

Submitter: Stephanie Brathwaite
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.

I am a mother to two kids who attend the charter school, Bend International School. The community of Bend is known for supporting our local public schools, so there really aren't any "problematic" schools. That being said, our charter schools offer what public schools can't right now: a true sense of community. The smaller class sizes and the smaller campus encompassing K-8 means staff and administration are more in tune with all students, and students understand their responsibility to themselves, their peers (older and younger), their school, and their surrounding community in very tangible ways. We applied to this school when our first born was getting ready for Kindergarten. We were placed on the waiting list for three years and it is just this school year that room opened up for both our children. They have never been happier or felt more supported.

All public school students in Oregon deserve the same investment in their education, regardless of attending a public charter school or public district-run school. Currently, students in public charter schools receive 48% of the funding that their peers in district-run schools receive (see the recent report by ECONorthwest). My children'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Our state's initial - and now outdated - charter school legislation is not in line with our state's current priorities.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 strongly 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 critical fix in our public education funding.

With appreciation,
Stephanie Brathwaite