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Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, I am Dr. Allison Galvin, Executive Director at Oregon Charter Academy. Oregon Charter Academy is the state's most tenured virtual public charter school, having served students in Oregon for the past 20 years. Thank you for hearing HB 2583, which would allow funds from the Student Investment Account (SIA) to continue to serve students in the public education system.

Funds associated with SIA enhance support and programs for students who are underperforming and, often, traditionally underserved. When this legislation was first passed in 2019, virtual public charter schools were the only type of schooling within the public school system that was excluded. While there was no debate that these students were public school students, the concern was that most of these funds would be sent to the for-profit management companies, or EMOs, that managed these schools at the time, taking Oregon money away from serving Oregon students. This made sense at that time. Since then, a lot has changed in virtual public charter schools, where the majority of virtual public charter schools, and students who attend these schools are not associated with an EMO; rather, they are Independent, locally-based schools. For perspective, according to state-reported data in 2019, 52% of virtual public charter school students attended EMO-managed schools. However, 2024 state data shows only 20% of students who are enrolled at a virtual public charter school attend an EMO-managed school. HB 2583, without the requested amendment, is drafted to continue to support programs to serve underperforming students, while keeping money in Oregon for Oregon students.

This past year I published dissertation research modeling a correlation between enrollment of students in virtual public charter schools and credit deficiency of those students at the point of enrollment. SIA funds are dedicated to serving public school students who are underperforming. With current legislation, if a student enrolls in a virtual public charter school already academically behind, as demonstrated by my published research, the law currently says that this student's needs are no longer worthy of the investment because they enrolled in a different form of public education. I would argue that this student's needs are incredibly important, and programs to support this underperforming student are as necessary, if not more so, as before they enrolled.

Oregon Charter Academy opened in 2005, originally as Oregon Connections Academy, an EMO-managed school. While having the support of that corporate-managed model made sense in 2005, it became increasingly clear that it was time to move away from that model and become Oregon Charter Academy, an independent and locally-managed school. On July 1, 2020, Oregon Charter Academy became completely independent of a management company, keeping taxpayer money in Oregon to better serve our Oregon students. Since then, ORCA has thrived, such as increasing the graduation rate 24% in the last two years, being named as a Cognia School of Distinction, growing our CTE pathways, students competing with their bricks-and-mortar counterparts in competitions such as Poetry Out Loud, Future Health Professionals (HOSA), and Science Olympiad, developing amazing partnerships with NASA and AVID, building equitable learning experiences for all students, and so much more.

Yet, there is more to be done. Access to SIA funds will allow schools like Oregon Charter Academy to build programs to meet the unique needs of each student within our school. This includes expanding



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summer school options, further developing our credit recovery program, lowering class sizes, growing early literacy programs, developing a math remediation program, and expanding what we call pathways to success. This includes expanded CTE options, supports for late enrolling students, and added layers of counseling and community resource programs to support the whole student.

I urge your support of HB 2583, without the -1 amendment, to create equitable access to funds to support our public school students, taking action to show that the needs of all students matter.

Thank you,

Dr. Allison Galvin
Executive Director
Oregon Charter Academy



YES on HB 2583

**Equitable SIA Funding for all Oregon-managed schools,
including community-managed/independent virtual charter Schools**



BACKGROUND

The Student Success Act has been a great resource for most Oregon schools and students. However, one group of public school students was specifically excluded from accessing these funds. Virtual charter schools were excluded from Student Investment Account (SIA) funding over concerns that taxpayer money would be directed to the private for-profit Education Management Organizations (EMOs) that managed many of Oregon's virtual charter schools at that time.

Since 2019, a lot has changed in the make-up of virtual public charter schools. Currently, out of the 20 virtual public charter schools in Oregon, 14 are community-managed and community-governed, including the largest virtual public charter schools in the state.

With the drastic change in the virtual school landscape, there exists a solution that continues to keep money away from the pockets of the EMOs while providing equitable access to SIA funds for community-managed schools.

SOLUTION

HB 2583 successfully grants access to SIA funding for virtual public charter schools that are NOT designated as an EMO, or managed by a for-profit management company. This change continues to keep taxpayer money in Oregon, spent directly on Oregon students. HB 2583 is urgent to ensure that all Oregon students have access to equal and appropriate funding.

THE GOAL OF SIA FUNDING

The goal of SIA funding has always been to focus on marginalized students within Oregon. HB 2583 keeps money in Oregon but allows that money to stay with students who are most in need

While already responsible for completing the full grant application associated with SIA funds, HB 2583 allows non-EMO virtual public charter schools to continue to serve students most in need through additional supports and curricular options.



Oregon Charter Academy (ORCA) is an independently operated virtual public charter school

The mission of Oregon Charter Academy is to prepare all students for success in a global society through an inclusive, rigorous, academic environment where students have daily live interaction with highly qualified teachers and continuous access to curriculum. Oregon Charter Academy staff partners with families in a transparent, collaborative school environment to support all students in their academic journey.



WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE ORCA

ASCEND - Career & Technical Education (CTE)

- Career Pathways in Computer Science, Medical Science, Veterinary Science, Hospitality & Tourism, and Business & Management.

AVID

- A college and career readiness program designed to close achievement gaps and prepare all students for success after high school,

College Now (Dual Credit)

- Partnerships with Linn Benton Community College, Chemeketa Community College, and Willamette Promise.

Clubs & Social Opportunities

- Over 45 student-suggested clubs, including K-12 Student Gov., NASA, and esports.
- More than 150 in-person & virtual field trips around the state every year.

DATA & STUDENT SUCCESS AT ORCA

In the annual state assessments, ORCA continues to outshine the state with higher pass rates in every tested subject and every grade band, with fourth-grade math scores leading the way with a 59% pass rate, compared to the state at 38%, and high school language arts with a 67% pass rate, while the state's rate is 48%.

Since 2020, students in ORCA's ASCEND (CTE) program have earned a total of 512 industry certifications.

Over 1,520 students have earned college credit through our College Now partnerships.

ORCA's graduation rate has improved by over 20% in the last two years and is among the top rates for virtual public charter schools.

ORCA has been named an Exceptional Charter School in Special Education by the National Association of Special Education Teachers.

Oregon Charter Academy was named an International School of Distinction by Cognia in 2021 for our high accreditation score of 377.5 out of 400