

E d u c a t i o n

Oregon Test Scores Are Up

Oregon students in 1997 scored higher than students in previous years on state math and reading tests and maintained high scores on writing tests. Students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10 were tested last spring.

After years of flat math scores, scores for grades 3 and 5 jumped three points and grade 10 increased one point. Grade 8 remained the same. Math scores for grades 3 and 5 are the highest in the seven years of state testing, while scores for grades 8 and 10 match previous highs.

Reading scores continued their steady climb. Scores for grades 3, 5 and 8 increased, while the grade 10 score held steady.

"We are seeing dramatic improvement in the elementary grades," said State Schools Supt. Norma Paulus. "Younger students are experiencing the new higher standards from the beginning of their education and the difference shows in their scores. As more and more students move through the new system, we will see marked improvement."

Standards are Higher

For the first time since state testing began, the tests now are connected to higher academic standards. Last fall, the State Board of Education increased scores students are expected to achieve on the tests.

"We raised the bar much higher," said Paulus. "Although it will take time for students to reach the new higher expectations, this year's results show that students are stepping up the academic ladder."

"We need to keep in mind that the new standards are much higher than ever before," said Paulus. For example, students scoring 226 on the grade 10 state math test achieved the proficient level of performance in previous years. The new standard is 239.

In most cases, more students are meeting the standards. For example, 62 percent of third graders achieved the math standard compared to 52 percent in 1996. Fifty-nine percent of fifth graders achieved the math standard compared to 48 percent in 1996.

Grade 8 and 10 math results are not as positive. Forty-nine percent

of eighth graders met the standard, up one percent from 1996, and 30 percent of tenth graders met the standards, down one percent.

A study in 1996 shows that students who take tough math courses in high school have little difficulty meeting the standard. However, Oregon students trail students nationally in the percentage who take those classes.

Paulus praised Salem-Keizer School District's "Algebra for All" "Build a firewall around instructional time"

Protecting class time is critical, said Paulus. "Schools need to build a firewall around their classrooms. Too many times natchers are grabbing instructional time. We never see a football game interrupted for math practice, but math class is interrupted all the time to get ready for a football game."

Other programs which steal instructional time, she said, include the DARE program, pep rallies and assemblies, driver's education, walk-a-thons, health screenings, immunizations and fundraisers.

"They need to occur outside the regular school day, not during it," she said. "Communities can start taking care of some of these things and not expect schools to do it all."

Beginning in 1998-99, tenth graders must meet standards on reading, writing and math tests to receive a Certificate of Initial mastery.

Except for Asians, minority students have more difficulty meeting the new standards. For instance, only 22 percent of Hispanics, 26 percent of Native Americans and 27 percent of Blacks met the grade 8 math standard. Fifty-eight percent of Asians and 53 percent of Whites met the standard.

Minority students are enrolling in public schools in higher numbers. For example, Hispanic enrollment increased 11 percent last school year compared to an overall enrollment increase of 2 percent.

For many of these students, language barriers, poverty and mobility make learning more difficult.

Test results are available on the Oregon Department of Education's web page on the Internet (<http://www.ode.state.or.us>)

"Back to School" With Experience Corps!!

The Experience Corps program, a national demonstration project recently held their annual kick-off, to celebrate and bring together the teams from the six participating schools in the fight to end illiteracy among Portland's First, Second, and Third grade children.

The Experience Corps program consists of older adults (55+) working in teams to organize projects embracing the needs of elementary schools and their communities. The teams help to fill critical types opened up by school funding cuts and the increased needs of children. Our goal is to match older Americans whose considerable experience constitute an extraordinary repository of help for our children. With their energy and enthusiasm they can create service achievement, strengthening parent-teacher organizations, and developing and implementing after-school programs.

Our dedicated members at O.P. Lent Elementary School invite you to join them in their "back to school" poetry readings. This project, called "poetry break" inspires children to expand their reading and comprehension skills while exposing them to other forms of literature and diversity. The event will take place on Tuesday September 2, 1997 at 9:00 a.m.

We hope that you can attend our "Back to School" with Experience Corps. If you have any questions or wish to confirm, please call the Experience Corps staff at 249-0469.

