



**Baker Charter Schools**  
3000 Broadway Street  
Baker City, OR 97814  
541-524-2300 main  
541-524-2339 fax

April 2, 2025,

Chair Neron, Vice Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2583. My name is Dr. Shawn Farrens, and I serve as the Principal and Director of Human Resources for Baker Charter Schools. Baker Web Academy provides education to approximately 3,400 students across Oregon. Families seek us out because, according to them, we are able to meet their students' needs in ways their local schools have not. Some examples include LGBTQ students who do not feel safe or accepted in their schools, special education students who are not receiving the individualized support they need, students with severe illnesses who are unable to attend in-person classes, and student-athletes who must train and travel extensively to compete at high levels, such as professional bull riding, elite gymnastics, and national level soccer clubs.

I am writing as a virtual public charter school leader to express my strong support for Oregon House Bill 2583 and urge its passage without amendments. HB 2583 ensures that virtual public charter schools that are community-managed become eligible to apply for the Student Investment Account (SIA) grant that is approved and monitored through the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). This bill upholds the intent of Oregon's commitment to equity in education funding and supports schools that serve diverse student populations.

Virtual public charter schools provide critical educational opportunities for students who thrive in nontraditional learning environments. Many of these students face barriers in brick-and-mortar schools. Ensuring equitable access to SIA funds allows our schools to serve these students as the law intends, giving our students access to more high-quality, student-centered learning experiences than we currently are able to offer. Baker Web Academy would use the funds to increase our reading interventions, CTE opportunities, and mental health support for our students.

We feel very strongly that the current law discriminates against students who do not thrive in traditional learning environments. HB 2583 remedies this. There is nothing in this bill that says the Department of Education must fund our grant request for SIA funds. The bill simply says that we are eligible for SIA funds and cannot be disqualified simply because we are a community-managed virtual school.

The passage of this bill without amendments is essential to maintaining the intent of the bill. Oregon has the opportunity to lead by example, ensuring that public funding is fairly distributed to support all students, regardless of their learning environment.



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I urge the committee to support HB 2583 without amendments and to advance it through the legislative process swiftly. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shawn Farrens, EdD, pHCLE  
Principal/Director of HR  
Baker Charter Schools