

Submitter: Kyle Sutherland
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.

When parents choose to drive their kids for 9 years to a particular school, rather than taking the easier choice of the closest school in the district, that speaks volumes to the importance they place on THAT education and community offered by THAT school. Also, taking into account the amount of parental involvement a charter school like Madrone Trail requires of its families in order to truly thrive, one gets a sense of the dedication and engagement that make this K-8 community truly special. My wife and I are extremely grateful that our family has found such a vibrant community that is passionate about raising healthy, well-adjusted children. I hope that in the future, more and more children will have the opportunity to grow up in this kind of socially-enriching environment.

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,
Kyle Sutherland