



**Tigard - Tualatin School District 23J**  
**Larry Hibbard Administration Center**  
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Tigard, OR 97223  
[www.ttsdschools.org](http://www.ttsdschools.org)

December 18, 2020

**RE: Support for LC 21: Temporary COVID-19 Liability Protection for Education**

**TO: Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, and members of the Joint Interim Committee on the Third Special Session**

The 2020 school year has been one of the most challenging and unpredictable experiences for all of us who serve public education in Oregon. On behalf of our staff, students, and their families, our deepest gratitude to our lawmakers for the continued tireless support of our schools this year. Yet there is still a major challenge that we have yet to deal with in 2020. School Districts and Education Service Districts are not able to purchase insurance to protect against the costs of COVID-19 lawsuits. Insurance carriers and re-insurers stopped offering COVID-19 and communicable disease policies in Oregon earlier this year.

I write to you today representing the Tigard-Tualatin School District community. I am asking for your support of LC 21, which provides temporary liability protection for damages related to COVID-19 for school and education service districts when operating in compliance with emergency rules. School districts across Oregon need the Legislature to take action and provide this protection as we continue to navigate this pandemic while making plans to safely bring our staff and students back into our schools. We are not asking for full immunity or protection from irresponsible actions. We believe our district should have some form of legal protections if we are following all the relevant guidance and rules for COVID-19 safety that have been issued by the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Health Authority, OSHA and others. Our district needs to know that if we are following state guidelines to protect our students, staff, and community we will be protected from lawsuits related to COVID 19 exposure. Without this protection, our district budget is vulnerable.

This legislation is especially critical for the protection and preservation of District assets when students and staff reenter our buildings for in-person teaching and learning. Additionally, our valued families and community have been anxiously awaiting the reopening of our outdoor campuses for recreational use, which could be more plausible with the immunities provided by the proposed legislation.

Please continue your advocacy -- speak up and urge your Legislative colleagues to tackle this issue during any upcoming Special Session. As always, my thanks for your continued advocacy for our teachers, students, and families. I am available to provide additional information to help you with this work or answer any questions or concerns you may have.

With great respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Rieke-Smith, Ed.D."

Dr. Sue Rieke-Smith  
Superintendent  
Tigard-Tualatin School District