

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King, Jr.




In times of economic challenge, livability starts with family wage jobs, reliable ways to get to work and housing that's affordable.

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CAREER & EDUCATION

Governor's Failing Grade on Education

Parent's Corner



BY RON HERNDON

Previously it was shared that a Children's Defense Fund report revealed that American 15 year olds rank 23rd among students in the industrialized world in science; 17th in reading; and 31st in math.

The 15 year olds who ranked number one in all categories were from China. Upon closer examination we learn Asian-American students ranked 2nd overall in the industrialized world; white-American students ranked 7th; Hispanic-American students ranked 43rd; and black-American students ranked 49th, just behind Serbia and ahead of Bulgaria. These numbers highlight the American "Achievement Gap" in the global economy.

Gov. Kitzhaber is proposing legislation to address Oregon's "Achievement Gap" and "School Readiness." But his political track record raises serious questions about his administration's ability to have any meaningful impact on either.

During the 80s, 90s and the first years of the 2000s, Portland organizations and coalitions composed of black, Hispanic, Native American, white and Asians aggressively pressed Portland Public Schools to take rapid steps to address all forms of academic and institutional inequities between white and minority students. A push for changes in the district was met with stiff opposition from the Portland School Board.

During the 20 year period John Kitzhaber was an influential member of the Oregon Legislature and governor, he offered neither tacit, nor overt, support for well-publicized parent and community efforts to address the "Achievement Gap" in Portland, including an appalling drop-out rate, and other indicators of PPS failure to serve Hispanic, black, Native American and low-

income white children.

The public is now asked to ignore the governor's previous track record of indifference and presume his administration has now formulated meaningful steps to reduce the "Achievement Gap."

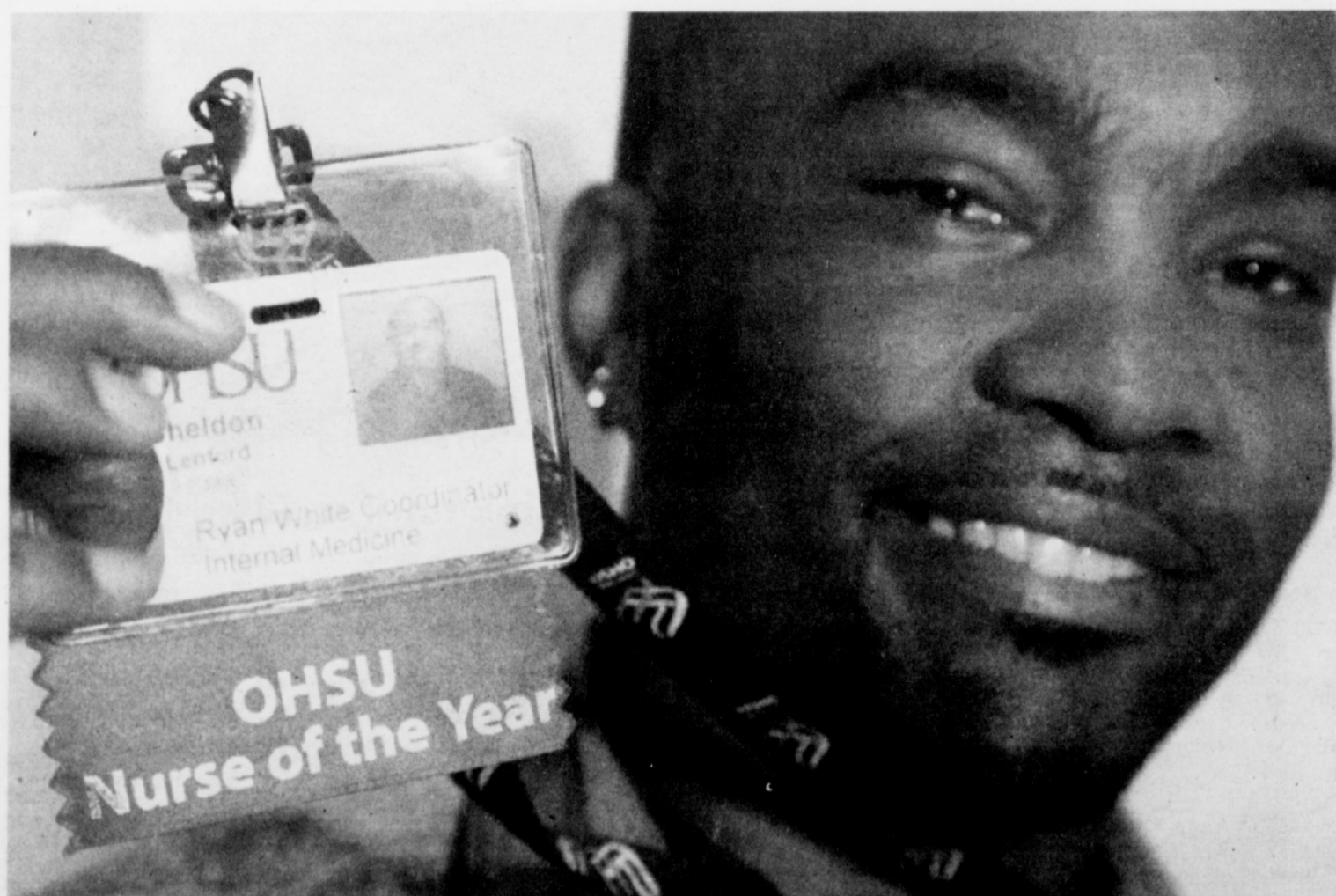
Head Start is one of the most effective school readiness programs in Oregon and America. To most observers it is wise to invest state and federal dollars to serve all Oregon Head Start eligible families. But over a 20-year period, that investment was not part of the governor's legislative agenda.

During the 90s, Associated Oregon Industries, an important business organization, made providing funds to serve all Oregon Head Start eligible families one of its major legislative objectives. Not the Governor's office.

The late 90s found the governor's office contacting the federal office of Head Start in Seattle and requesting that they lower the federal funding per Oregon Head Start family. If federal staff had agreed, he then planned to lower state funding for every Oregon Head Start family. The federal office rejected the governor's request.

To conclude, in an effort to balance the state budget during his last tenure, the governor cut state funding for Head Start. A Portland Head Start program was cut well over \$200,000. This is the governor's political track record regarding the "Achievement Gap" and "School Readiness."

Ron Herndon is a longtime advocate for educational opportunities for African-American children. He has served as director of Head Start in Portland since 1975.



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Men of Legacy Luncheon Thursday

Reaching and Empowering All People, Inc. (REAP) will host the 2012 Men of Legacy Luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 16 at the Rose Garden Arena.

The luncheon focuses on a candid male dialogue, which addresses parental support, health awareness, college inquiry, career exploration, and relationship problem-solving.

Business leaders, educators, elected officials and community activists and students will be engaged in solution-driven dialogue

on issues related to young males and what is needed for them to be successful.

"While school districts are experiencing budget cuts that threaten quality education, community organizations such as REAP are filling in the gap and giving students an educational experience that is innovative," said Mark Jackson, executive director of the non-profit group.

Registration is available online by going to the REAP Inc. website at reapusa.org.