

Dear Representative Kotek,

I'm writing to ask for your help in getting equitable funding for all publicly educated students in Oregon. Charter schools provide an essential function in our education system by picking up where some typical schools leave off. Parents are able to choose charter schools with a specific emphasis on an educational format that best suits their particular children, children who may or may not be succeeding in a traditional school setting.

My daughters have both attended the Portland Village Charter school, I have a third grader currently, and my eldest began when the school opened and she was in 2nd grade. She attended through 8th grade and together we chose our neighborhood high school once graduating from PVS. She is thriving with a 4.0 gpa, her teachers have all remarked on her level of commitment to school, her poise and participation in class as well as how well-rounded she is as a student and individual. While I would like to take full credit for how wonderful Ava is, I know that this is due in large part to her attending a Waldorf-inspired charter school for 7 years. She had an early education that was steeped in art, nature, storytelling, music, mythology, science, dance and more. The methods engage the children head, heart and hands – and truly creates a learning environment that encourages exploration through the body, mind and spirit, supporting the child at every step.

Our school has a committed parent body, and we have come together again and again over the years to raise additional funds. It has been a challenge, year after year, to do more with less. Our current location has always been considered temporary, though as a young school with only 80% funding through the public school system it has been difficult to find a location large enough to accommodate a 2 track K-8 school. PPS will NOT rent vacant space to charter schools. Additional funding would allow our school to consider other properties, hopefully before our lease runs out (and will not be renewed by the owners) in 2018.

In closing, my hope is that you see the value that Charter schools offer to the families of Oregon. Ours is only one story of a successful school committed to serving students at a high level of experiential activities and academics. There are many such stories, and funding these schools who AUGMENT rather than take away from the typical public school's efforts at educating our children is simply crucial. Choice in education is a pearl of great price, for who is more important than our children, truly our future?

I implore you to see the bigger picture that affects thousands of students across our beautiful state and cast your vote on SB 819 accordingly with a resounding YES.

Respectfully and with the deepest gratitude,

~Amy Bean

Mother to flourishing Charter School Students Portland, OR