

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

My husband and I share a son (4yrs) and my husband's two daughters (my amazing step daughters are 12 and 6), all of our children have been powfully impacted by the unquely kind and engaging experience of Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School. We were homeless in 2020 and were able to join the program at My Fathers House family shelter. They helped us recover our stability and get into transitional housing. Zia (12) had to leave her mother and move in with us due to her mother's struggle with addiction. Unsurprisingly she struggled with the trauma of many situations leading up to this transition. Her attendance at Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School was a joy to her and a they made sure it was a safe place for her in every way. She was able to be with her (now sober) mother for a time but wishes to return to our household and want to go back to the school she loves. She will be back in attendance on Feb 14th.

Amanhi (6) has also been through poverty, homelessness, neglect with her mother and came to live with us once we were stable. She has also found it 'so fun' and 'really happy' to attend what she calls her sisters school. She has been flourishing at Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School.

Everyone at Lewis and Clark knows my children's names, greets them with joy and seems to genuinely care about them as individuals.

Even my 4 uear old son AJ (who cannot yet attend) is greeted by name and treated with respect and joyful interest by the staff.

The impact of losing Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School should not be underestimated. It would be devastating to my children, my family and my community.

In these times we have a lack of good educators, schools suffering everywhere from violence, lack of staff and lack of funding. The focus should not be on politics or amending zoning rules but on supporting schools like Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School. Safe and joyful spaces of learning are so few and far between already.

I am against this change to the rules in regards to charter schools. If anything I would clone Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School in every district... but they are unique.

Thank you for your time.

Carlie Polite