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...in Monday night, as residential candi- The Citadel college ate. This time, how- l questions not from voters sent in YouTube Web site. ns ran the gamut o offbeat, all in the IDEOS, Page A8

ATHER

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sun
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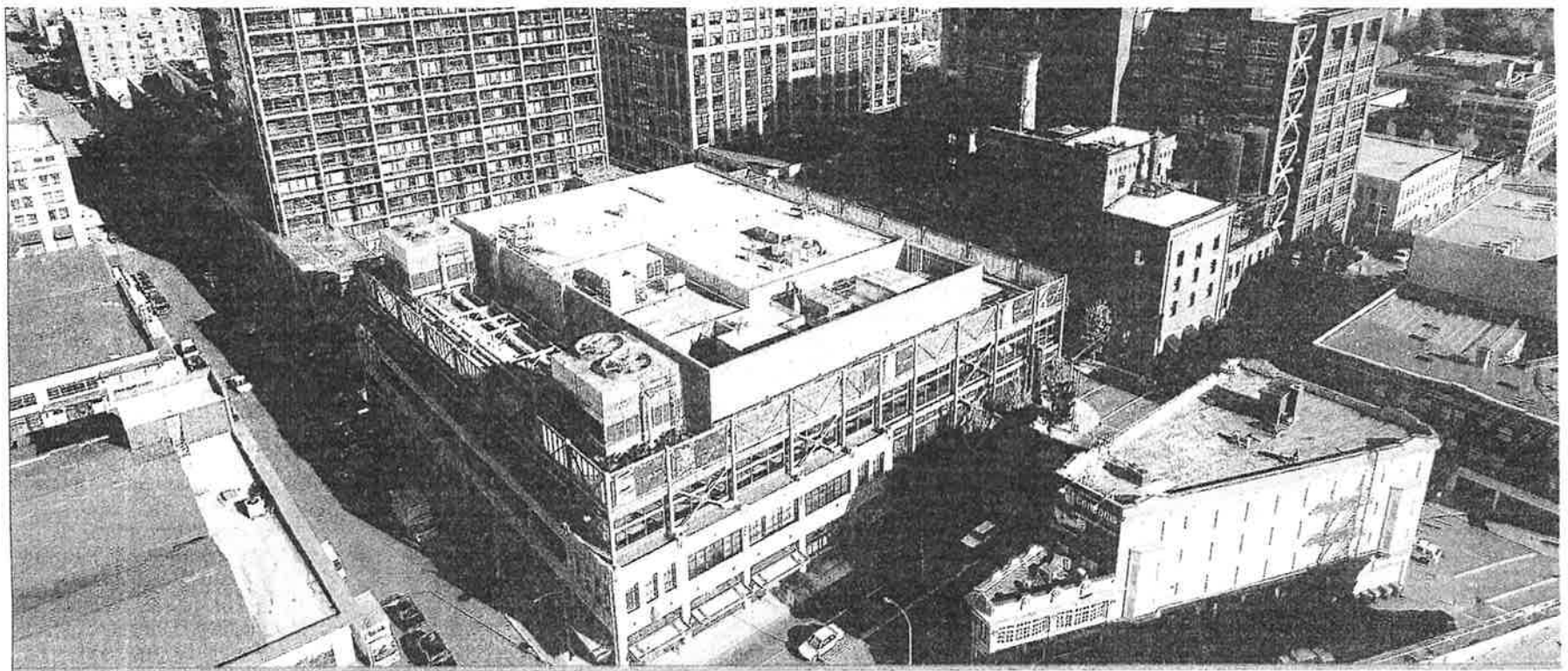
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Head Start adds staff to reach 3,100 more children

Ana Alvarez (left) works with Alexis Echeverria, 4, as he plays a matching game in a Head Start classroom at the Hillsboro Child Development Center. The game helps preschoolers develop early reading and math skills.

**BENJAMIN BRINK
THE OREGONIAN**



Preschool | New state funding of \$39 million in 2007-09 boosts enrollment to 75 percent of eligible kids

**By STEVEN CARTER
THE OREGONIAN**

Head Start, the 42-year-old preschool program that prepares children for kindergarten and beyond, is on the verge of the state's biggest expansion in years — but even that growth won't meet the surging demand from low-income families across Oregon.

At the urging of Gov. Ted Kulongoski, the Legislature increased state money for Head Start programs by \$39 million in the 2007-09 budget. That translates to about 3,100 low-income children added to the 9,800 already enrolled.

