

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Workforce
In Support of SB 634
Presented by Mike Neff, Insight School of Oregon

Chair Taylor and members of the Senate Committee on Workforce, I am Mike Neff, counsel to the Board of Directors of the Oregon non-profit corporation which operates Insight School of Oregon – Painted Hills, an Oregon public charter school chartered through the Mitchell School District. I am here in support of SB 634.

Senate Bill 634 is a follow-on bill to address what is a very minor issue for the Oregon Public Retirement Service Retirement Plan (“pension program”) but a significant issue of equity for a small group of public school employees.

Senate Bill 634 replicates legislation from the 2017 session (SB 201) which was enacted into law 18 months ago to ensure contributions previously made to the pension program and for the Individual Account Program by Oregon’s public universities would be credited to the public university employees for whose benefit the contributions were made. The common thread defining this group of public university employees are contributions made on behalf of employees by their employer universities during a period that these employees and their employers objectively but mistakenly believed they were eligible to participate in both the pension program and the Individual Account Program. SB 201 in 2017 provided equity for these employees and ensured their public university employers avoided lawsuits which likely would have alleged the universities failed to act in good faith and deal fairly.

Senate Bill 634 acknowledges a small number of Oregon public charter school employees are in the same situation as those public university employees who received equity through SB 201. Senate Bill 634 extends the same treatment for these primary and secondary public school employees as was provided for the public university employees during the 2017 session in SB 201.

I have been authorized on behalf of the Board of Directors of Insight School of Oregon – Painted Hills, to provide you any information your committee or any of its members needs to evaluate and act upon SB 634. My other written materials submitted to the Committee include: (1) a one-page background summary of SB 634; (2) the SB 201 language enacted as Chapter 642 in Oregon Laws 2017; and (3) the Oregon public university presidents’ justification for why adoption of SB 201 in 2017 was necessary.

Thank you for scheduling this public hearing, and I am happy to answer any questions concerning SB 634.