

PORTLAND PARENT UNION TRUST CIRCLE NOTES



information to be shared to those who attended the trust circle. If you wish to share with others that this will benefit, let us know who you are sharing it with by CCing us. If they wish to attend the next circle or volunteer please let them know to contact us....

SUBJECT "A MORATORIUM ON SCHOOL PUSHOUT" HELD SECOND WEDNESDAY APRIL 9, 2014.

JOIN US SECOND WEDNESDAY EVERY MONTH FOR CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP BUILDING..LETS PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER TO COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS NOT SUSPENSIONS.

WE DID “HAPPY” DANCE TO ENTER THE CIRCLE/IT REALLY DID MAKE US “HAPPY”



**WE HAD A FUN TIME. IT GOT PEOPLE ENERGIZED and EVENED THE PLAYING FIELD.
WATCH OUR AMAZING CHILDREN ABOVE DO THE “HAPPY” DANCE**

Snapshot: who was in the room

4 School Board Members including board co-chair (PPS)

2 PPS School Principals

1 PAT Uniserve Rep.

1 PPS Area Director

6 PPS/Parkrose School Teachers

1 Equity TOSA/Courageous Conversations (PPS)

5 PPS Department Heads/managers (2 Special ED, 1 Teaching and Learning, 1 Director of Multiple Pathways to Graduation, 1 Student Services)

1 Rep for Chief of Equity/Diversity Office (PPS)

Snapshot Continued

Community Orgs. Represented: Northwest Downs Syndrome Assoc., All Hands Raised, Youths Rights and Justice, Story Midwife - participatory media, The DreamYard Project and The Raw File, Portland Teachers Association, Oregon Education Association, Portland Human Rights Commission, Race Talks, Portland State University, Lewis and Clark, State Discipline Committee, PSU School of Social Work, People Celebrating People, SEPTAP, Education Northwest, The Words for Things and a few others we might have missed.

6 Supporting Parents and Grandparents

10 Impacted Parents and Grandparents (Telling Their Stories)

2 PPS Parent Liaisons

2 Miscellaneous (from the community)?

INNER (trust) CIRCLE SPOKE (Read by Stephanie Hunter Impacted Parent)

WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE GOT STARTED

The Portland Parent Union was founded in April of 2009 by Sheila Warren a, mother, grandmother, activist and advocate in the Portland Or. Public School Community. She saw the interests of the teachers, school administrators, and district leadership well represented and controlling decision making. The parents and students themselves suffering from the lack of a strong collective voice and support.

Tired of seeing parents - including herself and her family - pushed out, and after struggling with conflicts that should have been easily resolved, Sheila realized there was no organizational framework designed explicitly to advocate for parents and families and represent them when dealing with the school district. Other stakeholders have institutionally powerful support systems: teachers and staff have unions, principals have district administrators, district administrators have the superintendent, and the superintendent has the school board and full-time legal counsel. Against this institutional juggernaut, a family stands alone!

After many failed attempts to get a fair process and closure for her and her family, she was determined that no other family should go thru what she and her family had gone thru.

The Portland Parent Union was born of the desire to give parents representation and a collective voice equal with what teachers have. We will be a centralized group of parents and families connected to resources and supports necessary to be powerful advocates for our children and for each other, and ultimately for positive institutional changes and the greater common good.

By Sheila Warren/ Steve Rawley

OUR MANTRA READ (Stephanie Hunter Impacted Parent)

- We are the FAMILIES fed up with the racism, push out, so called achievement gap and exclusion within our education institutions.
- We are families who will demand our rights for our children to get the education they deserve. We will take our place as experts of our children back. We will model the strength and tenacity of a strong father/mother/grandparent/guardian who does not give up.
- These are our children- pushed out excluded, labeled, profiled, hurting and marginalized... Some have no hope. Through our efforts we will restore that hope.
- We will do this with our love, support, education, engagement, mentoring and sometimes even with tough love.
- We will take full responsibility along with accountability to galvanize, organize, and strategize the families.
- Our goal is to rejuvenate our Family community/families through diverse methods as mentioned above.
- Our Vision is to see transformed quality of life within our school communities. Our families will be whole again and the achievement gap closed.

To all School Administrators or Whom it May Concern:

PORTLAND PARENT UNION a member of Dignity Schools Campaign is calling for a moratorium on out-of-school suspensions in the State of Oregon, in an effort to address the nationwide pushout crisis facing our schools.

Solutions Not Suspensions is a call for a moratorium on out-of-school suspensions and for schools to adopt more constructive disciplinary policies that benefit students, classrooms and communities.