At least nine states are increasing free pre-kindergarten enrollment this year, but Libby Doggett, director of a national early childhood advocacy program called Pre-K Now, said Oregon's expansion is one of the biggest.

"There was a time when Oregon wasn't focused on its young children,"

Please see **HEAD START**, Page A6

Head Start: Many kids still will be on waiting list

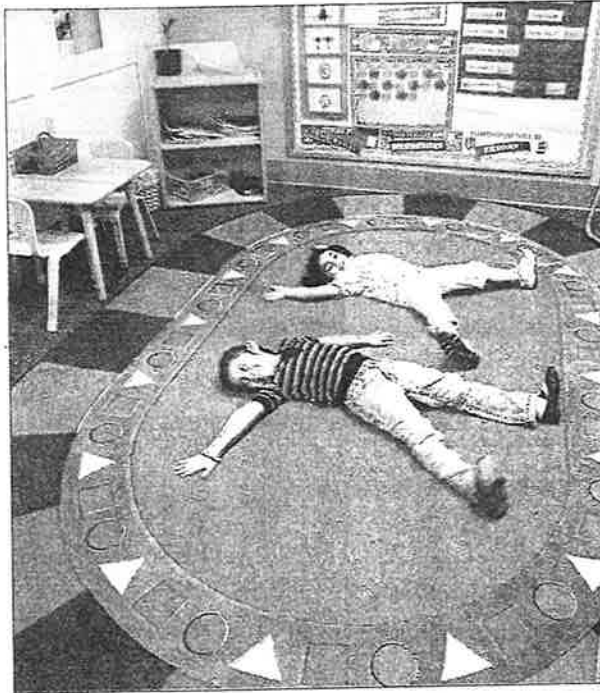
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Doggett said. "This is a really exciting turnaround and shows a real commitment to the young people of your state."

Dell Ford, Head Start coordinator in the Oregon Department of Education, said the money is enough to enroll 75 percent of eligible children, up from the current 57 percent.

Ford said all but three of the 29 local Head Start programs in Oregon have applied for state expansion grants. Even with the new money, they're likely to open this fall with children still on waiting lists. Deborah Berry, Portland Public Schools Head Start director, predicts a waiting list of 200 even after filling 97 new openings.

Kulongoski and the Legislature chose Head Start expansion this year over full-day kindergarten, relying on research indicating it has a bigger payoff in



BENJAMIN BRINK/THE OREGONIAN

Alexia Rico, 5, (foreground) and Montserrat Graciano, 4, do a little dancing on the floor to music at the Hillsboro Child Development Center. The children learn early literacy and math skills in the class, plus music, hygiene and social skills.

achievement, graduation rates and even reduced crime.

Providing Head Start's aca-

demic and socialization skills, plus family nutrition and other services, helps make children

Does Head Start work?

National research on Head Start for 3- to 5-year-olds shows that the program:

- Reduces the achievement gap between poor and middle-income children
- Results in better scores on national achievement tests
- Reduces the need for children to repeat grades or be placed in special education programs
- Increases the likelihood that students will graduate from high school
- Reduces the chances that students will be involved in juvenile crime

ready for regular school and successful once they get there, according to studies.

"Investing in children at this age is one of the best investments you can make," said Ron Herndon, Albina Head Start director and chairman of the National Head Start Association.

Herndon's program, which serves Portland's east side, will be adding 75 staffers, the majority of them teachers. The Clackamas County Children's Commission Head Start is adding 27 employees.

Altogether, Ford said, local Head Starts are hiring about 300

teachers, family advocates, bus drivers, supervisors and support staff to handle the increase.

At the Washington County Community Action Head Start, director Farzana Siddiqui got a state grant to add 162 children this fall, and more next year. She is scrambling to hire as many as 32 new employees and has moved several staffers into new supervisory positions. The Community Action Head Start serves Tigard, Beaverton and Hillsboro.

Nancy Alderman will move from being a teacher for more than 25 years to supervising six Head Start classrooms.

"I loved classroom teaching," Alderman said. "It's very hard to leave that, but the time seemed right. There's a lot of change happening."

Annie Nguyen, 24, will divide her time this fall between classes at Pacific University in Forest Grove and teaching in the Washington County program. She's new to Oregon, but she taught in a Head Start classroom in California for four years.

Most Community Action Head Start classes operate in schools during the regular school year, but the agency also runs two full-year, full-day programs in Hillsboro and Beaverton.

