

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:

I am the business manager for one of the largest and most successful charter schools in Oregon, Redmond Proficiency Academy. But I have also worked for several other Oregon cities and counties in the finance department. What we have been able to offer Oregon students, with the dollars we have, is truly astonishing. Tuition-free choice schools are essential to ensuring every child gets the education they deserve. I can't help but imagine what we could do with equity.

A recent report by ECONorthwest<sup>1</sup> found that Oregon public charter schools receive less than half the funding of their district counterparts. Over the last ten years, charter school enrollment has gone up, but funding relative to enrollment has decreased. At RPA, the biggest impacts of this inequity include -

- NO access to Facilities bonds, grants, financing, or improvement services
  - We spend \$2,000,000 a year on Facilities
- NO access to Transportation funding
  - We spend \$300,000 a year on transportation
- Our district keeps 5% of our SSF allocation AND charges us indirect grant fees on grant money we complete all the applications and reporting on - SIA
  - We lose \$20,000 on SIA and aprox \$420,000 on SSF

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<sup>1</sup> ECONorthwest. *Study of Oregon Charter School Funding 2024*. Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools, Oct. 2024. [https://www.orc3s.org/files/ugd/62bea0\\_05eae6c4155f4e29bf6063fabb2547be.pdf](https://www.orc3s.org/files/ugd/62bea0_05eae6c4155f4e29bf6063fabb2547be.pdf)

Many of our students would not be successful in a traditional schooling model. All of our students are better served emotionally and socially at RPA.

We have used our SSF dollars to:

- Provide hotspots for any student who needs internet at home (Cost about \$4,000 per year)
- Hired two full time social workers - one at the middle school and one at the high school (Cost about \$200,000 per year)
- Provide FREE breakfast and lunch to all students, every day of school (Prior to Provision 2 funding - \$90,000 a year)
- Achieve a high school graduation rate of 95%
- Partnered with our local police and embedded our treasure School Resource Officer as a genuine member of the staff (Cost \$50,000 per year)
- Established a Future Center tasked with college, career, and scholarship assistance. Our students received almost \$7 million in scholarships in 2023. (Cost about \$100,000 per year)

My list could go on and on. I am proud of the work we do in Charter schools. You should be proud of the work being accomplished in Charter schools and please pass HB 3444. Education has been transformed by the COVID pandemic, and charter schools are equipped and flexible to respond to these changes. With our smaller staff and student populations, we can pivot quickly and test solutions that will help inform Oregon public education as a whole. We are already problem solving challenges such as attendance, cell phones, and AI in the classroom.

**Please give us the resources to do this important work.**

Thank you,  
Christine Kurtz  
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