighted lottery” essentially means putting a student’s name “in the hat” two or three times instead of just once.
- This would increase the odds of historically underserved students gaining admission to public charter schools.
- Many other states use “weighted lottery” for admission to public charter school students (for historically underserved students, based on geography, or to ensure reflection of the local district’s demographics).
- KairosPDX requested this legislation, as it essential to our continuing to serve the students for whom we designed our public charter school. Many other charter schools support this legislation, as well; combined with a more equitable funding model and strategic outreach, we should see increasing diversity in charter school student demographics.

For additional information, please contact Kaaren Heikes: kaaren@kairospdx.org.