

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 240. Every parent should have the choice where they send their children to school.

Some school districts are better than others, we all know this. Yet, those school districts that are struggling to meet standards or are not a good fit for some children, are given a free pass by law makers to continue in their bad behavior because the State forces parents to stay within their district if the cap has been met for the number of students who can attend elsewhere.

Luckily for me, our cap had not been met and we were able to attend an online charter school in 2020-2021 school year. This has been the best education my children have received since starting school. Online charter school has given my children individualized attention without the constant interruptions created by distracting behavior from students in a standard classroom setting.

Having previously lived in one of the lowest performing schools in the state, we felt at our wits end how to help our children succeed. The learning gap between my children and those of their peers outside of our area was beginning to be frustratingly noticeable. Every time I brought it up to a classroom teacher or the principal, my concerns were minimized, and they continued to tell me that my student was excelling at grade-level. When I asked one classroom teacher if she was even teaching my child, her response was, "I don't worry about (your child), they'll be just fine, they are so good in the classroom." I was shocked to hear that the bulk of the day was spent dealing with behavior issues. This was not a positive learning environment. Ultimately, we moved because of it so that our children could attend in a better school. Not everyone is as blessed as we are to be able to make a move to change schools. An online charter school should be an option for them even if the district does not support it and/or the cap has been met.

Once we moved, we thought things would change. The school was ranked highly in our online research. After attending for only a partial year in 2019-2020, we learned that this school was so overcrowded that they had to hire more teachers mid-year. My child was crammed into a small classroom and individualized attention was impossible.

Online Charter Schools provide an alternative for families. The current cap only solidifies the idea that the public education system is failing our children and the only way to keep students in a standard public school is to force them to be there by capping those who can leave.

By removing this limitation, families can choose the best solution for their situation. If a school or district is under-performing, hitting them in their pocketbooks will help them realize that changing their behavior is the only way to bring students back to their classrooms. Basic economics tells us that market diversity (lots of options) creates higher quality overall as people choose where they will spend their money. By creating more competition in the public education system, districts will need to rise to succeed instead of more money being thrown at them with no noticeable changes in sight.

I am grateful to have found an online charter school that fits our current needs. I ask you to please pass Senate Bill 240 to give all Oregon families, both those in great school districts and those in struggling ones, the opportunity to choose where they send their children to school without cap limitations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jaylyn Nunn