

# OPINION

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## It all started on a bus



Almost 50 years ago Rosa Parks took a stand for equality by refusing to sit in the back of the bus. Her courageous act launched the civil rights movement as one man in particular—a young minister named Martin Luther King, Jr.—stepped forward to lead the Montgomery bus boycott. The rest is history...

The fact that it all began on the bus underscores how fundamental transportation is for equal opportunity to all. Transportation plays an essential role in our quality of life, financial security and freedom of movement. Today, TriMet is committed to providing high quality transit service to communities of color:

- The majority of Frequent Service bus lines—those with the best service—are in north and northeast Portland.
- \$350 million has been invested in the Interstate MAX line to provide frequent, reliable service and improved bus connections in north and northeast Portland.
- Innovative contracting and workforce programs have engaged the local community to work on the Interstate MAX project. To date, more than \$25 million have gone to disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs)—many north and northeast Portland contractors. And minorities and women comprise 31 percent of the workforce.

Transit brings opportunities to all.

TRIMET

See where it takes you.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

### Don't let Measure 30 defeat school progress

BY SUSAN CASTILLO  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The defeat of Measure 30 was tough for us all. Our hopes to bypass another round of painful budget cuts were not realized, and now we face the challenge of reviewing our priorities and making adjustments... again.

The next few months will not be easy, but you know and I know that our job does not fluctuate with funding levels.

Our schools have endured significant budget reductions over recent years, but the strong leadership in our schools and the quality of instruction in our classrooms has enabled our students to continue making gains in academic performance.

However, the trend of uncertainty and under funding has created new obstacles with each year, and this last hurdle has delivered a budget that could threaten our ability to sustain the momentum of student success. You

don't want that, I don't want that and I don't think the public wants to stall the progress we're making either.

I really don't believe the "no" vote on Measure 30 was anti-education or that anyone would argue our students deserve anything less than the opportunity to meet their full potential.

But I do believe that many Oregonians are struggling to make ends



State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo

meet during difficult economic times, and this election was a way for taxpayers to tell us they are not confident we're doing the best with the funds we have. You know you are spending money where you should - in the classroom. I know this, too. I think the general public isn't as sure.

We must change this perception, which means changing the way we communicate with our communities about where tax dollars are spent. One easy first step is to

keep budget information - current and past - on your district website. Publicize that this information is available to local civic organizations, media, parents, businesses, and policymakers.

At the Department of Education, we've created a link on our home page called, "How Oregon Schools Spend Tax Dollars." It opens up every district budget in the state - by spending and revenue - and has proven to be a powerful tool.

Audit reports are another effective way to communicate district performance to the public through a third party, nonpartisan professional. The public will appreciate an outside assessment, which will also demonstrate through action that the district holds itself accountable to operate at high levels of efficiency.

The more transparent we are, the better we can dispel the myth that school funds go into a "black hole."

The challenge ahead is not easy, but with your dedication and determination, we can ensure all of Oregon's students have the opportunity to meet their full potential. It is something that can and will be accomplished - and we will accomplish this together.

The above letter was sent to educators around the state and made public by Susan Castillo, a former lawmaker who serves as State Superintendent of Public Instruction.



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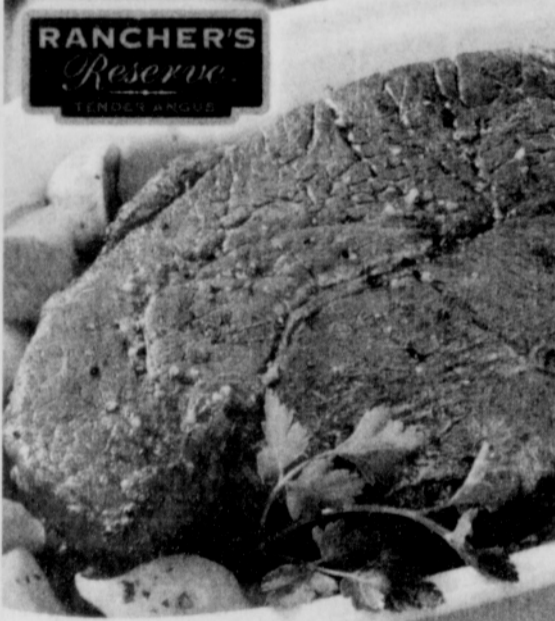
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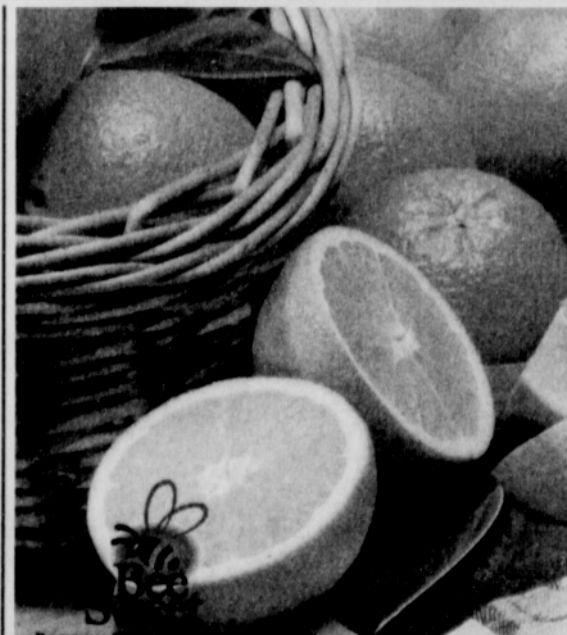
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