

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 an elected official in East County, I urge you to support House Bill 3444. I am on the Board of Education at Mount Hood Community College, and I stand in firm support of our local educators. Within Gresham-Barlow SD there is a free Montessori Charter School that is empowering a large number of neurodivergent and disabled families in East County that deserves your attention.

Oregon's public charter schools serve a critical role in Oregon's education system. Many of the students we serve were unable to be effectively educated, for a variety of reasons, in district schools. Public charter schools are committed to educational innovation, providing personalized educational opportunities for our students, and emphasizing equity and autonomy to ultimately transform the lives of young people.

Unfortunately, Oregon law shortchanges public charter school students. By passing HB 3444, we can fix the outdated issues with Oregon's school funding model and provide fair funding for public charter school students.

Oregon's public charter schools can only access 80% of State School Grant funds, and have no access to the number of other revenue streams that districts receive. This dynamic has created a huge disparity in funding. A recent report by ECONorthwest¹ found that Oregon public charter schools receive less than half the funding of their district counterparts. Over the last ten years, charter school enrollment has gone up, but funding relative to enrollment has decreased. Without access to an equitable share of the SSF Grant and other streams of revenue that feed into the District-run schools, this gap will only continue to grow.

¹ ECONorthwest. *Study of Oregon Charter School Funding 2024*. Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools, Oct. 2024. https://www.orc3s.org/files/ugd/62bea0_05eae6c4155f4e29bf6063fabb2547be.pdf

At my school, this funding gap is evident in the way we're able to offer accommodations and support to our students on IEPs and 504 plans. Our school also has had to cut a number of social worker supports that are necessary when it comes to providing equitable support and community resources to those who need it most.

Passing HB 3444 will help fix this ongoing disparity by:

- Allowing charter school students to access 95% of the ADMw provided through the State School Fund.
- Allowing charter school students to access local, state and federal education dollars that are also currently available to non charter public schools.
- Allowing charter schools to provide transportation services to students living within their sponsoring district and access transportation reimbursement grant dollars for providing those services.

All students in Oregon's public education system should have access to fairly funded public education options that meet their needs. On behalf of our teachers, staff, and most importantly students, please support HB 3444.

Thank you,

Dana

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Stroud".

Dana Stroud (*they/them*), M.S. Marriage and Family Therapy, M.S. Biology
Board of Education, Position 5, Mount Hood Community College