

Subject: please pass SB 819 and SB 820 tomorrow

Chair Roblan and Committee-

I am writing to ask for your support for SB 819 and SB 820 tomorrow. As a parent of a child who has not fit into traditional PPS programming, I'm very much affected by this legislation. My son has been 'falling through the cracks' during his early childhood education until we were lucky enough to enroll him in South West Charter School. He has been thriving since and recently is fully integrated in his classroom. The hands-on project based approach matches his needs and challenges him daily. We have learned that many of his classmates has similar stories of 'not fitting in' to traditional PPS programs and required expensive IEPs to suffer through their elementary experience. At SWCS, these kids are not needing this extra support and are able to integrate into the normal classroom ratio. We see him and his peers thrive in our uniquely crafted and encouraging community and go on to do very well in both a traditional and non-traditional public high school setting. While our teachers and place based educational focus surely has much to do with this, there is certainly a component of their success that is due to a smaller and different environment; one in which many various types of charter schools can provide. Unfortunately our school, like many other charter schools, must make all this happen with 42% less funding than district schools get. The Chalkboard Project just did a thorough study of this and the results are discouraging. The parent volunteers at our school work tirelessly to fundraise and support the teachers in the classrooms. I know firsthand how difficult it is to achieve the results we have, and are being held to, with such a drastic reduction in funding compared to our district counterparts. Our teachers and children deserve the same funding and opportunities that are provided to all district teachers and children, even if that means migrating to an alternative charter environment which allows them to thrive. I ask that you please pass SB 819 and SB 820 tomorrow. I very much appreciate your careful consideration of these issues.

Thank you for your excellent advocacy of our children's needs.

Mindy Cash, SWCS parent of two

4625 SE Center St

Portland, OR 97206

503-775-8019