



Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, OR 97301

March 31, 2021

**Re: Testimony on HB5514**

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB5514, the Oregon State Schools Fund. I'm submitting testimony on behalf of the Oregon Virtual Public Schools Alliance, a coalition of parents who have joined together to advocate for full-time virtual public charter schools in our state.

As the subcommittee considers how to financially support Oregon schools and the students they serve during the next biennium, I hope that full-time virtual public charter schools will be part of this discussion. Full-time virtual public charter schools are state-approved, public school programs. They utilize state-certified teachers and curriculum. They are proven programs that have been operating in the state for more than 15 years and they are a critical option for families who need an alternative to the traditional classroom.

Unfortunately, due to legislation approved more than a decade ago, many families seeking to utilize a full-time virtual public charter school are being shut out of these programs. In 2011, the Oregon State Legislature placed a cap of 3% on the number of kids in a school district that can transfer to full-time virtual public charter schools. Ten years later, that number hasn't been adjusted to account for growth. With the impact of COVID-19 on traditional schools around the state, more parents are seeking better online learning options and school districts are hitting the 3% cap.

As you consider the state schools budget, I hope you will recognize the need to fully fund virtual public charter schools for the 2021-2023 biennium. I also urge you to eliminate barriers and expand access to educational choice for Oregon families. Oregonians have seen during this pandemic that education shouldn't be one-size-fits-all. There should be options and choices that fit a family's needs.

The 2021 Oregon Legislature committed to a legislative agenda of access, equity and fairness in public education. I believe access and equity should apply to all students, including those currently enrolled or seeking to enroll in a full-time virtual public school. Onerous and arbitrary restrictions like the 3% enrollment cap eliminate access and choice for families. Since the law is now 10 years old, I hope that the State Legislature will raise the enrollment cap and expand access and equity for *all* students.

I look forward to working with you to provide the best educational options for Oregon students, including those who choose to utilize a full-time virtual public charter school.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Tricia Powell – President

PO Box 1652, Lake Oswego OR 97035  
866.961.3731  
[info@oregonvirtualschools.org](mailto:info@oregonvirtualschools.org)