

Submitter: Amy Botillier
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 3444, which seeks to address the funding disparities faced by public charter schools in Oregon. As a parent of children attending a small public charter school in Central Point, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that equitable funding can have on educational outcomes and community well-being.

Our charter school offers a holistic education that integrates art, music, and nature-based learning, fostering not only academic excellence but also the development of compassionate and socially conscious individuals. This nontraditional approach delays certain academic and technological skills to later years, yet our students consistently match or surpass their peers in traditional public schools by the end of middle school. This success is a testament to the dedication of our educators and the effectiveness of our educational model.

Despite these achievements, our school receives only 80% of the per-student funding allocated to standard public schools. This funding gap poses significant challenges in maintaining and enhancing the quality of education provided by this school.

Our school works hard to make ends meet through grants and tireless fundraising efforts by both staff and parents. Yet, despite these efforts, critical needs remain unmet. Our teachers salaries are low for their great skill level and while greater compensation would be appropriate, it is not possible with our budget. Our playground is severely lacking in equipment—much of it was removed last year because it was outdated and no longer up to code, and we simply have not had the funds to replace it. Our track and field area desperately needs a new irrigation system and reseeding, while our small track and parking lot are riddled with potholes. These are not just minor inconveniences—they directly impact the health, well-being, and opportunities of our students. Our children deserve the same access to safe and well-maintained facilities as their peers in traditional public schools, but too many of these basic needs remain out of reach due to lack of funding.

House Bill 3444 represents a crucial step toward rectifying these inequities by providing public charter schools with the necessary resources to continue offering diverse and effective educational options. By supporting this bill, the legislature acknowledges the value of educational diversity and the importance of nurturing well-rounded, socially responsible citizens.

I urge you to support HB 3444 and ensure that all public schools in Oregon, regardless of their structure, receive fair and adequate funding to serve our communities effectively.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Amy Botillier

Parent of two students at Madrone Trail Public Chatting School