

Submitter: Kandice Burton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

I am writing in support of HB 3444. I am the principal at Gresham Arthur Academy, in the Gresham-Barlow School District. We offer students in the district the opportunity to learn via the Direct Instruction model. We offer families the opportunity to be a part of a tuition-free, small public school. As public school students, our students deserve equitable funding. I know that you have the data showing our students receive only 48% of the funding that students at the neighborhood school receive in total. Yet, our students have historically, and continue to, outperform those at the neighboring schools. Increasing the pass through funds to 95% would help to bridge this huge gap.

Our students have higher needs than ever before. And, the funding disparity has caused our school to lose a staffing position this past year. This has been detrimental to our school. We need more staff, not less. We can't provide this when our funding is so low AND we are unable to access the building funds that other public schools can. Our building lease takes up a significant amount of our budget and is paid out of general funds. So, not only do we start with significantly less than we should, but we are also paying for our building using these funds, which the other district schools do not need to do.

Our teachers are paid significantly less than teachers in our district and it's becoming increasingly difficult to keep teachers. This is problematic because we have such a specific model and it's difficult to find, train and then keep teachers due to the poor pay. Many teachers have believed in our model, yet had to look elsewhere due to the lower pay.

We have our own HR, tech, and management. There is no reason the district should be retaining 20% of each student's state funding. The district is profiting from our students and that is unacceptable!

Please carefully consider HB 3444 and vote for equitable funding for ALL public school students.