

Passionate Fight for School Board Seat

Candidates at odds on Jefferson

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland School Board members don't get paid a cent for sitting through endless meetings. But with a school board election and Superintendent Vicki Phillips' departure in store, the board is poised to decide how to spend the taxpayer's monies and choose the person who will lead the district into the future.

Two candidates for Zone-2, representing parts of north, northeast and southeast Portland, are locked in one of the hottest battles on the May 15 ballot.

The challenger is Michele Schultz, a social worker and development consultant who wants to use the change of superintendents to move away from what she calls a crisis-oriented board.

"Building community connections is what we need to focus on for the hiring process," Schultz said.

The incumbent David Wynde, a US Bank community-relations vice president, says the board's focus on financial stability and closing a group of smaller schools has allowed the district to restore programs in other schools.

Wynde asserts that the current board has "found a strong superintendent and I am confident that we can find another."

He said changes over the last four years have resulted in "the best Portland Public Schools we have had in a long time."

Schultz disagrees. She cites persistent failures in many local schools serving minority students and thinks "the board needs to take more responsibility for their role in these issues."

Only with a "bottom-up approach" can minority voices be

heard in such a way that avoids a communication disconnect and repeating unsuccessful changes, she said.

"There was sort of a process in terms of the re-re-re-re-configuration of Jefferson," she says, "but there were many families and staff who were against the academy approach, so we've clearly got a top-down district."

Her accusations have put Wynde on the defensive.

"I have faith in the plan that's in place for Jefferson," he says. "There are a lot of people in that community who, through our efforts, are becoming reengaged."

Citing her experience in crisis management, Schultz criticizes the process for hiring administrators at Jefferson High School, which is now on its eighth principal in 10 years.

"When you do the same things

over and over again, clearly there's a cycle happening, and only Jefferson's parents and staff know who can reverse that cycle."

Wynde says that Jefferson's interim principal Cynthia Harris "will provide the leadership necessary for a smooth transition."

Another difference between the candidates emerges from their views

on the unique election of the board's seven members, with each residing in different neighborhood zones but elected by all of the district's voters.

Wynde says the system was designed to prevent five or six board members from living in the same neighborhood, like Irvington, while making them accountable to represent the entire school district.

Schultz, on the other hand, said



David Wynde



Michele Schultz

fications for representing minority voters in the Jefferson cluster.

"I'm a white woman who grew up in Maine," she says. "But the key to representation is to know that and to really listen to what everyone has to say."

Empowering voices is a key aspect of listening for Schultz because "if you're a family that can't afford electronic commu-

nication, you're left out of the loop in many ways." She pledges to do anything in her power to "make

sure every PPS family has Internet access" if elected to the board.

Wynde cites the board's creative use of Title I funds to restore full-day kindergarten and secure better student-teacher ratios in struggling schools, saying, "we have to remain vigilant in making sure low-income students are being served."

Ruth Adkins and incumbent Doug Morgan are running in the only other contested school board race, representing southwest Portland. Two other board incumbents, Bobbie Regan and Dilafruz Williams, are running unopposed.

Superintendent Search Begins

Portland Public Schools are in search for a new superintendent after last week's surprise announcement on the upcoming departure of Superintendent Vicki Phillips.



Vicki Phillips

Phillips is leaving the district June 30 to become director of education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

During her three year tenure at Portland, Phillips has worked to increase test scores and over-

come a gap in achievement between minority and non-minority students. But actions to close schools in the wake of cuts to state education spending and a re-design of Jefferson High School in north Portland also brought controversy.

Her proposals to close down eight neighborhood schools, most in north and northeast Portland, drew heated protests.



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Alberta Mob Tied to Drunkenness

Total chaos mixed with alcohol and police to create a mob scene on Northeast 18th and Alberta Street Thursday.

The disturbance broke out around 10 pm during Last Thursday, an art event held each month along Alberta, when an officer tried to arrest Ryan Hartman-Parsons a 22-year-old who was allegedly in the midst of a fist fight.

Police said they tasered Hartman-Parsons when he disobeyed orders to stop the fight. When one officer ran back to his car to get cover and another placed his taser on the ground to arrest Hartman-Parsons, another man identified as Joshua Hannum, 30, picked up the weapon.

Police said sparks flew again when Hannum complied with the officer to drop the taser, but the

crowd began to throw bottles and scream at police. As the mob grew, the intersection of 24th and Alberta was blocked off. People also tried to jump on cars, police said.

Sgt. Brian Schmautz, a Police Bureau spokesman, said that some of the people involved in the disturbance had too much to drink and others seemed to be the anarchist type.

Ceasefire Sponsors Gun Turn In

Ceasefire Oregon is encouraging local residents to help save a life by turning in your gun in exchange for a \$50 gift certificate.

The group's annual collection of unwanted firearms takes place

Saturday, May 12 at Redeemer Lutheran Church, located at 5431 N.E. 20th Ave. and Killingsworth Street.

The gun collection is voluntary with no questions asked. For more

information, visit ceasefireoregon.org on the Internet. For help on disposing of a gun year round, contact Multnomah County at 503-255-3600, extension 486.

Sub Bids Requested

Revenue Building 5th Floor Phase 1 Demolition - DAS
State of Oregon

General Demolition

Bid Date: May 18, 2007 2:00 p.m.
Walk Through Date: May 9, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.
855 Center Street, Salem, OR
(Corner of Center St. and Summer St.)

Contact receiving bids: Pete Smith 503-459-4477
Bid documents are available for review at the Fortis office or at the walk through.

Please Note: This is the only walk through that will be available. Walk through is not mandatory, but highly encouraged.

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HEALTH SCREENINGS!
Blood pressure
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Stroke Analysis* (\$10 donation) and more!

HEALTH FAIR!
Sunday, May 6
10am - 3pm

FREE HEALTH LECTURES!*
Friday, Saturday and Sunday
(see reverse for details)

FREE PROFESSIONAL MASSAGE!

COOKING DEMOS!
On the hour, beginning Sunday at 11 am

FREE FOOD SAMPLES!

*Please call ahead to reserve your time slot for Stroke Analysis.

LOCATION
Community Learning Center
4212 NE Prescott St
Portland, OR 97218
(503) 281-8596

*Friday, May 4 at 7:00 p.m.
Giving Your Health A New Start

*Saturday, May 5 at 4:00 p.m.
Natural Aids To Health

*Sunday, May 6 at 2:30 p.m.
Take Control Of Your Health