



Four Rivers Community School

2449 S.W. 4th Avenue

Ontario, OR 97914

541-889-3715 phone

541-889-3718 fax

www.4riverscs.org

Board of Directors

Pam Wettstein

Chairman

Penny Walters

Secretary

Blas Guerra

Betty Carter

Ramon Palomo

Superintendent

Chelle Robins, Ph.D.

May 29, 2021

Chair Teresa Alonso Leon
House Education Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelle Robins and I am the superintendent at Four Rivers Community School. Four Rivers is a K-12 dual language immersion charter school located in Ontario. I am here today to speak in support of House Bill 2954.

Oregon's public charter schools provide unique and innovative learning environments that help students excel. We believe these opportunities should be intentionally made more available to students from historically underserved communities and this legislation is a thoughtful, proven way to do that.

Public charter schools, working in tandem with their sponsoring district or the Board of Education, offer innovative approaches to help students achieve. When these schools find ways to close opportunity gaps for historically underserved students, statute should support strategies to make those learning environments more available to the students that can most benefit from them.

Under current law, the only enrollment preference public charter schools can provide is to siblings of members who are currently enrolled that school. HB 2954 expands that preference by allowing a weighted lottery to benefit specific student populations. By providing additional support to students who can benefit most from these learning environments, we can expand the ability of our public charter schools to be full partners in the equity in education occurring across the state. Research shows that when students attend more diverse schools, they become more conscious and thoughtful about stereotypes and racial bias, and they also see real academic benefit. Schools with greater diversity tend to see reduced achievement gaps and lower dropout rates.

Weighted lotteries are not a new concept for promoting equities. Other states have adopted these changes to charter school enrollment and have seen positive impacts in school data analyses. It is time for Oregon to do the same.

Four Rivers Community School has used the weighted lottery in previous years to ensure equitable access to historically underserved populations in our community. Specifically, we work with families in the local migrant head start to ensure equitable access to our high-performing dual language immersion program. The weighted lottery also aids in our dual language model's need to have a balance of Spanish and English speakers in the classroom. This year we were unable to use a weighted lottery and now have an unbalanced kindergarten class with more English speakers.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on behalf of House Bill 2954 and I urge the committee to adopt this bill. I would be happy to address any questions you may have. Thank you.

Chelle Robins, Ph.D
Superintendent