



Tigard-Tualatin School District 23J

Larry Hibbard Administration Center
6960 SW Sandburg Street
Tigard, Oregon 97223
503-431-4000*fax 503-431-4047
www.ttsd.k12.or.us

Mr. Rob Saxton
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310
rob.saxton@state.or.us

April 24, 2014

RE: 130 Hour Waiver Request for 2014-15

Dear Mr. Saxton,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Tigard-Tualatin School District for the purpose of requesting a one year waiver to OAR 581-022-1131.

Since this issue has been brought to our attention we have worked diligently to understand the key issues and to calculate the amount of time that we are short of meeting this requirement. By our calculations, we determine that we currently offer 124.4 hours of instruction per credit at our two high schools, once all of the various factors are accounted for.

In an effort to comply with the 130 hour requirement we developed a plan that we could implement but that we do not believe is in the best interest of our students or staff. Our draft plan would eliminate the weekly 20 minute late start that we are currently using to implement PLCs at the high school level. This is also the only time that our high school students currently have to receive help from teachers outside of the classroom environment. Our plan would also require that freshman students start school on the same day as everyone else which we believe is not in their best interest given our very large high school environments.

However, I believe that rushing to implement a change to a schedule that has existed for nearly 20 years is not in the best interest of the district. Since the fall of this year we have been involved in what we have termed a Community Engagement Process. This process involved written feedback from over 900 community members as well as focus group feedback from over 150 community members, staff and students. The process concluded this winter with three months of committee work utilizing the information we received in order to develop a set of recommendations to guide TTSD program development.

One of the key recommendations is that the district should evaluate how we use time at the high school level. The committee recognized that we should explore how to create more time for meaningful staff collaboration, provide dedicated time for academic interventions and for

working with students who have not yet met their essential skills requirements. In addition to this work, we have identified the need to review how we provide professional development and determine if our current model is meeting the needs of our staff. Finally, the program work group determined that we should evaluate our current school calendar to determine if both fall and spring conference days were necessary at the high school level.

The recommendations from the program work group were comprehensive. I am already on the record publicly stating that we will convene committee next year that would explore these key issues and make recommendations that will impact the district calendar as well as how we are currently using our time not only at the high school level but also at the middle and elementary level. This work will take place in the fall and early winter with recommendations completed by the end of January, 2015. At that point we would have several months to work with our staff and community to understand the changes and to make the necessary preparations for the fall of 2015. It would also give us the opportunity to have a thoughtful dialogue with our Association that is based on a thorough understanding of the problem and for our options for how to fix it.

From an organizational change perspective, a waiver is a crucial component in ensuring that our community, staff and students are afforded adequate time to understand the need for change and how the change will impact them before something is imposed upon them that negatively impacts their school experience and which they do not understand. This will lead to frustration that I believe reduces effectiveness and negatively impacts school outcomes. We are currently involved in a great deal of organizational change when you consider the move to Common Core and Smarter Balanced, standards based reporting, professional learning communities as well as our push to expand full day kindergarten and provide more dual credit options at the high school. Even the most effective organizations require time to effectively assimilate change before they initiate new initiatives.

In order to honor the voice of our community and to provide us with the time to develop a compliance plan that is in the long term best interest of our students and staff I request a waiver from OAR 581-022-1131 for the 2014-15 school year. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ernest L. Brown
Superintendent
Tigard-Tualatin School District

cc: Tigard-Tualatin School District Board of Directors
Brian Haliski, Tigard-Tualatin Education Association President
Rachel Stucky, Director of Curriculum and Instruction