

Seth H. Row & Marti L. Long
29 Churchill Downs
Lake Oswego, OR 97035

June 10, 2014

Via U.S. Mail

Mr. Rob Saxton
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310

RE: *Application for Waiver by Lake Oswego School District, 130 Clock-Hour Requirement*

Dear Mr. Saxton,

We write to voice opposition to granting a waiver of the 130-hour requirement for high school courses to the Lake Oswego School District. As residents of the District, we are keenly interested in the integrity of the education given to students of the District and believe that it would be detrimental to the interests of the students to grant a waiver.

The request for waiver dated April 11, 2014 fails to cite any justification for a waiver other than a desire that "schedule changes can be effected in a carefully considered process," alluding to a "major high school schedule change." We assert that the District has substantially overstated the time and effort that would be required to bring the schedule into compliance. A "major" change is not necessary as there are several alternative methods that the District could use to close the gap between the current hours of instruction and the hours required by state law. In the June 2, 2014 school board meeting, the District's Superintendent stated that by the district's calculations, the current schedule is only two to two and a half hours short of the requirement (Statement of Supt. Korach beginning 52:27). In this same meeting, the Superintendent stated that assemblies and orientations factor into the time calculations, and result in bringing the instructional time below the state minimum. Contrary to the district's April 11th letter, then, it is clearly not the case that the entire schedule needs to be re-configured. The district could easily "tweak" the schedule to increase instructional time by shortening or eliminating these outside-the-classroom activities.

Furthermore, the district is currently scheduled to have three furlough days in the 2014-2015 school year. If these days were added back to the school year, the district would be in compliance with the 130-hour requirement. By the Superintendent's own admission, the district currently has the funds to do so:

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Board Member Hartman: "We could buy back a furlough day, right? Just for the high school? Is that right?"

Superintendent Korach: "Sure." (June 2nd mtg. approximately 60 minute mark.)

Superintendent Korach: "Um, it, it, it's true that we could put the furlough days back in. You could afford it right now." (1:10:42)

Given that the district is making a deliberate decision to not add back any of the furlough days, and has not looked at reducing other activities that could easily bring the district into compliance with state minimum standards, the district has no serious basis for requesting a waiver. To grant a waiver in this situation, where the District has acknowledged that it is simply making a calculation to not bring itself into compliance by eliminating furlough days, would undermine the very legitimacy of the requirement and make a mockery of the Department of Education's rulemaking process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Seth H. Row


Marti L. Long

cc: Emily Nazarov (via email)