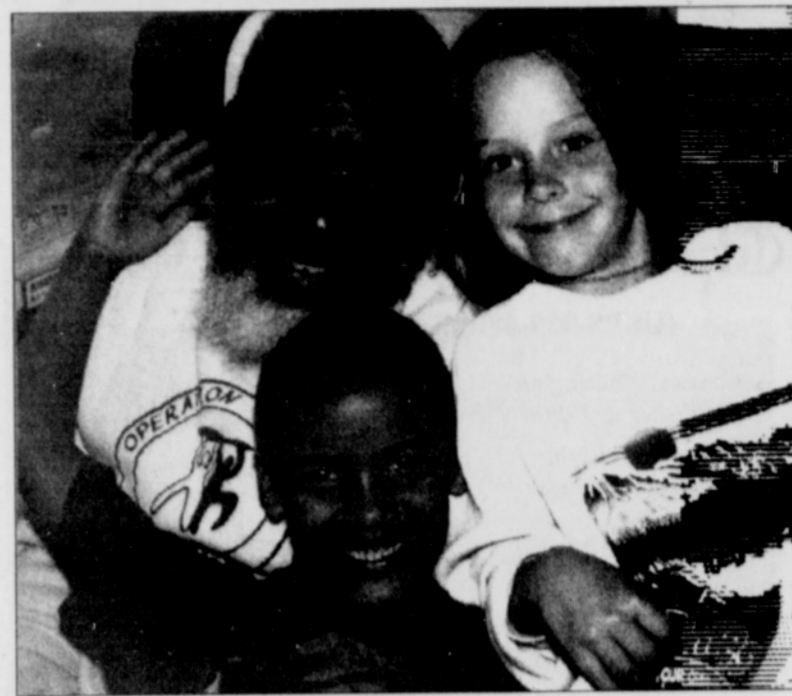
Puppeteers Needed To Serve Local Schools

The Kids on the Block Awareness Program is seeking up to eight puppeteers to help present elementary school puppet shows aimed at stopping gangs and violence, vandalism, and sexual abuse. Volunteers are trained in a particular topic and in the art of puppetry and then commit just two mornings a month from October to May for school performances.

Fall training begins Sept. 11 and continues one-half day per week or six weeks.

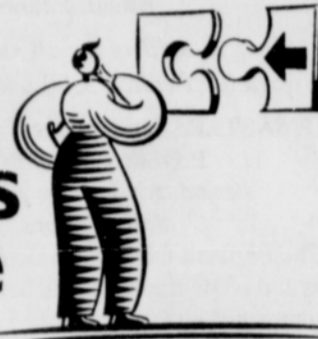
"We have 40 dedicated puppeteers who gave more than 300 performances on 13 different topics to more than 26,000 school children this past year -- throughout Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. But we've barely made a dent reaching all the children whose lives are being torn apart by violence, gangs and abuse," says Denise Tomasovic, executive director for Kids on the Block. "We believe our programs do make a difference, but we want to do more. Serving 15-20 schools out of 300 with a given topic just isn't good enough. But we need help to do more."

Kids on the Block programs use child-size puppets to help children learn to understand and accept disabilities and other differences in one another, and how to stay safe in difficult situations. Working in pairs, the puppets present a short skit and then answer children's questions, addressing fears and concerns in a simple, non-threatening way. Each program takes about 25 minutes, including Q&A. Teachers receive follow-up materials and discussion questions.



Dr. Dapo Sobomehin of Portland with his son Remi and friend Andromeda Thomas enjoy a light moment during summer vacation. Sobomehin is executive director of Operation EASY.

School That Fits Your Life



Flexible programs.
Convenient class times.
Classes at three campuses, three centers, and 200 neighborhood locations.
Affordable tuition.

- ◆ Start on a bachelor's degree.
- ◆ Train for a new career.
- ◆ Upgrade your job skills.
- ◆ Enhance your life.

Register now. Classes start Sept. 22. Call 977-4382 for information or visit our web site at www.pcc.edu.

Cascade Campus

Portland Community College

4th Annual High School Essay Contest Announced

Kaplan Educational Centers and Newsweek magazine invite high school students from across the country to enter the 1998 Kaplan/Newsweek "My Turn" Essay Contest. Kaplan and Newsweek will award ten outstanding young writers with \$1,000 scholarships for college. Winners will also have their essays published in the Newsweek Education program book: "My Turn" Essay: student Voices, which will be distributed at high schools nationwide.

"We are committed to helping students get into college," said Johathan Grayer, Kaplan's president and CEO. "This contest not only provides students with funds for school, but it serves as a forum through which they can voice their opinions on key issues that will impact their future."

"Our goal is to honor the best and brightest of the nation's young writers," said Richard M. Smith, editor-in-chief and president of Newsweek. "And we hope this contest will encourage all students to develop their writing talents."

The first-place winner will also receive a free Kaplan PSAT, SAT or ACT course or product, subject to availability. Students are asked to

submit a 500-1,000 word essay on one of six designated topics. Entries must be accompanied by an official entry form and postmarked by March 27, 1998.

