

To: Chair and Members of the House Revenue Committee

RE: HB 3397, Relating to Public School Funding Equity Bill

Dear Chair and Members of the House Revenue Committee:

As a constituent of Rep. Bailey, and a democrat, in District 42, I urge you to support HB 3397, which proposes to provide more equitable funding for Oregon charter schools.

Our family lives in Southeast Portland (District 42) and our two children, Uma and Jonas, attend The Emerson School. Uma is in second grade and Jonas is in Kindergarten. We feel so lucky that we "won the lottery" and were able to have them attend The Emerson School. Charter schools, and Emerson, in particular, provide children with innovative educational experiences. Our children are thriving at Emerson, due to its project-based approach, blended classrooms, small class size, location (easy access for field studies around the city), and high caliber of teaching. As an educator, I'm convinced that their educational experience is on par (or above) a private school education – despite the lack of resources.

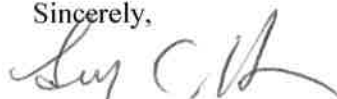
However, I see how Emerson struggles financially, challenged by financial costs and additional financial stresses that other public schools do not face (such as rent, insurance, building repairs, etc.). Emerson runs on a very tight budget! Oregon public charter schools receive about half the public funds as children in traditional public schools. This is appalling! Our children are public school students, we believe strongly in sending our children to public schools, and think that charter schools should be entitled to the same funding as traditional public schools. This funding belongs to our students – not the district! The funding is supposed to follow children to whatever public school he or she attends.

If HB 3397 passes, Emerson could benefit in so many ways potentially, such as:

- A permanent ongoing arts program
- Building improvements/expansion – Emerson does not have a library, lunchroom, gym, or auditorium as most schools do
- Additional classroom supplies to support project work
- Additional technology (there are only a few computers in the building)
- Staff salary increases – charter school teachers earn 20% less than other public school teachers, yet they are committed to working at Emerson
- Increased professional development opportunities for teachers

I urge you to support HB 3397. Thank you for your attention in this matter. If you have any questions or require clarification, please call me at 503-238-4017.

Sincerely,



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