



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 the Board Chair of Hope Chinese Charter School, I write on behalf of our Board of Directors to 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 be effectively educated, for a variety of reasons, in 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 By passing HB 3444, we can fix the outdated issues with Oregon's school funding model and provide fair funding for public charter school students.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.

This funding inequity has direct, daily consequences for our students, staff, and school community. At **Hope Chinese Charter School**, we have the demand and the passion to serve an additional 300 students, yet we are constrained by an **inadequate facility** with no space to expand. 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.

Despite these challenges, **our staff remain deeply committed to our students and our mission**. They work tirelessly, often going above and beyond their roles, to support the school and hold our community together. However, because of funding disparities, **we cannot offer salaries that compete with district schools**, making it difficult to **recruit and retain the talented educators** our students deserve.

By passing HB 3444, you can help correct these disparities and ensure that public charter school students are not left behind.

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,

Michael Willits
Board Chair, Hope Chinese Charter School