

GERVAIS High School

PO Box 195 ♦ Gervais, OR 97026

♦ Ken Stott, Principal ♦

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Dear Representative Teresa Alonso Leon,

As the student body president for the Gervais High School, our committee would like to tell you why the Willamette Career Academy is so important to a school like Gervais High School. Being a smaller rural school, we don't have as many opportunities as other bigger schools. Lack of resources and financial circumstances affect many of our student body population and their outlook on successful careers or dreams of higher education.

At Gervais High School we currently offer CTE classes, such as welding, woods/constructions, and some medical classes. The Academy would give many of us more real-life opportunities for hands-on learning that can help students figure out future career paths after school. It gives smaller schools like ours more opportunities and options for our students, especially those of color, in order to help close educational gaps.

Nowadays, college may not be the first option or choice for students. The Academy partnership with other schools and Gervais High School, would open up the same or similar opportunities that other stronger schools have - mainly financial resources. The programs at the Academy will help set up students for success in life, as well as helping pave the way to higher paying jobs. These future jobs will help create long-term employment and stability, and help students achieve job success. This, in turn, will help improve and reduce poverty and help promote racial equity.

I wish that the Academy had been available and open to someone like me, because I would have been able to take advantage of the upcoming Health Services program at the Academy. I am planning on going to the University of Portland to study nursing, and after I saw this program, I thought it would have been an amazing opportunity to experience the life of health care services before I went off to college. Even though this opportunity was too late for me, I am hopeful that remaining students at Gervais High School will be able to take full advantage of this amazing hands-on opportunity.

Our students, families, and community desperately need these kinds of services to help encourage and support students in our ethnically diverse town. College is expensive and may seem like a distant dream for many of us; however, the Academy can help change that by providing a solid opportunity for students to learn real trades that they can instantly put to use in the everyday world.

Thank you for your continued support of education for all Oregonians, and especially for those students in small, rural communities. We appreciate your representation and are grateful for any assistance that we receive to help distribute resources and opportunities in a more balanced way. The Academy is a great way to help improve outcomes for all our students.

Sincerely,

Gervais High School Leadership Spirit Committee

Isabel Contreras, Associated Student Body President

Uriel Aguilar, Associated Student Body Vice President

Katherine Hanson, Senior Class Vice President

Lillian Welburn, Committee Member