

# PPS proposes equitable desegregation plan

The desegregation-integration committee of the Portland School Board began Wednesday night to deal with the demands of the Black United Front, attempting to head off the school boycott scheduled for September 4th.

Last Thursday the Board had submitted a letter to the Black United Front stating in part, "The Portland Board of Education acknowledges the Black United Front's objectives to be a legitimate and accurate expression of dissatisfaction with the district's present program of desegregation. Further we recognize this dissatisfaction to express the views of a significant segment of the district's population. Therefore, the Board assures Black United Front members and other concerned citizens that it takes very

seriously and pledges to review very seriously the objectives of that organization."

BUF co-chairman Ronnie Herndon met with Board Chairman Frank McNamara Sunday and presented several proposals to be implemented for the 1979-80 school year. Among these were that the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades be returned to Humboldt and the 4th and 5th to Eliot; that middle school age children who are bussed out of the area have the option to return to Fernwood, Beaumont or Columbia/Whitaker middle schools; that white students in Early Childhood Education Centers be required to remain through the grades offered; that all students be allowed to attend the high schools in their area; that children wait for buses at the schools

and be provided shelter and supervision. Parents will choose whether their children will catch the bus at school or at pick up points. Supervision and shelter will be provided at the schools.

The Board of Education will meet Monday at 7:30 p.m. to discuss and adopt the committee recommendations.

Since all of the current Board members were present and only Forrest Reike expressed substantial opposition to the measures endorsed, it can be expected that they will be adopted with only minor changes.

Ronnie Herndon told the *Observer* that he is disappointed at the "undo amount of reluctance to giving the Black community the same choices available to the white community." He proposes that all students who

a ratio more reflective of the student body make-up."

For the coming year, the committee determined to create a 4th grade class at Eliot and a 3rd grade class at Humboldt and to invite those students who would otherwise be bussed out to remain in their school. They declined to add a 5th grade class at Eliot or 4th and 5th grade classes at Humboldt or to allow bussed students whose schools no longer have their grades to attend other Albina schools.

Children who are now transferred can return to their own school if their grades exist.

The committee decided to allow those 6th graders from Humboldt, Eliot and King Area I, who have no middle school assignment, to attend Fernwood, Beaumont or Colum-

bia/Whitaker. Seventh and 8th graders must remain in their current assignments.

Theoretically students who live in the areas served by Columbia/Whitaker (Woodlawn, Faubian, Vernon and King Area II) can attend Columbia/Whitaker. However, if all were to attempt to register at the school, there would be no space for them. Clint Thomas, desegregation supervisor, estimated that about 450 students who theoretically belong at Columbia/Whitaker have been recruited to other schools.

All students are now allowed to attend their own high schools, including Jefferson, even if they have been transferred to other schools. This is not widely known and some parents have met opposition from principals and area administrators.

vision; that efforts begin to achieve a 20 percent minority staff; that a community monitoring system be developed.

The Board committee agreed to develop a comprehensive desegregation plan, to be implemented in September of 1980, that where possible will cluster contiguous schools to achieve desegregated student bodies; create one or two middle schools in Albina; not close any school in Albina. Parents, the Black United Front and community organizations will be involved in the planning.

If adopted by the Board, the plan will include mandatory instruction of teachers in Black history and culture; curriculum that will enhance self-worth and cultural identity; an effort to hire Black staff to "move toward (Please turn to page 10 col. 1)

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### Black suspensions outstrip whites 5 to 1

Two years ago the disciplinary policies of the Portland Public Schools were found to be discriminatory against Black students. Under threat of loss of federal funds the district agreed to make suitable changes that would lessen the imbalance of Black students suspended and/or expelled from school.

The district's statistics for the 1977-1978 school year demonstrate that Black children are still suspended at a rate greatly disproportionate to their numbers in the school population.

Jackson High School for example, suspended 20.2 per cent of its minority students while suspending 2.7 per cent of the white students.

Madison suspended 21.3 per cent of its minority students and 5.4 per cent of its white students. Grant suspended 43 per cent of its minority students and 2.1 per cent of its white students.

