

May 3, 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to explain why I decided (with my family's support) to transfer from West Salem High School to Sprague High School during the 2015-2016 school year. There are several reasons related to our family calendar and future plans.

One of the reasons I transferred to Sprague was so that I could have more time with my Dad. Since he is the director of the Sprague band, he is very busy with events on the Sprague calendar. When I was a member of the West band, I was busy with events on that calendar. Because the different practice and performance schedules of the two band programs were often conflicting, it was difficult for me to even see my Dad during the week and often times on weekends too. When I was home, he was at band. When he was home, I was at band. Our family has always been close and that was very hard for me. There were lots of weeks during the fall semester when we weren't even able to sit down and have a family meal during the week. That was a huge loss for our family and I was starting to feel disconnected from my Dad.

In addition to not being able to hang out with my Dad very often, I was never able to go to any of his concerts. He had to miss a lot of mine too. Normally, we would support each other by attending important events in each other's lives, but when those events fall on the same day in opposite ends of the district, it is impossible. Music is a huge part of my life and my heart too! It was really hard all of those times when I had important performances but he couldn't come because he had performances of his own. On top of that, my Mom was rarely able to support my Dad by going to his concerts because she was driving me around to West Salem events or attending my concerts on the same night. We decided it was best for us all if my Dad and I were involved in the same band program for the rest of my high school years.

Making music together is a special privilege shared between groups of people who work hard individually and who also dedicate lots of time and energy to practicing together as a group. It is about dedication, commitment, mutual respect and friendships. People who have never been involved in a music program don't understand the bonds and connections that are made while making music. I just couldn't let my high school career go by without experiencing the joy of making music with my Dad. I started off in the West band because that is where I live, but I started realizing the opportunity I was missing to make music with my Dad. It is a real treat to see him in action as a teacher and I believe it has strengthened our relationship. As far as I know, all of the other children of current Salem Keizer band directors attend their Dad's school and participate in band, so it didn't seem strange to transfer to be in my Dad's program. It is just too special of an opportunity to miss out on.

My family currently lives in the West Salem area, but we are planning to move to the Sprague area as soon as possible. Since my Dad spends a lot of time at school, it will be easier for my family if we lived close by Sprague. It will actually be an easier commute to work for my Mom

too. Right now, Dad loses a lot of time commuting each day and Mom sits in traffic on the bridge every morning and every afternoon. Plus, when we bought our house in West Salem, we didn't know the Salem area as well as we do now. Since we've lived here for a few years, we are able to make a better decision about which area of town we'd like to live in. That area is Sprague. We intended to have our house up for sale by now, but found out that it needed some pretty big repairs before we could sell it. We are in the process of getting those fixed now. Since I know we are going to be moving to the Sprague area eventually, that became another reason to go ahead and transfer now. It has been helpful for me to start learning the Sprague campus and making new friends. That way, when we do move, I'll already feel comfortable.

As I explained above, all of the reasons I transferred to Sprague were related to different issues that were facing my family. Of course, there are a few things I miss about West Salem, but being able to spend more time with my Dad and make music together is awesome. It feels good to know that he will always be at all of my concerts now too! (It will be even nicer when we move to the south side of town.) I hope that answers any questions you might have. I don't feel like we have done anything wrong in having me transfer to Sprague. We just made a decision to ensure that our strong, close family stays that way.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Oksana Greenwood