

Submitter: Sumerlin Larsen Lesperance
On Behalf Of: Bend International School
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. When we moved to Oregon, we made the choice to enroll our daughters at Bend International School for the smaller class sizes, the specialized approach to learning and education and the emphasis on raising good citizens of our global community. We have been delighted with how both of our girls have thrived in this environment.

All public school students in Oregon deserve the same investment in their education, whether attending a public charter school or public district-run school. Right now students in public charter schools receive 48% of the funding that their peers in district-run school receive, an unsettling fact from a recent report by ECONorthwest. My child's education is worth more than 48 cents on the dollar. Even with these stark disparities, my children have done great, but I cannot help but wonder how they and their peers would perform even more excellently given an equal playing field with their peers from regular district schools.

Our state's initial - and now outdated - charter school legislation is not in line with our state's current priorities.

It diverts funding for early education and intervention, with K - 8 students receiving only 80% of their intended per pupil funding.

It diverts funding for our historically underserved communities, with less than half of the intended state weighed funds flowing through to serve those children.

It blocks access to federal funding, which is specifically intended to serve historically underserved students. This includes no access to IDEA, Title I, and Title III.

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.

With Appreciation,

Sumerlin Larsen-Lesperance