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**The Portland Observer**  
 Established 1970 USPS 959 680  
 4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,  
 Portland, OR 97211

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In April 2021, the Retiree Committee of the Oregon Alliance of Black School Educators (ORABSE) made the request for the PPS Board of Education to change the name of the Blanchard Education Service Center (BESC) to Dr. Matthew Prophet Jr. Service Center in commemoration of the legacy of service to Oregon by Dr. Matthew Prophet Jr. He was first Black, and longest serving, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, the largest school district in Oregon.

The Retiree group, led by Dr. Velma Johnson, reached out to numerous individuals who worked with Dr. Prophet to help tell the story of his contributions. A clear theme was evident throughout: Dr. Prophet believed that "All children can learn." Better yet, he placed the right people, capital, and financial resources in the right places to ensure that everything needed was available. No excuses. Just success! Educator morale improved. Families had greater trust in their schools, and children learned!

Director Michelle Depass put ORABSE on the agenda to pres-



Dr. Matthew Prophet Jr., first Black Superintendent of PPS from 1982 to 1992.

ent September 20, 2022. Kevin Bacon, the ORABSE President, Lurlene Shamsud-Din, Program Manager, and others including former Board of Education members, gave testimony as to why BESC should be renamed in honor of Dr. Prophet. Dr. Harriet Adair presented the formal request. Ken Berry, of World Arts Foundation Inc, produced a short video of community leaders detailing Dr. Prophet's impact on their personal and professional lives which was shown at the end

of the presentation. The presentation, a "village vision" led the PPS Board of Education to an unexpected move. Without reservation, the Board voted immediately and unanimously to change the name to the Dr. Matthew Prophet Jr. Service Center.

The new signs of the service center will be unveiled Saturday, March 11, 2023 at noon, located at 501 N Dixon St, Portland, OR 97227, USA. ORABSE invites all to join in to celebrate the unveiling.

## Walmart Will Close Portland Stores Nearly 600 workers to be laid off

Walmart is closing ten of its stores across the country this month. It is official the last two stores operating within the Portland city limits will be included. The locations, at 1123 North Hayden Meadows Drive and at 4200 Southeast 82nd Avenue at the Eastport Plaza, will both close on March 24. Walmart did announce they will help the affected employees transfer to other locations in the area.

Walmart said they are closing the stores because they were not meeting financial expectations. They also acknowledged that a "consider many factors, including current and projected financial performance, location, population, customer needs, and the proximity of other nearby stores when making these difficult decisions."

From January 2022- January 2023 Portland Police showed over 27,100 reports of theft in the city. That averages over 2,000 incidences a month. "Theft is



The Walmart logo is displayed on a store in Springfield, Ill., May 16, 2011. (AP Photo/Seth Perlman, File)

an issue. It's higher than what it has historically been," Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said in December on CNBC. He added that "prices will be higher and/or stores will close" if authorities don't crack down on prosecuting shoplifting crimes.

Portland police have been cracking down on retail shoplifters in recent months, with one sting in December seeing 64 arrests, another in February leading to 40 arrests. "For a long time we kind of let everybody get away with it, we just didn't have the resources to actually touch on it," Jordan Zaitz,

a member of Portland Police's Neighborhood Response Team, told KPTV. "Now it's good to actually be able to arrest people and hold them accountable and hopefully get them the help they need."

In one of Walmart's recent earnings call, Walmart CFO, John David Rainey, said the company lowered its outlook for the year ahead due to consumers having fewer funds on hand and interest rate raises from the Federal Reserve.

Walmart still operates several stores outside the city itself, in what is considered the metro area that includes the suburbs.