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## Teachers Discuss Equity

Rudy Crew tells teachers they must confront inequality

By Helen Silvis Of The Skanner News

When Oregon Schools Superintendent Rudy Crew was in school, his father asked his teacher what he needed to do to get to college. The teacher told his father that simply wouldn't be able to keep up. He wasn't smart enough, was the message.

If Crew's father had simply accepted the teacher's biased view, that could have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, breaking the unwritten rule for a Black parent in a mostly white school, he said, "Ma'am, Your job is not to tell people who can go to school."

The rest is history. Crew went on to graduate from Babson College and later earned his doctorate in education administration from the University of Massachusetts.

Crew shared that story with educators at the Oregon Leadership Network's Fall Leadership Institute: Putting Equity at the Center of Policy and Practice. The institute brought together more than 300 educators from across the state, to plan how to raise achievement for Oregon students and eliminate disparities based on race, class and first language.

Crew's talk came at the start of a day filled with sessions on how to help children achieve at every level. Crew's talk looked the state of education in Oregon, currently. He discussed the graduation rate —not best in the country but not worst—and the achievement gap that leaves Oregon's poor and minority students behind, when it comes to college and career prospects. He also talked about the need to support pre-kindergarten initiatives to help children succeed.

Yet he also said Oregon has the will and the creative talent to raise the bar and to keep on raising it. And he urged educators to be courageous and committed to change. "This is a systemic problem," he said.

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# HAPPY HOLIDAYS



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

Happy Holidays to all our readers from everyone at The Skanner News. We remind you to have a safe holiday season, and to be careful on the roads and in the streets. Remember, never drink and drive, and if you see somebody who has been drinking head toward a car, offer to call a cab.

## Sen. Merkley Plans 2013 Agenda

Appointment to powerful Appropriations Committee is a milestone

By Lisa Loving Of The Skanner News

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley has had a good year. Repeatedly singled out by news media for courageous stands on an array of issues including home foreclosure, ending the war in Afghanistan and now filibuster reform, Merkley last week was named to the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee—the first Oregonian to serve on the panel (in either chamber) since Mark Hatfield in the mid-

1990s.

Merkley also recently ironed out a serious snafu with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development over cuts to Oregon housing authorities' federal grants for five regions across the state.

The Skanner News spoke with Merkley last week about his controversial new proposed legislation that would prevent federal agents from spying on Americans without a warrant — as well as his top priorities for 2013.

The Skanner News: Senator you've done so much this year that it's hard to drill down into any single thing. But we were hoping to talk with you today about the Protect America's Privacy Act. That's such a huge issue. Talk about how you came to it and why you're sponsoring this bill.

Sen. Jeff Merkley: This is related to the FISA legislation that we anticipate will come on the floor shortly. Essentially there is a lot of concern about interpretations of stature and

those interpretations are being kept secret by the Administration — as in previous administrations. So Americans really don't know how essentially a secret court has created secret law regarding the government's ability to spy on them. And I find that unacceptable. So my amendment would essentially instruct the administration to end this practice of secret law, let Americans know what the court rulings are on interpretations of statute. We can read the

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## Obama: Gun Consensus By January

By Josh Levs and Holly Yan CNN

The nation will have a set of recommendations to address widespread gun violence within weeks, President Obama announced Wednesday.

Vice President Joe Obama will lead an inter-agency group to come up with "concrete proposals no later than January — proposals that I then intend to push without delay," the president said.

Speaking five days after a gunman killed 27 people, including 20 children, at a Connecticut elementary school, Obama said that "if there is even one thing that we can do" to prevent such tragedies, "we have a deep obligation, all of us, to try."

"This is not some Washington commission. This is not something where folks are going to be studying the issue for six months and publishing a report that gets read and then pushed aside. This is a team that has a very specific task to pull together

real reforms right now."

No single law or set of laws can prevent gun violence, the president said.

But the complexity of the issue "can no longer be an excuse for doing nothing," he said.

The "complex" issue demands action on gun laws and work in making "access to mental health care at least as easy as access to a gun," he said.

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