

Submitter: Claire LaPoma  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3444

Dear Chair Huron and Members of the Education Committee,

I am providing testimony in support of HB 3444 and asking for your support in its passage. I am a parent at Bend International School (BIS) and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Bend, OR, providing mental health services to youth and adults for 15 years. We selected Bend International School, currently in its 10th year of bringing tremendous educational opportunities to K-8 students, due to the flexibility in project-based learning, language, and creative opportunities throughout the school day, the tight-knit community, its focus on language and social emotional skills, and the long tenure of teachers -- who bring their passion for developing global critical thinkers in the next generation!

I have worked in school-based mental health in public school and the strain on resources was palpable... and that is WITH 100% funding! At BIS, students only receive 48% of the funding their peers in district-run school receive, despite the fact that they deserve the same educational investment as all Oregon children. Our state's founding and now outdated charter school legislation is not in line with our state's current priorities (it restricts funding for early education and intervention, as well as investment in our historically underserved communities). This is an unsettling fact from a recent report by ECONorthwest. My child's education is worth more than 48 cents on the dollar.

This is why I write to ask that HB 3444 be referred to committee and that they support its passage. This would go far in providing equitable and sustainable funding for a charter school we love! I urge you as a constituent and as a parent to support HB 3444, have it referred to committee, and ultimately vote in support of this very necessary fix in our public education funding.

Warmly,

Claire LaPoma, LPC