

District-wide Boundary Review Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes – PPS District-wide Boundary Review Advisory Committee
Gray Middle School – March 15, 2016

INTRODUCTIONS AND PPS STAFF PRESENTATION

Mr. Jon Isaacs welcomed the audience and introduced the language interpreters, Gray Middle School Principal, and PPS Board Members Julie Esparza Brown and Amy Kohmstamm.

PPS Superintendent Carole Smith spoke and explained the current state of the process, noting that she is looking over the DBRAC recommendation to get to something the board can make a decision on with the deadline intended for a March 29th proposal. She explained her intended recommendations, including opening Ockley Green as a Middle School in 2016, and switching many K-8s to K-5s and 6-8 configured schools on the East and Westside at the start of 2017 extending into 2019. Her proposal on the Westside includes boundary changes to Forest Park, Bridlemile, Ainsworth, and moving Chapman Kindergarten classrooms to the Ramona.

A full copy of her recommendations are available online at <http://www.pps.net/>

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jon Isaacs facilitated public comment. Public testimony is outlined below in the order it was received.

REPRESENTATIVE MARGARET DOHERTY: Representative Doherty stated her aspirations to see Smith Elementary opened in the Ashcreek neighborhood in 2019, and asked the district to direct bond money in the future towards Smith. She also thanks DBRAC members and the audience for attending and supporting their local schools.

TUCKER JOHNSON, MLC. As a MLC Junior and VP of the Student Government, Mr. Johnson testified against downsizing MLC or moving the program. He expressed his support for the student body, the inclusive community that their unique programming supports, and stated it was likely the most LGBTQ friendly school in the district. He cited Franklin High School's opening of a new social justice program based on the model pioneered at MLC, and that he wished to avoid seeing LGBT community being displaced.

CHRIS GILBERT, Astor. Mr. Gilbert stated that the Astor community wanted to stay a K-8, and had concerns for the underperforming test scores at George. He said the move felt unnecessary, and would disrupt the Astor community and the Roosevelt cluster down the line. He looked forward to a productive dialog with the district about how best to let their voice be heard for their aspirations for their community school.

STEPHIN CHEN, Ainsworth. Mr. Chen stated the Recommendation was moving in the right direction, but was concerned about the overcrowding being shifted to Wilson High School. He asked the district to consider Dual Assignment for Bridlemile and Ainsworth to Lincoln and Wilson, citing it would rightsize both schools by 2019. He expressed interest in seeing a new Middle School a new Westside Immersion Cluster program, and more funding for Hayhurst.

JENNIFER WHITTEN, Bridlemile. Ms. Whitten asked audience to support the Better Oregon campaign to get more resources for . She stated that she was pleased the Bridlemile was healthier and rightsized, but was concerned about the impacts on the West Slope neighborhoods now sent to Wilson. She stated support for a split at fifth grade so that they could walk to their school and have a consistent peer group through twelfth grade.

DICK HAUSKEN, Gray. Mr. Hausken expressed high satisfaction with Gray middle school but noticed that the enrollment had steadily climbed from 410 to 570. He asked to keep enrollment between 515 and 550 to keep the school rightsized.

KIRSTEN CARR, Hayhurst. Ms. Carr stated her support for Odyssey being located at East Sylvan, continuing to keep the technology teacher and robotics programming at the institution, and expanding the boundary to Custer Park. She expressed hesitation in opening a second Spanish Immersion program, stating that the Westside already has focus options and needs strong neighborhood programming.

DANIEL PORTER, Chapman. Mr Porter stated that he was disappointed by the most recent scenario, and declared that the process hasn't given a compelling argument for Focus Option over Neighborhood Option programming. Mr. Porter continued his testimony by stating he was frustrated that his children wouldn't be able to walk to their nearby K-5 program. He concluded by stating that a "just decision" by PPS wouldn't prioritize families who have a choice over those who do not, and asked PPS to make the right decision.

MICHELE SHEA-HAN, Sylvan Highlands neighborhood association. Ms. Shea-Han stated that as part of the Chapman boundary, she was concerned about the high school students having to travel from Lincoln to Wilson. The transportation concerns would limit their students opportunities to access extracurriculars, and noted her Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to endorse continuing to send their students to Lincoln. She noted that with an 80% on-time rate, TriMet buses would lead her students to be late to school once a week. She stated a preference to keep both sides of the neighborhoods together.

DEAN SMITH, Ashcreek NA. Mr. Smith lamented that his neighborhood was too isolated, and that the the district needed to be thinking about opening Smith in 2021 as a Neighborhood School. He stated that he would like to Smith see as an elementary school, and thanked DBRAC for their work for Southwest Portland Schools.

JOSHUA OWENS, Maplewood. Mr. Owens, who had been working on the Maplewood 2020 team, stated the results from his survey that he sent out to the Maplewood community. After getting a 70% survey response rate, he found that the latest Recommendation gets their support, but that it's time for Maplewood's overcrowding to be addressed in the near future. He continued that many families would consider voluntary enrollment to schools with smaller class sizes, and that the district needs to plan for the expected growth.

