



Oregon Assembly For Black Affairs

P. O. Box 12485
Salem, Oregon 97309
<http://www.oaba.us/>

February 12, 2010

Mr. Xavier Botana
Chief Academic Officer
Portland Public Schools
501 N. Dixon Street
Portland, OR 97227

Dear Mr. Botana:

My name is , and I am President of the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs (OABA). The Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs (OABA) is a statewide organization that was founded April 9, 1977. Its purpose is to improve the political, **educational**, social, legal, and economic status of Blacks in Oregon. As a nonpartisan organization, OABA places a major emphasis on building a better Oregon for the Black community. We know that “What Benefits Black Oregonians Benefits ALL Oregonians.” The reverse is not true. One of OABA objectives is to work for equal education opportunities for Black students at all levels, and to eliminate all unequal education opportunities and inferior educational programs.

I am aware that you are new to the PPS District as its Chief Academic Officer, and my initial purpose for requesting a meeting with you was introductory. Since it appears that you do not want to meet with me alone, I must raise several questions, at this time, concerning the intentions of the PPS District Redesign for its high schools.

OABA has been studying Portland zoning ordinances, procedures and practices, and how these laws and practices affect Portland Public Schools. From our study of them and the zoning violation complaints filed against PPS with the City of Portland, OABA concludes that PPS District is trying to use the Portland zoning laws and practices to close schools and that this will result in re-segregating Portland Public Schools. However, on Tuesday, February 9, 2010, at the African American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) meeting, Portland Mayor Sam Adams stated that the information he received from PPS concerning the high school redesign ensures that Jefferson HS and Marshall HS would receive the academic programs and increased student population to make them excellent neighborhood schools. Is this true?

As OABA studies the PPS High School Redesign, it becomes clear that this redesign will lead to school closures that will not guarantee that all students will have access to a comprehensive high school experience and that will not guarantee all students a neighborhood school. The exceptions that PPS seems to be building in the High School Redesign are: (1) language

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immersion programs, (2) district transfer for diversity, and (3) NCLB impact. Such exceptions appear to be designed to allow transfers within the district for certain students. Is this correct?

From the models for PPS High School Redesign, it appears that PPS will have only one magnet school. How can PPS say that it wants to balance enrollments if it is going to only ONE magnet school?

In an email dated January 25, 2010, OABA asked Superintendent Carole Smith and the PPS District Board the following question: "Has the school district received an offer from Warner Pacific College to purchase Franklin High School?" No replay has been received. Is this true?

Please understand that the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs (OABA) wants to work with the PPS District to ensure that all unequal education opportunities and inferior educational programs are eliminated and to ensure that equal education opportunities for Black students, as well as all students, are available at all levels of the PPS District.

Sincerely,

Calvin D. L. Henry

OABA President

CC: The Honorable Sam Adam, Mayor of Portland
Portland City Council
PPS District Board
PPS Superintendent Carole Smith
Ms. Carolyn Leonard, PPS Compliance Officer
Ms. Lynn Schore, OABA Researcher
OABA Board of Directors
Mr. Roy Jay, AACC President/CEO
Dr. T. Allen Bethel, AMA President
Dr. H. L. Hodge, Portland NAACP President
Mr. Marcus Mundy, Portland Urban League President