

Portland Arthur Academy

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Dear ORC3S,

I am currently a 2nd grade teacher at Portland Arthur Academy, a small charter school, which could be positively affected by House Bill 3444. Currently, sponsoring districts retain 20% of ADMw funds as “administrative oversight funds”. However, public charter schools, like our own, must provide their own Human Resources, Finance, Operations, Board and other services while also being required to adhere to quarterly and annual IRS reporting requirements as a 501(c)3. We also are responsible for facility costs while district-run facilities are financially supported through bonds. There are a number of streams of revenue that feed into a District-run school: state, federal, local, grants, and others. Of those streams, just one, the State School Fund Grant, is required to be passed on to the charter schools. As those funds are passed through the district, a portion is retained there - 20% for public charter students in grades k-8, and 5% for public charter students in grades 9-12. So public charter school students receive 80 or 95% of one funding stream only.

The reason passing this bill is so important is because public charter schools often serve historically underserved student populations, including low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities. Increased funding ensures that charter schools can offer high-quality programs, smaller class sizes, and additional support services to help close achievement gaps. Our school and public charter schools alike are critical to the education system because our curriculum focuses on innovative models that include arts, social-emotional learning, science, geography, health, and life skills. We

offer families choices within the public education system that allow students to find a learning environment that fits their needs best.

With increased adequate funding from this bill, public charter schools would be able to continue piloting new teaching methods that benefit all schools in the state, collaborate with traditional public schools, share best practices and improve educational outcomes for all students. As well as offer wraparound services, such as mental health support, and afterschool programs. With this bill, the increased funding could ensure charter schools can offer high-quality programs, smaller class sizes, and additional support services to help close achievement gaps.

This bill being passed is crucial to ensure all families and students that are a part of public charter schools are receiving ample and equal opportunities to those of district run schools. 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—deserves access to quality resources, experienced teachers, and opportunities for success.

Sincerely,

Samantha Pestner