

Submitter: Jeanne Randall
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB4161

I am a former public school teacher in the Central Point School district and a 14 year member of the Pinehurst School board in Southern Oregon. I support this bill to expand school choice and increasing charter school enrollment percentages of choice in Oregon. While I feel it does not go far enough in creating the further school choices that could benefit all children in the state, any increase for school choice in Oregon is a good thing. With severely and embarrassingly declining test scores within our state and the increasing flood of departure of students from public schools in our state, Oregon must create more alternative educational options that align with parents choices for their students. The increased expansion of the Educational Savings Accounts for more students is a huge step in the right direction to give educational equity to more and more students and gives parents many more options to choose what is in their option the best educational alternative to their students.

According to the Oregon Department of Education's own statistics for 2022. "The downward trend was pronounced across all student groups, according to data analyzed by ODE. Some groups slid down by a smaller margin, but that was most often the case with student groups that had lower passing rates to begin with. For instance, passing rates for students served by special education services only went down one or two percentage points, but they slid down to 16.3% passing the ELA exam and 11.6% passing math.

Among Oregon's largest racial groups, barely half (50.3%) of Oregon's white students passed the ELA test, while nearly two-thirds failed to pass the math exam (36.0% passing). Both white and Hispanic/Latino students saw their passing rates fall by about 9 percentage points on both ELA and math exams. But passing rates among Latino students were lower before the pandemic, resulting in passing rates of 26.9% on ELA, and 15.1% in math."

These statistics from 2022 are so completely unacceptable. We simply cannot continue on a path of this soft bigotry of low educational expectations for students of ALL colors.

Oregon's education system has many broken aspects that continue to fail student achievement. Parents should be given as many increasing alternatives, including private school enrollment options with state funds, or the State Educational Savings Account, Vouchers, and Tax-Credit Scholarship to counter the continuing decline in our public school performance. This would bring Oregon families on par with a growing number of other states, currently at 34 states, who are increasing school

performance and test scores through state funded school programs of choice, public or private. This is the kind of real equity deserved by all students of our state. Please continue to make Oregon an equal educational opportunity state.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Randall