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SAVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Sammy and Olivia, 3rd graders at Gatewood, joined teachers, parents and community members Thursday, March 1 for a March for Public Education from Westlake Park to the Gates Foundation headquarters. The marchers opposed proposed legislation for publicly funded, privately owned and run charter schools. The group marched to the headquarters of the Gates Foundation to protest their support for charter schools.

School to Prison Pipeline

Suspensions and Expulsions Part 2: Solutions and Failures

By Lisa Loving Of The Skanner News

An anonymous caller phoned The Skanner News office to say 5-year-old Camron Tarver is a real brat, and that fact hadn't been adequately reported in our Feb. 23 story, 'Suspensions, Expulsions of Black Students: The School to Prison Pipeline?'

While he admitted he doesn't know the family and has never been to the school but has "friends who do," the man angrily insisted that Camron's nine suspensions since the start of kindergarten are not about race.

In early February Camron's mom, Tamberlee Tarver, testified about her little boy's well-documented disabilities and her consistent inability to access special education services from his school before Gov. John Kitzhaber's Oregon Education Investment Board in Salem; subsequently the OEIB set up a public forum March 6 at the Center for Self Enhancement.

Sheila Warren of the Portland Parents Union is worried that the families most impacted by the racial disparities around discipline are not being heard - in part for the same reasons the anonymous caller tried to defame the courageous kindergartner and his mom last month.

"Partnerships and teamwork are the key," Warren says. "We must be intentional as well as persistent and consistent in relationship building through restorative listening and dialogue."

"Please get as many families out as possible Tuesday night," she says. "We need to hear from the ones that are usually overlooked."

The simple fact is that families caught up in the school disciplinary process are often not listened to, are often disrespected and shamed; they've "done something wrong."

It's a process that continues as the children grow older and are disproportionately

Lawmaker Retires from Congress

Rep. Norm Dicks says he'll step down after a whopping 18 terms

By Chris Grygiel and Andrew Taylor The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — As a young man, he worked for the late Warren Magnuson, a towering figure in the U.S. Senate known for his ability to strike deals and work with his fellow Democrats as well as Republicans. Almost four decades later, Rep. Norm Dicks rose to nearly equal stature in the House, famous as a fierce advocate for his state and labor interests but

still able to count opponents as friends.

Dicks shocked the political establishment Friday, announcing he'll retire at the end of the year after 18 terms in Congress.

"I have been thinking about this for years. At some point you have to retire. I just decided this was the right time," Dicks told The Associated Press.

In a statement, President Barack Obama thanked Dicks for his service. "Norm has spent his career working to protect our national security, championing

the men and women of our Armed Forces and fighting for the many natural resources of Washington State and the Pacific Northwest."

The top Democrat on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, the 71-year-old former college football player has a reputation as a defender of the Pentagon and the Boeing Co. and its unionized workforce. The aerospace company employs thousands of people in his district.

"It comes as a surprise. He's

been a mainstay of the Washington delegation for so long now, it's hard to imagine the delegation without him," said Sandeep Kaushik, a Seattle Democratic political consultant who has worked on congressional races in Washington state.

Over the years, Dicks has been skilled at "earmarking" pet projects like roads and community development grants to his northwest portion of the state. But Republicans controlling the House have banned the practice,

See NORM on page 3

See SUSPENSIONS on page 3

INDEX	
News	2,3,8
Calendar	2
Opinion	4,5
Bids/Classifieds.....	6-7

Scrutiny of Bank Overdraft Practices

'Candid discussion' on why customers pay billions in unfair fees

By Charlene Crowell NNPA Columnist

When the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau visited New York City on Feb. 22, a roundtable discussion with bankers and consumer advocates began a day of focused discussion of bank products that cost customers billions per year in unfair fees. In his opening

remarks, CFPB Director Richard Cordray called for a "candid discussion" and noted how less than 10 percent of checking account customers bear the brunt of more than 80 percent of all overdraft fees charged by banks.

Director Cordray announced new a new initiative wherein the agency will examine the practice of reordering customer transactions to boost overdraft fees. CFPB will also

look at disclosures and marketing, particularly with an eye toward impact on the low-income and young consumers.

Roundtable participant Rebecca Borne, senior policy counsel with the Center for Responsible Lending, advised that overdraft fees are the number one reason bank customers lose their checking accounts.

See BANKS on page 3