



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

5 February 2016

Dear Members of the House Education Committee:

As the Oregon Connections Academy Parents Association (ORCAPA), we represent the roughly 4000 students enrolled in Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA), along with their parents, families, and friends. We are greatly disappointed and concerned to learn of HB 4091. This bill, introduced by State Rep. Susan McLain, is an unnecessary and wasteful reprisal of "workgroups" and "studies" similar to those in 2009's SB 767.

ORCA and other online public charter schools are already the most transparent and scrutinized public schools in the state. Throughout all of the "oversight" ORCA has proven to be a good and successful option for Oregon students. While an online education may not be the perfect fit for all Oregon students, it is demonstratively effective for thousands of students and their families.

ORCA and other quality online programs allow students, (whose educational needs are not met within the traditional brick and mortar model), to thrive and succeed at school. These students choose online public education for a variety of reasons as individual as the students are. They and their families appreciate the chance to excel with a program that fits those individual needs.

ORCA and other reputable, proven online public charter schools have repeatedly faced unprecedented scrutiny and emerged as validated, successful options for Oregon's public school students. Is it really necessary to spend scarce resources to re-study an already thoroughly vetted public school option? We suggest that this is simply a union-driven fishing expedition that will waste taxpayer dollars and move resources away from educating our children. However, if the committee truly feels that it is important to *again* review ORCA's effectiveness, we would humbly suggest a simple review of the information already obtained, analyzed and summarized in reports from the previous studies.

We strongly urge the Legislature to recognize HB 4091 for what it is: a poison pill calculated to ultimately hamper access to a successful model of public K-12 education. Online charter schools have been studied and validated over and over again. ORCA's 10 year track record proves that HB 4091 is a "solution in search of a problem".

It is the responsibility of the Legislature to ensure that we are using taxpayer dollars well. Repeating studies, workgroups, and taskforces that have already underscored the need for, and effectiveness of, ORCA and other quality online public school programs cannot possibly be a good use of taxpayer dollars. Further, consider ORCA's 95% parent satisfaction rating over the 10 year life of the school and surely you will recognize that the "study" measures contained in HB 4091 are unnecessary and wasteful. Please reject HB 4091 and devote our state's attention and resources to issues that really do require immediate attention.

Sincerely,

ORCAPA Board Members:

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