

Submitter: Wendy Nelson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444  
House Committee On Education  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301 Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As a grandparent of Oregon public charter school students and a retired public educator, 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 is time to fund their education fairly.

Almost every public charter school family has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their children. Many started out in traditional public schools, but could not receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges and class sizes in public schools.

I spent 34 years as a teacher advocating for children and their needs. I know how schools well and I know my grandchildren. They were on a waiting list to attend a local charter school as a first grader and fifth grader and were finally enrolled in March of 2020... then enter a COVID-19. Thank goodness they were part of the charter school during the pandemic, receiving very personalized education due to the small class sizes and highly qualified staff. As IEP students, they are benefiting from the education their charter school provides.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades, students cannot access transportation services, food security programs are limited, and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By passing HB 3444, 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,

Wendy Nelson, Oregon City, OR