

Submitter: Shannon Perry
On Behalf Of: Forest Grove Community 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 a parent of an Oregon public charter school student, I am writing today in support of House Bill 3444. HB 3444 will fix a deep disparity currently happening in Oregon schools: that Oregon public charter school students are essentially funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. Public charter school students are public school students, and it's past time to fund their education fairly.

Almost every public charter school parent has a story as to why a public charter school became the right fit for their child. 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 for.

As a teacher and a parent at a charter school, I have seen firsthand how the funding disparity has affected our students. We have to make tough choices that make differences to our students' learning, including whether or not we can carry the cost of providing all students access to busing, elective courses, intervention programs, and ensuring that all students have enough materials.

When deciding how to staff our classrooms, our administration must move aside higher pay scales for the teachers in order to make sure there are support staff available. The lack of higher pay makes it difficult to hire strong staff and teachers, even though many of the teachers have remained at our school for over 10 years. Students can learn and succeed at our school when many do not succeed in the district schools. So, we need equitable funding to continue providing educational options for our families.

Unfortunately, because of Oregon's current school funding model, public charter schools are significantly underfunded. 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.

Thank you,
Shannon Perry
Teacher, Forest Grove Community School