

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

I vehemently oppose this poorly conceived piece of legislation. Clearly, it is crafted by and for a small special interest group in Pinehurst School District, Ashland, Oregon. The existing ORS 332 is sufficient to address notice and approval of a charter school operating in a different district than the one it is chartered through. While it's not clear why an "emergency" exists to pass this proposed bill, the language does not address a number of reasons charter school may need to relocate outside of the district they are chartered through.

I am the mother of two girls, age 9 and 14, who attend Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School (LCMCS). They are both neurodiverse children, one with an IEP, and the Montessori educational model has been perfect for them. They have both thrived at this school. As a public charter school, LCMCS is able to offer a Montessori education to children who might otherwise not have access because most Montessori schools are private. I'm grateful for the amazing teaching staff at LCMCS for the support, talent, patience and generous hearts they've shown my girls as they make their way through a public education system not designed for their success.

LCMCS has been chartered through the Gresham/Sam Barlow School District (GSBD) for 14 years and is currently located in Damascus. The school has leased buildings from the Sam Barlow School District (having been moved at least once) and the administrators were notified in October 2022 that their lease was to be terminated effective June 30, 2023 - 9 months to locate a building with at least 30,000 square feet for nearly 400 students, forcing the school to relocate as best they can. LCMCS would like nothing better than to find accommodations within GSBD but it has been a daunting task to find the requisite property to accommodate 17 classrooms and choices have been limited. In just the last few weeks LCMCS has begun its due diligence and entered into negotiations to purchase a building literally 1,000 feet from the GSBD boundary in Rockwood School District, which is a more diverse and underserved district, which is in keeping with the school's Strategic Plan to provide greater access and diversity.

Finally, the proposed legislation is overly punitive to charter schools who are in violation of the statute. As the statute exists today, district funds could be withheld if property notices aren't given, until the charter school rectifies the violation. This new bill requires immediate closure of the school and it's retroactive to 12 months prior to the enactment. So a charter school that has retrofitted a building to be usable as a school at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars since last June (let's say) would lose their investment, and parents would be left scrambling to find schools for their

children.

I urge you to vote "no" on this bill.

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