

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Eddie Melendez from Ontario Oregon. As a parent of a child who attends Four Rivers Community School, I urge you to support HB 5015 and appropriate at least \$10.3 billion for the next biennium's state school fund. I never knew that significantly less financial support than district run public schools. Four Rivers Community School is a charter school that has been providing exceptional education to our children with less support from the state. Public charter schools who serve grades K - 8th grade only receive 80% of the State School Fund allocation that a district-run school receives. While our PTA has been extraordinary in their efforts to bridge the gap through donations, fundraising, and volunteering, it is my firm belief that parents should not have to bear this burden alone. My child has gained so much from attending the Four Rivers Community School and I hope that with the support from HB 5015 the Four Rivers Community School can support the development of more children to come.

My daughter has attended the Four Rivers Community School since kindergarten and her ability to read, write, and speak Spanish has improved. Reading, writing, and comprehension is not the only thing that my child benefits from. Our child to educator ration is beneficial as well. Children at the Four Rivers Community School have more 1:1 instruction time and able to know their teachers on a more personal level and build relationships with school staff.

Despite Four River' success, there is still a lot of room for improvement, which can only be achieved through increased funding in the State School Fund. With additional resources, our school would be able to hire more staff to maintain smaller class sizes and provide individualized attention to our students. I ask that you consider allocating additional funding to our school and other public charter schools across the state, so they may continue to thrive and provide specialized and unique educational experiences for our children. With your support, we can ensure that schools like Four Rivers are able to give to our students the support they need that they otherwise would have challenges receiving at a district school.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I trust that you will give this request the consideration it deserves and make a decision that supports our children, our schools, and our community as a whole.