

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

To Whom It May Concern,

Please do not pass bill 767. I have 3 family members who attend Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School. It is a safe haven for those kiddos who struggle in a typical classroom environment. Lewis & Clark is a positive, supportive, community focused organization. Though the Gresham Barlow School District, which is their sponsor, has repeatedly canceled their building leases with very little notification, this student body has been flexible and thrived, improving whatever property they've moved to. Their lease was canceled just a couple months ago giving them an impossible deadline to find and move into a new facility before the 2023/2024 school year. However, Lewis and Clark's administration has been laboring intensively to secure another property for their 400 students. They have found a promising location, less than 1,000 ft from the Gresham Barlow District border. It's amazing they were able to find something that would fit such specific criteria with so little notice! Unfortunately, if this bill were to pass, it would make that property a non-option. Furthermore, it would very likely prevent the school from continuing at all with virtually no available options within the district's boundary. This school community is full of caring and involved families. I know they will continue to improve, support, and reach out to their surrounding neighborhoods wherever they land. The alumni from this school are notorious for being deeply invested and giving back to their communities. Something very positive, very unique, something we need more of is flourishing within this community. Please, don't take away their opportunity to continue growing and passing on what they're learning at Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School. Charter schools have a unique and necessary place in the standard education system. They face a lot of challenges as it is and the fact that they've survived is a testament to how critical they are, especially for specific populations that fail to flourish in the mainstream. Please don't add another road block to the success of children who are passionate about learning. They have already suffered through so much change and insecurity with the pandemic over the last few years. Please allow them to continue thriving. School is quite literally their home away from home. Please don't let this bill destroy that safe haven.