

Oregon City High School



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August 14, 2015

To the Mt. Hood Conference Hardship Committee members:

Please accept this letter as my support for Conner Mitchell's hardship.

Conner was an OCSD student for most of his education. He attended OCHS until mid-way through last year, when he decided on his own to transfer to Lake Oswego High School. Conner was suffering from depression, had sustained a concussion during football, and as a result had difficulties adjusting to a new coach and a new offense.

Late in the spring he contacted our football coach, told him that he had made a big mistake, apologized for his behavior, and expressed interest in coming back to OCHS.

Today Conner is in a difficult position: he wants to finish his senior year at OCHS with his friends, and he wants to play football. He never participated in any sports at LOHS but is ineligible to play there. He's ineligible to play for any other public school except OCHS, but needs to file a hardship and have it approved in order to play.

I don't support student-athletes moving around because they don't like a coach or aren't getting playing time or similar reasons. In this case, we encouraged Conner not to move, but to stay here and work on his issues. Like many teenagers, Conner thought he was making a good decision, then realized that he had made a mistake. Since then he has been going to counseling, dealing with his depression, and he made the decision on his own to come back here.

I support Conner in this case because he is an OCHS student, his roots are here, he has friends and staff members who are willing to help him, and we feel we are in the best position to help him graduate with his class on time. Much of his life is centered around athletics – football in particular – and his participation this fall will help ease his transition back here, and will also enable us to keep better track of his credits as he works towards a diploma.

This has been humbling learning experience for Conner. He has owned up to his mistakes, admitted that he needs help with his depression, and just wants to be part of his old group of friends.

At no time did we reach out to Conner and ask him to come back to OCHS. However, we are happy to have him back as a member of the OCHS graduating class of 2016.

We ask that you approve this hardship which would make Conner eligible to play sports at OCHS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Lovell".

Tom Lovell
Principal
Oregon City High School