

## **Written Testimony in Support of HB 2583**

**Submitted by:** Lauren Giger

**Date:** April 1st, 2025

Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I'm writing today in support of House Bill 2583, which would allow some virtual public charter schools to be eligible for Student Investment Account (SIA) funding.

I work as a support specialist at Metro East Web Academy, a virtual public charter school here in Oregon. A big part of my job is supporting students who come to us significantly behind in their academic skills. Many of these students arrive after struggling in traditional school settings—sometimes for years. In many cases, our virtual model is the only reason they're still enrolled in school at all.

For those who have never attended or worked at a virtual school, there can be a misunderstanding about what virtual schools actually do. We do more than just give students a computer and an online curriculum. Our dedicated staff is deeply involved with our students every day. We offer live instruction, small group and one-on-one support, both virtual and in-person learning labs, social-emotional support, enrichment activities, and even help with basic needs like food and clothing. We also maintain a physical school building where students can come for support and to connect with peers and staff.

We are a public school. And just like any other public school in Oregon, we are doing everything we can to help our students succeed—academically, socially, and emotionally. Many of our students come to us because traditional school didn't work for them. They may have experienced bullying, trauma, health issues, or anxiety. Virtual learning gives them the flexibility and confidence to re-engage with school.

HB 2583 is about helping students. Right now, our students are excluded from SIA funding simply because they chose a virtual public charter school. Our students deserve access to the same resources and opportunities as any other public school student in Oregon. Please consider approving HB 2583 so students at virtual charter schools can get funding to provide quality support.

Thank you again for your time and commitment to equity in education.

Sincerely,

Lauren Giger

Response to Intervention Coordinator

Metro East Web Academy

