

TO: Senate Education Committee
From: Beth Hutchins, Opal School
RE: Senate Bill 915

Dear Chairman Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Beth Hutchins. I am the manager at Opal School, and also the mother to two graduates who are now in college.

During my children's lifetime, the world wide web was magicked into existence and fits into your pocket. Google processes over 3.5 billion searches every day and fake news abounds. How do we teach students to make sense of this flood, to think critically? To prepare for "jobs that do not yet exist...using technologies that haven't been invented...?" (*Fisch & McLeod, Shift Happens*)

At Opal School, we are researchers of students and their learning. We are small and nimble, and through innovation and experimentation we have discovered learning structures that support students to develop the "habits of mind" that give hope for the future of democracy. Over the past sixteen years we have offered our research in the form of professional development to thousands of teachers and administrators from around the world. This year, we will work with over 700 educators, with relationships that stretch over many years and reach into schools with many challenges. These school districts in Oregon include: Reynolds, Gladstone, Hillsboro and Lincoln County.

For our research to be robust, our student population must reflect the diversity of our community. Our school can feel out of reach to many families, because we do not have funding to consistently provide transportation, or after-school care, or a nutrition program. We know from experience that the loss of each of these programs directly affects the diversity of our student body.

My family's time at Opal School changed my children's lives and changed my life. I wish for all families to have equitable access to these innovative models.

It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that students across Oregon are treated equitably, and that charter school students are valued in the same way as students in district run schools. I hope that you will support this bill and allow the opportunity for it to be brought to a vote.