

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Education subcommittee. My name is Joe Gullidge and I am the Director of Bands at Clover High School in Clover, SC and have been a teacher in South Carolina for 24 years. I come to you today on behalf of the South Carolina Band Directors Association to ask you to support Senate Bill S.302. This would allow participation in Marching Band to satisfy the physical education credit requirement for the SC High School Diploma as an alternative to the traditional PE class. A similar bill, S.1204 passed the Senate in 2016 but the session adjourned before consideration in the House of Representatives.

Why is this bill important?

Participation in band programs around the state and being able to have band/fine arts “completers” has become nearly impossible for many students. The implementation of the 4x4 or A/B block schedule along with increased emphasis on AP classes, dual credit options, career clusters, etc. is cause for many students to opt out of continuing band participation in high school. The passage of this bill would allow band students just a little bit more scheduling flexibility. One more “slot” that they can use to be a “completer in band vs being forced to drop their band class so they can take an AP class or get the 3rd or 4th level Foreign Language or Math class needed to graduate.

How would this work?

For twenty years plus, the South Carolina Band Directors Association (SCBDA) has presented the rationale that the rigor and physical activity of marching band meets and exceeds the physical movement and healthy life skills that are expected from the standards of physical education. We further believe that

participation in marching band also meets or exceeds the same requirements of the Physical Education class currently offered via Virtual SC. Yes, you can now take PE online. In fact, many band directors across the state are already serving as their students “fitness sponsors” for the Virtual SC program administering the fitness test to their band students. Marching band curriculum parallels the following standards from the virtual school standards:

- Group Learning Community for Fitness
- Cardio Vascular Exercises
- Flexibility Exercises
- Muscle Strength Exercises
- Muscle Endurance Exercises
- Jumping Jacks
- Movement Forms – *team sports, etiquette, safety, activity logs*
- Life Time Fitness

There are countless studies that show that participation in Fine Arts, in Music... in BAND, helps students to be more successful. A ten-year study by Dr. James Caterall at UCLA indicated that students who study music achieve high test scores, regardless of the socioeconomic background. College admissions officers continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness. Passage of this bill would help insure that more SC students have these opportunities.

You have before you a document that hopefully will answer any questions you may have about this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.