

Submitter: Heather Cupples
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB767

To whom it may concern:

I ask you not to support SB767. As a state licensed teacher who was skeptical of the Montessori model, I have been surprised and inspired by the scientific methods being practiced in this school. Most of the Montessori schools I've encountered display an appropriated version of the pedagogy; a privatized, cost-prohibitive business model; and a racially, culturally bland community. The mission and values of Lewis and Clark Montessori Charter School, as a public Montessori, have broken all of those preconceptions.

While we are currently sponsored by the Gresham Barlow School District, we have not felt welcomed by the district, nor have we had the opportunity to expand and realize our potential as a school for underserved communities. Most recently, GBSD has broken their lease agreement with us by terminating it early and giving us less than the agreed amount of time to vacate the building we currently occupy. In spite of a huge effort on the part of our administrators, staff, and parent community, we have not been able to find a building to lease or purchase within GBSD; however, under ORS 332.158 we were able to find a building that would perfectly suit our needs and vision. Not only is this building on a public transit line, it is located in a district that already values the vision and pedagogy of Montessori in the public sector. We cannot simply change our sponsoring district, but it would give us a huge boost toward finally putting down roots and establishing a sense of place in our community.

Conversely, if SB767 is passed, our school would be forced to close after 14 years of creating an equitable learning environment for those who most need it in our community.

Thank you.