

Submitter: Heather Scannell
On Behalf Of: Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

After 14 successful years in the Gresham Barlow School District, Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School is being forced to relocate, with less than a year for the planning, property search, approval process, and the move itself, due to changing priorities at the District Office. It has been a mad scramble to try to find a new location. No suitable properties were available in our home district, forcing us to expand our search to the surrounding areas. Eventually a building was found that would meet our needs--as well as improving access to and diversity in our school, due to the proposed move from our current rural campus to a site better-served by public transit--but it's 1,000 feet outside of our home district.

Were SB 767 in effect, this successful charter school, founded by a group of parents and in operation for 14 years, would be forced to close. My husband and I were part of this group of founding families. Both of our children attended Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School through 8th grade and transitioned well into our local high school. The charter school offers an alternative approach to K-8 education that is a marvelous fit for many children and families, as evidenced by its growth to a population of 400 students (with a waitlist). Shutting it down, due only to a lack of appropriate campus facilities within the physical boundaries of our school district, would do a great disservice to our current and future community and families--and would eliminate an important educational option for residents of East Multnomah County. (We are open by application to students from several surrounding school districts.)

SB 767 is arbitrary, unnecessary, and harmful to educational choice in this state. Please join us in opposing this bill.