- Visit the [Solutions Not Suspensions website](#) to learn more and to find news & updates, resources, and more.

Video:



A CALL FOR A MORATORIUM PG 1

(Read by Dawnnesha Lasuncet impacted parent)

Portland Parent Union along with Dignity Schools are sending out a call for a Moratorium on School Pushout. PPS is already being intentional about eliminating the disparities. We are asking PPS to take it even further. Will you sit down with us and come up with a plan of what a Moratorium could look like for Portland Public Schools. We are asking PPS to be the first district in Oregon to support the Moratorium..

This release was sent in January with no response. Can we change our attitudes towards each other. Can we be intentional about respecting our marginalized families. To many times we have brought families to testify at the school board of their "pushout issues" with no followup. To many times we have sent invitations to come to People Celebrating People, a program that started eight years ago to bring together school administrators and the community to relationship build.

We are creating a trust circle for all to come and be a part of a much needed dialogue with our families, community members, PPS Administrators, Superintendent and School Board Members. This Event will be on Wednesday April 9, from 6-9 at Concordia University. More details when we confirm the venue. This is a "Restorative Practice genre."

The Moratorium is just an accountability process, that education institutions are trying to come up with anyway. The great thing about this proposal is that it was written by those who are the most "impacted ones" here and across the country. The parents, students, teachers, wraparound service orgs., legal orgs., orgs. of color, etc.

Again here is the Moratorium request. Can you help us push for change? NEXT PAGE

A CALL FOR A MORATORIUM PG 2

Google Drive: create, share, and keep all your stuff in one place.

[A Call for a Moratorium on School](#)

[Pushout](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/664644583570736/>

Forever Grateful

Sheila Warren Executive Director/Founder

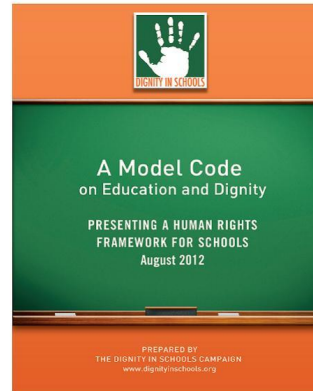
Portland Parent Union

503-287-3768 PPU Phone

ppuportlandparentunion@gmail.com

"Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for their children that they forget that they themselves are really the experts." Marian Wright Edelman"

"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us walk together..."--- Lila Watson, Australian Aboriginal woman "Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s"



Exercise Facilitated by Dawnnesha L. a parent and associate director of PPU: **First Question**

Do you know what pushout is?

Responses:

- practice of suspending/expelling to “get rid of” discipline problems. School to prison pipeline.
- starts before student gets to school@ 3 or 4 years old
- check office of civil rights data
- doesn't allow parents to have voice
- referrals to office and special education
- groups working on attendance issues but in conflict with pushout

Second Question

HAVE YOU BEEN IMPACTED BY PUSHOUT?

RESPONSES

- Fought for son, see it everyday in schools, same young men sitting in hallways, office, labeled as bad student in courtrooms “I see you like getting suspended
- Impacted as someone in community and as someone works with youth- “vested in success of individuals moving back into community” students lose hope
- everyone is impacted but this is for the families impacted
- current situation w/8th grader-learning power we didn’t know we had- we made a mistake of trusting admin/teachers
- breakout sessions pairs of 2-3 -- share about moratorium as issue.

Break Out Session (Facilitated by Dawnesha L. impacted parent)

- SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT A MORATORIUM. FOLKS BROKE OUT IN TRIADS

REPORT BACK COMMENTS:

- WE ARE AT THE END, DO/SEE SOMETHING DIFFERENT
- A CREATIVE BEGINNING
- CLEAR DEMAND W/VALUES BEHIND IT; STOP SEGREGATION

=====

TOBIN KRELL IMPACTED PARENT: LEAD US THROUGH GROUP AGREEMENTS

LISTEN

CONFIDENTIALITY

OPEN HEAR

RESPECT EACH OTHER'S STORY

PARENTS ARE now INVITED INTO CIRCLE

Media Showed Up?

Not appropriate for trust circle. We had a vote. One family is uncomfortable another family spoke up later. Press was invited to leave. Press are never allowed in the circles unless they are invited in. Folks who show up in the circle are ones who have been invited in...Press not allowed in healing circles, parents need to FEEL safe...Press can be invited in as a participant of the circle but not allowed to get a story..

PRAISE

No more top down decisions for our children please!

