

QuickPoint! - Race-Based School Funding

By John A. Charles, Jr.

On April 14, Governor Tina Kotek held a press conference to reaffirm her commitment to protecting students from discrimination based on race, national origin, or immigration status in Oregon schools.

The point of the announcement was to focus on the implied future threat from President Trump, but discrimination is already occurring in Portland.

For the past decade, the Portland Public School district has been providing extra funding to schools in part on the basis of race ([2024-2025 Proposed Budget – Volume 2, pp. 4-5](#)). Students who are Black, Hispanic, Native American, or Pacific Islander are automatically characterized as “historically underserved,” which means the schools they attend receive more money. This is true even if their parents are rich and the students themselves are high achievers.

For the current school year, the elementary school receiving the most generous funding is Rosa Parks, with \$17,891 per student. The school with the least amount of funding is Richmond, at \$7,649.

At the high school level, Jefferson receives \$15,812 per student, while Grant gets \$8,109.

It’s not clear why Portland school parents have been tolerating this for so long. ORS 659.850 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any public school, and PPS funding is clearly discriminatory.

The Governor should stop grandstanding about President Trump, start enforcing civil rights laws in Portland, and put an end to race-based school funding.

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