

Submitter: Mary Kay Bean
On Behalf Of: Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

I do not support this bill. I understand why some may think it's important but I'd like you to consider the real-life effects of this decision. Some exceptions must be made.

My experience with Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School in Gresham has given me new understanding of the situation charter schools may find themselves in. This wonderful, established, excellent program has been evicted from their current location by our own sponsoring school district. The school is struggling to find an appropriate place to reopen for the new school year. They need 17 classrooms for the more than 400 children they educate. I've been shocked by the numbers and the idea that they should just close because there aren't appropriate buildings within our small community is just nonsensical to me. They have found a building that would work - but it is 1,000 feet outside the district boundaries.

It seems that charter schools are treated as second-class citizens. This school has been surprising to me in it's wonderful programs. All that my grandchild has learned, experienced, explored is so much more extensive than any of my other four grandchildren in typical public school programs. My understanding is there are families that drive from Milwaukie and North Portland to have their children attend this school because of its excellent programs. The repercussions of your decision could be devastating to so many children and families.

Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School is an established part of our education community, they've been in existence for 14 years and they need support, not more barriers, to continue the excellent job they are doing. Another important piece that you need to understand is their Strategic Plan includes serving even more children by moving from a rural location that is inaccessible by public transportation to one that opens access for enrollment to underserved, more diverse populations in Rockwood, Fairview, Troutdale and the surrounding area while also continuing to serve their current families.

Please consider the individuals, the diverse, the wonderful options in this situation rather than the black and white rules that are always so much easier to enforce. Find a way to allow more rather than restricting new ideas and ways.

Thank you for your consideration.

