

April 6, 2015

Mary Melinda Martin
Portland, OR 97230

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am the mom of a 3rd grader at a public charter school, Reynolds Arthur Academy, in Troutdale. My son has attended this school since Kindergarten and has thrived. I can't imagine him having the same degree of learning, academic success, or joy for schooling in a "standard" public school in the Reynolds district.

I support and urge you to endorse SB 819 to allow for fair funding of Oregon public charter schools. I feel the proposed sharing of funding is fair to the districts and the charter schools. The current level of funding is not justified or fair to charter school students.

As it stands now, Oregon public charter school students are at a disadvantage:

- Teachers cannot be adequately paid in comparison to district teachers. For example, there have been several excellent teachers who have begun at our school only to leave, sometimes mid-year, due to better financial offers.
- Buildings and grounds suffer due to lack of equitable funding from the district. Charter school students, such as ours, often make do without gyms, music rooms, libraries or dedicated lunch rooms.
- Many charter schools, like Reynolds Arthur Academy, excel in academics by all standard markers such as OAKS testing. Imagine the increased benefit to students when funds are distributed more justly and even more possibilities for excellence are available to explore!

At a time when many school districts, including ours, have very poor academic results or are "underperforming", charter schools are an important alternative. They are approved by individual districts in an effort to make available different materials, techniques or environments to optimize students' success. As a rule, the districts only continue to approve a charter school if it is effective. Why should these successful schools, often vastly more successful than others in their district as is the case for our school, not be funded at a comparable level to other schools in the district? I believe supporting SB 819 will help many more children succeed in school and life.

Thank you for taking my view into consideration. I am available for further discussion at the phone number or e-mail address above.

Sincerely,

Mary Melinda V Martin
Gresham, OR