

Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I strongly SUPPORT your committee APPROVING Senate Bill 767 with a **do pass recommendation**. SB 767 is needed to correct a previous typographical error where the word “virtual” was left out of the statute intended to grant virtual charter schools the ability to build testing facilities in another Oregon School District. This was a correct and reasonable request, but the language of the previous bill was **never intended** to be used for brick and mortar charter schools to be placed outside of a sponsoring district without consent from the district in which the charter school would be located. Senate Bill 767 is simply a fix for a previous error.

The longstanding definitions of “Public Charter School” and “Sponsor” under ORS 338.005 explain:

(2) “Public charter school” means an elementary or secondary school offering a comprehensive instructional program operating under a written agreement entered into between a sponsor and an applicant and operating pursuant to this chapter.

4 “Sponsor” means:

(a) The board of the common school district or the union high school district **in which the public charter school is located** that has developed a written charter with an applicant to create a public charter school. (*Emphasis added*)

In Oregon, all statutes pertaining to brick and mortar charter schools assume that the charter will be located in the district which is sponsoring the charter. This preserves correct governance of a school district where each school board manages the whole of their own jurisdiction. This is the way it’s always been and the way that it should remain. By inserting the word “virtual” and accurately defining what the statute was approved for in the first place, just makes sense.

Please ensure that local school board control remains intact for all school districts in Oregon and VOTE YES to approve Senate Bill 767.

I would also like to share with the committee the results of our recent public comment period as reflected by the number of letters received in support or opposed to the John Adams Academy charter school that is seeking sponsorship from Pinehurst School District to place multiple charter schools in the Rogue Valley and none in our own district. The District has received 159 letters. Of those, 94 letters came from within our school district boundaries reflecting 72 opposed and 22 in support of the John Adams Academy proposal. In addition, 65 total letters were submitted from out of our district. Of these, 43 were oppose and 22 were in support. I believe that the in-district letters are the ones that are most relevant to our district’s decision and those opposed outnumbered those in favor by more than 3 to 1.

Perhaps even more to the point, is that we are a single school, rural and necessary school district. This makes us vulnerable to being taken over by a charter school, as that is allowed by statute. This proposal has divided our community over whether it is right for us to be able to place a school outside of our district to bolster our own enrollment. And it would mean doing so, with a Charter school 100 times larger than the in-district students Pinehurst has served for the past 115 years. Some feel this is okay to usurp students from other districts via a satellite charter school. I feel that the error in the previous bill, created a dangerous and untenable loophole, that simply needs fixing. Yes, many in our community are

weighing in in opposition to SB767, but they also are not thinking through how letting this stand takes away local control for school districts charged with overseeing their own jurisdictions.

I will also submit to the record, in a separate submittal, one letter in particular, from Deb Evans, that articulates MANY of the concerns that have been expressed by those opposed to the charter school in our Pinehurst School District. It is informative to how damaging allowing charter schools free rein to move in uninvited to another school district to not just the neighboring school district's governance, but also to a district such as ours that is very small and suddenly being asked to over see a school infinitely larger than we are. Please close this loophole and ensure that districts who want to sponsor brick and mortar charter schools, do so only inside their own borders. This would be the proper channel for the John Adams Academy to have taken from the beginning and although they showed their proposal to the neighboring school districts to satisfy ORS 338.045 which states "(1) An applicant seeking to establish a public charter school shall submit a written proposal to a school district board.", they did not pursue any sponsorship from the school districts in which they wanted to be located. Instead, they pulled back those proposals, preferring instead to try and get a blanket approval from Pinehurst to build in any of the neighboring school districts without needing those district's approval.

Please vote yes on SB767 to protect all school district in Oregon to maintain their own local governance.

Sincerely,

Ron Schaaf