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Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith meets a group of Jefferson High School seniors, including (seated, from left) Sekai Edwards, Mahogany Bradford and Savannah Carter, to help the young women make connections with leaders of color and explore career paths.

Investing in Youth

A power luncheon for young women of color

Dozens of high schoolers from Portland's black community are learning about leadership with a powerful line-up of women.

Multnomah Commissioner Loretta Smith hosted a "Lunch with the Leaders" event Friday for students at the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center/Rosemary Anderson High School and

Jefferson High School.

Held at the nearby North Portland Library, the gathering was an opportunity for young women to make connections and explore career paths with local leaders of color.

"I asked myself an important question," said Smith. "Do I do enough for young women of color? And the answer was no. So, I decided I need to get out into the community and do more. I wanted to bring some of the people I know and let them be your people for the day."

Students attended the networking lunch with women from a variety of backgrounds including

public service, education, health, law, media and communications, corporate business, and government.

Guests included Kimberly Howard of the corporate social responsibility team at Portland General Electric; Kendall Clawson, director of executive appointments with Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber's office; Former State Sen. Margaret Carter; Serena Stoudamire, early transitions, equity and community director with the Oregon Education Investment Board; Marissa Madrigal, Multnomah County chief operating officer; Antoinette Edwards, director of the city of Portland's Office of Youth Violence Prevention; Grace Neal, field representative with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden's office; Jessica Morkert-Shibley, communications officer for Multnomah County; Nicole Rose, political analyst for Commis-

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