

Submitter: H Fitch
On Behalf Of: Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I am joining several other parents, educators, administrators, and support staff to advocate for my children's access to public education that effectively serves the diverse needs of our community, as I believe should be the goal of all public education. I also believe that there should be effective oversight in education, and I can appreciate that there are situations in Oregon where there have been gaps and corrections might need to be made. However, the language in SB 767 (as I understand it) does not take into account the need for flexibility that charter schools face when looking for facilities (or situations in which transactions have already been started). Its reasonable that options for 30,000 sq ft spaces that can accommodate 17 classrooms, 400 students, staff, etc are quite limited, and I believe there should be language that allows for waivers to be submitted/reasonable timelines to be provided for schools who have already done their due diligence in finding a facility that meets their needs within a reasonable distance from their sponsoring school district without the additional hurdle of having to establish the existing charter with a new district. I am not an expert by any means but I have seen the question raised about the amendment being attached to ORS 332 instead of ORS 338 and I would appreciate committee discussion on that point and how it empowers parents and families to ask school districts for reasonable alternatives through charter schools. On a personal note, Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter school has been an incredible asset to our family and community. The new location they are in the process of purchasing after the sponsoring district terminated their current lease with an unreasonably short notice to find new space not only is within 1000 ft of the district boundary line, but also moves the school within public transportation access, giving even more students and families the opportunity to receive an education that best serves their children. This is but one example of how this law would drastically impact an entire community with a single decision. Thank you for taking protecting the integrity of both school choice and public education needs across the entire state seriously.