

3/14/2025

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 staff member and former parent at Reynolds Arthur Academy, I urge you to support House Bill 3444. Oregon's public charter schools serve an important role in Oregon's education system. Many of the students we serve were unable to be effectively educated, for a variety of reasons, in district schools. Public charter schools are committed to educational innovation, providing personalized educational opportunities for our students, and emphasizing equity and autonomy to ultimately transform the lives of young people.

Unfortunately, Oregon law shortchanges public charter school students. By passing HB 3444, we can fix the outdated issues with Oregon's school funding model and provide fair funding for public charter school students.

Oregon's public charter schools can only access 80% of State School Grant funds, and have no access to the variety of other revenue streams that sponsoring districts receive. This dynamic has created a huge disparity in funding. A recent report by ECONorthwest¹ found that Oregon public charter schools receive less than half the funding of their district counterparts. Without access to an equitable share of the SSF Grant and other streams of revenue that feed into the District-run schools, this gap continues to grow.

At my school, this funding gap is evident even though we run a very tight ship! The unavailability of bussing in particular greatly limits which families are able to enroll to take advantage of opportunities our small school offers. Our school would benefit from a gym or even a covered outdoor area for recess and Physical Education in our Troutdale weather. Additional staffing for small groups and support positions would be amazing. Current funding disparities place unnecessary financial burdens on charter schools and charter families, limiting resources for students, teachers, and classroom materials.

Passing HB 3444 will help fix this ongoing disparity by:

- Allowing charter school students to access 95% of the ADMw provided through the State School Fund.
- Allowing charter school students to access local, state and federal education dollars that are also currently available to non charter public schools only.
- Allowing public charter schools to provide transportation services to students living within their sponsoring district and access transportation reimbursement grant dollars for providing those services.

All students in Oregon's **public education system** should have access to fairly funded public education options that meet their needs. On behalf of our teachers, staff, and most importantly students, please support HB 3444.

Thank you,

Mary M. Martin

Reynolds Arthur Academy