

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 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.

We made the decision to transfer out of our district school into our local charter school in 2023/2024 and we are so glad! We saw that the environment in the larger school was becoming toxic and not maximizing the potential of our students. We gently coaxed our children to make the switch but they each made their own decision. Our daughter has now made the most of the 'Early College Program' at our charter school and will graduate High School this year with two full years of college and a 4.13 GPA. Our oldest son, in 10th grade, is already accumulating college credits with a college GPA of 3.85. Our youngest son, in 9th grade, attends charter school on-site two days per week and schools-at-home two days and his grades have improved to straight A's. He has built a great group of friends, is excelling, has great teachers and a positive environment and is thriving. The decision to take your children to a Charter School is not without cost or commitment; it requires far more parental investment of time and financial resources. This is not a passive option but we are so glad we made the choice to give our students the opportunity to switch to a public charter school; it is one of the best decisions we have made. Our students spend far less time waiting for teachers to keep order in the classroom (their words) and are accomplishing far more. What we hope you will hear is that **we have found that charter school is a fantastic investment**. Our charter school is partnering with us in preparing our children to become adults who are a benefit to society.

Oregon's Public Charter Schools serve a critical role in Oregon's education system. Many students are unable to be effectively educated in a positive environment in a district school. Expanding access to state funding for public charter schools is essential to ensuring educational equity, fostering innovation, and strengthening Oregon's entire public school system. Every student - regardless of where they attend school - deserve access to quality resources and opportunities for success. Public charter schools allow more choices for students and families to find a learning environment that best fits their needs and potential.

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 can't 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. Increased funding ensures charter schools can offer high-quality programs, smaller class sizes, and additional support services for students.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Thank you