

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 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. As an educator myself, I was impressed by Springwater Environmental Sciences School's focus on active, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning. Decades of research suggests that these techniques maximize student gains, but as importantly, they help instill a lifelong love of learning. My children attending Springwater not only learn to collect data/evidence about questions that interest them, but also are encouraged to use their linguistic and artistic skills to report what they find in engaging, creative—and quite frankly—impressive ways. The smaller size, dedicated faculty, and nimbleness of a charter school makes this possible.

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,  
Todd Watson, PhD