PPU has made important steps so that we, amongst the rest of the Family communities, can go forth to do the work that we are called to do. Every family of the educational system has a right to be heard and the children have a right to a great education. We are created in the divine likeness of those who came to demand before us. We live a struggle that we know to well but are creating/demanding safe spaces for us to be heard.. This is what will sustain us.

Folks like Norain, Etta, Jamila, Jasmine, Christie, Kara, Angela C., Tobin, Dawnnesha, Sheila, Stephanie, Angela J., Gloria, Michael, May, George and Daniel have continually been at the tables to ask "What about the parents/grandparents"? What about the Students? What about the disabled? What about the pushouts? Sheila Warren a grandparent herself made sure the label "Grandparents" was coined along with Parents/families, guardians.

We write of mental and physical oppression that attempts to keep our children bound to that educational slavery (testing, exclusion, labeling, profiling, privilege). Even though our Families have been indoctrinated with the belief that they are inferior, we will be courageous enough to know that families will evolve into the strong advocates who are respected and listened to as well as looked at as the true leaders.

Our educational oppression is a timeless message that tells of the struggle of our marginalized families and how every day we push our children to rise above the education system's expectations. We must see and name the process of knowing and connecting to the RLD's message as our Families' capital.

We are dedicated to the growth and maturity of our Families/Students and have an inner courage to conquer the trials we come across.

When asked for a word to describe the capital of our Families, we call it "unifiedcollaborative" capital. Ours is a community built on the strength drawn from the love of our Children. This is PARENT POWER

Announcements

See [PPU Website](#)



May 14 Second Wednesday continue trust Circle/ Concordia University Library, Room 108, 6-9

May 15 Restorative Justice Forum St Charles Parish, Flyer coming soon

June 5-6 or 13-14 Solutions not Suspensions Trainings/Details TBD

SPECIAL ED PTA (SEPTAP) CHECK FB PAGE FOR DATES <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Special-Education-PTA-of-Portland-SEPTAP/146985922029947>

PARENTS' STORIES



PARENT 1

- **Son was suspended for bringing a nintendo handle to school. Good student and no behavior issues**
- SON FEELS LIKE HE WAS LABELED AS BAD KID-STILL HAS AN IMPACT- FEELS HE IS A BAD PERSON- AND HE'S THE FURTHEST THING FROM IT!!
- PPU CAME TO OUR RESCUE WITH OUR STRUGGLES. THERE'S POWER IN PPU.

PARENT 2

- ONE SON 12- NO SCHOOL TROUBLE UNTIL 8 YEARS OLD. THEY STARTED LABELING HIM WITH BEHAVIOR ISSUES JUST BECAUSE HE CHALLENGED ADULTS.
- WE ARE ASHAMED TO SAY THAT WE DIDN'T QUESTION WHAT ADMIN. WAS SAYING.
- HOW MUCH DID BIAS PLAY INTO INTERPRETATION.

PARENT 2 CONTINUED

- WHAT WAS SON'S INTERPRETATION ACROSS 36 INCIDENTS? (Adults perception) THE PRINCIPAL STARTED OUT WITH EVERYTHING HE HAD DONE BAD
- MY TRUST IS COMPLETELY ERODED- I SHOULD HAVE QUESTIONED EVERYTHING.
- IT BREAKS YOUR HEART WHEN YOUR CHILD CALLS YOU 4X BEFORE NOON
- THEY ARE STILL ISOLATING AND EXCLUDING HIM
- PSYCH/PPU REPORTED IT IS NOT THE CHILD- IT IS THE ADULTS
- THERE NEEDS TO BE A CHANGE

PARENT 3

- KEYWORD WE ARE DEALING WITH IS BELONGING continued next page

PARENT 3 CONTINUED

- EVERYTHING “EXPERTS” TELL YOU IS WHAT’S WRONG.
- child spit/kicked b/c person was not skilled and inappropriate/untrained- but student was excluded
- Tag- “bright white child.
- Have taken in all this pain..can be engine for change
- I want the right for everyone to have justice and respect

Parent 4 Grandparent

- I have been through PPS for 30 years
- It was really bad-did not have the help I thought I had
- Going to lots of meetings. grandchild in lots of schools
- Grandson’s principal is caring-first time ive seen this- he will talk to me- this has helped me along
- I just want to see my grandson succeed
- I am trying to work with grandson’s issues
- Went to a meeting advocate and the folks knew who Sheila Warren/PPU is. Made me feel safe.

VOICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR an Impacted Grandparent

The Executive Director paused to talk about fear. She would rather be referred as a “Connector” rather than a leader it holds more merit...be intentional about how you can connect to someone every time you have the chance. Be intentional about always connecting others with others. It is the beginning of building relationships...

If you are in a position to serve the public you have to get over your fears. Be intentional about going towards those fears.

“Embrace your fears, if you are a leader of all people you have to learn how to embrace all people, not just the ones you feel comfortable with”....

A quote from PPU Director ; In education there are so many groups, unions and others trying to push for change . A- good thing- but it feels like we are throwing the baby out with the bath water.

We are so busy putting our time in at the top level pushing for change, the bottom, who we claim we are representing does not get our time at all. While our backs are turned, the education system is getting away with murder in real time and on the ground with our families. Come join us on the ground and see the real cases, not the data or reports, but real time abuses from the educational system." This is how we can build solidarity.

When you see people pushing back on any kind of re-configurations/pushed changes, you will not see us the most impacted along with them.

Impacted parents have the best information because they have the experience.....

Parent 5

- As grandparents we said don't mess with our granddaughter. We helped her to build her self esteem.
- Please build a relationship and get to know who she is. We will not allow you to destroy her high self esteem. She has high confidence because of folks who care for her in her family and in her previous schools.

Parent 6

- Daughter experiences autism/hearing impaired
- She announced to me one day that she wanted a different brain. Where is this coming from?
- Good relations with teachers
- IEP meeting-teacher "selective hearing" as if daughter had a choice
- Tried to be a partner and was not treated as one
- Kids earn red tickets my daughter did not earn very many this is were I'm not smart enough came from
- "I don't deserve this" because teacher wanted to take back teddy bear?
- With new teachers worried this will happen all over again

FOUR OTHER PARENTS SPOKE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS: COMMON THEME INCLUSION AND DISTRUST ---"CAN WE JUST GO BACK"

TRANSITION

FAMILIES BUILD TRUST WITH THE OUTSIDE CIRCLE: THEY ARE CHARGED TO PICK SOMEONE THEY MIGHT TRUST FROM THE OUTER CIRCLE TO BRING INTO THE TRUST CIRCLE.

BELONGING EXERCISE: FACILITATED BY ANGELA JARVIS-HOLLAND IMPACTED PARENT

PAGES 20-25 ALL IN THE CIRCLE WROTE THEIR COMMENT OR QUESTION IN A CLOUD

SUBJECT: BELONGING

EACH ONE WAS INVITED UP TO THE TRUST CIRCLE BY THOSE WHO LEFT THE TRUST CIRCLE TO GIVE US WHAT THEY WROTE AS WELL AS COMMENTS. WHEN WE DO CIRCLES EVERYONE GETS TO SPEAK *at least ONE TIME.*

SEE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS NEXT Page

Everyone present was invited to ask the question they felt important to more belonging for all students. These are questions all individuals in the circle wrote in their cloud...

Group 1



1. How can the community contribute to the change we need?
2. How can I, How can all of us here help our schools and classrooms become places where every student, every family belongs, feels worthy, loved, supported, recognized for gifts and ways of being that they offer. How can pushouts be replaced by healing, trust and restoration?
3. Is it possible to get rid of individuals that don't promote belonging in a systematic process?
4. Belonging- How do we move from exclusion being seen as an effective tool to seeing inclusion as a requirement?
5. How do we ensure that relationships are created between and sustained between students and staff? How does this deliberate relationship-building ensure students stay in school?
6. What do you want the school system to do instead of push out?
7. When and how will our will our community and education system sees our kids as full citizens? Including a child with a disability should be the rule not the exception in school and community programs.
8. Where is balance?

Group 1 Continued

- Do you love children; you work with/deal with/hear about/make decisions about LIKE THEY ARE YOUR OWN?
- How can we communicate to schools that a sense of inclusion and building self esteem are more important than test scores?
- More inclusion = stop exclusion; can't we start changing practice with Kindergarten? Changing the future one generation at a time.
- Belonging- would you kick a family member out? Why aren't we using consequences or re-teaching that are inclusive?
- How can PPS significantly accelerate its efforts to be true to existing policy around discipline and racial equality?
- How can we join diversity issues together?

