



Columbia County Christian School

PO Box 448 • St. Helens, OR 97051 • Phone: (503) 366-9209 • Fax: (866) 717-5568 • www.cchristianschool.net

December 17, 2020

Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

I am aware of an amendment being drafted to LC 21 to include private schools in liability protection and am asking you to pass this amendment. I would also ask you to include private schools, including ours, in any financial relief being offered to schools to offset the costs of meeting OHA and ODE guidelines as set forth in the RSSL requirements.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Columbia County Christian School and other private schools in the state have been diligently working to implement the guidelines put forth by OHA and ODE. At CCCS we have spent additional money out of our budget to meet the safety regulations and limited our own enrollment to follow the space requirements.

As a Christian school we understand the importance in joining the fight against COVID-19, but it is clear that we are not protected in the same way as public schools under this new amendment. We are following the same guidelines, yet we would not have liability protection in the same way as public schools.

I am also concerned that no additional funding is allocated to private schools, as it is in public schools, to cover the additional costs for sanitation and PPE. We are being held to the same standards and are needing to implement additional costs to follow these standards, yet we have had (and continue) to absorb the additional costs. It is unclear why private schools are not able to receive the same additional funding.

In this amendment private schools are being treated differently than public schools creating greater divide. If we are going to be required to meet the standards of the RSSL to open our schools, we should be funded and protected in a comparable way to public schools. If we are not going to be provided additional funds or not included in the limited liability, then we should not be required to follow state guidelines. We hope that this information will give you greater insight into the issues of equity presented in the proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

Beth Winegar
Administrator
Columbia County Christian School