SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate bill updating charter school laws passes unanimously
SB 255 reflects work of diverse group of education stakeholders

SALEM – The Senate voted this morning on a consensus bill that modifies provisions in Oregon statute regarding charter schools. SB 255 is a product of the Charter Review Committee, a work group consisting of representatives of public schools, charter schools, the Department of Education, the Legislature, education associations, parents, teachers, and other education stakeholders.

"This legislation is the product of a diverse group of concerned educators and partners," said Senator Suzanne Bonamici (D-Washington Co./NW Portland), a member of the group that reviewed Oregon's charter school law upon it's ten-year anniversary. "Senate Bill 255 shows what we can accomplish by working together and finding compromise on what is sometimes viewed as a contentious issue."

Significant features of SB 255 include provisions to bar members from serving on both a sponsoring school board and a charter school board within a district, extending timelines for applications to establish new charter schools, clarifying that charter schools are bound by non-profit laws, and setting out a mediation process in the event of disputes.

"We need to encourage educational innovation while making sure that there are systems in place to ensure taxpayers are getting the greatest value from every dollar," said Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), chair of the Senate Education and Workforce Education Committee. "These changes have the blessing of the people that are affected by charter schools and represent common sense solutions to issues that have come up since charter school legislation was first passed in Oregon a decade ago."

SB 255 now goes to the House for consideration.

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