

Tim Hyre
Chairman, Willamette Connections Academy School Board

March 30, 2023

Senate of Oregon
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chairman Senate Education Committee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chairman Dembrow and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

As the Chairman of the non-profit board for Willamette Connections Academy virtual charter school, I know the good work that virtual charters have been doing throughout Oregon. Our teachers are dedicated educators who want the absolute best for their students.

Willamette Connections Academy has proven the following:

- Willamette Connections Academy outperformed the state of Oregon in English/Language Arts, Math, and Science assessments.
- The money that flows to our schools is used to pay for Oregon teachers and to educate Oregon students.
- Our teachers are devoted to ensuring that our students are not just dropped in front of a screen. We work with parents to ensure that there is accountability both in the classroom and at home.
- We serve all students, regardless of need. Currently, 17% of our students are special education, and 7% are on a 504.
- We serve students from families of all income levels. Over 32% of our students qualify for Free and Reduced Meals.
- We are a diverse school and serve students of all backgrounds. Nearly 13% of our students are Hispanic and over 10% of students define themselves as belonging to multiple races.
- Parents believe in us. 94% of parents believe that our curriculum is high quality. 97% are satisfied with their children's teachers, and 96% agree that our program provides them with more involvement in their child's education.

As a non-profit board member, I am proud of the school's accomplishments and its impact on students. This bill is not needed for the following reasons:

- "For profit virtual charter schools" are already forbidden in charter law. The law states that all charter schools must, "be established as a nonprofit organization under the laws of Oregon; and have applied to qualify as an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code."

- In addition, the current charter law already requires school district authorizers to conduct an annual review of a virtual charter’s academics, finances, and overall organization ensuring accountability for student learning and fiscal accountability.
- Finally, the law also includes additional requirements in section 338.120 when the non-profit boards partner with third party entities. Some of the requirements include the “third-party entity’s budget for the provision of educational services,” and, “the salaries of supervisory and management personnel and consultants who are providing educational or related services for a public charter school in this state.”

For these reasons, I believe that another task force to study virtual learning and virtual providers is not needed. SB 1066 is a fundamentally flawed bill. Please vote no on this bill.

Sincerely,

Timothy Hyre

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Chairman, Willamette Connections Academy School Board