

Submitter: Patti Murphy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1552

Parents have the Right to Choose virtual public charter schools for their children's education. Such online education provides major advantages for all students, especially the most vulnerable, including those with disabilities, because it is extremely easy to differentiate for Special Education, ELL students or others, easy to access for those facing mobility concerns such as wheelchairs, much more adaptable for immune compromised children and/or for children experiencing traumatic distress in the age of COVID-19.

As a mother who has three adopted children who were able to overcome the delays and deficits caused by abuse, neglect and fragmented education prior to coming to us, I can attest to the High Value of programmed virtual learning, delivered in a self-paced, non-threatening manner, allowing children time and space to recover their self-esteem while feeling safe from social stigma and bullying.

Another major advantage of virtual education is that it empowers parents to easily and fully comply with Oregon standards and standardized testing requirements through their school years. Virtual education is NOT "Home-School" or emergency-based "Remote Learning"; instead, it is a rigorous, intentionally designed study program, customized to enrich students' educational experience, taught by highly qualified Oregon teachers who go beyond mere academic professionalism to provide comprehensive outreach using the best technology available to do so. If anyone listening has doubts, I suggest you request sample Lessons or Final Exams from one of the four core disciplines, English, Math, Science or Social Studies, and compare them to those used by other public and private schools at the same grade levels. From my own personal experience with Oregon Connections Academy, now Willamette Connections Academy, the curriculum is outstanding and provides numerous opportunities for students to go much deeper into the subjects than they ever would based on a one-time lecture based format. Not only can students easily re-read textbooks and re-watch constructive videos and Live Lessons, but with just a click of a mouse they can be transported into learning through real internet research as well; when my son was taught the meaning of apartheid in one social studies class, he chose to go deeper into the life of Nelson Mandela by reading his autobiography online text to speech and, being inspired, then watching biographical documentaries from our local library.

Virtual education is also a flexible method for families facing difficulties of all types with accessing "brick and mortar" options. For families who are extremely mobile (whether due to parent's business obligations or because of homelessness) virtual

education is the only method to avoid interruption. Even better, if a child is too ill to attend school for a period of time, they can pick up immediately with the same curriculum whenever they are ready, eliminating the danger of serious educational losses and/or the necessity of repeating classes or grades. When/if a student has difficulties with one particular subject, they can be given extra access to review that subject with the chance to catch up and continue to make progress, rather than be forced to drop back into non-age-appropriate classes.

Please do not limit our Oregon children from benefiting from the opportunities of Oregon virtual public charter education. If indeed we wish to leave no child behind, we need to allow them ALL fully accredited and publicly chartered options, instead of forcing parents to possibly have to relocate from high-demand counties to meet their needs. There should be NO PERCENTAGE LIMIT on the number of children allowed to enroll in any of Oregon's virtual public charter schools. Please respect and honor the freedoms of our youth and their parents today by passing this long-overdue legislation to achieve equity and better prepare them for the technological world of the future.