



April 20, 2021

Subject: Oppose SB 240 - Do not divert public school funds to virtual charters

Dear Sen. Michael Dembrow, Sen. Chuck Thomsen and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

On behalf of the schools and students in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and Washington Counties, thank you for your service and statewide leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. In your efforts to help communities stay safe and fully recover from the pandemic, **I urge you to prioritize our students and our local public schools by opposing SB 240.**

**SB 240 would increase virtual charter school enrollment even though Oregon's virtual charters overwhelmingly fail students** and divert funds from local, public schools where invaluable relationships exist between families, students and educators. A recent [Stanford University comprehensive national study](#) found that online charter schools have an "overwhelmingly negative impact" on student achievement. According to this study, students at online charter schools lost an average of 180 days of learning in math compared to similar students attending traditional public schools, leading one analyst to conclude that "it is literally as if the kid did not go to school for an entire year." Similarly, [a 2019 study of online charters in Pennsylvania](#), also conducted by Stanford, found that students in online charters (compared to traditional schools) lost the equivalent of 106 days in reading and 118 days in math. The researchers state, "Any potential benefits of online schooling such as student mobility and flexibility in curriculum are drowned out by the negative impacts on academic growth of students enrolled in such schools." Locally, [Oregon academic proficiency and graduation rates for virtual charters](#) (and the performance of national charters with an Oregon presence) similarly demonstrates the low success rates of online charters.

If we truly care about accountability, quality and student achievement in our education system, these outcomes cannot be acceptable, *much less expanded* by SB 240. SB 240 will divert hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of students from local, public schools at a time when neighborhood schools have invested in professional development, technology, and health and safety resources to deliver quality face-to-face and virtual learning during and after the pandemic.

Perhaps because of the pandemic, Oregon's public schools now have the tools, the expertise, and the overarching infrastructure to deliver robust online instruction while capitalizing on the existing relationships between local teachers and their students and families. As their outcomes plainly demonstrate, online charter schools cannot replicate these necessary attributes. Our schools' educators have already developed relationships with students and families. Accordingly, online instruction delivered by local school districts to their community's children leads to far better outcomes.

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■ Clatsop County  
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3194 Marine Drive  
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■ Columbia County  
503-366-4100  
800 Port Avenue  
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■ Tillamook County  
503-842-8423  
2515 3rd Street  
Tillamook, OR 97141

■ Washington County  
503-614-1428  
5825 NE Ray Circle  
Hillsboro, OR 97124



SB 240 neglects established relationships and greatly diminishes the potential of our local educators to adequately support students through the reopening of schools and this disruptive, historical crisis. SB 240 could thwart Oregon school districts' ability to evolve at this critical juncture and I urge you to oppose SB 240.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large 'D' followed by a wavy line and another large 'D'.

Dan Goldman  
Superintendent

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