

Submitter: Vanna Miller
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. My name is Vanna. My kids attend Bend International school, one of only 2 public charter schools in the Bend La Pine School District. This year I was supposed to finish my schooling to become a health practitioner but instead most of my time and energy goes to helping run school programs that we have to be scrappy to keep going.

My story is not unique. It's comes with the territory of attending a public charter school where funding is part of each and every conversation. Parents accept this sacrifice because these special schools give us a community unlike those offered in traditional public school systems. I personally found early parenthood incredibly isolating, especially on the heels of covid. At Bend international I found my parenting community and I can say with confidence that I can reach out to any family in my children's classes in a time of need. That's not a statement that anyone else in my friend circle can say they identify with. Additionally, im so grateful for the unique education opportunities my children get to partake in. Bend international has a global community focus and this theme is weaved into every fiber of the education. This year my second grader is studying change makers and is challenged to design and execute his own changemaker project. When i was a student in public school, the message was clear. I was a kid. I was only capable of studying. My kids receive a completely different, empowering message. They don't need to wait to grow up to make a difference. They are creative and capable of doing big things now....at the same time that they are meeting or exceeding the state standards in core subjects.

I feel like that's a model of education that is unique to public charter schools and one that deserves more funding....not less. Parents know this is worthwhile and are keen to donate their money and time resources but maybe we shouldn't have to feel like getting a great education comes at a huge price. Teachers often take a pay cut to be a part of these schools. Bend International is no exception. Despite this, turnover is low since teachers feel like these schools are a worthwhile teaching endeavor. But maybe they shouldn't feel like they have to sacrifice financial wellbeing to be part of a thriving public charter school community.

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.

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,
Vanna Miller