

Submitter: Misty Galofteanu
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

Dear Senate board,

My name is Misty and I have a blended family. In our family we have 6 children. As you can imagine they all have different personalities, different needs and have different learning styles as well as different levels of success in all they do. I have a high achieving student who is getting better guidance at Oregon Charter Academy (ORCA) for his future. I have a struggling student that is getting the extra structure and help he needs to be successful enough to graduate high school. I have a middle school daughter who struggles socially and having her at home during the school week is helping us navigate. I have a kindergartener who was our first ORCA student who I originally signed up with ORCA for her because our local district was not allowing volunteers in the school. While my older kids are capable of letting us know when things are not right, I was worried about my youngest in a school setting that now with pandemic rules would not be in an environment where the teachers had the extra accountability and support of volunteers in the classrooms and school.

My family could not afford to just pay for home school as we are low income. Getting Olivia, my kindergartner into a learning institution that I felt was appropriate was very stressful because of the 3 percent cap. Our saving grace was the school district we live in did not respond to the enrollment request which was most likely an oversight. Later as the school year progressed we had an issue with our middle school daughter being bullied, while our boys at the high school had mask mandates in a building with broken heating and cooling systems struggling to wear a mask in an overheated classroom, all while watching my least successful student slipping through the cracks. Simple solution was to put them in ORCA, but it wasn't that simple. Through the entire process of desiring to school my children from home in an accredited program there was a sense of uncertainty. Here I was, waiting on a "mess of a district" to get the final say for if I was going to school MY OWN CHILDREN from home. Low income families should have access to the same types of education more privileged families can afford offering families accredited online programs regardless of where they live is essential to having a fair and inclusive education system here in Oregon. Furthermore, if our local school district was more focused on the things that mattered and had to consider that low income families have the ability to leave, maybe they would do better, better with their planning, better with their staff hiring, better with their money and better with their programs and policies. Just imagine if our schools actually had to work hard for families to stay.

Thank you for the board's time.

Sincerely,

Misty Galofteanu