



To: House Committee on Education
From: Kristen Miles, Oregon School Boards Association
Re: House Bill 3413
Date: April 7, 2017

Chair Doherty and members of the House Committee on Education:

On behalf of OSBA members, including 197 school districts throughout the state of Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 3413. My name is Kristen Miles, and I am a Board Development Specialist at the Oregon School Boards Association. Having nearly a decade of experience in the charter school realm, I am happy to speak to you about this bill and the reasons OSBA supports the bill.

ORS 332.158 requires a school district wanting to lease, purchase, or construct a school in another district to obtain written permission from the other district prior to the first day on which students will attend classes in this new school.

Currently, there is no such requirement for charter schools. In fact, a charter school is only required to provide notice to its sponsor and to the district in which it plans to locate a new school facility. This means that, in the current system, a charter school sponsored by a school district could open additional schools all over the state in districts that: have not approved them through an application process, do not sponsor them, and have no oversight over the education being provided to students in their own districts. In effect, the current law makes the application process obsolete for charter schools wanting to multiply, once they have a single approval from a single district.

HB 3413 would simply impose the same requirement on charter schools that is currently imposed on districts. Charter schools intending to open an additional school in a district which is not their sponsor would need to get permission from that new district. This preserves local control for the district in which the charter school wants to locate.

And while this bill is a step in the right direction, we believe that there is more work to be done. Not addressed in this bill is a requirement that a charter school get permission from its sponsoring district before opening a school in another district. Why is this important? Let's say, for example, that a charter school located in Salem chose to open up another location in Nyssa. The school gets permission from Nyssa, and merely notifies Salem. But Salem would still be the sponsor of this charter school. This means that Salem would still have the obligation to provide special education services, to conduct the annual site visit, to provide ongoing oversight of the school's academic, financial, and organizational performance, and to hold the school accountable. How would Salem effectively do this from a distance of 400 miles? There's no guidance for this, and no support for the sponsoring district.

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Again, we believe that this bill is a good first step in ensuring that charter schools maintain positive relationships with the districts in which they are located, as well as preserving local control for districts. I am happy to answer any questions you have.