

HB 4091 Testimony 2/8/16

Baker Charter School's Position represented by Director- Dr. Daniel Huld, Ed. D.

Committee Members,

I am here representing Baker Web Academy, a virtual charter school sponsored by Baker School District in Eastern Oregon. We currently have 780 students enrolled from all corners of the state. Our staff is comprised of 5 administrator's, 10 support staff, and 36 (29.3 FTE) teachers. In our school we do bi-weekly home visits and offer drop in support in Baker City, Bend, Eugene and Portland. Every student in our school has access to computers, a variety of online or paper/pencil curricula, and a full time math tutor, and part time language arts tutor.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and position on the current version of HB 4091. I also want to express my thanks for your work last year to gain funding for all Oregon students, improve state testing conditions, and allowing charter schools to have facilities outside their sponsor district. These decisions in the end show that as a committee you are dedicated to all children in Oregon who deserve the best education we can provide. That is the reason we are all here, for the children.

For the current bill as presented in the -3 amendments our school and sponsor district does have concerns that we would like to express. First of all I will say that we support changing the word "plan" to "requirement" for many of the initiatives from 2009. Since 2009 we have operated by these standards and found many of them to support best practices and current research in online learning.

Our main contention is that under the current language in the ORS and our individual charters there is already a wealth of accountability for our school model. Adding on additional evaluations and requirements will distract resources from directly educating children. For Baker Web Academy we have a lot of oversight and support from our local school board and Baker School District. Here is list of a current reporting and accountability measures:

1. **Annual Audit** by third party that is publically available and sent to Baker Charter School Board, Baker School District and ODE. This audit is a detailed analysis of spending of our school from a third party. We eagerly comply with this requirement and go above and beyond to post our budget percents on our website- <http://bakercharters.org/board-information/>. Therefore the department of education already has a detailed accounting of every dollar we have received and what we spent it on at least dating back to 2010-2011.
2. **Monthly Board Meetings-** Our board evaluates our entire Quick Books each month at our board meetings looking at our P and L sheets as well as balance sheets. They also evaluate our performance, engage in conversation around improvements, challenge our team to constantly improve, evaluate the Director, and improve our policies.
3. **OSBA Policies-** We have a full set of OSBA authorized policies that guide our every move financially. As Director every dollar that is spent in this school must have my approval. Every expense over \$5,000 requires board approval. We adopt annual budgets and have a number of internal accountability measures in place. Every check requires two signers- One charter school representative and one district representative.
4. **Monthly Meetings with Baker School District**

5. **Annual Report-** We report to our charter board, Baker School District and ODE every year on the following categories: enrollment, financial position, academic performance, improvement measures, staffing, and our relationship with Baker School District.
6. **Annual Service Agreement-** Each year Baker School District and Baker Charter Schools enter an agreement detailing our services and agreements between the two organizations. This is discussed, approved, and finalized in public meetings at both the charters and the district.
7. **Third Party Accountability-** We are fully accredited by AdvancED, which is a rigorous accreditation agency that looks at multiple facets of our school. Additionally we are working on achieving NCAA certification. Finally through as an OSAA associate member we are required to have our student athletes participate at levels of performance similar to all schools.

As you can see we have a lot of accountability, support and transparency before the passage of HB 4091. Our recommendation finally is this- lean on the accountability and measurements already in place rather than adding on additional requirement. Use AdvancED accreditation evaluation as a measure of performance rather than building another requirement into the system.

My final point would be to look at long term data, rather than just the year SBAC was implemented. In my own internal study of virtual charters in Oregon I noticed a 15-20% drop across the board when comparing the 2014 performance to 2015. I would suggest evaluating the last 3-4 years of data rather than a snapshot that does not capture past performance.

In short-

- 1- We support changing plan to requirement
- 2- Use accountability measures already in place to gather data
- 3- Look at long term data in evaluation to establish growth trends and promising practices

While I realize I may not have time to review this entire document live I will do my best to summarize and answer questions.

Thank you for your time and considering the perspective of Baker Web Academy.

All the best,

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