



## Portland Public Schools

### Lincoln High School

1600 SW Salmon Street, Portland, Oregon 97205

Telephone: (503) 916-5200 \* Fax: (503) 916-2700

Dear Lincoln Families,

Prom is right around the corner. Our juniors and seniors will be celebrating the closing of the school year with this annual dance and the festivities surrounding it. Before our young men and women are let loose upon the dance floor on April 26<sup>th</sup>, we would like to address a few issues circulating in the Lincoln community.

It has come to our attention, as staff and administrators at Lincoln High School, that abstinence-only education is not effective. Instead of enforcing policy that does not work, we have decided to implement a more realistic approach to the situation concerning drug and alcohol abuse, as well as sexual activity. As our students grow into fantastic young adults, it is our job to help them learn and discover along their journey. That is why this year we would like to encourage you—the parents of our wonderful pupils—to talk to your kids about the reality of being a high school student.

You don't have to watch MTV or the latest movies to know that the world our children live in continually bombards them with images glorifying sex and substance use. It has been confirmed at the highest echelons of the nation's educational organization that we must begin to change our curriculum to accommodate the changing times and social attitudes. To commence this process, we have concluded that the best course of action is to acknowledge the fact that despite our best efforts to thwart such behavior, our students will inevitably partake in the consumption, or use of illegal materials, and be sexually active.

Before your sons and daughters leave for the dance this April, we would like you to understand that there will be individuals that will be providing access to alcohol and drugs. We do not condone this conduct, but we understand that we cannot stop it. With that said, please don't keep your children from attending prom this year. Instead, talk to them about the possibility of them participating in the said behavior, and consider opening your home as a safe, secure place for students to have fun after the dance. If you provide the alcohol, you can have peace of mind knowing that they did not acquire it illegally. Furthermore, you will know that they are not going to drink and drive, or hurt themselves or anyone else. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission has stated that a fifth of alcohol, like Hennessy Cognac, is sufficient supply for at least 8 adults. One can assume that for 17 to 18 year old individuals, one fifth can probably be spread out to 4 students. Considering our reputation (Drinkin' Lincoln), in some cases one fifth is only enough for a single person.

According to a recent government research article substance abuse leads to increased chance of sexual activity. To adapt to this news, we have also decided to include a condom with this letter. Once more, although we do not support the participation in sexual intercourse by our students, we want them to be safe. The condom included will provide at least some security to our students, and to you. Whether or not

the behavior is appropriate, it will be a relief knowing that the chance of our students becoming pregnant or contracting a venereal disease has been decreased. STD epidemics have spread through other high school communities and we want to prevent such an outbreak as best we can.

We hope that your students have a wonderful prom, and enjoy themselves thoroughly. We would like to continue the tradition of Lincoln working hard, but playing hard as well. After a stressful year of school, this is an opportunity for our students to relax, have fun and prepare themselves for what life is going to be like in college.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

The Lincoln High School Faculty and Administration