

Dear Ms. Engbring,

I am writing to you to ask for your support of SB819.

My family and I moved to Beaverton, OR nine years ago. We did so partly because of the good school system. However, as school years arrived and I became more involved, I began to learn more about the benefits of language immersion in education. And about some successful teaching methods used overseas. A local charter with an emphasis on math and Spanish immersion was just launching, so I took a leap and entrusted my children to this new school (watching with a close eye!) It has been a great experience for the entire family.

Our charter school is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year. We have seen many changes as we have established ourselves more firmly. Every organization unit has shown great dedication in moving us forward - including teachers, administration, PTO, board, parents and students. The commitment to volunteerism and 'making it happen' is very strong. Our community is very dedicated in fundraising efforts to try to close the gaps. This takes tremendous time and energy which could better be spent on the kids education more directly.

When I first learned that charters got 80% of the funding per student that standard public schools got - I thought that was a bit challenging - but the district does have some overhead to cover. Now as I understand more deeply all of the monies we have no access to (the taxes and levies, some federal grants and matching funds) I understand we actually get less than 60% of the per student monies for the district. Plus we pay facilities rent. This helps me to better understand why our financial hurdles seem so overwhelming sometimes!

While we are a charter - we are still a public school. We cannot choose who to educate from our district. And we cannot charge tuition. Correcting the huge imbalance in per student funding would make such a tremendous difference in our ability to run more efficiently, focus on the kids rather than the fund raising, and retain our staff. The last several years, many of our teachers have been hired away by the traditional public schools. We cannot even begin to compete in pay to keep them. And despite our great academic success - we are always financially on the edge - with parent zeal and administration flexibility making the ends meet just in time. This makes planning for the future challenging.

Please consider this bill. Charter schools can do 'more with less', but a small shift to reimburse a realistic per student funding amount would make a huge difference in our ability to keep forging the best education possible for all of our kids - including those who thrive in less traditional environments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Suzanne Rain