

Submitter: Joy Zhou
On Behalf Of: School Admin Support Team
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

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

As the Finance and HR Director at Hope Chinese Charter School, on behalf of our admin support team, I urge you to support House Bill 3444. Oregon's public charter schools serve a critical role in Oregon's education system. Many of the students we serve were unable to access the cultural and language immersion education that we offer through district schools. Public charter schools are committed to educational innovation, providing personalized educational opportunities for our students, and emphasizing equity and autonomy to ultimately transform the lives of young people.

Unfortunately, Oregon law shortchanges public charter school students. By passing HB 3444, we can fix the outdated issues with Oregon's school funding model and provide fair funding for public charter school students.

Oregon's public charter schools can only access 80% of State School Grant funds, and have no access to the number of other revenue streams that districts receive. This dynamic has created a huge disparity in funding. A recent report by ECONorthwest 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. Without access to an equitable share of the SSF Grant and other streams of revenue that feed into the District-run schools, this gap will only continue to grow.

At Hope Chinese Charter School, we could easily provide language and cultural immersion education to an additional 300 students. However, due to this funding gap, we are stuck in an inadequate building space where we have no room to grow. Our teachers and specialists have to meet with students in busy hallways and even the kitchen because we have no space for small group intervention. We have no room to allocate for a library, no indoor gym space, and our outside space has fallen into disrepair. As a public charter school we also cannot utilize school district funds to help us acquire a better facility or maintain our current one.

Passing HB 3444 will help fix this ongoing disparity by:

Allowing charter school students to access 95% of the ADMw provided through the State School Fund.

Allowing charter school students to access local, state and federal education dollars that are also currently available to non charter public schools.

Allowing charter schools to provide transportation services to students living within their sponsoring district and access transportation reimbursement grant dollars for providing those services.

All students in Oregon's public education system should have access to fairly funded public education options that meet their needs. On behalf of our teachers, staff, and most importantly students, please support HB 3444.

Thank you and Sincerely,
Hope Chinese Charter School Admin Support Team