Minority suspensions: Jackson 20.2 per cent; Jefferson 25.7; Lincoln 6.2; Roosevelt 15.9; Wilson 27.2; Adams 62.1; Benson 6.7; Madison 21.3; Marshall 10.4; Monroe 4.7; Cleveland 19.1; Franklin 8.2; Grant 43.0; Washington 38.7. The percentage of minority high school students suspended is 25.6 per cent. While student suspension rate was 10.8 per cent.

Portland's minority middle school students (grades 6 through 8) were

suspended at a rate of 20.3 per cent. White students were suspended at a rate of 12 per cent.

Markham Middle School suspended 29.5 per cent of its minority students while 5.1 per cent of the white students were suspended. Fernwood suspended 23.1 per cent of its minority students and 7.8 per cent of its white students.

Suspension records indicate the following rates of minority suspensions: Markham 29.5; Portsmouth 8.9; Binnsmead 14.0; Whitaker/Columbia 19.2; Fernwood 23.1; Hosford 25.6; Kellogg 13.0; and Sellwood 43.4.

Although many elementary schools, especially primary schools,

did not suspend students 5.2 per cent of the district's minority students in elementary schools were suspended.

Atkinson suspended 15.6 per cent of its minority students while 2.9 per cent of its white students were suspended; Glencoe suspended 15.8 per cent of its minority students and 1.0 per cent of its white students. Woodstock suspended 37.9 per cent of its minority students and 5.3 per cent of its white students; Hayhurst suspended 40.2 per cent of its minority students and 2.6 per cent of its white students. Multnomah suspended 38.5 per cent of its minority students and 7.7 per cent of its white students.

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Portland's next mayor? City Commissioner Charles Jordan hopes so. He and Commissioner Frank Ivancie split the vote 2-2 in an effort of the Council to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Neil Goldschmidt.

### Parent endorses demands, opposes boycott

Ms. Edna Pittman came under some criticism following an interview that appeared in last week's *Willamette Week* quoting her as an opponent of the planned school boycott by Black children. Ms. Pittman clarified her position: "I am against keeping children out of school—even for one day—but I agree with the Black United Front's demands. I have fought too hard for too many years to keep my children in school to take them out now."

Ms. Pittman proposes no alternative to the boycott, but mentioned a court suit as a possibility. "That takes too long, so I don't know what could be done right now."

Ms. Pittman states emphatically

that the school district has a serious discrepancy in the discipline of Black children and that she has learned this firsthand.

Ms. Pittman is a member of the Title VII committee and as a member of that committee went to visit Binnsmead School, which her children attended. Jeffery, who was then in the sixth grade had attended Binnsmead for three years with no particular problems. Following her visit to the school, she states, Jeffery began having frequent suspensions for minor rule infractions, this continued during his seventh grade year and got so bad that she organized a group of Black parents who also had children at the school.

"I considered a boycott then. I

was ready to ask all the Black parents to take their children out of that school. I had made so many trips to school, went to the principal, the area administrator and everywhere I could to get help but no one would help me. I tried to get Jeffery into Columbia/Whitaker but they said there was no room for him.

"I received a call from an administrator who asked if I liked my job at Adams and suggested that Jeffery stay at Binnsmead. He had never asked me how I liked my job before."

The day the parents were to meet, Jeffery was suspended pending expulsion. He and two other boys had been giggling. When the teacher told them to stop and they did not, the

teacher allegedly hit Jeffery with a book. He said, "If you weren't my teacher, I would hit you back" and was suspended. "I called HEW and decided to file a complaint. I made the mistake of telling an administrator what I planned to do. The next day a place for Jeffery was found at Columbia/Whitaker and in one day he was transferred." Ms. Pittman relates that many of the Black parents at Binnsmead were angry that she had moved her son and thought she should have stayed to fight.

Jeffery stayed at Columbia/Whitaker the remainder of the year, and because he was unhappy there he went to Kellogg for his eighth grade (Please turn to page 2 col. 4)

### Some thoughts on the problem

by W.H. McClendon

"Black people must make positive decisions about their lives. They do not need to be in a state of anxiety about this leading to their being alienated from white people. They must be working constantly to remove their alienation from other Black people."

