

CONTINUING the DREAM



PORTLAND
MESA

MATHEMATICS, ENGINEERING, SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NATIONAL MODEL

The Oregon Department of Transportation is pleased to join many other leaders in government, business and industry in recognizing the achievements of Portland MESA.

MESA is a program designed to attract minority youth into careers in sciences, engineering, math and technology, although participation is open to all students.

"We are the first MESA program in the nation to involve both middle and high school youth," stated Dr. Ernest Hartzog, Assistant Superintendent for Portland Public Schools. Hartzog noted that many minority students enter high school not having selected properly sequenced math and science courses.



"The purpose of MESA," stated Renee Wilkerson, Coordinator of Portland MESA, "is to make minority students more aware of technical careers, to motivate them to take appropriate math, science and engineering-related courses in high school and to reward them for achievement in these subject areas."

Portland MESA is a joint venture between the Portland State University School of Engineering and Applied Science and Portland Public Schools.

Dr. Chic Erzurumlu, Dean of P.S.U.'s School of Engineering and Applied Sciences serves as Director of MESA and is Co-Chair of the MESA Advisory Board. Dr. Hartzog, who directs District-Wide Programs for Portland Public Schools, is also Co-Chair.

Three hundred twenty five students are participating in the program for the 1986-87 school year. Students come from eight middle schools: Beaumont, Fernwood, Whitaker, Tubman, Oakley Green, Blinnmead, Mt. Tabor and Kellogg; and three high schools: Jefferson, Grant, and Benson.

BROAD BASED ACTIVITIES

Portland MESA began July 1, 1985, with 209 students—the largest start-up program in the nation, noted Wilkerson. "In the first year we had 9 workshops, including preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Test for college entrance, 15 parent meetings, 18 technical site visits with cooperating corporations and agencies, and 48 speaker presentations," stated Wilkerson.

Students also had the opportunity to spend the day with a mentor, compete in a math contest, attend after-school study labs, write MESA reports and give presentations to their fellow students.

Activities for the current school year have included: a Bridge Building Contest, a Mouse Trap Car Design and Race, Math Relay Races, a Math/Science Jeopardy Game; and workshops on Newtonian Physics, Dissection, and Probability and Statistics. Wilkerson has also put together a range of activities from camping trips to slumber parties to talk about issues such as leadership and initiative.

Each school has a MESA Advisor, and students meet with that person on a weekly basis. There is an extensive Summer Program that students may attend.

URGENT NEED

"We see Portland MESA as a very important educational initiative in the State," said Vicki Nakashima, Manager of the Oregon Department of Transportation's Civil Rights Office.

Nakashima referred to an October, 1985 Engineering Manpower Bulletin which cited cuts in financial aid, reduced college recruiting, and lack of role models for the recent decline in minority enrollment at engineering schools.

"Blacks, Hispanics and American Indians represent only 5.4% of 1984 graduates earning a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering," Nakashima pointed out. She also noted that in that same year, 1984, 4.4% of engineering undergraduate students were Black, 3.1% were Hispanic, and 0.3% were American Indian.

"Those numbers will continue to slip without intervention," said Nakashima, "and that is why programs like MESA are important."

Karen Bell, the first Black female Engineer in ODOT, stated that career awareness programs were instrumental in her entry into the field. "Karen is one of several ODOT employees who contributes significant time in the classroom and on the job site with our students," said Penny Fukui, Career Coordinator for MESA. "Karen and others are excellent mentors and role models," Fukui noted.

"It is my turn to provide leadership and give something back to the community that supported me," said Bell.

ITS ABOUT ACHIEVEMENT

Nakashima had praise for the leadership of the MESA staff which consists of Renee Wilkerson, Penny Fukui, and Office Manager, Chris Mueller. "They have put together a very effective program that students, parents, educators, and the corporate community can get behind and know their time is a good investment," she observed.



Pictured, left to right, are a portion of Jefferson High School's MESA Chapter. Front row: Sharon Davis, Evelyn Dasalla, Trisa Watson; Second row: Sunshine Guzman, Janise Gordon, Pamela Clegg; Third row: Pardis Navi (Advisor), Nilesh Dayal, Gina Yarbrough; Fourth row: Manish Patel, Jodi Lewison, Kimberly Robinson; Last Row: Jon Cauthorne, Leila Aziz, Dana Bailey, Carl Slater. (Photo by Larry Mills, Portland Public Schools)

"The MESA Program does make a difference," noted Hartzog. "We've seen higher grades and increased

participation in math and science programs from MESA students."

Allisa Benjamin, a former student at Tubman Middle School, said that the MESA Program had been a motivating experience for her. "I was an average student in math and science two years ago," noted Benjamin, "sometimes below average. Now I am an A and B student."

"Ninety-four students received 'incentive awards' last year," said Wilkerson. To receive an incentive award a student must receive A's and B's in their math and science classes and participate in a minimum number of MESA activities.

WE SHARE THE DREAM!



The Oregon Department of Transportation

CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION
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1985-86 MESA AWARD WINNERS

BEAUMONT
Kevin Dunn, Traci Fantz, Laura Gunderson, Robert Ingram, Katherine Jones, Mark Knepper, Chau Luong, Vinh Luong, James McKenzie, Toletia McKenzie, Ben Painter, Jonathan Stokes, Craig Walker, Kristen Warren, Heidi Whitcomb.

FERNWOOD
Julia Alexander, Lyla Bradley, Shanell Burns, Duane Burton, Christopher Dawson, Hilson Edner, Sasha Eymann, Tamara Johnson, Sharon Kinnieu, Elizabeth Laws, Christopher Lewis, Dana Mitchell, Stacey Pemeil, Casandra Person, Jessica Reiss, Zoe Weiss, Caroline Wright.

OAKLEY GREEN
Glen Currier, Kim Doa, Myla Godfrey, Scott Ledington, Tiffany Mitchell, Rita Patel, Summer Sahn, Jesse Stricker, Nakisha Thompson, Rochelle Watson, Vicki White.

TUBMAN
Dana Bailey, Allisa Benjamin, Simone Brooks, Sandra Cerasar, Eidor Gonzalez, William Gordon, Elizabeth Marquis, Patricia McCormick, Nicole McCray, Sarah Morse, Erika Murphy, Tara Paulson, Bun Tan, Huamei Warfield, Jackie Williams.

WHITAKER
Faresa Bell, Marcellus Brown, Veda Brown, Teresa Charles, Pamela Clegg, Lalanya Fall, Rachel Galton, Keith Hawthorne, Lashonda Hodges, Anthony Jackson, Kobie Keaton, Dorkos Ketsou, Ramay Lewis, Zalka Milton, Jonathan Norman, Sondra Reed, Durron Richard, Roosevelt Ross III, Rafeegah Smith, Shunita Tate, Regina Warren, Patrice Wilson.

GRANT
Stephanie Bell, Tasha Harden, Cheryl Mason, William White, Maua Wolfe.
JEFFERSON
Leila Pizz, Robin Beavers, Sharon Davis, Heidi Durous, Linh Hong, Van-Mai Nguyen, Manish Patel, Kimberly Robinson, Trisa Watson.