

## Testimony on Senate Bill 223: Private School Registration

March 17, 2021

**TO:** Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair; Senator Thomsen, Vice-Chair; members of the Senate Committee on Education

**FROM:** Carmen Moore, 30-year career in private education, currently Dean of Students at North Clackamas Christian School

**RE:** Statement Opposing SB 223

While Senate Bill 223 “describes private school registration,” there is not a compelling reason why a private school would agree to register with the state, except to continue participation in OSAA. However, there are reasons why private schools would be opposed to registering:

- First, the bill requires unnecessary reporting of private schools’ standards and qualifications. Application for registration requires the school to demonstrate to the state (ODE):
  - qualifications of teachers
  - quality of curriculum
  - adequacy of the facility

However, these criteria to be registered are criteria that private schools which are accredited already meet and demonstrate to the accrediting bodies

- Next, the bill authorizes unnecessary and inappropriate oversight of non-public schools:
  - The Department of Education (ODE) can require “any reports or information” from registered schools.
  - An advisory committee, consisting primarily of representatives of private school organizations, is to be appointed; but the Department of Education creates the rules and accepts, denies, suspends, revokes the registration.

Private schools, and organizations that support them, work hard to provide quality education to those students whose families have made the choice - and make the sacrifices - to enroll their students in non-public schools. This takes place without government funding. SB 223 opens the door to oversight from the state that has no place in private education.

- Finally, as mentioned, only registered private schools can participate in OSAA. As you are aware, the bill actually states that public school districts can only have membership in voluntary interscholastic activities organizations which accept only registered private schools as members. The direct implication is that private schools would need to choose between continuing to participate in extracurricular activities and competitions (sports, music, other things) with other schools of their size - public and private, or agreeing to allow ODE oversight that it should not have. Both private school students and public school students would lose many opportunities, as private schools would seek alternatives as they are denied membership in OSAA.

Private schools are a valuable part of Oregon's K-12 education system, as noted on the ODE website. Senate Bill 223 threatens the independent standing that these schools have been granted, and it is not right. Students from public and non-public schools enjoy meeting students from other schools and competing with one another as they engage in sports, choir, and other activities that are so essential to this season of their lives. SB 223 will take that away for many students, and for what purpose?

You will do right by the many private schools in Oregon - and thousands of students - by voting against SB 223.