

Head Start

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the door to the largest full-day Head Start program in the metro area.

But the fact that the respected institution was ranked next to last among all the applicants despite a history of educational innovations and a spotless financial record is raising the alarm about who is driving the changes in early childhood education in the state.

"This crew at the state came in with the imperious notion that they knew what was best for Head Start. Much like the Obama administration," Herndon says. "Both have implemented policies that have harmed Head Start."

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"Neither had the good sense to talk with the Head Start community before developing policies. Or to ask the community three simple questions, 'What is working, what needs to be fixed and will you help us?'"

Rupley says the state grant is for expanding programs that serve communities where kids are not "kindergarten ready," and that show innovation in their approach as well as new ideas in engaging the outside community.

"The grants were then competitively scored because there are always more requests for slots and students than there are monies to be able to give for innovation," Rupley said. "So they were very, very competitive applications."

Rupley pointed to two standout programs that did receive the funding – Portland Public Schools' Head Start destined for the district's new Early Learning Center at the newly rebuilt Clarendon Elementary School in North Portland; and the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Head Start focusing on Klamath tribal children in the Chiloquin School District.

"I think that some of what we were looking at is what kind of things were they doing to reach out to their community in a different way than they have in the past," Rupley said.

"Sometimes applications don't reflect the good works that are going on in organizations, and that's probably the part that I think is the very hardest thing to say to somebody — that you may be telling me all these things are going on in your organization but that didn't show up on the paper that the reviewers read. "And that's the kindest way I know how to say it, and that's the hardest part of competition."

Herndon points to a laundry list of innovations at Albina's 22 locations, including family advocates to help families navigate county social service systems; free preventive dental care for kids and pregnant moms; an in-house Health Team that incorporates high school and college students working towards degrees in related fields; a fresh food partnership with a local catering vendor for healthier school meals; an expanded multi-lingual Pen Pal program linking kids in Oregon, California, Texas and Mexico.

Teens

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The state plans public service announcements, parent guides and "new rules for packaging and labeling."

The state Liquor Control Board has already banned packaging with cartoons or depictions of children, and mandates that product labels list amounts of active THC, and ingredient lists.

"The initiative legalized marijuana only for adults 21 and over and it is incumbent on everyone — retailers, parents, health professionals and public officials — to do everything possible to keep pot away from kids," Inslee said. "If we fail in that, Washington's regulated, retail market for marijuana may fail, too."

"The federal government sent a strong message to Washington and Colorado that we must enforce against underage access to marijuana," says Attorney General Bob Ferguson.

A \$400,000 education campaign by the state Department of Health targets parents' responsibility to educate kids about the

health effects of pot, view it at www.learn-aboutmarijuanawa.org/.

"Teens who use marijuana regularly are at higher risk for addiction and are more likely to get lower grades in school," says State Health Officer Kathy Lofy, M.D.

Meanwhile Inslee on Tuesday announced a "comprehensive review of the criminal

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justice system" to find ways to slow the prison system's growth and improve public safety.

Inslee signed an executive order creating a bipartisan Justice Reinvestment Task Force to study the system.

"We're forecasted to need another 1,000 prison beds by 2018, and I think this is the right time to take a step back, take a deep look at our current system and talk about opportunities to effectively leverage our public safety dollars," Inslee said in rolling out the effort.

"I'm hopeful the work of this task force

will reveal the drivers of prison growth so we can develop strategies to address them while continuing to improve public safety consistent with our Results Washington goal measure of reducing recidivism."

"By launching this project and establish-

ing an inter-branch task force, Washington becomes the 23rd state to take important steps through the JRI toward creating new justice reform policies grounded in research and state-specific data that will improve community safety," said Bureau of Justice Assistance Director Denise E. O'Donnell.

Inslee's office says the state's prisons are currently 2 percent over capacity, and are expecting a 7 percent jump in the next decade.

Number crunchers estimate that rate of growth will cost somewhere between \$387 million and \$481 million in construction and operating expenses.

Inslee's 21-member task force includes lawmakers and representatives from across the law enforcement community as well as a former offender and one community member.

It will be led by Sen. Jim Hargrove, D-Hoquiam and the governor's general counsel, Nick Brown.

High Point Juneteenth



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Sisters Presea' 6, Pre'a 3 and Presaia, 6, enjoy some food at what organizers hope to be the first annual Juneteenth Celebration, June 22 in the High Point Neighborhood. The event also included music by Leif Totusek and Thione Diop, food, and a presentation by event organizer and fitness and wellness expert Liz Davis.

Herndon is proudest of Albina Head Start's new Mandarin Chinese immersion program, taught by an instructor from China, which inspired Portland Public Schools to install a continuation program at King Elementary School starting this fall.

"This is the first time the Black community has ever started a language program," he says. "And Portland Public

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Schools thought highly of it enough that they went with it and are starting the same thing at King — and that Mandarin immersion program goes all the way through high school."

Albina was awarded a Spirit of Portland Award in 2011 for Outstanding Organization. Just last week the group learned that its application to the federal New Market Tax

Credit financing program was successful, allowing them to eliminate all their outstanding debts and pay off the mortgages on three of their program buildings.

"We serve the largest number and percentage of black children in the state," Herndon says. "We probably have the most diverse staff. And that's the thing that's disturbing to me, these people down in Salem talking about 'the equity lens' and 'equity.'"

"From the very inception of education reform in the state, I think you have people who probably have good intentions but have never successfully run programs that impact the children that they say they want to help—the folks that are furthest behind in the achievement gap."

Herndon on Tuesday night sent an official letter to the Early Learning Council to appeal the grant award, but Rupley on Monday said there is no appeal process.

"I feel badly for Albina because I know they're doing good work and I will continue to reach out, because I have worked with all of the Head Start providers across the state," Rupley said.

"And I think that Ron will tell you that I've listened to him for two years. I've learned an incredible amount from him, and so we will continue to work in the direction that I know that he feels is important too."

Find out more about Albina Head Start www.albina-parents.org.