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State School Czar

Rudy Crew tapped by Governor for newly-minted position

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Rudy Crew is officially Oregon's CEO of schools – that's Chief Education Officer, a unique position expected to "lead the transformation of" all public schools from early childhood programs through college.

He toured the city yesterday, meeting students at Jefferson Middle College and Portland Community College, before attending the 2012 Oregon League of Minority Voters Annual Liberty and Hope Award Dinner – where he was buttonholed by many community leaders curious about his new job.

Crew, who has led school districts across the country, is considered a controversial choice to work under Gov. John Kitzhaber's – also controversial – new Oregon Education Investment Board, coordinating a redesign of public education throughout the state.

Meanwhile, protesters with Oregon Save Our Schools were frustrated Thursday morning in their attempt to hold a picket line at Parkrose High School, where the OEIB held its morning vote to approve Crew.

Susan Barrett and Steve Buel of Oregon SOS said the OEIB changed its meeting site at the last minute from Portland State University to Parkrose, where picketers were outnumbered by Portland Police officers in a steady drizzling rain.

"We really think it's because of the rally, and it's ridiculous – we saw nine police cars out here today," Barrett said. "We're just parents and community members who want to see our schools funded, and to waste taxpayer dollars to put the police force out here is just unbelievable."

Barrett and Oregon SOS are critical of the corporate-style approach they say is leading the OEIB to play up educational initiatives rather than stable school funding statewide.

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AMERICAN WINTER



PHOTO COURTESY 'AMERICAN WINTER'

How are Portland families getting by in the down economy? Emmy award-winning filmmakers Joe and Harry Gantz have completed shooting for their newest documentary in Portland. Called "American Winter," it profiles struggling families including that of Dierdre, above. Also appearing are Bishop C.T. Wells of the Emmanuel Temple Church and City Commissioner Nick Fish. Help the Gantz brothers finish the film by through www.IndieGoGo.com, where their self-imposed deadline for "crowdfunding" is June 30.

Education: the Good, the Bad

Q&A: Kali Thorne Ladd on Portland's civic responsibility to schools

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Kali Thorne Ladd is Mayor Sam Adams' Education Strategy Director. She recently had a baby, her second, but has returned to work through Adams' final months as mayor. Thorne, who's originally from New England, is a graduate of Boston College and got her master's degree in education policy from Harvard.

She came to work for Mayor

Adams after working as a policy analyst for Susan Castillo at the Oregon Department of Education. She's also been a SUN Site Manager at King Elementary School, and a consultant for the Portland Schools Foundation (now called All Hands Raised) and for the County Commission on Children and Families. Thorne also spent two years in South Africa developing educational curriculum, and managing community based projects.

The Skanner News: What do you do for education in Portland?

Ladd: I work as the mayor's education strategies director, leading a team of three plus three Vista volunteers. So we are six people and we are working on strategies to increase graduation rates and access to post-secondary education, trades, career schools and more.

TSN: The state and the school district are responsible for education. Why is the City getting involved?

Ladd: The city needs to be involved because education outcomes affect our prosperity and livability. It's in the city's interest to have a strong education system, where all the young people have an equal education. If we want to be this great city, to be an international city, we have to address inequity because the quality of education matters for people who move and stay here.

TSN: What are you doing to change that?

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Michelle Fine on 'Policing and Testing'

Lewis & Clark keynote speaker lays out ways students used for profit

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Michelle Fine wants to worry us. She wants to worry us about high stakes testing, and about closing schools that serve communities of color. She wants to worry us about the increasing presence of police on school campuses, about school pushout, 'stop and frisk' and

how policy decisions are creating problems for our youth.

"I want to worry you about the industries of policing and testing, that are making a fortune right now and are not experiencing budget cuts," Fine said.

The Distinguished Professor of Psychology at City University of New York was in Portland to deliver the commencement address at Lewis & Clark Graduate School

of Education and Counseling. Nationally known for writings on race, sex and justice in education, Fine made time in her schedule to speak to teachers, counselors and youth advocates at Self Enhancement Inc. on Saturday, June 2.

"We have watched, over 30 years, money flowing from education to prisons," she

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