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Pacific Northwest

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Every Junior Walks

Boycott follows growing trend against high stakes tests

By Donovan M. Smith
Of The Skanner News

Every one of the juniors at Nathan High School in Seattle followed a growing trend in schools across America last month by deciding not to take the Smarter Balance Assessment Curriculum—an exam designed around the controversial new Common Core standards.

The 280 students will be earning a “0” for their boycott of the new test, but according to a Seattle Public Schools spokesperson, it’s an exam many juniors don’t need in order to graduate.

However, their protest of Common Core will leave schools with lower passing rates and could lead to loss of funding, Seattle Public Schools spokesperson Stacy Howard tells *The Skanner News*.

“Without these assessments, teachers and families would not have a common measure of how students are progressing toward academic goals,” says Howard. “We need the results to determine which resources and supports are needed to improve achievement and close the opportunity gap.”

So far, Oregon is seeing a more than 5 percent opt-out rate in Portland Public Schools alone during its first year of implementation.

Contrary to trends from its neighbors to the north, it’s Portland public’s youngest students that are pulling out in droves: Creative Science K-8 and Metropolitan Learning Center already have more than 30 percent of their 200-plus kids out, and Abernathy Elementary School tops the list with over half of its 253 kids shaking their heads “no” to the Common Core.

Charles McGee, president of Portland’s Black Parent Initiative, says his staff has gotten their share of questions from concerned parents wondering how these Common Core standards will affect their children.

Next year, he says, the group will begin

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NATIONAL ACTION DAY



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Protestors participating in the Justice for Black Lives: National Action Day on May 2 are stopped briefly by the Seattle police as they march down Jackson Street towards Rainier Avenue. Similar events were held all over the nation.

Landmark Study on Alzheimer’s

Oregon Health and Sciences University needs research volunteers

By Arashi Young
Of The Skanner News

Facing Alzheimer’s disease can be a terrifying experience. The chronic neurodegenerative brain disease starts slowly and begins to eat away at a person’s memory, bodily functions, and sense of self — ultimately advancing to death.

Alzheimer’s is the fifth leading cause of death for people aged 65 and older in the United States. Currently, there is no

cure for the disease; there are only treatments to manage the symptoms.

Oregon Health and Science University, the National Institutes of Health and Eli Lilly and Company hope to change the management of Alzheimer’s disease through the multi-site, Anti-Amyloid Treatment in Asymptomatic Alzheimer’s Study (A4 Study).

OHSU is currently looking to screen and enroll participants from diverse ethnicities including African American, Latino

and Asian backgrounds. There is a small reimbursement for participants for their time and travel expenses.

Reaching out to diverse participants is a necessary part of the A4 Study; every fifth person enrolled in the study needs to be a minority or the study can’t move forward.

African Americans are more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease compared to white people. According to the Alzheimer’s Association, African Americans are more

likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of Alzheimer’s when there are fewer treatment options.

Also, the disparate health outcomes of heart disease, stroke and diabetes, which are higher in the Black population, are risk factors for developing Alzheimer’s disease.

As demographics shift, the Alzheimer’s risk for the aging population becomes even more severe with a projected five-fold

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Lynch Meets with Baltimore Leaders

Newly-appointed U.S. Attorney General also reaches out to police

By Freddie Allen, NNPA Senior Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Keeping her promise to ensure “both strength and fairness, for the protection of both the needs of victims and the rights of all” in the criminal justice system, U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch traveled to Baltimore Tuesday to meet with city officials, law

enforcement and community stakeholders to encourage closer ties between police and the residents that they are sworn to protect.

The same day Lynch was sworn-in and just a few hours after Freddie Gray’s funeral, dozens of people, most described as teenagers and students, looted shoe stores and burned local businesses and police vehicles. On April 12, Gray, a 25 year-old Black man, was chased and arrested by

police officers. While in police custody, Gray suffered a severed spinal cord and a crushed voice box and died a week later. Gray’s death, and viral cell phone footage of his encounter with police, sparked nationwide protests.

Last week, the Justice Department dispatched Vanita Gupta, the head of the Civil

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