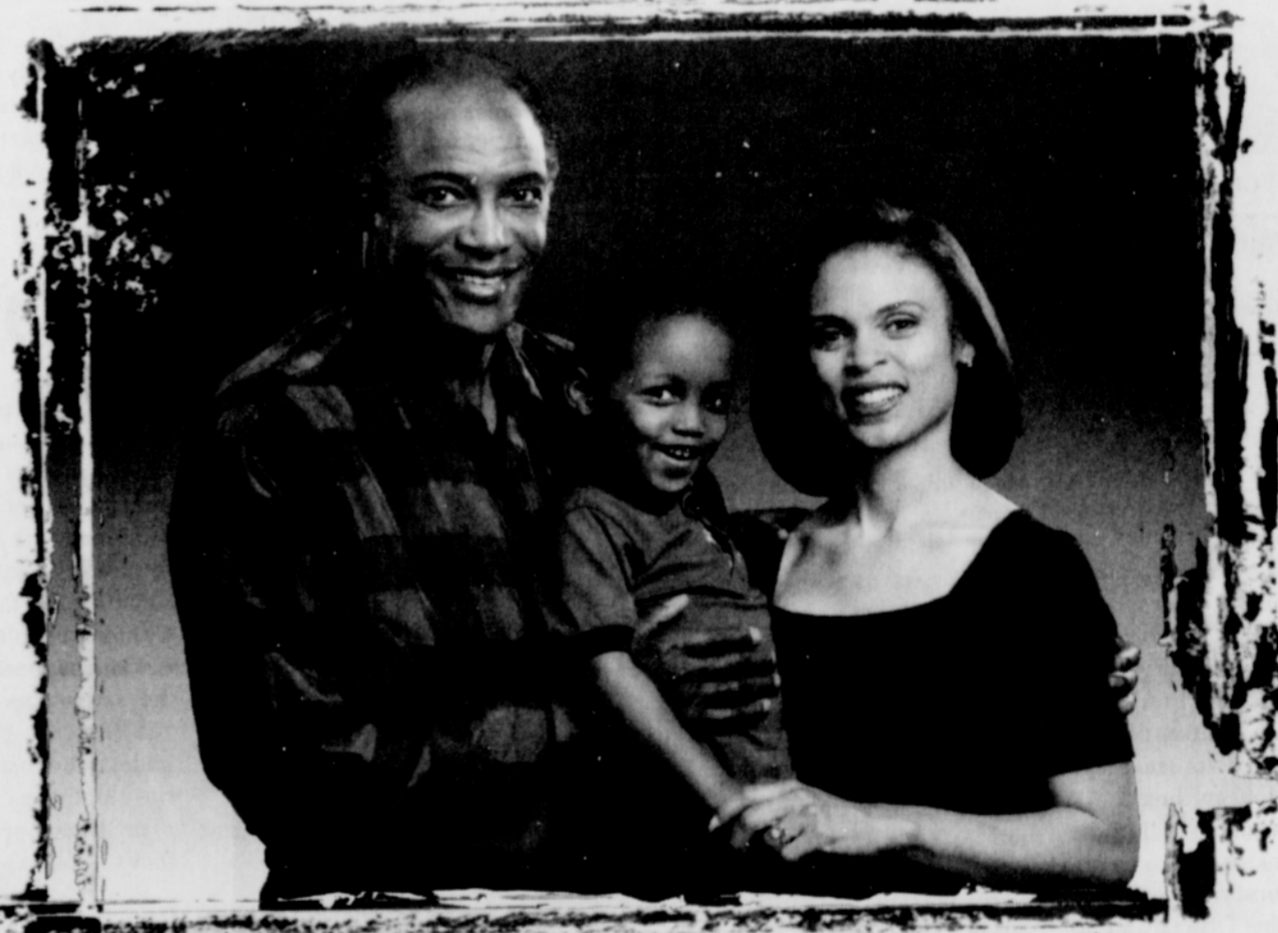
For a complete entry packet, including official rules and official entry form, students should contact their guidance counselor, or call Kaplan at 1-800-KAP-TEST (or visit the Kaplan web site at www.kaplan.com).

Kaplan Educational Centers is one of the nation's premier education companies, providing individuals with a full range of resources to achieve their educational and career goals.

With 1,200 locations throughout the U.S. and abroad, Kaplan has served 3 million students in its nationally-recognized test preparation courses.

In addition, Kaplan offers admission services, student loan information programs career services, individualized study programs for grammar school students and educational tools for universities and businesses.

Kaplan is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Washington Post Company.



The connection is still strong.

The roots of African Americans in this country are deep. They have toiled for hundreds of years for their rightful place in American society.

Throughout the times of struggle, it was by maintaining family connections that they persevered.

Their endurance was strengthened by the determination inherited from parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and is a testimony to their heritage. They understood injustice and overcame countless

obstacles to build a solid foundation for today's youth.

A link to history is nurtured by a connection to family roots.

At U S WEST®, we recognize the importance of learning and sharing the history of African Americans. We help families share their history by providing the best telecommunications products and services available anywhere.

This way, your family connections are always maintained - across the miles, over the years - throughout history.

USWEST®