

Unfairly Expelled from Local Schools

continued ▲ from page 3

tion. Black students face these struggles as early as preschool, and expulsions and suspensions are metered out to darker skinned students at higher rates as children age.

Warren started the Portland Parent Union to hold her own community accountable for the education and stabilization of these families and their students, hoping that more schools would see the benefit in supporting black students and better setting them up for success.

District officials have been working with Warren and her group to offer more discipline models that allows and encourage students to re-engage in-school while attending, instead of outright banning them from class.

Warren called the fine "just a band-aid" on a much greater problem the district is having with discrimination and black students in particular. On Tuesday, Oct. 7, Warren's group held a rally outside the Portland School District's office to decry its discriminatory discipline processes.

A district lawyer specializing in special education released a statement saying that five black students who qualified for special education were suspended for over 10 days or expelled this past year. State sanctions don't come into play until at least 10 students face exclusionary discipline.

It's possible Portland could avoid another round of sanctions next year, and that more black students will receive other chances to stay in school and continue their education.

"The sanctions come at a time when Portland Public Schools is working on these disparities with us," Warren says. "They have agreed to sit down with the Portland Parent Union and other organizations to come up with a moratorium on out of school suspensions. We just started discussing this in June, and we have meetings on the second Wednesday of every month."

Warren gives some credit to School Superintendent Carol Smith for being committed to the goals of the Moratorium Committee.

"We're closer to our goals but there's still this disparity. They're working on it," she says.

On Saturday, Oct. 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Portland Parent Union is planning a week of action event. The theme, reiterated throughout their emails and event pages, is simple: Education is the Key to Success, Don't Lock Us Out.

"The initiative we're working on is solutions, not suspensions," says Warren. "I just want more for children. The first point of contact is the

educators; they can profile our black boys just like the police do. Some educators struggle to see our children as children, they see them as adults, and punish them more severely. This is what we see all the time. We try to advocate and stop the demonizing of our children. The things educators say really stick with us. A compliment can go a long way, but an unfair punishment or judgment even further."

Soulful Singer Farewell

continued ▲ from page 3

nection. I know what she wants, and she knows what I want. We know our expectations of each other, and it makes the music evolve into something glorious."

Hornbuckle was a critically acclaimed singer, and won three Muddy Awards for Best Female Vocalist from the Cascade Blues Foundation in the past 23 years. In 2010, she was recognized by the Oregon Music Hall of Fame, and she has since been considered a

critical artist to represent jazz and blues in the American northwest.

Fellow musician and long-time friend Peter Dammann, a blues guitarist, recalled one of Hornbuckle's most moving performances that brought him and several audience members to tears. It happened at the Waterfront Blues Festival when a deluge of rain stopped the music. The power went out and a piano was destroyed. An inch of water covered the stage. Hornbuckle took the stage in spite of this and

sang a perfect rendition of "Amazing Grace," a capella to the stunned audience. The clouds parted, Dammann says, and the crowd was moved.

Upcoming benefit concerts originally intended to fundraise for Hornbuckle's medical needs are to be carried through as tribute concerts to her lifelong achievement in blues, funk, gospel and soul.

The next of these tributes will be on Tuesday, Oct. 14 at the Crystal Ballroom, downtown. The concert, "Love for Linda," will celebrate Hornbuckle's passionate life and all the people she touched with her voice and soulful delivery.



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