



Highest performing online school in Oregon

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1394 NW Civic Dr • Gresham, OR 97030

March 22, 2019

RE: House Bill 2516

House Education Committee:

Rep Margaret Doherty, Chair  
Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair  
Rep. Cheri Helt, Vice Chair  
Rep. Diego Hernandez  
Rep. Courtney Neron  
Rep. Jeff Reardon  
Rep. E. Werner Reschke  
Rep. James Sollman  
Rep. Kim Wallan

I am writing this letter to voice opposition to House Bill 2516. I am the Chief Operations Officer for Metro East Web Academy, a public virtual charter school that serves over 600 students throughout the state of Oregon. We strive to provide a quality virtual option for students and families that is much needed in our current educational climate.

The reality is students and families are dissatisfied with the current educational system. They are looking for options and we support, along with many Oregonians, school choice. These students will continue to look for alternative options whether we exist or not. It appears that HB2516 unfairly targets online or virtual schools, which would limit our efforts for families to identify our school as an option.

When polling families, many say they had no idea we existed in the area. Through targeted marketing campaigns, they discover our school as an option, usually while searching for information on Oregon Connections Academy or Oregon Virtual Academy, both for-profit options for students.

Our marketing expenditures do not exceed 0.4% of our annual revenue. We are fiscally prudent when managing public resources. We provide many different services, including breakfast and lunch options free of charge for students, PSAT and SAT and no cost to families, tutoring services and we have a team to provide engagement and wrap around services for families. We also provide sponsorship for many community partners, including our local

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Chamber of Commerce, little league teams, women's shelters, and continue to support other local community services. We appreciate our communities and would like to continue to support these very valuable events and programs. However, with HB 2516, our contributions would be non-existent. The reality is students and families will continue to look for alternative options for students. We would like to be able to reach out to our community, let families know we are an option and support these families within the communities they live and work rather than have them choose another organization that do not have ties to where they live. These same organizations have other funding resources and options and they will continue to market, campaign and compete for our local students.

I would hope you would take this into consideration while contemplating the future of this legislation. Thank you for your time with respect to this current proposed bill.

Kind regards,

Tonia Gebhart  
Chief Operations Officer  
Metro East Web Academy