

Submitter: Grace K
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 an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep injustice currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are effectively funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Students at Ridgeline Montessori Charter School are public school students, and it's past time to fund our education fairly.

Each student here at Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School has a story about why this school has made a positive difference in their life. 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.

But what makes Ridgeline Montessori Special? I have only been at this school for a year now, but I really feel that this school is a better fit for me. I want to tell you a personal story.

I went to Yujin Gakuen from kindergarten to the third grade. I left the school right as Covid hit, and my parents decided to homeschool me. But we thought that without being in a school environment, I would have a difficult time adjusting to high school. That was where Ridgeline Montessori came in. Years later, when it was time for my brother to go to kindergarten, they started looking for schools and found Ridgeline. He is developmentally delayed and has learning and social disabilities, so we thought that he would thrive in the Montessori environment. He did and still is.

Then, they thought this school could be a great opportunity for me to be able to adjust to the school environment and make some new friends, so they put me in the lottery system. I was put on a waitlist, and got in the school for 7th grade. I was reluctant to go to school, but when I started, I absolutely loved it! I found my own group of friends, adjusted to the school quickly, and overall I think I now will ease into

high school easier.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. This directly impacts me as a student. 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.

Sincerely, Grace