



To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Kristen Miles, Oregon School Boards Association
Re: Senate Bill 915
Date: April 11, 2017

Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Kristen Miles and I am a Board Development Specialist with the Oregon School Boards Association. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you about Senate Bill 915.

Each biennium, OSBA members, including members of all 197 school districts in Oregon, vote to adopt legislative priorities. These priorities are the foundation of our legislative activities during the session. Some of the priorities chosen by our association membership for the 2017-18 biennium include:

- Stable and adequate funding for districts
- Local control
- Opposition to unfunded mandates

Unfortunately, SB 915 does not meet these priorities. As you are all too acutely aware, funding for education in the coming biennium is far from being finalized. However, most of our members are currently drafting budgets that anticipate serious cuts- to school days, teaching staff, or both. The funding “pie” is getting no bigger.

According to info from ODE, this bill would shift approximately \$30 million statewide from districts to charter schools. This shift would cause districts to make even deeper cuts than they are already planning, and it would decrease the support and services districts can offer to their charter schools.

Beyond changes to funding, other elements of the bill are problematic. The text of the bill seems to make a basic presumption that charter school operations are similar to school district operations. That is not the case. However, I believe that areas of concern could be addressed with changes to language and other technical-style fixes.

Furthermore, we believe that there are areas for meaningful collaboration between school districts and charter schools, including: ESD services to charter schools; district pass-through of grant and program funding to charter schools; and including charter school transportation costs as part of reimbursable district transportation costs. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively on these issues in the future.

Thank you, and I’d be happy to answer any questions you have.

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