



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

18 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 were impressed by the 24-0 vote on the Senate Floor in favor of SB 1566, which would extend the sunset currently imposed this year on families who wish to attend a school outside of their residence district. We urge the members of this Committee, and the House as a whole, to support passage of this legislation.

Although the current version of SB 1566 only extends the "sunset" for another three years, passage will allow students and families who currently use this provision to continue doing so through 2019. In future sessions it is our hope that the Oregon Legislature will make permanent the ability for families to choose to attend a school that best fits their needs, even if they happen to be located in another geographic region or district. The involvement and effort required to not only make the choice to transfer, but to follow through on the many obstacles (time, transportation, communication, etc), should warrant acclaim and laudatory praise, rather than the looming possibility that their chosen educational path will be eliminated. Although not permanent, passage SB 1566 will at least give families another few years to make this choice.

Given the time and other constraints of this year's short session, the provisions of SB 1566 are better than doing nothing, which would eliminate this choice altogether. We urge your support for SB 1566 on behalf of students and families from all over Oregon who currently rely on this option.

Sincerely,

ORCAPA Board Members:

*Anne Marie Gurney, Preston Baxter, Mark Scarborough*