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On Behalf Of: Lewis and Clark Montessori School
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

We started our son in our local elementary school, and he was miserable. In his kindergarten classroom of 31, there was almost a daily need to leave the classroom due to one or more children's behavior, he was not getting the help that he needed when they were able to complete lessons and he was fried. Then covid happened, and we are able to take some time to think about what the best education for our son looks like. Unfortunately, it does not look like our local public school. At Lewis & Clark Montessori School, my son has bloomed, and the staff and teachers have taken so much time and care, to ensure that he is able to get the help and resources that he needs to be successful.

I tell you this because, Lewis & Clark Montessori School was given notice in late 2021 that the option to renew the lease for the Gresham-Barlow School District building that currently holds the school would not be available, giving the school one year to find another building in an already limited area with not many options available. Due to the size of the building necessary to hold a K-8 school being so large, there are not many in our area available. Add to that a limited amount of time and funds, and Lewis & Clark has had to look outside of the Gresham-Barlow School District area, and in doing so, they have found a building that would work. The dilemma is that it is 1000 feet from where the GBSD boundaries end. If SB 767 goes through, this school may cease to exist, after 14 years of making a beneficial impact on our communities children.

As you can understand, this is highly frustrating. Not only because it would uproot well over 300 students, not to mention the teachers and staff that make up this great education community, but also because if we lived in west Multnomah county, this wouldn't be an issue. On the west side, there are a plethora of educational options, but because we live on the east side, we apparently do not get the freedom to choose the education that best fits our children's needs. By limiting where a charter school can exist in already small spaces with limited availability to lease or own, we are limiting our children's education.

Families need choices when it comes to their children's education. Our local schools are bursting at the seams, and SB 767 would close the additional options for education. Not only because it could mean the end of this school, but because it could possibly end new options arising for charter schools in our community, in the future.