



LEWIS & CLARK MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

February 2, 2023

Sen. Dembrow and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Education

Re: Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School Board Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 767

Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School (LCMCS) is a loving and supportive school community, home to nearly 400 K-8 students and their families, and operating successfully in partnership with the Gresham Barlow School District for the last 14 years.

As chair of our volunteer school board, I write today to share our opposition to Senate Bill 767 as currently drafted. While we understand the initial motivation of the bill, we want to make sure committee members are aware that its unintended consequences to our school could potentially be catastrophic, effectively ending our operations at the close of this school year.

Our school is currently seeking a new location, after termination of our current lease earlier this year, and we have been unable to find a suitable location within the boundaries of the Gresham Barlow School District, even with support from district leadership and staff. For our school community to stay whole, we need an estimated 30,000 square feet of space, with the appropriate zoning, permitting, construction, and utility connections to house our 400 kids safely. We also aim to keep our new location as close as possible to district administrative offices, so that the special education and other support the district provides our students can continue without straining district staff's capacity.

We recently found a potential site located very near the district's administrative offices, but just outside the geographic boundary of the district. Our hope is to purchase this building and finally give our school a safe, sustainable, and affordable "forever home." SB 767, as currently drafted, would require us to either find another location or another district sponsor in a matter of weeks, or else close our school indefinitely at the end of this school year. Because of our unique situation, we must make a purchase decision within the next 45 days, so even uncertainty about this bill's future further into session could be devastating to our school community.

We understand that this bill was drafted to address a very different problem, and we appreciate your efforts to ensure that the partnership among charter schools, district sponsors, and communities follows not just the letter but the intent of Oregon laws and regulations. We offer our active support in drafting potential amendment language, and we hope to hear from you

soon that we can find a way to address this unintended consequence quickly and collaboratively.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara O'Brien', written in a cursive style.

Sara O'Brien
LCMCS Board Chair