



**Oregon**  
SMALL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

2001SW Nye Avenue  
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March 23, 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature

**The Oregon Small Schools Association supports SB 667 and urges passage of the bill.**

The annual appropriation to the Small School District Supplement Fund, formerly known as the Small High School Grant allows small high schools throughout Oregon to preserve important classes for their students. Although this allocation is modest, it is critically important to maintaining program funding in the face of declining rural enrollment and allows children small schools to have the same opportunities as students in more urban parts of Oregon.

Thank you for your continued support of small high schools throughout the state.

Sincerely,

Michael Lasher  
Executive Director,  
Oregon Small Schools Association



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**To:** Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Knopp and Members of the Senate Committee on Education  
**From:** Justin Martin, Oregon Small Schools Association  
**Date:** Thursday, March 26, 2015  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 667

The Oregon Small Schools Association (OSSA) supports Senate Bill 667, which removes the sunset on the Small School District Supplement Fund, more commonly known as the Small High School Grant.

Per student costs are naturally higher in schools with fewer students, and small districts struggle to provide similar opportunities to those in larger districts. The Small High School Grant allows districts with one or more small high school to offer a diversity of programs that otherwise would not be available, including college and scholarship advising, career counseling, and technical skills training. Each of these programs gives students from rural Oregon some of the same opportunities as their peers in larger districts.

The need to offer a variety of programs at small high schools with limited funding never goes away and deleting the sunset on this grant will secure a funding mechanism that small school districts have really come to rely upon.

Enclosed are some short explanations from a few of our 147 member schools describing how crucial this funding is to small high schools.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me with questions, 503.580.5226 or [jgmartin@me.com](mailto:jgmartin@me.com).

**Please support Senate Bill 667**



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**Alsea School District**  
**\$6,236 (FY 2013/14)**

The Alsea School District uses the Small High School Grant to run our entire Career & Technology Education (CTE) Program and Business electives including computers, woodshop, electronics, and robotics. This fund supports 1.5 FTE positions of certified staff.

Marc Thielman, Superintendent  
Alsea School District

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**Athena-Weston School District**  
**\$32,721 (FY 2013/14)**

Athena-Weston School District uses our portion of the Small High School Fund as part of our general fund in support of instructional staff salaries and benefits. Essentially, our Small High School Grant pays for approximately .50 FTE at Weston-McEwen High School. Without this support, given the Co-Chairs budget of \$7.235 billion, our district would need to reduce instructional staff at the high school.

Jerry Copeland, Superintendent  
Athena-Weston School District

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**Coquille School District**  
**\$51,944 (FY 2013/14)**

The Coquille School District has used those funds to bring back a health teacher to Coquille High School. This position does much more than teach health, he is also helping our juniors and seniors prepare for life beyond high school. He teaches students about managing personal finances, how to fill out college and job applications and how to rent an apartment or purchase a car. My own daughter asked him to be with her when she spoke to an Air Force recruiter. This position is an essential component of our high school and without the Small High School Grant to offset a portion of his salary; we would end up laying him off. I cannot begin to express how critical these little pools of money are for small schools. They are our lifeblood and they sustain so many important educational opportunities in rural Oregon.

Tim Sweeny, Superintendent  
Coquille School District #8



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### **Mapleton School District** **\$10,672 (FY 2013/14)**

The Mapleton School District currently rolls its Small High School Grant Funds (approximately \$10,000) into our general fund to offset recent cuts. However, to put it into perspective, the \$10,000 funds our College and Career Center at a 0.3 FTE. This provides our high school students with a senior seminar, assistance with college applications and scholarships; provides college visits for sophomores/juniors and seniors; handles the career related learning standards; monitors our online curriculum; facilitates an after school elementary program; and acts as our on site counselor. Prior to adding this position, our Senior Support Services were provided within the regular classroom and we were unable to offer any college or career counseling services. Now we are becoming an AVID MS/HS with a focus on increased rigor and college and career opportunities for all of our students. The Small High School Grant helps us offset the costs associated with these goals.

Jodi O'Mara, Superintendent  
Mapleton School District

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### **Oakridge School District** **\$27,350 (FY 2013/14)**

The Oakridge School District has endured a decline in enrollment on the average of 5% for the last 15 years. In essence, we have had to eliminate almost 50% of our staff and 70% of elective courses. Programs eliminated include music, Career & Technology Education (CTE) courses, counseling programs, art courses, foreign languages, Response to Intervention (RTI) programs, etc. The Small High School Grant allowed us to keep some elective offerings, such as a period of woodshop and a technology class. Without the continuation of the Small High School Grant we will eliminate both programs. Once again shortchanging students of possible career exploration opportunities.

Dr. Donald L. Kordosky, Superintendent  
Oakridge School District



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### **Pleasant Hill School District** **\$54,690 (FY 2013/14)**

The Pleasant Hill School District has faced enormous budget cuts in the last 20 years. We have seen thriving elective programs disappear--forestry, culinary arts and business classes. The Small High School Grant provides enough money for us to keep some elective classes. We use the money for the equivalent of three periods of Construction/Wood Shop. It is a program that allows students much needed hands-on, technical education. Without this grant another educational option for students disappears.

Tony Scurto, Superintendent  
Pleasant Hill School District #1

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### **Santiam Canyon School District** **\$26,150 (FY 2013/14)**

The Santiam Canyon School District has seen steadily decreasing funding for many years. The result is a district that does not have the same student offerings and supports as it did years ago. The Santiam Canyon is rich with scenic beauty that stretches over a large rural area, yet offers limited services and family supports due to the rural isolation and small populations. The Small High School Grant has helped us keep electives that we would not otherwise be able to consider such as; Robotics, Drama and Sports Marketing. We work hard to give our students the core knowledge they need in high school. It is through offering these elective courses that we are able to give students outlets for creativity and passion for a topic and/or give them an opportunity they may otherwise never have. The Small High School Grant opens doors for students in isolated areas and helps prepare them with the skills needed for college and career. The students of rural Oregon and the Santiam Canyon will lose greatly if this funding disappears.

Todd A. Miller, Superintendent / Elementary Principal  
Santiam Canyon School District