

House Committee On Education
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and members of the Committee:

As a parent of a learner at Sauvie Island School, and a teacher at West Hills Montessori School, I urge you to support House Bill 3444. Oregon's public charter schools serve a critical role in Oregon's education system. Many of the students we serve were unable to be effectively educated, for a variety of reasons, in district schools. Public charter schools are committed to educational innovation, providing personalized educational opportunities for our students, and emphasizing equity and autonomy to ultimately transform the lives of young people.

My daughter transitioned from my Montessori school to Sauvie Island School for her middle school years. This has been a seamless transition at a time of her life which is filled with changes and challenges of adolescence. The community at SIS has been incredibly welcoming, and will allow my child to have a smoother transition to Scappoose High School when the time comes. Having a cohort from the small program at SIS has given her the confidence she will need!

Unfortunately, Oregon law shortchanges public charter school students. By passing HB 3444, we can fix the outdated issues with Oregon's school funding model and provide fair funding for public charter school students.

Oregon's public charter schools can only access 80% of State School Grant funds, and have no access to the number of other revenue streams that districts receive. This dynamic has created a huge disparity in funding. A recent report by

ECONorthwest¹ found that Oregon public charter schools receive less than half the funding of their district counterparts. Over the last ten years, charter school enrollment has gone up, but funding relative to enrollment has decreased. Without access to an equitable share of the SSF Grant and other streams of revenue that feed into the District-run schools, this gap will only continue to grow.

At Sauvie Island School, this funding gap is evident. Students are essentially funded at 48 cents on the dollar compared to district students. This is in large part because Oregon's public charter schools can only access 80% of State School Grant funds, and have no access to the number of other revenue streams that districts receive. This dynamic has created a huge disparity in funding. Current funding disparities place unnecessary financial burdens on charter schools, limiting resources for students, teachers, and classroom materials.

Passing HB 3444 will help fix this ongoing disparity by:

- Allowing charter school students to access 95% of the ADMw provided through the State School Fund.
- Allowing charter school students to access local, state and federal education dollars that are also currently available to non charter public schools.
- Allowing charter schools to provide transportation services to students living within their sponsoring district and access transportation reimbursement grant dollars for providing those services.

All students in Oregon's public education system should have access to fairly funded public education options that meet their needs. On behalf of our parent community, teachers, staff, and most importantly students, please support HB 3444.

Thank you,
Jessica Sturdivant
Parent, Sauvie Island School

Upper Elementary Guide, West Hills Montessori