



Jackson County School District 9

P.O. Box 548
Eagle Point, OR 97524

February 7, 2017

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee and others considering SB 183,

I am writing in support of SB 183 and urge the passage of this important piece of legislation.

I have been working in Southern Oregon for the past 16 years managing discipline and attendance systems for Southern Oregon ESD and the Eagle Point School District. We have had our fair share of successes and each and every day offers a new opportunity to connect with students and families but we all have much more meaning work to do.

At times the challenges students and families face seem uncontrollable from a school staff perspective and most often we do our best with what resources we have but often fail. We fail to connect the dots and leverage all state and caring agencies with a common language. We lack the strategy and organization we need to address the high mobility rates in Oregon schools. It is for this reason we see Oregon still trailing the nation in producing a 74% graduation rate.

We need leadership in making "Attendance" a priority because a key stone habit of earning a high school diploma is "Showing Up."

I fully support SB183 because it is the right tool to move our efforts collectively forward and I recommend that you carefully review both the "Statewide Chronic Absenteeism Plan" and the contents of SB 183.

Again, I fully endorse SB 183 and urge its passage. This is a critical priority for our state. Please let me know if I can be of assistance in providing further testimony or explanation of the state's challenges in this area or of the tools and strategies to address this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Ortega', is located below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Phil Ortega
Attendance and Student Services
Eagle Point School District