

Submitter: Jennifer Klinger
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I have been teaching in Public Montessori for over 9 years now. I have had the privilege to serve children and families in several major metropolitan school districts. This is my third year teaching at Lewis and Clark Montessori in Damascus, Oregon. It has been an amazing experience to bring public Montessori to children and families living in rural Oregon. We provide a safe environment for learning, exploring, discovering. For some of the children and families that we serve (BIPOC, LGBTQ+) this may be the only safe place that they have. Dr. Maria Montessori was not only a change maker, she was a Peace Maker. In today's climate of division, hatred and separation, I believe the pedagogy of Dr. Montessori is one of the ways that we can bring Peace to not only Damascus, Oregon but the World. It's a time to come together, all of us, in community. Lewis and Clark. has been in existence for 14 years. The impact that our school community has had on children and families is immeasurable.

Unfortunately, we are forced to relocate due to a lease termination by our sponsoring district, GBSD. It would be ideal for us to remain inside GBSD boundaries but given an extremely limited time frame and lack of existing facilities to accommodate 17 classrooms, our choices are limited. The proposed new facility is located less than 1000 ft from the GBSD boundary. We would like to turn an unfortunate situation into a positive impact by moving from a rural location that is inaccessible by public transportation to one that opens access for enrollment to underserved, more diverse populations in Rockwood and the surrounding areas while continuing to serve our current families. A key component of our current Strategic Plan.

We hope you take this testimony, along with many others when voting on Senate Bill 767. The children of Oregon deserve a safe place to learn, grow, explore and thrive.