

## **PORTLAND 80%ERS FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

April 15, 2013

The Honorable Sara A. Gelser  
Chair, House of Representatives Education Committee  
900 Court St. NE, H-285 Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Gelser,

The *Portland 80%ers for Educational Excellence* support HB 3232 and HB 3233 as amended in order to improve student achievement in Oregon. The *PDX 80%ers\** are mostly from the 80% of Portland voters who do not have school-age children, but advocate and support practices in the Portland Public Schools (PPS) that will raise student achievement.<sup>1</sup>

We are proud that the active PPS Student Achievement Compact Committee has recommended to the PPS Board two bold goals:

1. 100% of this year's kindergarteners (the class of 2025) "read to learn" by their third grade, the 2015-16 school year; and
2. 100% of this year's 8<sup>th</sup> graders complete high school or equivalent in 5 years.

To accomplish these inspirational goals PPS will need to launch new initiatives for early learning. Our Portland 80%er team is collaborating with the district on one such initiative, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading campaign which is aligned with the first proposed compact goal. Additionally, the district and community groups need to measure and monitor student performance from preschool to beyond graduation, but especially monitor transitions to high school and provide extra supports for struggling students in early high school years. The district also needs to increase its investment in STEM to increase graduation rates and produce more graduates capable of working in our new economy. These initiatives require new learning strategies and additional strategic funding, which HB3232 would provide.

Although HB3232 addresses students and is a huge step forward, it is not enough. For PPS to achieve their bold goals, educators will need supports and professional development to acquire new learning strategies and to grow in their craft. We embrace the thrust of HB 3233, creating a network for quality teaching by supporting innovative teacher and principal training, creating new teacher development methods, all to help teachers improve student achievement.

PPS may apply and qualify for the strategic funding that both these bills provide. In discussions with PPS staff, we have seen plans for more focused substantial research-based initiatives to increase student achievement. We believe Portland Public Schools will better prepare our students for college and/or career if they are given the opportunity to make proposals with outcome commitments that would qualify them for additional funding as these proposed laws would allow.

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<sup>1</sup> Our mission, desired outcomes and principles are attached for your information.

In short, we support these bills and urge their adoption.

Respectfully,

Eliza Erhardt-Eisen, John Hirsch, Margi Brown, Co-Leaders

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Copies to: PPS Board, Superintendent Carole Smith, Dr. Rudy Crews, The Oregonian

## Portland 80%er for Educational Excellence

### Strategic Plan

#### Our Mission:

To significantly and immediately increase student achievement so that every PPS student graduates within five years beginning in 2018, and is prepared for either college or technical certification.

#### Our Success Outcomes:

1. The successful implementation of a bold **student achievement compact** -- by garnering community support that measures, monitors and motivates.
2. Enhancing instructional excellence by ensuring that **teachers have the training and experience required for their assignments** – through backing appropriate language changes in the upcoming teacher contract negotiations and/or changing PPS management practices.
3. Facilitating the implementation of a successful **PPS 3rd grade volunteer supplemental reading initiative** that supports the Achievement Compact objectives (that 100% of students can read to learn by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade).
4. Build **relationships of trust** that allow us to be effective advocates for the changes necessary to accomplish our mission.

### Our Principles

1. Every child can learn and succeed.
  - a. In order for children to reach their full potential, PPS, in collaboration with responsible entities in the community, must deal holistically in addressing all of the factors/resources that impact their learning: parents, teachers, administrators, nutrition, physical and mental health and safety, housing and funding.
2. Because of the pace of global change and the need for our citizens to be competitive in world-wide economy our students must:
  - a. Learn how to analyze and solve problems both independently and collaboratively with others.
  - b. Be technologically savvy.
  - c. Develop the discipline for personal accountability and responsibility.

3. Our students deserve great teachers in every classroom.
  - a. The biggest factor attaining high student achievement is great teachers.
  - b. Great teachers are creative and conduct highly interactive classes with differentiated instruction that is performance-oriented. Excellent teachers frequently assess each student's progress so every student can master skills needed to be successful.
  - c. Successful teacher support includes personalized professional development based on standards, observation and measurement, feedback and developmental actions
  - d. In order to have great teachers:
    - (i.) All assignments are made on the basis of the candidate having the training and experience necessary for the assignment.
    - (ii.) Annually, by April, PPS conducts one round of hiring and placement where both external and internal candidates are selected.