

House Education Committee

SB 208 Testimony

May 22, 2017

Jonathon C. Bullock, D.Ed. - Executive Director of Redmond Proficiency Academy

Chair Doherty and distinguished members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. My name is Jon Bullock, and I am the Executive Director of the Redmond Proficiency Academy, a public charter school serving nearly 850 students in grades six through twelve from throughout Central Oregon. I am here today to ask you to reconsider language found in Senate Bill 208.

The goal of this bill is to provide charter school students equitable access to interscholastic athletics and activities. I am absolutely in support of providing charter school students the same access to these activities as traditional school students and home school students. I think students should have access to these programs. RPA is fortunate to have a positive and productive relationship with our sponsor, the Redmond School District, as well as neighboring districts. These relationships have allowed RPA students to compete and participate with schools throughout Central Oregon.

Unfortunately, Senate Bill 208 establishes the potential of charging charter schools a 5% fee for each student to participate in interscholastic athletics and activities. While I am adamantly opposed to any fee of this nature, it appears that this 5% rate is an arbitrary one. For example, our sponsoring school district spends approximately 1% of its general fund expenditures. It is possible to conduct a study that examines the amount of money each district spends and find a less arbitrary number.

In addition to the arbitrary nature of the fee, I do not think the establishment of any fee creates equity. Currently, it is my understanding that homeschool students are allowed to participate without incurring any additional fees beyond the pay to play fees charged to all participants. Further, our sponsoring district currently retains 5% of the State School Fund allocated for our school. This amounts to approximately \$300,000 per year. We have about 60 to 70 students each year who participate in various sports and activities. This bill would require us to pay an additional \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year for our students to participate. This, potentially, would cause Redmond Proficiency Academy to have to choose between allowing our students to be a part of the extracurricular community in Redmond or continuing to fund our award-winning theatre or robotics programs.

Finally, this bill does not have the full support of the charter school community. Negotiations regarding how this bill and its language might be constructed did not include all the stakeholders who might be impacted by such a bill. The new dash 9 amendment would allow us the opportunity to evaluate this issue to determine what the true cost for student access is and to have a truly collaborative conversation inclusive of all the appropriate stakeholders.

I deeply appreciate your time today. I would ask you to reconsider SB 208 and its impacts upon public charter schools throughout the state. Thank you.