

Submitter: Brittany Lawson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444
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.

Almost every public charter school parent has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their child. Many started out in traditional public schools, but couldn't receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges that required specialized attention beyond what a public school classroom could provide, or physical, developmental, or mental health challenges that public schools simply couldn't, or wouldn't, accommodate for.

My experience, along side my son, at Madrone Trail Charter School exceeds any schooling experience that I ever had when I was a child. I feel that I am tapped into my son's life so much more. For instance If someone from the community asks for a volunteer in the classroom , a bag of soil for the garden, a special snack or warm apple cider for the fall equinox, cardboard for an art project, just about anything the community pulls together. A family is always there to help. This school is full of helpers.

I am so touched by personal relationships and friendships at this school. It is a small, aware and activated community. This isn't just schooling, it's "life-ing."

My son will be in the same class of children all the way up until the 8th grade along with his teacher, they are synonymous to a family unit. That to me is something I never had at any school I've attended. Lifelong friends, growing and learning together consistently.

This school is chosen by families because they want to be there alongside their children. It's not just drop off, at a school in a district we all fall under, we are intentionally here with our children.

I've been searching for community like Madrone for so long.

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.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Thank you,