



November 25, 2015

Dear Mr. Tom Welter,

I write today on behalf of Maria Taylor, a sophomore at Madison High School, who is interested in competing for the Madison Women's Basketball program. In my brief time as Madison Athletic Director, I have come to know Maria Taylor has someone who is learning from past mistakes rather quickly. Maria Taylor started at Madison High School last year and finished her first semester with 1.625 GPA. This included one 'F' in Algebra. Maria struggled with understanding the value of attendance, and, when family problems hit hard in the spring of 2015, Maria had a difficult time balancing family and school life. She finished the second semester with a 0.143 GPA which included all Fs, and a D. This past spring her birth father was arrested, and subsequently deported out of the country. Maria made a series of errors with regards to her academic obligations, and didn't have the requisite skill set to handle personal tragedy, and her academics. Her coach at the time had left Madison and Maria was left to fend for herself.

In the athletics' world, we often speak of athletics as the 'carrot on the stick,' and no truer phrase could best describe Maria Taylor. The connection she gets to the school, and its community through participating in Basketball is the catalyst for Maria making a drastic improvement in her school accountability, her grades, and, ultimately, her future. She recognizes that her actions have an impact. In speaking with her counselor there is legitimate concern that without basketball Maria gives up on school altogether and becomes one of the students who slips through the cracks. Head Coach Josh Green and I have the ability to set strict guidelines for Maria to adhere to which will help her improve her grades, and become one step closer to graduation. In fact, she has already applied to the SUN school to have tutoring after school. With the girls' practices in the evening, this is a perfect opportunity for Maria to receive in-school support before basketball practice.

Having a basketball support system will allow her to have a set of adults who are able to closely monitor her progress. Without the accountability of athletics, I am not sure Maria has an opportunity to correct mistakes. When meeting with her Mom and Maria in my office, Maria broke down when we discussed her father's deportation, and her guardian father's illness last spring. She has a fantastic opportunity to be a success story as she is only two-and-a-half semesters into her high school academic career. As it stands now, Maria has two 'Fs,' which she is currently working to fix (math, again, and English. I have included Q1 Progress Report; Q1 Grade Report; and Q2 current grades to show her improvement over the course of the fall).

Maria has made an immediate improvement from her second semester freshman year, and it is the belief of the Madison women's program, and the Madison athletic department that Maria has a

strong chance to make corrective and life-impacting changes that will not only set her up for academic success at Madison, but also a significant impact on her ability to have a successful post-high school life.

It is my request that Maria Taylor be afforded the opportunity to improve her academic standing while also being a part of the Madison basketball program, and the overall Madison community. With a new head coach in place, and one who has a very strong support system around him, this is an opportunity to significantly use sport as a vehicle to teach and promote life lessons.

Please let me know if I can further speak to my belief in Maria Taylor being an academic success story at Madison High School, and if I can provide more information on behalf of Maria Taylor. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

M. Scott Archer
Athletic Director
Madison High School