

Submitter: Casey Kilker
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

RE: Support for House Bill 3444

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Casey Kilker and my daughter currently attends Yankton Arthur Academy, a public charter school in St. Helens. My son will start Kindergarten there next year. I am so grateful for the education they are able to provide my daughter and the environment she learns in - she thrives in her school. Like any parent, it's important to me that my kids get the best education possible in a supportive environment.

I love the smaller, rural town we live in now and I value the close knit community that comes with it - it's why I love the smaller school community at Yankton. I grew up in the suburbs with a stepfather who was in the Air Force, and I benefitted from well-funded public schools across the country that were located near the bases. I've always known what a good education can do for you and how important it is in life. That's why when we moved to Oregon and I learned that the graduation rates were some of the lowest, I started looking into the best options for my children.

While Oregon's national graduation rate struggles, Oregon's public charter schools tend to have rates far above the state average. When we got into Yankton and got to know their model on class mastery, their smaller class sizes, and their overall community-based environment, I knew this was the right fit for my kids.

While my daughter thrives in her learning environment, we are learning now that my son may not. We are working with our ESD to evaluate his needs and figure out how he might be successful. I know that Yankton will work to meet his needs.

Yankton is the right fit for my kids, but I know our public charter schools struggle with fewer resources per student than traditional public schools. Without access to transportation grants, our school struggles to provide easily accessible transportation options. As a single father, I have had to explore a few options to get my daughter to school, almost a patchwork of transportation that is not easy. Most families drive their kids directly to school at Yankton, but because of my job in Portland, I am not able to do this.

As a parent who wants nothing more than a quality education for my children, I know that our public charter school is the best fit. I was surprised to learn that public charter school students work with 48% of funding that students at district-run schools

receive. It almost feels like we are asking them to do more with less - that's not right. I urge you to support House Bill 3444 and provide fair funding for public charter school students. Thank you for your time.