—The Black Scholar, September 1974

The present aspects of Black life in Oregon are historically rooted. They were produced here prior to the Civil War and reflect the character and attitudes endemic to the widespread anti-Black white racism of Northwest settlers who were the advocates of white racism as it was being expressed then in the North and the South. Oregon, in fact, remains as an impregnable haven for fostering the peaceful co-existence of the abrasive, overtly assaultive, racist practices attributable to the South and the insidious, ruthless, subtle racist customs of the North.

The vast amount of discord which is obvious today lies in the unresolved dispute over the status of the Black population knows it should have as a matter of citizenship and the low status in the social structure to which Blacks are assigned by the law making and public policy authorities. Their contrivances and manipulations to maintain here glaring injustices and inequities have resulted in keeping Oregon, and Portland in particular, frontiers of racial confusion. The resulting antipathies have produced problems in the education sector that have com-

pounded and crystallized racial segregation. The present school administration has contributed its special skills and training to this endeavor for the past ten years and it is plain to see an enormous degree of success has been realized. The Portland school district can now be assessed as providing a volume of damaging and useless mal-education for its Black students percentage-wise that is not surpassed by whatever urban area may be competing for first place for this infamous distinction.

### Analysis

A disclosure of the Portland school system's operations for the past ten years reveals some appalling violations of Black peoples' rights. For example, the Schools for the Seventies plan actually isolated Blacks from other Blacks, even in the same families! At the same time these Black children were also victims of exclusion by the whites, preferred occupants, in the relocation compounds where the buses delivered the Blacks. This school administration insisted that this was integration...who needs it? The damages to result from subjecting Black children to this kind of treatment had been foretold a thousand times by as many Black analysts in more than 50 cities of this nation. Nevertheless, the Portland school district persisted in following the lead set by a mind packed with racist and contemptuous indifference. Moreover, a compliant School

Board, a subordinate administrative staff and teaching constituency (Blacks and whites) gave collective support and this provided the machinery and the momentum for wrecking the minds of Black children in many ways that approximate the damages resulting from incarceration in P.O.W. and concentration camps.

Education for the Seventies, the highly publicized operating format for Portland schools, planned by the present school superintendent was understood by Black analysts from the beginning as designed to serve as an unmatched demoralizing regime for Black students. This was perceivable regardless of the catch phrases and elaborate jargones used by school district spokespersons to have subtle mechanisms of coldly designed segregation thought of and accepted as educational innovations. It was at this point that the superintendent and his supporters (including the Blacks) were revealed to be unsuited and unqualified to head educational programs and make policies in the best interest of students of any ethnicity or class.

Nevertheless, educational racism was expanded and intensified under this leadership. Through the years many extraneous, belittling machinations emerged to increase the difficulties and miseries endured by Black students.

It should be clear by this time that Blacks do not wish to see any school authorities assuming the roles of overseers of the Black community. It is expected that they will carry out their duties as professional (Please turn to page 2 col. 4)

### Park change brings safety concern

Residents of the King neighborhood have been asking for a park on City land adjacent to Martin Luther King School for many years, but now that construction is in progress they are not sure what they are getting. A controversy has risen over the selection of playground equipment.

"The main reason we wanted a park was to have a playground for the little children," Linda Johnson, a member of the King School Parent Advisory Committee explained. "Now we aren't sure what we are getting is safe or that it will last."

Mrs. Linda Johnson and Marian Dawan represented King School and the King Neighborhood Association on the committee that designed the park. "We were the only community representatives, the others were for the City and knew about building parks. They were the experts, we just tried to make sure we got the playground equipment we wanted and to insure that the park will be safe for children. We didn't want another Unthank."

Specifications were written to call play equipment "manufactured by Wildwood or approved equal." The bid accepted from Paul Brothers Construction was \$31,310 less than the next bid and they were awarded the contract. Their bid on the playground equipment was \$550 less but they substituted Timberform equipment.

Mrs. Johnson explained that she was told by Rich Wiley in the City's Purchasing Division that a committee had approved the Timberform (Please turn to page 2 col. 1)



Workers install playground equipment at King community park adjacent to Martin Luther King Elementary School. The park also will have a track, sports field and tennis courts.

(Photo: Terry Robertson)