

Submitter: Maria Rutkowski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

To the Oregon State Legislature,

I am both a parent of a child currently attending a public charter school in Oregon (as well as a parent to an alumni of the same school) and an educator in the state of Oregon.

Having worked with children in educational settings outside of the public school system for over 20 years, I have seen first hand many, many, many times how insufficient support is for education in Oregon. Specific to this bill, I would like to point out the near impossible nature of finding locations for a school that both meet all the very specific requirements of such a space while also being able to make it all come together financially. With the near impossibility of finding a facility large enough and suitable for as an educational setting, the incredible overhead of building or renovation a facility, along with the very short timeline many settings are given to move from their current location and therefore have to find, purchase or lease, renovate, and move in to a new space - making MORE options available for schools should be the priority for Oregon. This bill severely limits the options existing charter schools have when presented with such a situation.

My child's current school, Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School, currently in Damascus, Oregon and in the Gresham/Barlow School District has already been through an amazing amount of upheaval in the 7 years we have been a part of their community. They have been forced to leave now three locations by Gresham/Barlow School District. This last demand for vacating their leased space came with only 1 year of notice - an impossibly short time to make such a transition for a school of their size. But they found a space! It is, however, outside of their current sponsoring district. This space will make it possible for our children to continue on with a community that has supported them for most, if not all, of their formal educational experience. My kids love their school. We love their school. All the families we have known there LOVE this school.

If this bill were to pass, Lewis and Clark Montessori School would no longer be able to function. Our children would lose the security and predictability of a school and community they are so invested in. They do not deserve this kind of upheaval. They deserve for the State of Oregon to care about them, their education, as well as their mental and emotional well-being.

If the State of Oregon hopes to have Charter Schools stay within their sponsoring districts they should offer choices and support for schools to do so - schools that are a part of the district!!! It is shameful the way Gresham/Barlow has treated Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School! And I have heard their experience is not unique to them alone. I strongly oppose this bill. Again, Oregon should be offering our children

MORE CHOICES, MORE SUPPORT, MORE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES -
not less!

Thank you for your time,
Maria Rutkowski