

**Dave Porter
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1/14/15

To: Members of the Oregon Board of Education,

My public comment for the January 22nd Board meeting:

For your information, I have attached my scheduled public comment for the 1/20/15 meeting of the Portland Public Schools Board. I ask that they allocate \$16,647 in their 2015-16 budget to pay for two students to study abroad in 2016-17, one each to China and Mexico.

I am also asking them "to weigh in strongly on the issue of whether local school districts, like PPS, should be able to count for purposes of the distribution State School Funds the students they have funded to study abroad. I am asking you to fund the two students and to include them in the ADM count you submit to the Department of Education for your share of the State School Fund and to assert your authority and responsibilities as a local school district to fund the best programs for your students and to receive State School Funds for doing so."

My full public comment is on the following pages.

Thank you.

Sincerely - Dave Porter

Public comment to the Portland Public Schools Board, 1/20/15

From: Dave Porter

Please consider the attached "Pilot high school study abroad proposal" for funding in your 2015-16 budget. Please allocate \$16,647 in your 2015-16 budget to pay for two students to study abroad in 2016-17, one each to China and Mexico.

Not only are high school study abroad program rich educational experiences, often life changing, for individual students, but our common futures increasingly will depend upon the abilities of our next generation to seize opportunities and solve problems beyond our national borders. We need to give more of them the skills and experiences needed to make them successful.

There is also a racial equity issue in play. Now, typically, high school students who study abroad are White, middle class students because parents have to pay the study abroad fees. We need to bring more equity to high school study abroad opportunities.

There is a related political problem and, in urging you to fund a pilot high school study abroad program, I am also asking you to weigh in strongly on the issue of whether local school districts, like PPS, should be able to count for purposes of the distribution State School Funds the students they have funded to study abroad. I am asking you to fund the two students and to include them in the ADM count you submit to the Department of Education for your share of the State School Fund and to assert your authority and responsibilities as a local school district to fund the best programs for your students and to receive State School Funds for doing so.

This issue came before the State Board of Education at their August meeting. They then heard from Oregon Department of Education (ODE) staff on my proposed new rule to clarify high school study abroad that:

"For the purpose of calculating Average Daily Membership (ADM) used in the distribution of State School Funds, a school district may count high school students studying abroad on programs approved and paid for by the school district."

ODE staff did not cite any Oregon statute or rule that would now prohibit local district from counting students studying abroad in allocating State School Funds. They did have administrative concerns, like how to validate data and how to work with the third party study abroad organizations They also said, and the Board of Education for now seemed to agree with them (although the Board does want to find ways to "incentivize" high school study abroad), that it would not be the best use of State School Fund money to pay for study abroad programs.

First, that statement is wrong or, at least, arguable. Second, it is the responsibility of local school districts, like you, to determine what is the best use of State School Fund money. Please assert your authority to do so.

Thank you.

Pilot high school study abroad proposal for Portland Public Schools 2015-16 budget

Portland Public Schools will send two PPS high school students to study abroad for the 2016-17 school year. One will go to Mexico and one will go to China. PPS will pay study abroad fees and airfares. Total estimated cost for two students is \$16,647, or \$8,324 per student. PPS will use the study abroad organization ASSE in this pilot program.

This is a pilot program to permit PPS: (1) to develop the administrative and financial systems to run a high school study abroad program, (2) to access the level of student and parent interest in a high school study abroad program, and (3) to assess the student/parent satisfaction with and student learning outcomes from such a program.

Costs:

ASSE fee estimates for 2016-17

	2015-16	Plus 5%	Minus 10%	Application	Airfare	Total	# of	Total
	Fees	Increase	Discount	Fee		/ student	students	Costs
Mexico	\$7,140	\$7,497	\$6,747	\$200	\$600	\$7,547	1	\$7,547
China	\$9,100	\$9,555	\$8,600	\$200	\$300	\$9,100	1	\$9,100
								\$16,647

Note: ASSE study abroad fees are now known only for 2015-16. In the charts above, a 5% increase in fees is estimated for 2016-17. Also Note: ASSE gives a 10% discount for fees paid by January 15 for students leaving for abroad in August/September. That discount is included.

Revenues:

The goal is to get the State School Fund to pay PPS its per pupil distribution for a high school student studying abroad (when paid for by PPS) the same as if the student were attending one of PPS’s in-district high schools (that a studying abroad student counts in determining ADM).

ASSE:

ASSE was selected as the study abroad organization to use because of its low costs and large size.

ASSE was established in 1976 as the American Scandinavian Student Exchange by the Swedish Government to organize student exchange programs between Sweden and the United States. Soon Denmark, Norway and Finland elected to participate. At present, ASSE works closely with the Canadian provincial education ministries and is approved by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand. ASSE maintains 38 offices in 31 countries and accommodates more than 30,000 high school age students and host families annually in its programs in the more than 30 participating countries.

ASSE fees cover:

ASSE arranges for tuition free high school placement.

ASSE covers the round trip international airfare from Los Angeles to Asia/Pacific. Year programs to Mexico exclude airfare.

Fees also include comprehensive health, accidental death and travel insurance, host family recruitment and screening, non-English speaking country language training, and orientation.

Timelines:

2015, May: Program and budget approved by PPS Board

2015, August through October: Notice of opportunities promoted

2015, November: Applications from PPS students due

2015, November through December, Selection of students made

2016, by January 15th, payments made to ASSE for 10% discount

2016, August: Students leave to spend 2015-16 year abroad

Administrative structure:

Some current administrator needs to be given responsibility for this high school study abroad program. It should take very little administrative time and only slightly more clerical time.

Students eligibility

Student must have attended a PPS school full time for all of the 2014-15 school year and be enrolled full time for 2015-16 as of application.

Student must have a passport or be able to obtain one prior to international travel.

Student must have a 3.0 high school grade average at application

Student selection process:

Students will be selected from those eligible according to the following priority. Students with equal priority will be selected by lottery.

First priority: Students with six years (K-5th) or more of dual language immersion in the relevant language or attending Jefferson – Middle College for Advanced Studies for the 2014-15 school year

Second priority: Students with four or five years of dual language immersion in the relevant language.

Third priority: Students with one to three years of dual language immersion or one or more years of middle or high schools courses in the relevant language.

Fourth priority: All others

Credit for high school year abroad:

The intent of this program is that students would receive a full year credit towards graduation for a full year spent studying abroad. For some students, this may require flexibility and creativity in granting credits for courses taken abroad.

Liability:

There is always the risk that something bad will happen to a student while studying abroad and that the students and/or parents will sue PPS. PPS has liability limits set by state law but PPS should take whatever steps legal counsel would recommend to reduce its risk. ASSE should bear most of the risk.