On a recent morning, 5-year-

old Mayra Botello and her 16 classmates kept busy with games, songs, recess and some practice matching pairs of figures on cards. Recognizing patterns and similar characters helps build early math skills, said Yanchin Topgyal, the lead teacher. Head Start classes are deliberately kept small, with at least one assistant, so each child gets plenty of attention.

"I've matched five cards already," Mayra shouts, in Spanish.

"Good work," answers teacher assistant Ana Alvarez, in English. Some of the children arrive with little or no English, but have made strong gains once they leave for kindergarten. Mayra moves effortlessly between English and Spanish.

Later, she picks at a lunch of fish sticks, green beans, milk and cantaloupe, sitting next to her friend, Alexia Rico, 5. The children in the full-day program get a full breakfast and lunch, plus an afternoon snack.

Siddiqui says by the end of phase two of the expansion next year, she hopes the agency will be able to handle most, if not all, eligible families in her service area.

And one thing's for sure, she says: There'll be no trouble filling the slots.

Money: Bookkeeper on unpaid leave July 9

Continued from Page One

different schedule, depositing eight paychecks to her Key Bank personal checking account in March alone.

Early this year, bank employees began keeping track of Rowley-Butcher's visits. According to records they submitted to investigators, Rowley-Butcher deposited 30 fire district paychecks into her personal account — and cashed several more over four and a half

their findings to the Oregon Government Waste Hotline, which forwarded the case to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office on June 25.

Rowley-Butcher also cashed an undetermined number of payroll checks at Key Bank, and may have performed more transactions at U.S. Bank, where she is believed to maintain other accounts, a Clackamas County Sheriff's Office investigator wrote in a request for a search warrant.

On July 11, the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office announced that Rowley-Butcher, 59, was the sole suspect in connection with several hundred thousand dollars that vanished over a period of several years. Fire Chief Alan Hull estimated that \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year — up to 4 percent of the dis-

without arousing suspicions of colleagues, the district board or even the district's accountants. Hull said Rowley-Butcher's books always appeared to be in perfect order, but he acknowledged that she had virtually exclusive and unsupervised access to district mail and finances and resisted even minimal oversight.

Payroll reports to the fire chief and district board always listed checks in numerical order, Hull said. "Every month was ... just perfect," he said, but no one was watching to make sure the check numbers lined up from one report to the next.

"The gap was between the months," Hull said.

Standing near Rowley-Butcher's former desk Friday, Hull pointed out a special machine the district uses to imprint dollar amounts and signatures on its checks. For security pur-

ground. That's my right and duty as a fire chief."

When the district installed QuickBooks accounting software earlier this year, she complained and refused to use it, Hull said.

On other occasions, Hull said, Rowley-Butcher grew angry when the district employees asked her to supply line-item data from the budget.

"We don't do that here, because if we did, you'd know how much money you had to spend, and you'd spend it all," Hull recalled her saying.

Rowley-Butcher hasn't been back to work to claim her belongings; three Patrick Nagel prints of women in glacial purples and blues still hang on her office walls. At her desk, a winning \$7 scratch-off lottery ticket remains unclaimed and a sticker reads: "I'll trying being nicer if

work ID card, the fire district's mail, two stock certificates with 1,000 total shares of GE Corp. stock, a jeweler's receipt, more than \$1,740 in cash from a black purse, and a small amount of marijuana with a pipe.

The fire district put Rowley-Butcher on unpaid administrative leave July 9 and terminated her medical and dental benefits, which also covered her husband, Kevin Butcher. She remains the chairwoman of Estacada's budget committee.

Rowley-Butcher often boasted to co-workers about an inheritance from a deceased relative; Hull said he heard it was a quarter-million dollars left behind by a generous uncle.

They said that was how she explained some extravagances: taking half a dozen coworkers out to lunch each week; offering financial support to family

Butcher also owned a motor home and an 18- or 19-foot ski boat.

Jennifer Molina, the district's administrative assistant, said she felt awkward when Rowley-Butcher used to buy her lunch. "She would get offended if I said, 'Can I pay?'" Molina added. "She was very, very generous in many ways, but you were sort of held hostage in others."

Looking back over the years Rowley-Butcher ruled district finances, Hull reflected, "Everybody had all these little red flags and clues, and nobody put it together."

On Friday afternoon, what seemed to be red flag nearly jolted him out of his chair. A local bank called to say Rowley-Butcher had arrived with a new paycheck from the Estacada Fire District.

"I was panicked at first. Cashing another check, how could