

Mayor and City Commissioners,

I am urging you to ^{call on PPS} ~~use your bully pulpit~~ to lift the artificial enrollment cap at Benson Tech as a matter of economic equity, to give more students a career path to paid apprenticeships to high demand jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Benson Tech speaks to race, poverty, and middle class jobs and lifting the cap is the quickest way to fix income inequality and fix PPS' abysmal graduation rate, one of the worst in the state. Benson has one of the highest graduation rates in the city (86%) compared to PPS 67%. It has some of the best graduation rates for minority students and economically disadvantaged students, though 70% of its students qualify for free & reduced lunch and many are non-native speakers and first generation immigrants. Minority students are being denied an opportunity to study computer science and other targeted job creation areas in Portland Plan, to keep them at lesser performing schools without marketable job skills or BOLI approved apprenticeships.

@ 20% Higher

Major manufacturers including Precision Castparts, ESCO, Vigor, have called upon civic leaders as a jobs issue to foster a skilled workforce in target job creation clusters. These employers are going out of state to hire skilled technicians for jobs that pay \$100k, without an advanced degree, due to lack of a skilled workforce. Manufacturing is 28% of our state's GDP and a rapidly growing sector with family wage jobs.

PGE, NW Natural, and Pacific Power have also called for the cap to be lifted to meet workforce needs. These companies employ 8,000 people with average salaries of \$80k.

The City has an interest as a jobs issue, to attract and retain businesses seeking a skilled workforce. Youth unemployment is at its highest since WW II, and Benson is the career piece of the Cradle-to-Career. It

provides relevant career training for target job creation clusters in the Portland Plan including software, advanced manufacturing, electronics, and health sciences.

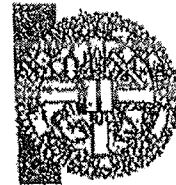
Benson has capacity to serve 2000 students, yet PPS has artificially capped enrollment at 850, turned away hundreds of students and denied them a career path out of poverty. Where students used to study computer science and engineering, PPS is running drug rehab and alternative programs that at-risk youth. These programs need to be relocated to empty buildings to free up instructional space for high demand STEM programs.

PPS has had 2 years of ½ day high school, with 80% of high school students unable to get a full schedule of classes according to a complaint filed with ODE. We are heading for a strike that will move this City further from equity. It is time for an intervention to double down on programs that work, like Benson Tech.

Please exert leverage on the School Board to find 4 votes to lift the cap, as a matter of economic equity.

GIVEN BY
TERESA RAYFORD

**Benson Polytechnic High School
Alumni Association**




Benson Polytechnic High School (Benson) has been the subject of many articles in both the Oregonian and Portland Tribune with regard to the Career Technical Education Opportunities the school has historically and continues to provide to the students of Portland. Benson is Portland's School. The entire city is its neighborhood as students apply from all neighborhoods of the city. Benson graduates 81% of its students, the highest graduation rate of any East Portland High School. Its student body is a mix that represents the city very well, approximately 25% each of African American, Hispanic, Asian and White. Benson's capacity is 1800 to 2000 students, currently it is serving 880 due to the restrictive enrollment policy implemented by PPS. Last Fall, 390 students applied and PPS allowed 280 students. This Fall, PPS has increased the allowable enrollment to 260. There is no question more than 260 students will want to attend Benson starting in the Fall of 2013. We simply ask that you sir, as the head of all of Oregon's education system, step up and make it clear to PPS that this restricted enrollment does not serve ours nor the city of Portland's long run economic interests of creating a more qualified young workforce for our present and future manufacturing needs.

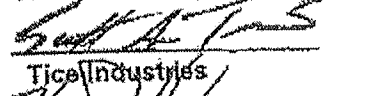

It is well documented in the press that our business community needs increasing number of Career Technical oriented and trained employees. This generation and future generations will need industrial grade educations that this school has historically provided. It is also well known that Finland has the best educational system in the world, while the U.S. is lagging severely. In Finland, 48% of Sophomore High School students choose a Career Technical Education track and it is well understood that this reduces the dropout rate dramatically. Benson has proven that as well, as Sophomores make decisions on their major from an array of Career Technical Education choices.


Governor and Education Leaders of Oregon, the persons in charge of all education in Oregon, we as a community of business leaders which have a goal of developing a quality pool of talented workers to draw from for our individual business success ask you firmly to overrule PPS's position on enrollment restriction at Benson for the Fall 2013 and going forward. We need to build a stronger base of skilled labor and provide Portland's students opportunities (and for that matter all of Oregon's students) to excel in proven manufacturing disciplines that allow them to pay their way through further education or seek a trade that can provide a family wage. We are not asking for money, we are asking for opportunity. As PPS Board will be making a decision soon on this issue to formalize their position, we ask for immediate action from you.

