

February 6, 2018

RE: SB 1520

To Whom It May Concern:

I want to thank the Senate Education Committee for the work you do to further the cause of public education in Oregon. The work you do is not easy, but is some of the most important work done in the legislature. That said, it is important that we continue to improve public education in Oregon and keep our valuable resources in the state so that we can best leverage these hard to come by tax dollars to best benefit our most important commodity, our students and future K-12 graduates.

Last year, there was legislation that would have removed the sunset provision that allows virtual public charter schools in Oregon to be managed by for profit entities. You prevented this from happening. Now, I ask that you do the same and remove from SB 1520, the language that would remove the sunset provision that allows for corporate run virtual charter schools in Oregon.

It is evident that charter schools operate quite well without outside corporate management. In fact, the three statewide virtual charter schools that are managed by outside corporations can function quite well within existing structures. The leadership and independent boards of these schools, in partnership with their local chartering school districts are easily capable of furthering the continuation of the education of students enrolled in these three schools. There are high quality curriculum and learning management systems that can be purchased outside of Pearson's Connections Academy and K-12 Inc.

I have personally witnessed the profit mentality that persists in these three schools. In fact, over the last 5 years in my present position as Executive Director of Metro East Web Academy, I have seen change in leadership of ORVA and ORCA in both schools of at least 3 Heads of School in those 5 years. The professionals that held those positions, are all quality Oregon educators with many years of experience. Their only fault and reason for removal, is that they did not make the student recruiting quotas required by the national offices of these corporate management companies. Even though, student achievement at both schools has improved, these leaders were still removed.

Profit cannot be our motivation to run our public schools. Oregon Resources need to stay in Oregon. The employees of these three schools deserve an opportunity to earn a reasonable salary comparable to what other virtual charter schools pay their employees. For these reasons and those articulated above, I ask that you keep the sunset in place and remove this language from SB 1520.

Sincerely,

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