Group 2

1. How do you see yourself using the power you have to create a culture of belonging for families and students?
2. How do we get from IEP to HIP? Hopeful, helped, heightened levels of empowerment, happy, heartened and healed?
3. In our school/community what supports the practices of exclusion?
4. What does wrap around services look like? (and such services help our students feel community?)
5. How do we put individual students above test scores and curriculum?
6. How can we get PPS to hire more people of color?
7. Why is it so difficult for us to value our youth of color?
8. How can teachers and administrators make your child feel welcome in their school? How can teachers ensure you the parent feel empowered as part of the school team?
9. How do we help parents and teachers work together to stop exclusion? How do we get them the tools to make this work?
10. What will it take to change how we treat each other?
11. What do communities do to help kids feel they belong in the schools?

Group 3

1. What would it take to include every child in his/her neighborhood school? What do we lose in terms of human dignity and the strength of our communities not include everyone? How do we find within ourselves the will to make this happen?
2. What is one thing each of us can do to change this unjust system? What is my role?
3. Do youth relationships not mirror adult relationships? What are we modeling?
4. How do we make those who are invisible visible?
5. Why is education not a priority; personally? In our community? As a nation?
6. What is our message to children when we ask them to leave?
7. What tools can we give principals and teachers to keep classrooms safe and productive learning environments?
8. How can culturally specific curriculum and supports change our approach to discipline and build our schools to advocate?
9. What will need to happen for the community and education system to understand the lifelong damage done to our kids being excluded in school, after school programs and future employment?

More captured comments in the trust circle

- IP-HIP Whole, Healed, ETC..
- hard job of school staff is trying to build relationship
- if we support people they show up
- it's hard to stay open-because it hurts-we don't come into this to hurt kids
- need-race specific solution
- what is the message to kids when we ask them to leave. we don't take time
- also says impacted parent child eager to please teacher
- its about message we share with children as we are struggling as parents
- why did we create this system
- how can we get PPS to hire people of color
- learning that I can't be a part of society/bad
- what would it take to include every child/what do we lose
- "just say no" to zero tolerance
- how can we make students feel welcome/parent empowered-Policies are important /set tone
- need concrete way- without it taking 10 years
- belong to what-safe and inclusive-perceptions of safety-when coming from a place of fear-we are all scared of each other
- what do you know to do or what schools do in place of exclusion
- share affiliation, listen
- what about students playing games, c students?
- being intentional about building relationships
- embrace your fears, if you are a leader of all people you have to learn how to embrace all people, not just the ones you feel comfortable with....

Ensure relationship building

Impacted Parent: I want it to go back to the way it was when I was little, Problem social issues-remember common problem solving for themselves with adult ally, basic regard for children as humans, I could make a mistake and come back, we are not making community anymore.

NEXT STEPS

ACCOUNTABILITY

(NOT PARENTS SOMETIMES THEY ARE BLAMED ALONG WITH THEIR CHILD/PARENTS WILL HELP PARENTS BE ACCOUNTABLE)

CONTINUED CIRCLES

THE MORATORIUM IS CALLED "SOLUTIONS NOT SUSPENSIONS." OUR MOTTO/MANTRA "JUST SAY NO" THANK YOU JODI WHO IS AN IMPACTED TEACHER.

SIGN UP FOR MORATORIUM TEAM/STEERING COMMITTEE HERE



[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/embeddedform?formkey=dFZEeXpveXg1dENPV2pkSEMwZU5TLWc6MA" width="760" height="1431" frameborder="0" marginheight="0" marginwidth="0">Loading...](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/embeddedform?formkey=dFZEeXpveXg1dENPV2pkSEMwZU5TLWc6MA)

Next Steps continued

“SOLUTIONS NOT SUSPENSIONS CAMPAIGN” Moratorium/Model Code Training June 6 and 7th or 13-14 [Details Coming](#)

____Our Motto: **Just Say No!**_____

Continued Circle Second Wednesdays

May 14, June 11, July 9

Concordia University Library, Room 108, 6pm to 9pm

Childcare and Food

Let us know if you want to be part of the Moratorium steering committee sign up on page 25. Some we will be asking to be a part because your voice is needed.....

We will meet each month before the Second Wednesday...Hopefully we can agree to meet as much as we can to expedite time (we want to get this done as quick as possible)

BONUS: “DATA WITH SOUL”

Parents’ Stories



Parents Stories
<http://www.portlandparentunion.com/#/services2/cyoh>

Make Sure You Check out these Videos



Power U Center for Social Change
Miami, FL

Thank you for coming [www.
portlandparentunion.com](http://www.portlandparentunion.com)

Our Mission

is to organize Parents for better outcomes by enriching them thru support, information and education. We are dedicated to parents: to involve their families, to anticipate their challenges and help them to take advantage of opportunities to guarantee a successful student. We are dedicated to the Parent's development of leadership skills, knowledge and responsibility.

