

Submitter: Karin Webster  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444  
House Committee On Education  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As a former parent of an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep disparity currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are essentially funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Public charter school students are public school students, and it's past time to fund their education fairly.

Almost every public charter school parent has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their child. Many started out in traditional public schools, but couldn't receive the education they deserved, often due to learning challenges that required specialized attention beyond what a public school classroom could provide, or physical, developmental, or mental health challenges that public schools simply couldn't, or wouldn't, accommodate for.

We spent 10 years as a charter school family with 2 children attending Woodburn Arthur Academy (a K-5 school) from 2014-2024. As you know, this put us there before, during and after the pandemic. The charter school offered a small community for which my children could learn. Every child learns differently and the focus on making sure everyone learns in the way that was best for them was impeccable. My children were well prepared for middle school and high school and are thriving with the knowledge and tools taught you them at their charter school. I also was a very involved parent for every year I was allowed to be there so that I could take an active part in my children's educations. From field trips, to school functions, to helping in classrooms, or helping with serving lunches I was a welcomed part of the community. The aspect of "community" cannot be understated. Working together as a community all the children achieved more. Being involved allowed me to get to know many of the students and watching them grow and learn was very special. My oldest son is now in 10th grade and many of his former classmates still say "hello" when we run into them around town. This shows a lasting impression on the students educationally as well as socially and emotionally. I am happy that our family was able to be a part of a charter school for so long.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. Many buildings are old and in need of upgrades, students can't access transportation services, food security programs are limited, and schools lack essential school supplies and mental health resources. By passing HB 3444, you can fix this ongoing disparity and provide fair funding for public charter school students who deeply need it.

Please vote yes on HB 3444.

Thank you,  
Karin Webster