

Lorenzo Poe Turns Down Second Board Term

School leader cites district gains, hopes

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Upon my election to the Portland Public School Board, I made a commitment to give my full energy and my time to the district's issues and its children. To be the voice for those who often did not have one, to help bridge the breach between issues that divided both the School Board and underrepresented communities, to bring back credibility to the District, and to support the wonderful people who work daily on behalf of our children.

I found a district facing many challenges: from funding crisis, to racial crisis, to deep achievement disparities. All of these challenges compounded by a leadership and community confidence gap.

I won't say that in my time on the board all of the issues I have mentioned have been resolved, but significant progress has been made. One major accomplishment has been the hiring of what I believe to be the most outstanding urban superintendent. In Dr. Vicki Phillips, leadership and confidence has been restored to the Portland Public School District.

As difficult as it seemed, I have enjoyed my time on the board. Getting to know the many talented and committed staff, administrators and teachers; visiting our schools and seeing first hand what a truly outstanding job they do each and every day; and seeing the wonder of children's eyes and smiles as they learn, has been more compensation than I ever could have hoped to receive.

And having the opportunity to work with my fellow Board Members, both "the old and the new Board" has been a blessing that I will always carry with me.

But also during my four years of service to the District, my family and I faced many tragedies and hardships. Losing both my father

and father-in-law, two men I loved and respected and with whom I never had quite enough time to spend. The horror of facing two tragic automobile accidents that almost took the lives of my youngest two daughters, who it seems were also robbed of quality time, along with their brother and older sister.

During these tragic moments I made a very quiet personal commitment and prayer, that I would take time for my family and myself. I now most honor that commitment.

So it is with love in my heart and faith in the board and our new superintendent that I have decided not to run for a second term on the Portland Public School Board.

I will not, however, be far away nor will I quit working on issues

taxpayers, the school community, and all our partners and to be accountable both financially and academically; and to be a strong role model for children of color who do not often see positive images of themselves in this city and thus have no reason to believe all things are possible.

It has been an honor to lead the board with Julia Brim-Edwards during a most critical period for our school and the community. The board, Portland Public Schools and the city needed strong board leadership, and we delivered.

Under our leadership, educational achievement once again became the focus of the district, and achievement levels, while not yet where we want them to be, are up throughout the district. We are

seeing gains for the poor and for our children of color. result of middle class flight and gentrification.

A world-class instructional leader was hired and is at the helm of the district. With the hiring of Dr. Vicki Phillips, great things will happen if we all support her and her efforts.

A strong and functional board is in place that is focused and committed to achievement and accountability.

The board has rebuilt community confidence in the Portland Public School District and increased board visibility in schools and the community. It has engaged the taxpayer and demonstrated that we recognize the value of their invest-

ment in the district. The Annenberg Institute's Central Office review and its recommendations now allow the Superintendent to restructure the Central Office support system.

There is so much left to do: We can and must be the first urban district to close the achievement gap. This can be accomplished if we and all of our partners stay focused and remember it's not about us, it's about the children.

Racial isolation and mistrust is a growing cancer in the district that must be addressed.

Permanent funding for our district must become a reality soon or our district will be irreparably damaged.

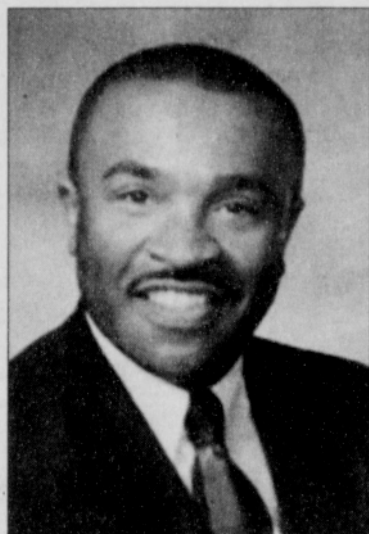
The debate about class size and locations will continue to be an issue as we lose populations as a

I want to thank the citizens of this district for giving me the opportunity to serve and to give back to a city and a district that has given so much to me. And to the Portland Public Schools staff and the school

community for all the support you have given to me.

I only hope I have served you well.

Lorenzo Poe
School Board Member



Lorenzo Poe

"We can and must be the first urban district to close the achievement gap. This can be accomplished if we and all of our partners stay focused and remember it's not about us, it's about the children."

— School Board Member Lorenzo Poe

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