

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Boon Setser. I am the parent of a Charter School student at Baker Web Academy. I would like to start by saying thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns and share with the rest of the Senate Education Committee. I realize all of you are busy so I appreciate your commitment to the education of our children, and ultimately, the future of our Nation.

I would like to strongly encourage the Education Committee to allow Charter students to participate in Public School Sports and extracurricular activities. I was a Public School Administrator for many years (both at the HS level and Elementary). One of the things I tried to do was foster a relationship with homeschoolers and charter students. I found these students to be well versed and prepared for life. One of the inequities I found was their participation in extracurricular activities.

As you know, a student's years in school are preparation for life. Extracurricular activities and participation in sports can make an enormous impact on a child. Not only do such activities develop a strong character and work ethic, they add to the full and rich life we all want for children. Here is the conundrum: my child is not allowed and therefore misses some of these important lessons.

My daughter currently swims in a club. She is, at this point, not allowed to be on her HS swim team in La Grande. While she is socialized into the swim club, she continues to be excluded from other peers. This is beyond unfortunate. She may be missing out on life-long friendships, competitions and association by being excluded. This is simply because we wanted a different type of education for our daughter. Why should she have to pay the price by being excluded?

As an Administrator I understand the distribution formula to ensure equal access across the State for all children. However, as a tax payer I am confused. Access should be allowed by all students since we, as parents, pay our taxes. In La Grande, I actually pay extra taxes (a bond was passed last year). How is it I can pay for the bond but have my daughter's access limited? I find this entirely unfair to my daughter (I also have 2 more daughters that will be interested in participating in HS sports). Their exclusion will limit their articulation with others and others might miss out on what they could contribute as well.

Just like to inclusion of students with Special needs, ELL, TAG, and others, our public schools are richer because of their inclusion. Why would it be any different with homeschool or Charter students. As I see it, Charter Schools have much to offer the public schools by way of inclusion. When has such inclusion, in our society and County, ever lead loss? We have nothing but gains to be made (for all students) if we approach this issue inclusively.

Thank you, again, for your time and consideration.

Boon Setser