

March 7, 2017

Good afternoon Senators,


SB208 as drafted is an unfunded mandate which would require school districts to cover the costs of all extracurricular activities (including but not limited to band, theatre, and athletics) for students who elect to attend public charter schools including students of virtual charter schools.

Access to extracurricular activities has been proven to boost attendance, connect kids to their school community and keep them on track to graduate. These strategies are particularly helpful in closing the achievement gap amongst students who are economically disadvantaged. For these reasons, Medford School District has deliberately invested in strategies to boost participation in extracurricular activities, from initiating running clubs and cross country track meets in elementary schools, to investing \$500,000 in musical instruments. These investments are paying off with increased attendance in our schools, and increased numbers of freshman on track to graduate.

We are already at capacity in many of our athletic programs including cross country and swimming at the secondary level. If this bill is implemented, we will have to turn students away from these and other activities.

We ask that you amend SB208 to include the language "as space and materials permit." This is the language currently found in our Charter agreements, and allows the School District to continue to allow Charter students to participate, as long as there is room in the program. We believe that continued flexibility is in the best interest of all students.

Thank you for this opportunity.



Dr. Brian Shumate
Superintendent, Medford 549C School District



Karen Starchvick
Board Chair Medford 549C