

COALITION FOR COMMERCIAL-FREE SCHOOLS

April 23, 2007

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Portland Council PTA
Community Health Partnership
Stand for Children
Rethinking Schools
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First Unitarian Church
Teacher Education Program,
Graduate School of Education
and Learning

Vicki Phillips
Portland Public Schools, Superintendent
500 North Dixon
Portland, OR

Dear Superintendent Phillips:

Thank you for sending the Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools a copy of the district's research policy options that would affect advertising and commercial influence in Portland Public Schools (PPS). It appears that the policy options presented to your staff on June 7, 2006 were not acted upon. We want to see a recommendation from your office to the Board on this issue.

In the spring of 2005 the Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools formed with one goal in mind: adoption by PPS of a strong, comprehensive policy on advertising and commercial activities. In November 2005 representatives of the Coalition met with Dona Lehr and Eileen Flinn to express our concerns. It was our understanding that Ms. Lehr would research the topic and present options to the staff and that you would send recommendations to the Board, likely in the spring of 2006.

It is now spring of 2007. We are pleased that a wellness policy has now been adopted by the Board and that it reflects an awareness of the negative impacts of commercial influence. However, we have not been given the opportunity to present our recommendations for a comprehensive advertising policy to the PPS school board. Ms. Lehr stated in her memorandum that "existing policies are outdated, conflicting, and unclear" and result in "confusion for principals and other district staff." We agree, and there is strong support in the community for a comprehensive policy. The recommendation of the Wellness Advisory Committee to limit commercial influence relating to fundraising and food marketing is evidence of this support.

We would appreciate a response to our request that you send a recommendation to the Board. A copy of this letter will be sent to all school board members.

Respectfully,

The Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools Steering Committee:
Sara Leverette, acting director of the Coalition for Commercial-Free Schools
Rick Seifert, NW Media Literacy Center
Jeanne Roy, Center for Earth Leadership
Kari McFarlan, Community Health Partnership
Mary Lynn O'Brien, Stand for Children
Sandy Shulmire, Oregon Psychological Association