

April 25, 2012

Mayor Sam Adams
Portland City Council
City Hall - 1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Subject: Support Pass-Through Funding for SUN, Including Buckman

Dear Mayor Adams and City Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you protect the City's pass-through funding for SUN programs at all Portland Public School sites. At a time when PPS schools are facing drastic cuts in staffing and other resources, it is more important than ever to maintain the City's strong and beneficial relationship with SUN. These high-quality academic enrichment programs not only provide essential after-school care for working families, but they also connect at-risk children to educational and social services that public schools are simply unable to provide under current fiscal conditions.

Building Community

I believe the City should continue its commitment to all SUN sites, and as a parent of two children who attend Buckman Elementary School I am particularly concerned that any cuts will result in the closure of the program at Buckman. The Buckman neighborhood has no community center and the Inner Southeast is deficient in parks compared with other parts of the city. The SUN program at Buckman is the only one in the Inner Southeast, and it also serves children from other schools. I understand that the City Council does not ultimately decide which SUN sites will close if budget cuts are made, but Buckman is a candidate that can not afford to lose this catalyst for building community. If we are to achieve the vision of neighborhood schools outlined in the Portland Plan, we need programs like SUN to facilitate connections between schools and the wider community.

Academic Enrichment

From a strictly educational standpoint, SUN programs cushion the blow of continued PPS budget cuts, providing valuable academic services at a relatively low cost to the public. The Parks and Recreation budget is an appropriate source of funding because SUN is a recreational learning program. The 60 after-school classes at Buckman are tied to academic benchmarks. Thirty children who are below standard benchmarks receive free tutoring daily. Beyond the regular classes, SUN runs a homework club and community programs like Family Math Night and Family Write Night.

Social Equity

The Buckman SUN program meets urgent community needs at a large school that has seen the poverty level among its students increase steadily over the past several years. Despite common misconceptions, families at Buckman generally have modest incomes and the school meets the Title I threshold of children who qualify for free and reduced lunch. In total, Buckman SUN annually serves nearly as many children as are enrolled at the school (500), including approximately 250 who are at-risk. The program supports these children and their families with tutoring, mentoring, connections to social services, sponsoring the Season of Sharing, and calling all English Language Learner families each week to check in.

A Good Investment

A continued City partnership with SUN is a fiscally responsible investment. Because of outside funding and partnerships with more than 40 community organizations, Buckman SUN leverages public dollars by a 2:1 ratio (and leverages the City's own investment at a much higher multiple). Its long-established relationships with other agencies and nonprofits allow SUN to bring resources to the table to serve the most vulnerable children and families in the PPS system – meeting urgent needs that would otherwise put more pressure on public budgets. These are the kinds of financially efficient partnerships that can help carry us through budget deficits and hard times while still providing supportive services to children and families.

Closing a program like SUN is not like closing a public toilet to save money in the short term. It would take years to rebuild the structure and relationships that are already in place thanks to wise City investments in SUN. Any short-term savings from cutting SUN programs will be far outweighed by the future costs to our children, schools and the City budget itself.

You are certainly faced with very challenging choices in managing limited public funds, and every budget decision has tradeoffs. Now is not the time to step back from a highly successful partnership with SUN. Past investments in the program have helped build it into a smoothly functioning, vital community asset. For a modest renewal of this commitment, the community will continue to receive a tremendous return and the City will avoid the higher costs of restarting the program or providing necessary services in other ways.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,



Greg Greenway
1313 SE Oak Street (97214)

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Moore-Love, Karla

From: Greg Greenway [gdgreenway@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Council meeting speaking request

Dear Ms. Moore-Love,

I am requesting a slot to speak at the City Council meeting on Wednesday, April 25. The subject of my comments will be "No pass-through cuts to SUN, including at Buckman". If possible, I would prefer to speak this Wednesday, but I understand that those slots are already full. If not, please schedule me for this week.

Thank you,

Greg Greenway
1313 SE Oak Street
Portland 97214
503-239-1599

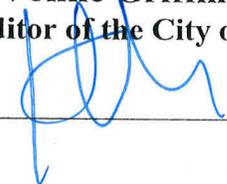
Request of Greg Greenway to address Council regarding no pass through cuts to SUN including at Buckman (Communication)

APR 25 2012

PLACED ON FILE

Filed APR 20 2012

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Leonard		
Adams		