

Submitter: Allison Bone
On Behalf Of: Madrone Trail Public Charter School
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 the parent of a child attending an Oregon public charter school, I am writing in support of House Bill 3444. The students that attend public charter schools are public school students, and it is deeply inequitable that our schools receive, on average, less than half of the funds per student than regular district schools. Public charter schools serve families of all income levels who may not be able to access an alternative form of schooling to best serve the needs of their child.

We chose Madrone Trail, a Waldorf based public charter, as the parents of an active, neurodivergent boy with a late summer birthday. He is in his second year of kindergarten, and it has been amazing to see him blossom from the time he started school last year as one of the youngest in his class, to now being one of the oldest. I attribute so much of that to his teachers and the environment they have created at our school. I truly believe that he would not be thriving as he is today had we placed him in a traditional classroom with an early academic focus. The unique supports that his teachers and support staff can offer within a Waldorf style curriculum would be completely unparalleled in a typical kindergarten class. Instead of sitting at a desk, he is learning how to be a friend, how to solve conflict, and playing outside rain, shine, or snow, as young children should be. Our school has taken such care and attention to support our child and our family; I wish every public-school family could have this experience.

To a district with a budget of almost \$300 million, the extra state funds are a drop in the bucket. But the 15% increase would be transformative for our school. We have an amazing community of faculty and families who put in so much of their own extra time, talents, and money into keeping our students and our school thriving, but allowing our school access to a greater share of state funding would relieve the enormous financial burden placed upon our community to bridge the gap. While it's inspiring to look at what our school community has accomplished with limited resources, I can't help but wonder how much more we could do with equal funding.

Public charter schools in Oregon are significantly underfunded because they lack access to other revenue streams available to other public schools, such as property taxes. Giving them access to more of the funds allocated to districts for the children attending their schools is a great step toward equitable funding for all public school children. Please vote yes on HB 3444 to properly fund all public school student's educations. Thank you,

Allison Bone