

The
PO



Neighborhood Activist Fired

Northeast Coalition votes
out its executive director
See Local News, page 3



Marching for Peace

Annual tribute to
victims of violence
See Local News, page 3

The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses'



Volume XXXXI
Number 35



www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • September 12, 2012

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

years of
community service



PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Oregon Department of Education is making disciplinary data from schools more accessible to the public. One key goal is to ensure education reform efforts address the disproportionately high numbers of suspensions and expulsions of minority youth. Pictured is Grant High School in northeast Portland.

Advocates hope for better outcomes

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As school year begins for youth throughout the city, civil rights and education advocates are hopeful for an increase in equity for students of color.

One key goal is to ensure education reform efforts address the disproportionately high numbers of suspensions and expulsions of minority youth in Oregon school districts, which educators say is an influential factor in dropout rates.

"The evidence clearly demonstrates students of color are more often suspended or expelled than their white peers," said Dana Hepper, who worked for Stand for Children Oregon as advocacy director for the past five-years.

Unequal School Justice

National data, she said, shows similar trends. "We know we have been inspired into action by what we have seen in the data," said Hepper. "We are not treating all kids equitably and that needs to change."

According to Hepper, awareness of the issue is the first step to equity within education. "Our biggest concern is when we send kids out of school for suspension or expulsions, they miss valuable learning time, they are less engaged with school and they are more likely to drop out of high school," she said.

In June, the Oregon Department of Education launched a new website aimed to make disciplinary data from public educational institutions more accessible to the public and made possible through the dedication of five advocacy organizations unique within the state.

The organization Stand for Children Oregon, along with the Urban League of Portland, Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality, American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon and the Tribal Government to Government Cluster, applauded the state's efforts, in hopes the new database will reduce the disproportionate disciplines of students of color.

Working together with the Oregon Department of

continued ▼ on page 5