Signed Collectively,


Vigor Industrial


Greenbrier Companies


Tice Industries

Oregon Ironworks


Oregon Metals Industry Council

Submitted Respectfully,

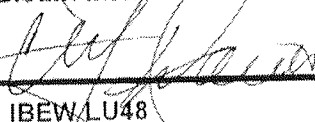

Rob Johns, Chair, Alumni Association
Robjohns@comcast.com, (503) 314-0041


Esco Corporation


PCC Structural, a subsidiary of Precision Castparts


Daimler Trucks North America


Blount International


IBEW LU48

September 10, 2013

Dear Portland Public Schools Board of Education:

As leaders of Oregon's energy industry — an economic driver of Oregon's economy — we urge the Portland Public Schools Board of Education to lift the artificial cap on Benson Polytechnic High School student enrollment to provide a strong technical education to more Portland students.

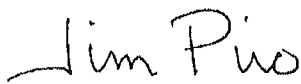
Between now and 2020, our companies will experience an almost 50 percent workforce turnover due to an aging workforce. Collectively, energy companies in our region employ more than 8,000 workers at an average salary of just under \$80,000 annually. Like other local industries, we rely on a qualified workforce pipeline flowing from our schools to run our companies. We need strong, career technical education to ensure a supply of skilled trades' workers, engineers, and other science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers.

Despite the economic and employment opportunities our industry provides, we see the student population at Benson reaching historic lows — fewer than 900 — when the historic capacity of the school has been almost 2,000 students. This year and last, 300 students were turned away due to an enrollment cap. The decline in the Benson Polytechnic High School enrollment and programs in recent years is alarming. These students could have been new hires in our companies as our skilled workers retire.

While we understand concerns about impacts to the neighborhood high schools from which the Benson students come and instituting the cap to help other campuses grow, it is time to start moving in the direction of increasing Benson's enrollment and the resultant opportunities offered.

We ask PPS to restore Benson Polytechnic High School to its previous levels of enrollment and its funding for career technical education programs. Our industry is committed to workforce partnerships to keep our economy strong and to the success of Benson and all of Portland Public Schools. We look forward to our continued work with you to strengthen PPS and provide better opportunities for its graduates — our future workforce.

Submitted Respectfully,



Jim Piro
President and CEO
Portland General Electric



Gregg Kantor
President and CEO
NW Natural



Pat Reiten
President and CEO
Pacific Power

cc: Superintendent Carole Smith

of 102,410 STEM jobs by 2018, a 13% increase; 29% will be engineers and engineering technicians

Students master industry-recognized technical standards such as the ability to read plans and elevations (COPF10.02) and understand power quality and grounding (COPH.10.05) at school and on work sites, while advancing the employability skills identified as critical by employers: communication and interpersonal skills, problem solving, using initiative and self-motivation, teamwork, organizational skills, and the ability to adapt. This work positions graduating students ready for careers well beyond entry level, often towards high wages and into high-demand specialties, such as school design and construction.

C. Underserved Students

Benson High School and its CTE programs are open to all students across the district. As a designated *focus* school, all district students in grades 8-12 are eligible to apply for fall enrollment, although priority is given to students from high schools with >64% low-income students. In each student group noted below, and in every racial and ethnic minority group, Benson students graduate at a *statistically higher rate* than do their peers across the district.

Percent of Underserved Students at Benson and for all PPS District High Schools						
	Low-Income	SPED	ELL	Eth/Racial Minority	Male	Female
Benson	63.9%	12%	4.4%	71.3%	56%	44%
All High Schools	40.7%	12%	4.8%	44.2%	51%	49%

Graduation Rate of Racial/Ethnic Minority Students: Benson & District Schools							
	Native American	Pacific Islander	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Grad Rate
Benson	66.7%	100%	94.9%	76.8%	77.2%	84.1%	82.2%
All High Schools	29.0%	61.2%	74.1%	52.6%	54.2%	67.8%	63.1%

Benson has been extremely successful in recruitment efforts resulting in 450 applications for 250 9th grade positions for the current year. The result is a far higher percentage of minority and low-income students than the district average for high



October 14, 2013

Dear Portland Public Schools Board of Education:

We are writing to offer comments on enrollment limitations at Benson High School. Cambia Health Solutions is a leading employer in the Portland-metropolitan area. We are committed to attracting a diverse workforce, bringing together individuals with different talents, skills, backgrounds and abilities. Our employees not only contribute to the success of our organization but also work to transform health care from the inside out.

