

Submitter: Quinn Ellingsen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I am highly opposed to this bill as a parent of a student that is currently attending Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School (LCMCS). This bill would close down a thriving school that has been around for 14 year and has had a positive impact on thousands of children and families in Gresham and surrounding communities.

Our school is being forced to relocate due to lease termination by our sponsoring district, Gresham Barlow School District (GBSD). They just notified us of the lease termination in October and gave us until June 30th to be out! The LCMCS administration has worked tirelessly over the last few months to locate, enter into a contract, and start due diligence on the purchase of a property. Every effort was given to stay within the GBSD boundaries as this would have been the ideal outcome, but given the time constraints and lack of existing facilities to accommodate 17 classrooms, the options were extremely limited. The new property that we are we are in the process of purchasing is located less than 1,000 feet from the GBSD boundary.

The LCMCS administration and staff sees this has an opportunity to move from a rural location on the outskirts of Gresham to a location that is actually in closer proximity to the GBSD families we currently serve. Additionally, the new location makes getting a Montessori education more accessible to historically underserved populations. Greater communication access and diversity is a major component of the school's strategic plan going forward.

It makes sense to want to keep a district's resources within the district, but an emergent action like SB 767 would add another layer of uncertainty for LCMCS and other charter schools that are already in the middle of purchases or leases. The administration at LCMCS has made a good faith effort to keep our school as close as possible to GBSD and their students will still receive priority enrollment during the lottery process. Additionally, our school and then community as a whole are committed to becoming an important part of the surrounding neighborhood.

I certainly hope you will reconsider this bill and how abruptly it impacts charter schools as well as public school boards. However, should the body determine this bill is necessary to prevent future charter school moves, I urge you to amend to allow a more reasonable grace period for schools who are already navigating unexpected transitions to new locations or allow a certain distance that a school can be located outside of district boundaries. Our school community is close-knit, caring, and committed to this school and it's continued success. Please allow time for schools to

have some certainty in their planning efforts and, at a minimum, change the effective date of SB 767 to grandfather schools that are already engaged in plans for a transition.