BRIAN UNFLAT, Rieke/Wilson. Mr. Unflat stated that after 15 months of work, he appreciated the work of DBRAC, the school board members and PPS. He expressed that he believed this plan would ensure the majority of schools would be right sized and properly

funded. He noted that keeping grandfathering in effect will ease some transitions for the new school boundaries, and he asked the community to support the A Better Oregon campaign to increase funding for schools.

TOBY ETHRIDGE, Odyssey. Mr Etheredge testified that he was excited to see East Sylvan reopen to students, and that he was supportive of PPS Superintendent Carole Smith's Recommendations. She asked PPS to build safe, accessible and productive environments for children, and that while it will be bittersweet to move to a new school, he was heartened by the opportunity to call East Sylvan his new school.

MARTINA PHILLIPS, Bridlemile/West Sylvan. Ms Phillips stated that she was shocked to hear that the boundary change would send Bridlemile students to Wilson, expressing concern that it would make for a cumbersome commute to school. She detailed her experiences taking TriMet from her neighborhood to Wilson, noting it involved over an hour of commute and long walks on roads without sidewalks.

LISA MACRIS, Astor. Stating her concerns that the Astor community didn't feel that they had been heard, Ms. Macris was concerned that the changes to the historically strong community school with great results was going to be changed. She testified that these changes were not good for her students, and believed that the move would push community students away from their neighborhood. She cited the poor results from surveys of George students and teachers, and asked the district to address George's underperforming results.

JOSHUA HORNICK, Ainsworth. Mr. Hornick thanked the superintendent for their work, and expressed support for the Recommendations she supported. He stated that he hoped the changes didn't lead to overcrowded classes at the neighborhood program of Ainsworth, and challenged PPS to provide an implementation plan that supports a smooth transition.

PAOLA MARIN-TIPPRER, Ainsworth Spanish Immersion. Ms. Marin-Tipprer stated appreciation that the Spanish Immersion program has not been moved out of Ainsworth, and that they embraced opening a new immersion program on the Westside in the future. She expressed a desire to see these programs expanded to the full slate of students who wanted it, and wanted to offer to partner with PPS on reaching out to Portland's native speaking population to engage the community.

VICKIE SUMNER, Bridlemile staff. Ms. Sumner expressed support for the Recommendations, noting she appreciated the efforts to maintain the school as rightsized. She continued that the Bridlemile staff strongly supported the dual assignment option for students entering Middle School.

EDIE ROGOWAY VAN NESS, Hayhurst. Ms. Van Ness detailed her proposal to move the Custer Park neighborhood into the Hayhurst district, stating it would help rightsize the Hayhurst program. She discouraged the grandfathering clause to help address their urgent under-enrollment and stated her support for the Hayhurst school. She also noted that Hayhurst has approximately one third of its student body that is at or below the poverty level. She noted that

Hayhurst needed more help because it lacked the high income population who could help fundraise to make up the difference.

ERIN FITZGERALD, Gray. After thanking PPS staff, Ms Fitzgerald stated her support for rightsizing Bridlemile, and she welcomed the Chapman students who were going to move to Bridlemile. She expressed how important the guaranteed transfer option was for Bridlemile students who are transferring, which would take the pressure off of overcrowding at Gray.

ASHLEY MASTRORILLI, Bridlemile/West Sylvan/Lincoln. Ms Mastrorilli stated that she got involved with the boundary review process because she felt concern about the split feeder pattern at Bridlemile, even though it did not impact her children. She stated that she wanted to see Bridlemile stay a healthy-sized community with 450 students, which rules out Scenarios 2A and 2B.

CASEY RODHE, Chapman Staff. Ms. Rodhe, speaking as a Kindergarten teacher at Chapman, expressed what she saw as the drawbacks and opportunities associated with moving the Kindergarten programming into the building at the Roman. She noted the safety concerns, the transitions, the lost opportunities for older students to engage with younger students, and the opportunity to take students to The Fields Park everyday, and appreciated that the district was addressing Chapman's overcrowding concerns.

KARA STONE, Southwest Hills NA. Ms Stone, speaking on behalf of the SWNI Schools Subcommittee, expressed her appreciation for the community that showed up at these meetings and the PPS commitment to ensuring southwest Portland schools were successful. She stated that she hoped anything that comes forward is a thoughtful plan and that she wanted to see more Westside residents engaged in future DBRAC initiatives.

LIAM SIPP, MLC. Mr Sipp, a student at MLC, expressed support for the unique curriculum and community at MLC, noting it's status as an alternative school and not a Focus Option. He noted the program was overcrowded

MICHAEL KISOR, George Smith. Mr. Kisor testified that Smith was difficult to access by automobile, which made the facility difficult for programs like Odyssey. He hoped the school would reopen as a neighborhood program, preferably sooner than 2019 as proposed by the district and perhaps as soon as 2017.

ROBERT AND CARYN COHEN, West Sylvan. Mr. and Ms. Cohen concluded testimony by stating that, despite experiencing the district boundary rebalancing process as a fractured family with students going to multiple schools, they expressed satisfaction with the transparency and openness of the process. They stated that while families will inevitably be satisfied at some point, they have experienced redistricting processes in the past in other districts and believed PPS ran theirs transparently.