

Please vote to extend the online schooling option to ALL of Oregon's public school students, not just the 3% that "got there first" under the 2011 law.

Please read the 120+ testimonies posted by families who are finding that virtual schooling is meeting their needs where in-person school did not. As parents, we are the **primary stakeholders** in our children's lives. We are the unpaid caregivers, the ones who care the most of anyone else.

Please notice that all of the non-parental citizens that have testified against this bill mention money. In one of the non-parental testimonies, the writer says, "We do not need any more ways to siphon off much needed dollars to support students in our system. " Siphoning off implies misappropriation of funds. I taught at an online public charter school in Oregon for several years. I think specifically of one of my students, a 15 year old new mother in a tiny town in eastern Oregon. She was able to stay home with her newborn baby while completing her GED. Is that a misuse of taxpayer dollars? Please read below of my two children thriving at their online charter school and ask if that is a misuse of taxpayer dollars as well.

Our story: my two children were able to switch to online schooling in 2020. Our local school district offered an online schooling option, but it had no live teaching component and the curriculum was canned. Especially for my 3rd grader at the time, it would not have been a good fit.

We chose to send our kids to an Oregon-grown online charter school which is one of the **75% of virtual schools in Oregon that are not corporately-owned**. The teachers are excellent and they write their own curriculum, dovetailing with the state standards.

My son is talented and gifted for Math and English and has been given numerous opportunities through online school that our local school could not provide. At our local school, though the middle and high school campuses literally border one another, the middle school would not allow my son to attend Spanish, Social Studies, or English classes at the high school. When asked why not, they responded that they just don't do it. At our virtual school, my 5th grade son was able to attend a 9th grade English class several times and collaborate with students there. He also just finished the first semester of high school Spanish as a 7th grader. Additionally, in each middle and high school class at our virtual school, there is an "Honors" option offered to all students. This is truly unique, as there are always students who desire more challenging content but who are not designated as talented and gifted.

My daughter, now in 5th grade, is thriving in online school. When she started back in 2020 as a 3rd grader, she needed a lot of help from me on a daily basis. Now, she organizes her own daily schedule, gets herself into her live classes on time, and is exhibiting many study skills that even high schoolers struggle with. Online schooling has required increased personal responsibility from her and she has risen to the challenge. In the extra time afforded by online school, she works as a mother's helper for our neighbors twice a week, earning money to pay for her leopard gecko's mealworms.

I am a public educator and there are few things that I care about more in this world than educating children. My plea is that you provide equity for ALL children in Oregon. A child in the Reynolds School District should have the same opportunity as a child in the Lake Oswego School District. Our kids are the future and **they ALL deserve to have their needs met.**

Thank you for your time and for holding a courtesy hearing on this bill. I notice and appreciate all members of the Senate Education Committee.

Sincerely,

Ursa Shaw, MAT