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Portland Public Schools’ “Stories Project” Explores Families, Teachers

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Portland, OR—Beginning May 1, Portland Public Schools will present “The Stories Project: Race, Class, Culture & the Dynamics of Difference in Education”. The Stories Project is a collection of over 100 black and white and color photographic images that invites viewers to explore the diversity, strength, and complex nature of Portland Public Schools’ families and teachers.

The exhibit will debut at the Interstate MAX Yellow Line Grand Opening May 1, 2004 at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC) at 5340 North Interstate Avenue (503-823-4322). After its debut, The Stories Project will remain on display at the IFCC through May 27.

The Stories Project explores trusting relationships, working together and building on the strengths of diversity. These are essential for strong school communities, yet around the country communities struggle to connect across the boundaries of difference. The achievement disparity that exists both locally and nationally is often tied to an ongoing challenge: the challenge to openly discuss and respond to issues of race, class and culture.

The dynamics of difference are visible in classrooms and hallways everyday as children and parents interact with teachers and peers who may not look, speak, believe or act as they do. Struggles with difference are also visible in staff meetings, boardrooms and in headlines. The challenges of diversity and the invaluable lessons learned from it come to life in the stories of those who teach and learn in our schools every day. The students, families, and teachers portrayed in The Stories Project are reminders that at the center of educational success are trusting relationships.

Throughout the month of May, related activities will take place across the city and school district, including:

- A series of leadership planning meetings for principals and other school leaders at IFCC
- Workshops for teachers on culturally responsive standards based teaching and learning
- Meetings with parents and other community-based school supporters
- A parent involvement summit for families in Title I schools: Saturday, May 22 (sponsored by Portland Public Schools, Community and Parents for Public Schools, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and the Portland Schools Foundation)
• Additional conversations and dialogues with youth, higher education and other groups on race, class and culture

The Stories Project is facilitated by Shauna Adams and Lisa Race. This project is a collaborative effort between PPS- Title I Family Involvement and photographer, Kathleen Nyberg. For more information call 503-916-5840, extension 247.

About Portland Public Schools

Founded in 1851, Portland Public Schools is a PreK-12 school district with an enrollment of approximately 50,000 students in 100 schools. General information questions about Portland Public Schools can be directed to our Public Information Department at (503) 916-3304, or by email to pubinfo@pps.k12.or.us. For more school district information, please visit http://www.pps.k12.or.us Portland, OR 97208-3107. The Board office telephone number is (503) 916-3741. For more information, please visit http://www.pps.k12.or.us/depts/board/.

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