

Submitter: Sarah Williams
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As a parent of an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep disparity currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are essentially funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Public charter school students are public school students, and it's past time to fund their education fairly.

Almost every public charter school parent has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their child and their family. Many families are put in the awful position of having to choose between the educational services and experience their child needs that only a public charter school provides, at the expense of other services that the state funds at traditional public schools, like transportation support, food security programs and more.

As a parent, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that charter schools have on students. My child has benefited greatly from the specialized curriculum, dedicated educators, and unique learning environment that their charter school provides. My student's academic performance is stellar due to the curriculum and dedication of teachers, parental involvement is significant, and educators are incredibly dedicated. However, none of these successes are sustainable without equitable funding compared to neighborhood public schools. Without fair financial support, charter schools will struggle to maintain the high standards and exceptional learning experiences that benefit so many students.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades or are not designed to promote learning as they are repurposed buildings; students can't access transportation services; food security programs are limited; and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By supporting HB 3444, you are standing up for the rights of all public school students—regardless of the type of school they attend. I respectfully ask you to vote in favor of this bill and work to ensure that charter school students are treated fairly under Oregon's education system. You can fix this ongoing disparity and provide fair funding for public charter school students who deeply need it.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Thank you,
Sarah & Galen Williams