

Dear House Education Committee,

My name is Eric Knox, and I am the Executive Director and Founder of HOLLA School, a public charter school in the Reynolds School District in East Portland. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3444 (HB 3444), which ensures that state school funding allocated to public charter schools increases to 95% of the per-student funding that traditional public schools receive.

Currently, our school receives only 80% of the per-student funding, which significantly hinders our ability to operate effectively. As a school that serves a high percentage of low-income and under-resourced children, this funding gap makes it incredibly difficult to provide the essential wraparound services our students need to thrive academically and personally.

Many of our students have 504 plans, IEPs, and are neurodivergent, requiring specialized support that demands adequate resources. Despite these needs, the current funding model shortchanges our ability to meet both district and state educational standards. Without equitable funding, we are forced to make difficult decisions that ultimately impact the quality of education and support we can provide.

HB 3444 is critical because it acknowledges the disparity in funding between traditional public schools and public charter schools. Increasing funding to 95% ensures that we can:

- Hire and retain qualified teachers and support staff to better meet our students' academic and social-emotional needs.
- Expand critical support services such as counseling, special education resources, and interventions for students with learning differences.
- Enhance classroom resources and programs that directly impact student learning and long-term success.

Public charter schools, like traditional public schools, play a vital role in educating Oregon's children. We work within the same state and district guidelines, yet we receive significantly less funding. HB 3444 is a necessary step toward funding equity, ensuring that all public school students—regardless of the type of school they attend—receive the support they deserve.

I urge you to support HB 3444 and help ensure that public charter schools have the resources needed to provide a high-quality, equitable education for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Eric Knox
Executive Director & Founder
HOLLA School