



Wednesday, November 15th, 2023

Saturday Academy develops creative, confident, and curious critical thinkers by engaging students in socially conscious and equitable Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math experiences. We accomplish our mission in partnership with public schools, which are pillars of a healthy community as providers of space for vital support and services that enrich the lives of students and families alike.

Saturday Academy centers student voices. We listen when they speak. A Roosevelt High School student shared at a recent rally, " [Teachers] don't solely teach the curriculum... they also teach [us] about life. I now stand here in solidarity with the very same educators who have listened to my victories and helped me through my struggles." Saturday Academy was created in 1983 by two visionary former public school educators. Motivated to bridge the gap in resources afforded by the public school system, they sought to ensure affordable and accessible hands-on STEAM learning experiences for all.

As things currently stand the teachers and Portland Public Schools would benefit from better support and resources to provide a healthy and enriching educational environment for the students. We are at risk of losing essential educators when students need them the most. For this reason, we support teachers, students, and families during this strike.

Saturday Academy's relationship with Portland Public Schools spans forty-one years of investment and engagement, providing residency programs in and after school for Grades K-12. In 2022-2023, we held residencies in 12 PPS schools, educating 288 children, of which 76% were low-income. We work in direct collaboration with school administrators and teachers to ensure our programs deepen student knowledge and skills, helping them to become life-long learners.

- ▶ **We believe in each student's right to a fully supported learning environment.**
- ▶ **We believe in the transformative power of an educator who is provided the tools necessary to do their job well.**
- ▶ **We believe in a future informed by a system that engages in civic dialogue and creative problem-solving.**
- ▶ **We believe that students and families who are most vulnerable to systemic oppression can thrive in an ecosystem that provides essential services and care informed by their lived experiences.**

We hope for a resolution that recognizes these beliefs and the value of our teachers, and one that upholds our community's high standard for quality education for all children. This strike will not affect our Days Off programming or any Fall classes being held on the University of Portland campus. However, we will not be running Saturday Academy residency programs on PPS premises during the strike.

May we approach this dialogue with urgency. This effort has been a long time coming, and as history is made, may we be active supporters in bettering students' educational experiences.