

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

As an Intervention Specialist for the David Douglas Arthur Academy, I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3444, which seeks to modify the funding structure for public charter schools in Oregon. This legislation is crucial for ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all students in our state. HB3444 addresses the funding disparities faced by Oregon's public charter schools, ensuring that all students—regardless of the type of public school they attend—receive equitable educational resources.

Public charter schools play an essential role in our education system by offering diverse learning environments that serve a broad range of student needs. Currently, public charter schools receive a percentage of the State School Fund allocations that is often less than that of traditional public schools. This inequity limits their ability to provide essential programs, retain qualified educators, and offer the same level of support services available in district schools. HB3444 proposes to adjust this percentage, thereby aligning funding more closely with that of non-chartered public schools. Additionally, the bill mandates that school districts transfer federal, state, and local funds to public charter schools on the same basis as they do for traditional public schools. It also recognizes transportation costs incurred by public charter schools as equivalent to those of school districts.

These changes are vital for several reasons:

1. **Equity in Funding:** By ensuring that public charter schools receive funding comparable to traditional public schools, we promote fairness and acknowledge the valuable role these schools play in our education system.
2. **Enhanced Educational Opportunities:** Equitable funding allows public charter schools to offer diverse educational programs, catering to various learning styles and needs, thus enriching the educational landscape of Oregon.
3. **Support for Innovation:** Public charter schools often serve as incubators for innovative teaching methods and curricula. Adequate funding ensures these schools can continue to develop and implement pioneering educational practices that can benefit all schools.
4. **Recognizing Transportation Costs:** Addressing the unique transportation challenges public charter schools face by providing necessary funding for these expenses.

The importance of HB3444 is underscored by the widespread support it has received from various stakeholders. Numerous testimonies from educators, parents, and community members have been submitted in favor of the bill, highlighting the positive impact it would have on public charter schools across Oregon.

In conclusion, passing HB3444 is a necessary step toward achieving funding equity for public charter schools in Oregon. This legislation will ensure that all students, regardless of the type of public school they attend, have access to the resources they need to succeed. I urge you to support HB3444 and help create a more equitable and innovative educational system for our state.

Sincerely,

Elissa McIntosh