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From: Kate Snyder

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- 1) If elected my top three priorities will be:
  - a. The development of a Portland Public Schools Comprehensive Plan
  - b. The continued use of, and expansion of, the Portland Public Schools Multi Year Budgeting Plan
  - c. The negotiation of, and mutually agreeable settlement of, several union contracts
- 2) My husband and I have three children in Portland Public Schools:
  - a. Daughter, Haley, at King Middle School
  - b. Daughter, Quinn, at King Middle School
  - c. Son, William, at Nathan Clifford School
- 3) A positive change in our School Committee over the past year has been the continuation of leadership among several members – and the development of new leadership within the Committee among newly elected members.  
A positive change within our schools over the past year has been a budget development process that moves away from “schools as silos” and toward a system of budget development that looks to identify opportunities for equity among schools within categories (elementary, middle and high as categories) and an effort to work toward system efficiencies and partnerships.
- 4) One frustrating change over the last year has been some resistance to change regarding how we develop the budget; we are asking administrators and teachers to manage their budgets within a much larger context – one that is mindful of several other schools. This means that administrators have to work differently to incorporate system opportunities into their thinking – it also means that they are required to think about the students, teachers and needs beyond their school environment.
- 5) My competing responsibilities:
  - a. I have a job. I work in Augusta for the Board of Corrections, 32 hours a week.
  - b. I have a family.  
However – I feel strongly that it is important to be able to reasonably manage these two commitments with my School Committee commitment not only for myself – but also for those who will serve on Portland’s

School Committee in the future. School Committee service needs to fit within the context of people's dynamic lives. In order to have strength, experience and diverse people on the Committee we need to make sure that the commitment is realistic and can be accommodated by those with jobs and family.

- 6) I will vote in favor of amending the Portland City Charter to allow for an elected mayor.

I do not think that an elected mayor will significantly change the relationship between the Committee and the Council – in that this relationship is well established within the Charter.

- 7) The School Committee's role within the management of the Portland Public Schools Budget:

- a. Oversight of Year to Date progress within the current budget to understand where/if at all there are indications that there could be overspending that will require readjustments within the approved budget – so as to live within the budget!
- b. Work with the Superintendent and administration all year long to understand how the budget is responding to needs within the district: Is it allowing us to appropriately manage the number of students in a classroom? Is it allowing us to pursue initiatives that have been developed and articulated within the Multi Year Budget document? Is it allowing us to respond to unforeseen needs? This constant work is both oversight of the current budget – and development of the next budget(s).
- c. The School Committee also must work all year long to understand impacts to the budget such as:
  - i. The City Council's stresses/opportunities regarding their budget and how that impacts the PPS budget;
  - ii. The state legislature's stresses/opportunities within their budget and how that impacts the PPS budget,
  - iii. The Federal Government's role/impact to our budget
  - iv. The community's response to our budget and how that will impact the development of upcoming budgets
  - v. Grant opportunities
  - vi. Corporate/community alliance opportunities for sponsorship partnership support

The School Committee can (and must) continue to improve the budgeting process by developing a district Comprehensive Plan, using and expanding the Multi Year Budget Plan, continued, persistent oversight of both YTD progress and development in response to the above listed areas of impact (and be ready to identify more!).

- 8) Rather than respond by indicating what I'd cut – I think it's critical to foresee the reduction to revenue and plan for it. We know that we will see reductions in both state and federal funding – and we can develop projections regarding that amount and impact. Let me be clear - I am not dodging the fact that we will most likely need to reduce spending. But as we

saw within the development of the FY11 budget – there are places where we can reduce spending (from the current baseline) without negatively impacting student learning. Portland Public Schools – just like many other entities that rely on several volatile revenue sources (state funding, federal funding, property tax) has to continuously work to prioritize student learning, teacher development and the maintenance of our infrastructure that supports this work (buildings, technology, curriculum resources). I will not advocate for reduction in funding that negatively impacts student learning in the classroom: student to teacher ratio, curriculum resources, opportunities within the curriculum for continued challenge and special help – these issues are critical, in my opinion. Some of the extra curricular and co-curricular areas, also critical to the total education of a student, may need to be funded and supported differently – and maybe this will actually improve our communities’ support of this learning and activities.

- 9) We can improve the number of students going on to post-secondary education by:
  - a. Improving graduation rates;
  - b. Providing more access to local/area opportunities so that students can know what might be next;
  - c. Require and administer the SAT for all students (we already do this).

Benchmarks to inform improvements in this area:

- a) Improvements made to graduation rates;
  - b) Number of students (tracked – baseline (now, past) to future) who apply, are accepted and enroll in post-secondary education.
  - c) Improvements to SAT scores – this will increase likelihood of acceptance.
- 10) I need to learn more about the legal resident voting issue before I can state a position and vote in November. I’d like to improve opportunities for immigrants to engage in PPS decision-making processes. Several ways to do this could be:
  - a. Hold School Committee meetings at different locations around the City – to improve accessibility.
  - b. Work more closely with the Multicultural Center (within PPS) to determine better ways to engage constructively.
  - c. Gather information through surveys that get sent home with kids (in backpacks) and ask for parent responses that can be returned electronically or on paper, back through the student’s school.
- 11) I would like to see PPS improve transportation options by:
  - a. Working with the METRO bus system to improve access and increase use;
  - b. Encourage bike riding, and the use of Portland’s many (and excellent) bike paths by providing locking stations at schools.
  - c. Use some portion of transportation dollars to support more crossing guards at busy intersections so that students can safely walk longer distances (than they currently do).

- d. If/when PPS needs to re-district to accommodate housing/population/school needs be sure to incorporate alternative (to busing) options in the planning.
- 12) Portland's enrolment is steady or on the up-tick in the majority of schools. We see a decline in only a couple of schools and this is worrisome because it means we potentially:
- a. Underutilize some buildings and over utilize others;
  - b. Have a clustering of socio-economic indicators;
  - c. Work against the goal of improving equity;
  - d. Have very different academic outcomes.

I think we need to study this issue (the Comprehensive Plan would be a great vehicle to advance this work). I think that housing and parent advocacy significantly impacts enrollment. Therefore, in an effort to effect enrollment that will have positive impacts for all, I think we should investigate the impact of housing and the current district lines that direct who goes where. I think we should also be open-minded about the development of (expansion of) choice programming that we know (Many Rivers) draws people out of their districted school and into other neighborhoods.

We need to do right by all of our students and families. This means constantly working to understand what works and what doesn't – and remaining open to new ways of “doing business” in PPS.