

April 17, 2016

Dear OSAA,

I am requesting a consideration of hardship in order to play sports for Eagle Point High School in Eagle Point, Oregon. I have lived in Jackson County School District 9 my entire life. I am a student athlete and I have been playing volleyball since middle school and softball since I was 6.

My freshmen and sophomore year of high school I attended Eagle Point High School. My junior year of high school, I attended Prospect Charter School for the opportunity to be my academic best with the smaller class sizes and the one on one mentoring I could receive from the teachers. During the fall of my junior year, I played volleyball for PCS and had several ankle injuries, then during a practice in October I tore my ACL and meniscus. I was out of sports for the year. My mom and I both spoke with Mr. Mickelson, the Athletic Director, about accommodating my school schedule my senior year, and he had extensively worked with me about my college plans to attend an agricultural university and to play softball in college. At the end of my junior year, I was told by Mr. Mickelson that my schedule for the next year would be accommodating to sports, as I only had a few classes I needed to graduate. I spent time on the phone with Lacy Thompson, the PCS registrar, working on my senior schedule and we had my schedule worked out. However, when I returned to PCS in August 2015 my schedule was in direct conflict of my ability to play sports; my two most academically challenging and important classes were during 6th & 7th period. 6th period was English 12 and 7th was Math 112. I shared my concerns with my teachers and my parents and they were willing to work with me. I had the same teacher for math 112 as I did in 3rd period and since I was the only student in his 3rd period class, he was willing to teach me two classes in one class period. My mom spoke with the principal, Mr. Dexter so that my parents, myself, my teachers and Mr. Dexter could meet to work this out and solidify a plan, this meeting would of included Mr. Mickelson as one of my teachers and the Athletic Director. Instead, I was taken out of class for a meeting with Mr. Dexter by myself that neither my parents nor myself knew about in advance. I was informed that "Prospect is too small of a school and we cannot accommodate everyone's needs", that Mr. O'Neil, my math teacher, was not to double teach me my math classes and therefore I would be frequently missing important classes that I need to graduate in order to play sports. This did not make sense to me, since I knew that my teachers were willing to with me to accommodate my academic needs while being able to play sports. Mr. Mickelson was invested in me, helping me to apply to his alma mater, South Dakota State University, and mentoring me. I was crushed by the betrayal that Mr. Mickelson called my dad and told him that he would do everything in his power to keep me from playing for EPHS.

I have been accepted to Oregon State University, South Dakota State University & University of Arizona as a double major in Agricultural Business Management and Non-ruminant Nutrition with a minor in Livestock Genetics. I went to PCS to be able to academically focus on what I needed to accomplish with their teachers mentoring me and the small class sizes. I left Prospect a few days into my senior year, because the administration could not accommodate what I needed in order to receive my education with the teachers there willing to help me. My parents supported my decision to not attend PCS because Mr. Dexter did not have the meeting including my parents and teachers and because of Mr. Mickelson's statement to my dad that they would keep me from playing sports for EPHS. I returned to my home school district and Eagle Point High School, where I attend my freshmen & sophomore year. Since I left PCS, there has been no contact from the school administration, no information of my withdrawal from the charter school and therefore I did not consider myself a "transfer student", but a returning student to EPHS. I acted in good faith in returning to EPHS to continue my education, my academic success and to return to playing sports after reconstructive knee surgery and many months of physical therapy. Why did PCS wait until 11 games into my senior softball season in 2016 to say something, when they knew September 2015?

I would like to thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Taelor Thompson