

# Safety Issue for Incoming Woodlawn Kids

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that hits them will be remorseful for the rest of their life," Warren said.

According to the Portland Public Schools Student Transportation Department guidelines, busing will only be provided for elementary school students who live more than one mile from Woodlawn school. Even then, students are expected to walk up to half a mile from their home to a school bus stop.

For Woodlawn students, two proposed bus stops are planned Martin Luther King on North Albina at the intersections of Terry and Morgan streets. This is 11 blocks from Martin Luther King Boulevard and 18 blocks from the school, located at 7200 N.E. 11<sup>th</sup> Ave.

When ACORN and the Neighborhood Schools Alliance, another advocacy group presented their worries to the Portland Public School board at a July 6 meeting, the district's transportation policies thwarted their attempts.

They were told that other busy areas around the city, such as those at Northeast 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Sandy Boulevard or Southeast Division and 82<sup>nd</sup> Streets, currently have students crossing the intersections on their way to school.

"It makes me mad," Warren said.

"That lets us know that they're not going far enough to make sure our kids are safe."

Nicole Breedlove, chairperson for the schools alliance in north Portland, said, "I think that's a crazy justification. If there are other places that are more dangerous, the district should be dealing with that - not using that as a reason to not put something here."

The consequences of it all far outweigh the simple solution, Breedlove said.

The school advocates say a school bus stop at the busy Lombard/MLK intersection and crossing guards are needed.

"It's not that difficult when there are already buses going to Woodlawn. It seems like a very simple thing to do to prevent accidents," Breedlove said.

But Bryan Winchester, director of school district's student transportation cites a Portland Office of Transportation report designating the intersection "a pretty safe area."

"Lombard and MLK is a busy intersection, but it's controlled. It has crosswalks and signals," he said.

Winchester suggested that those not comfortable crossing at Lombard could walk a few blocks up to Dekum to cross MLK. He also



A rally at Northeast Lombard Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard calls attention to the two major highways children will have to cross to get to Woodlawn Elementary School now that Applegate Elementary is closed.

said that work is in progress to provide in-school education about walking safety, which would include pamphlets and a 30 to 40 minute presentation. Ultimately, though, he says it's a parent's responsibility to show their children how to safely cross a street.

"The parents have to be involved in the issue on how to get their kids to school," Winchester said. As far as the recent rally went, he said, "I'm glad they were there, glad they were concerned. I want people involved."

David Wynde, school board co-chairperson, said, "As a board and district in general, we take school safety very seriously. I have two kids that go to elementary school, too. I'm very careful with their safety so I understand people's concern."

But, he said, "As a parent, I'm more nervous about a non-controlled intersection. There are millions of those everywhere."

Wynde noted that because the Lombard and MLK intersection is controlled, the board sees it as safe.

"We're doing all of that to get the best job done to deal with safety," Wynde said. "We're not trying to get away with anything here. We think the policy is reasonable."



## James Earl Jones Visits Local Kids

Renowned actor James Earl Jones visited the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library on Tuesday to meet with children who participate in Self Enhancement Inc., a program that helps inner city youth realize their full potential.

Jones read the book "The Other Side" by Jacqueline Woodson to the children and followed with a discussion.

Known for his acting and voice roles in movies like "Field of Dreams," "Star Wars," and "The Lion King," Jones is the spokesman for Verizon Wireless, the main sponsor of the event, along with the Portland Trail Blazers. The visit was part of a literacy initiative to promote the power and joy of reading.

Actor James Earl Jones smiles Tuesday with local children from Self Enhancement, Inc. at the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library.

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