

School Uniforms for Jefferson Debated

continued ▲ from Front

Phillips has made two reform proposals this year, designed to revamp the weakening structure of school administration and student achievement in several low-performing north and northeast schools.

Jefferson has undergone many improvement efforts in the past few years, replacing principals several times, switching over almost all staff members and the development of a magnet arts program. However, enrollment continues to decline, with a significant number of students in the community attending other schools.

Phillips formed an advisory team of

students, parents, educators and community members to discuss reform. The proposals aim to improve the curriculum and expand college and career preparations.

The advisory team proposed school uniforms after visiting out of state schools, impressed by the unified student body and the dedicated environment it created.

Jefferson students and several adults attending Thursday's meeting objected to the school uniforms plan, complaining that they would stifle individual freedom and not treat all schools the same. Jefferson and Harriet Tubman Middle School, another school targeted for reconfiguration by starting

The reshuffle is aimed at boosting or nearly tripling enrollment at Jefferson.

an all-girls academy, would be the only two schools in the district requiring uniforms.

Jefferson would be organized into two or three smaller schools: a co-ed Arts and Technology Academy, grades 9 through 12; a co-ed prep International Baccalaureate program for

grades 9 through 12; and a Young Men's Leadership Academy for grades 7 through 12.

Tubman, located near the Rose Quarter, would be organized into a Leadership Academy for Young Women, grades 7 through 12, with a focus on science and technology.

Area elementary schools would become pre-kindergarten through eight grades, with a few other options available to students and families.

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Other proposals include hiring more teachers of color, increasing the cultural proficiency of teachers and staff mem-

bers, and establishing stronger connections with neighboring Portland Community College, Cascade Campus.

Changes would be phased in over the next two to three years. Jefferson students could continue to transfer to other schools in the district.

A public hearing is scheduled for final recommendations for Jan. 17 with the plans going for School Board approval on Jan. 23.

Funding for the initiative would be dependent upon a potential tax to replace the Multnomah County Income Tax that expires next year, and a recent \$9 million grant to the district by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Meyer Memorial Trust.



A family lights a ceremonial candle during the seven-day holiday of Kwanzaa. Each candle represents one of the seven principles of the African American holiday that emphasize commitment to family, community, and culture.

Kwanzaa Brings Families Together

Local events planned

Portland will be celebrating Kwanzaa, a seven-day holiday celebrating family, community, and African American culture.

The Black Educational Center is coordinating a special evening to celebrate the spirit of community unity and strength by paying tribute to the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The event will be held Monday, Dec. 26 at Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott Street, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The program will begin with a

traditional candle lighting and libation ceremony. Community tributes, music, an African marketplace and refreshments will also be presented.

A lively program for children and families will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 27 at the North Portland Branch Library, 512 N. Killingsworth, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., to celebrate the second principle of the holiday, Kujichagulia, representing self-determination.

The third night of Kwanzaa celebrates Ujima, collective work and responsibility. Area residents are invited to share in the experience of setting your own Kwanzaa table at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural

Center, 5340 N. Interstate Ave., on Wednesday, Dec. 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Local artists and families will present Kwanzaa table settings that inspire a sense of meaningful connection. The IFCC gallery will host photos and artwork relating to Kwanzaa, highlighting many ways to celebrate. Also, Julianne Johnson will be entertaining with a gospel performance.

On Friday, Dec. 30, the Kwanzaa principal of Nia will be celebrated with the Bridge Builders Gala and Gentlemen's Ball at 7:30 p.m. at Newmark Theater, 1111 S.W. Broadway. For more information, call 503-288-8429.

Diverse Workforce Hiring Pledged

The Portland Development Commission, developers, educators and Portland labor unions have agreed to work towards a common goal of training and diversifying the local workforce. The plan is to increase

minority and women workers in construction jobs to better reflect the community.

The partnership includes Oregon Health Science University, River Campus Investors, North Mac-

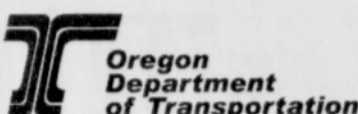
adam, Inc., the International Union of Engineers Local 701, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 290, and Electricians Local 48.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Teaming up for Holiday Giving

Soukhavh Kanhalikham (from left), Pernell Brown, Michael Johnson and James Jones volunteer at the Northeast Precinct to deliver Sunshine Division food baskets to deserving families and individuals this holiday season. 3,000 holiday food boxes were delivered on Saturday.




HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ODOT

The Oregon Department of Transportation wishes you safe and happy holidays, and invites you to explore careers in highway construction in the new year.


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Building Dreams



DeJuan Chesterfield, looking for work to support his family, contacted V. West Contracting & Consulting Services to help him get into a construction trade. A few weeks later, DeJuan started working for a bridge building contractor through the AGC Carpenters Apprenticeship Program. Cascade Bridge LLC employed him, and he is still working for the company today, one year later. When asked about his new career, he says that he is very pleased and enjoys most learning the technical aspects of bridge building carpentry. On the job he is gaining skills in concrete curing and finishing, welding, framing and building forms. In the classroom he is receiving instruction in carpentry, building codes, roof building, team building, identifying hardware and blue print reading. What advice does DeJuan offer a young person interested in the trades? "Start early, and never quit", he says emphatically. Very happy with his progress to date, DeJuan adds "I wish I had started earlier in my life." However, he is looking to the future and is very excited about his present participation in the trades. Five years from now, "I would like to be still be building bridges and taking care of my kids."

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