

Testimony in support of SB 453

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, I am Peter Tarzian, Superintendent of Falls City School District, which is a small, K-12 district west of Dallas with a school age population 145. We have one high school (9-12) and one elementary school (K-8). I am here in support of SB453, as work left unfinished by the Legislative Assembly in 2009.

As I am sure you are aware, the same proposed measure was considered last session. Unfortunately, all that got through in the end last time was an updating of eligibility of small high schools for the correction (the fix for the elementary schools was stripped out of the final legislation). The best example of the problem and the SSF mechanism to solve it was, at the time, Toledo High School. This time it is Yoncolla, and others such as Falls City Elementary.

Toledo previously was too big to qualify for the additional weights built into ORS 327.077, which are intended to support small schools in meeting state and federal student achievement requirements. Due to continued declines in enrollment at Toledo, it was ineligible but desperately in need, finding itself excluded because of the "as of July ... 1995" qualifying requirement in the statute.

The Assembly very correctly addressed the need to update school eligibility for the small schools in the state. Given the Legislature's acknowledgement of the immediate problem these small and remote schools face, and the fact that they "fixed" the problem of increasing need by adding a small number of rural high schools to the correction formula, we are requesting that you to do the same for the elementary schools and complete the updating and eligibility process.

Dr. Peter M. Tarzian, Superintendent
Falls City School District
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