



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Dan Saltzman, Police Commissioner
Rosanne M. Sizer, Chief of Police

1111 S.W. 2nd Avenue • Portland, OR 97204 • Phone: 503-823-0000 • Fax: 503-823-0342

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January 27, 2010

Dear School Superintendent:

RE: Mardi Gras “Fat Tuesday” on February 16, 2010

This is to advise you that the annual Mardi Gras “Fat Tuesday” celebration is quickly approaching and to help you understand some of the challenges this celebration brings to our community. Specifically, we are concerned about the infusion of thousands of teenagers into the downtown area who engage in various forms of inappropriate behaviors for several hours that evening.

Fat Tuesday is a small segment of the Mardi Gras celebration that originated as an additional night of festivities for the participants and those who made the trek to New Orleans. During the past several years, it has become the largest “street party” in downtown Portland, drawing thousands of people to local nightclubs or to hang out on the street and cruise in cars.

This event is associated with the sale of alcoholic beverages and the resulting behavioral issues that are associated with drinking. For the past few years, both men and boys have come downtown with cheap plastic beads and offered to give them to women and girls who show them their bare breasts. This results in a charged atmosphere and, in conjunction with the alcohol, an increase in the number of assaults, DUII arrests, and sex crimes.

More importantly for you, over the past few years, the Portland Police Bureau has encountered substantial problems with junior high and high school students who initially traveled to downtown Portland from throughout the metropolitan area and southwest Washington out of curiosity. However, they now come downtown to join in the street party atmosphere. Although they are not allowed in the bars, an overwhelming number of the kids obtain alcohol through a variety of avenues and often consume more than they can manage. This results in a considerable number of issues: these young people become targets of opportunity for the predatory crowd, who even engage in sexual acts that put these teenagers at risk.

Due to the magnitude of this phenomenon, the police bureau will be assigning more than 100 extra officers to the downtown area for the evening. The Portland Police Bureau is prepared to take youngsters into protective custody when their actions endanger themselves or others; this can include baring breasts in large crowds, engaging in sex acts, and other behaviors that

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threaten their safety or the safety of those around them. In the unfortunate event that these juveniles are involved in the commission of a crime, they will be arrested.

The Portland Police Bureau is providing this information as a preventive measure to help you better inform your students and parents of the potential issues associated with the Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday celebration. Please feel free to pass on any or all of this to your students and parents to help them make smart, well-informed decisions.

Lieutenant Sara Westbrook will be the Incident Lieutenant for this event. She is working closely with Lieutenant George Burke, who is available to answer any additional questions you have. He can be reached at (503) 823-0252 or Gburke@portlandpolice.org.

Thank you in advance for assisting us with this educational awareness effort regarding Fat Tuesday.

Sincerely,

DAVE FAMOUS
Commander
Central Precinct