

February 8, 2016

Good afternoon, Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paul Peterson, and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Northwest Regional Education Service District. As part of my regular duties, I also serve as the director of Oregon Virtual Education, commonly referred to as ORVED, a virtual charter school sponsored by Gaston School District. I am here in support of HB 4091. I am joined by Kerri Smith, who is employed also by Northwest Regional ESD as Director of Schools, and who also serves as Principal for ORVED.

While ORVED shares much in common with other virtual charter schools, including full accreditation, ORVED approaches this work focussed on deep cooperation and interdependence with our public school partners to carry out its mission of Personalized Learning for All Students.

Our board is intentionally a very representative body, comprised of the following:

- Laurie Wimmer, representing Oregon Education Association
- Paul Zastro, representing Oregon Association of Education Service Districts
- Charan Cline, representing The Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
- Ozzie Rose, while not representing a specific body, Ozzie recently joined the ORVED board as a voice representing all our shared interests in providing a high quality online learning experience for students.
- ORVED has one open board position, previously held by Kevin Noreen, who was referred to ORVED by Dan Jamison of The Chalkboard Project.

A key design feature of ORVED, is that in addition to enrolling students in the virtual charter school, ORVED also has a proactive model of cooperation with 37 local school districts, in which the student remains enrolled with their local neighborhood school district. This 'best of both worlds' approach gives students the ability to be active and engaged with their local brick and mortar school while participating in online courses at the same time. Of the 577 students that ORVED is currently serving, only about 70 students are enrolled as either full or part time in the virtual charter school. All the other students remained enrolled with their local school district. ORVED helps meet the overwhelming majority of demand for students to be able to take one or two online courses while remaining enrolled with their home district.

ORVED's unique rolling enrollment feature allows students to start courses at any time of the year. Rolling enrollment means students don't need to wait for the next semester in order to start a course, they simply register this week, and begin the following Monday, all year round.

ORVED is proud to be the provider of online courses and licensed and Highly Qualified teachers via a contract with the Department of Education. This contract makes ORVED's catalog of courses, each supported by an Oregon licensed teacher, available to 133 small and rural school

districts. From ORVED's experience, we have seen the highest level of student success when students are locally supported in their community, while having access to online courses and teachers. Here are some examples of success from schools participating in the ODE contract with ORVED:

- Riddle School District has 20 students participating, 85% of whom are on track to pass
- North Lake School District has 24 students participating, 92% of whom have either passed their course or are on track to pass their course
- Tillamook School District has 28 students participating, 78% of whom are on track to pass their course
- Sherman County School District has 24 students participating, 87% of whom are on track to pass
- NeahKahNie School District has 12 students participating, 92% of whom are currently passing their courses

I support this bill's effort to study virtual schools and find what's working well for students, because online education works very well in some instances, but also has some challenges. I will admit that the schools I mentioned above are highlights, and not all schools' experience getting into online learning are the same, but I provide these to emphasize that high success rates in virtual school are possible and currently happening right now in our state. The more we can reveal and support what's working well for online learners, the better for all students now and in the future, which will most assuredly include more and more online learning.

Thank you for your time and support of online learners.