Cambia is a nonprofit, total health solutions company dedicated to transforming the way people experience the health care system. We have approximately 2,500 Oregon employees, about 1,800 of whom are at our Portland headquarters. Our portfolio of companies spans health care information technology and software development; retail health care; health insurance plans that carry the Blue Cross and Blue Shield brands; pharmacy benefit management; life, disability, dental, vision and other lines of protection; alternative solutions to health care access; and free-standing health and wellness solutions.

Our success depends on our ability to recruit top talent with strong technical skills and health care backgrounds. If the talent does not exist locally, then we must recruit for positions out of state. Recognizing the changing workforce demographics, we support high school programs that emphasize STEM subject matter and encourage students to pursue careers in health care and IT.

The technical curriculum and hands-on education offered at Benson High School are impressive, and are unlike any other in the area. While we understand the board's need carefully to deploy resources across the entire Portland school district, we respectfully request that Portland Public Schools Board of Education evaluate the impact of Benson's current enrollment limit on students as well as on employers, restore Benson's computer science program, and, finally, consider expanding Benson's enrollment.

Please let us know if we can provide any additional information in support of Benson High School.

Sincerely,

Michelle Schwartz, MPA

Manager, Diversity and University Programs

Human Resources ph.

503-273-4132

michelle.schwartz@cambiahealth.com

Benson Tech Action Items – Lift the Cap

Urgent action is needed before the transfer period closes on February 21, where PPS will further restrict transfers to Benson Tech, which will further limit CTE program options:

1) **Please contact the PPS School Board to urge 4 votes for lifting the enrollment cap** and allowing approximately 190 students to get off the wait list and into Benson Tech's proven program:

Superintendent Carole Smith superintendent@pps.net;

Board Member Co-Chair Pam Knowles pknowles@pps.net 503-334-7668

Board Member Co-Chair Greg Belisle gbelisle@pps.net

Board Member Bobbie Regan bobbie.regan@pps.net

Board Member Matt Morton mmorton@pps.net

*Board Member Tom Koehler tkoehler@pps.net

Board Member Steve Buel sbuel@pps.net

2) Contact Rob Saxton, Deputy Superintendent of Oregon Department of Education

rob.saxton@state.or.us – oversight authority over PPS due to failure to comply with most educational standards.

ODE could order PPS to fully lift the cap for fall 2014 by relocating (4) alternative programs subleasing space within Benson including: Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center for 18-24 year olds, Reconnections for 5th year and older students, Alliance High School for 16-20 year olds (15% graduation rate), Portland International Academy (\$580k for 6 full-time staff to serve only 8 students) to reclaim instructional space and funding for successful programs. PPS should not be running drug rehab and alternative programs where students want to study engineering, computer science, and health sciences, particularly since it is sitting on \$113.7M worth of closed school properties, according to the Oregonian.

3) Contact Secretary of State Kate Brown kate.brown@state.or.us – audit authority over PPS.

WW's "Flunk Factories" details how Superintendent Smith's bias toward costly alternative education programs with 9% graduation rates, makes PPS the region's worst performing district, though it spends 25% more per student. http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-21514-flunk_factories.html. School Board members are directing PPS funding to organizations where they are employed, raising potential violations of state conflict of interest laws.

4) Industry partnerships for CTE teacher training incubator, apprenticeships.

Benson Tech is applying for CTE grants and will be more competitive if industry employers are willing to provide apprenticeships and support for relevant CTE teacher training. Please let me know of businesses interested in partnering with Benson Tech.

5) Tours for industry supporters

Benson Tech will offer additional tours to broaden the base of business, labor and civic supporters, and I welcome your referrals to other industry leaders who understand the importance of relevant CTE training as a workforce issue. Please think through your contacts at Intel, HP, Tektronics, Boeing, IBM, Providence, Legacy, construction, electronics, software, advanced manufacturing, health sciences.

Rob Johns
Chair, Benson Polytechnic Alumni Association
robjohns@comcast.net

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Lainie Block Wilker [lainie.block.wilker@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, December 23, 2013 2:48 PM
To: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Public comment 2/12/14

Dear Karla,

This is to confirm I am reserved for public comment on 2/12/14 re: Benson Tech.

Lainie Block Wilker
3823 NE Flanders St
Portland, OR 97232
503-754-9084

Topic- lifting enrollment cap at Benson Tech

Sent from my iPhone

Request of Lainie Block Miller to address Council regarding Benson Tech
(Communication)

FEB 12 2014

PLACED ON FILE

Filed FEB 07 2014

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Novick		
Hales		