

HB 4091 Testimony 2/8/16

Silvies River Charter School Position represented by Superintendent/Principal- Dr. Shawn Farrens, EdD

Committee Members,

I am here representing Silvies River Charter, a virtual charter school sponsored by Frenchglen School District in rural Eastern Oregon. We currently have 185 students enrolled from all corners of the state. Our staff is comprised of 1 administrator, 1 support staff, and 10 (6.25 FTE) teachers. We have tutoring centers in Burns and Salem and utilize public and private facilities in Bend that serve as ad hoc tutoring centers. If a student is not near a tutoring center our teachers are available to meet them at a location near them, over the phone, or virtually via Google Hangouts. Additionally, each teacher is required to plan an outing/field trip each school year that every Silvies River Charter School student is invited to. These field trips are funded by Silvies River Charter School and are as cost neutral to the families as possible.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and position on the current version of HB 4091.

One third of Silvies River Charter Schools population resides in rural Harney County with many of these students living on ranches up to two hours away from their local High School. Silvies River Charter School provides an option for families to keep their students at home, receive a high quality education, and graduate with a high school diploma. For some of these families the only other option to receive an education is to have their children at the age of 14 move away from home and live full-time in the dorms in Crane. I am sure you can appreciate the fact that some families do not prefer to not raise and spend time daily with their 14 year old children. Additionally, we serve students that are pregnant and parenting or need to work to support their family. For many of these students a brick and mortar school is not an option because they must work or take care of their families during the typical school day.

This bill will unduly put pressure on Silvies River Charter School and may severely impact our ability to serve our students. If this bill is intended to create greater accountability I can assure you we have many measures of accountability already in place, for example:

1. We are audited annually by a third party that is publicly available and sent to the Frenchglen School District Board and ODE.
2. We have contracted out all accounting transactions to an authorized auditor.
3. An authorized board member AND either myself or my administrative assistant have to sign every check.
4. Our budget is built with the exact same line items and codes that a school district uses.
5. I submit our annual budget to the Frenchglen School District board.

6. My entire board is sent a list of the monthly transactions, a report showing our year to date expenditures, and a report showing what percentage of the budget has been spent year-to-date in the various line items in our budget.
7. We follow all the OSBA policies including adopting any updates that they suggest. These policies are publicly available through our website at [www.silviesrcs.org](http://www.silviesrcs.org).
8. We are held accountable through a third party accrediting agency, Advanced ED. We will undergo our renewal audit next school year.

Thank you for your time and for considering the perspective of Silvies River Charter School.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn Farrens, EdD  
Superintendent/Principal  
Silvies River Charter School  
[s.farrens@silviesrces.org](mailto:s.farrens@silviesrces.org)  
541-589-2401