

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to recommend Miguel Hernandez for a hardship waiver from the OSAA. I first met Miguel at the beginning of February as our team was doing voluntary winter workouts. I saw Miguel and asked him if he would be interested in doing track and field. I invite many students I see in the weight room or on the track to come out. Most do not do it, but Miguel did. He came out and did all of the winter works outs from that day forward.

I did not know his story at the time and I would never have guessed his story, because Miguel is the most wonderful kid with great personality, always smiling, always wanting to be around us coaches and eager to hear positive feedback. Little did I know that underneath his smile was person that was hiding many problems at home that were carrying over to school.

After learning he was ineligible it caused us to have a tough conversation that I wish I would have known I needed to have with him sooner. I learned he did not do well in school because his dad is an alcoholic, his brother is using drugs and his mom was asking Miguel to kick his brother out of their house. Miguel did not want that kind of responsibility. Most people can see quickly why he could not focus in school. He had things that were much bigger in life.

As teacher for 9 years, I know that the student comes before athlete for a good purpose. However, 9 years of coaching and teaching Science and Health has also taught me that even before the student is the person. According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if a student does not feel safe, it is almost impossible for a student to focus on their learning. Sometimes we forget that our students are people with lives outside of school and sometimes those are more important than school.

Miguel also informed me that track has given a new purpose and has caused him to stay in school. I believe that Miguel needs track. He needs the positive messages and relationships that he is building in track. In this particular situation, I think the new sport that he Miguel has found will do more to keep him in school. In addition, with the dynamics of his situation changing, he has new purpose which will enable him to put more effort into school and should be part of a decision to grant Miguel a hardship waiver.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Malcolm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David Malcolm

North Salem Assistant Track and Field Coach