



DISTRICT-WIDE BOUNDARY REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Jan. 28, 2016

K8 Criteria

K8 Criteria 1st - Recommendation & Exceptions

Recommendation:

- That Portland Public Schools return to a predominantly K-5 /middle school model.
- That any schools remaining as K-8s must have sufficient enrollment and space, in one building, to support three sections per grade at all levels and not impede the ability of other schools to maintain enrollment sufficient to support a full K-5/middle school program.

Exceptions:

DBRAC recognizes a few exceptions to these criteria given the location of PPS school buildings. These exceptions include:

1. Instances in which a reconfigured school's geographic location would result in a commute time consistently greater than one hour and a potentially unsafe commute for students to middle school. Only Skyline K-8 School meets this exception and should remain a K-8.
2. Instances in which a school building is under construction as a K-8 and includes contracts with and commitments to outside partners integral to a unique program model. Faubion K-8 School, which is under construction in partnership with the Concordia University 3 to PhD program, meets this exception and should remain a K-8.
3. Non-neighborhood Focus Options and Alternative Schools. These programs are undergoing review in a separate process.

4. In addition, we recognize that PPS is constrained by the size and location of its current portfolios of buildings. When a final reconfiguration plan is developed, there may be K-8s that continue to exist because there are no good options for conversion due to size of building and availability of middle school space.

K8 Criteria 2nd – Urgency and Interim

The tension of urgency versus successful implementation:

To allow for adequate planning and facilities work to support implementation that best serves students this time, **we heed the guidance that Superintendent Smith offered to DBRAC in December that grade reconfiguration not be implemented until Fall 2017.**

Exceptions and stipulations for the interim

However to address the urgency of students not going another year with inadequate programing, we offer the following exceptions and stipulations:

Ockley Green - Jefferson Cluster If it is possible for PPS to deliver a robust middle school program at Ockley Green this fall, DBRAC believes it should do so.

Family certainty

- Determine which schools would be K-5s and which would be middle schools in March.
- Decide on boundary decisions and high school feeder patterns by late May.
- DBRAC also accepts the District's invitation to continue in an advisory role to these final steps in this process.
- DBRAC urges PPS to stick to this timeline to allow for facilities and program planning over the summer and to provide families and staff with time to prepare for the transition.

Interim steps to support K-8 programs

The DBRAC also recommends that PPS take steps to resolve program inequities at K-8s during the 2016-17 school year while the larger reconfiguration is planned in order to immediately address student needs. These include:

- **Ensuring equal instruction time at the middle school level regardless of grade configuration**
DBRAC asks that the District collaborate with both PAT and principals this spring on a solution that ensures equal instruction time for all middle grades students starting in fall 2016, regardless of the school configuration.
- **Investing in additional course options for under-enrolled K-8 schools**

PPS should include in its budget for 2016-17, funding to add course offerings in K-8s not currently offering a full program, even if it includes providing opportunities after school or through transportation to another school.

K8 Criteria 3rd – Implementation

Implementation of the district-wide K-8 reconfiguration

- **Ensure adequate funding for facilities upgrades and program delivery**
- **Ensure equitable access to program offerings** - DBRAC recommends that sufficient budget be allocated to ensure that all schools are funded to support a minimum of one foreign language elective, one science/technology elective, one arts elective, and one PE elective per grade, depending on the needs and interests of students in the school.

Middle School Criteria

Middle School Criteria Advice 1st – Recommendation #1

Recommendation #1: The selection of middle school locations and feeders should be based on having middle schools with a minimum enrollment that provides approximately six, 25-student sections per grade level (6th, 7th and 8th). This is to afford a range of course offerings including electives, and advanced and support-level classes in such subjects as math. If a new middle school will take up to three school years to meet the target enrollment, the district shall provide supplemental resources so the school can offer programs and services expected of a middle school.

Middle School Criteria Advice 2nd – Recommendation #2

Recommendation #2: The selection of middle school locations should be based on model B. However, there should be only two middle schools in the part of North Portland in which Scenario B proposes three. This change is in response to the low forecast enrollment and community feedback.

Middle School Criteria Advice 3rd – Recommendation #3

Recommendation #3: To be able to successfully reconfigure the majority of K-8 schools beginning in fall 2017, DBRAC recommends:

- The District should prepare and implement transition plans for each new middle school. These plans should provide for the resources, planning, time, and community input needed to implement this effort successfully. The District should work with principals and teachers to identify and incorporate elements required for successful transitions.
- Certainty as to student assignment should be established for families no later than May 2016.

The move to K-5s and middle schools must be planned, designed and resourced to preserve the benefits of K-8s where possible. This includes preserving the sense of children being "known" in their schools, including that each child will have more than one strong relationship with staff members. Approaches to consider include sixth-grade academies to help students root in middle school and partnerships with feeder elementary schools such as reading buddies or joint field trips or arts productions so that students and families feel connected to both their K-5 and middle schools.

- Both the Board and District must work with schools and families to ease transportation between K-5s and middle schools. The change from K-8 schools to K-5/6-8 schools can make transportation to and from school a significant challenge for some families. The distance and time to travel from home to school impacts whether a student can walk, bike or help a sibling get to school, as well as whether parents can be actively engaged in a school. These issues are of particular concern to our undocumented immigrant families who may lack of access to driver's licenses.
- The middle school committee concurs with K-8 committee's recommendation to change Ockley-Green back into a middle school for fall 2016 due to its unique readiness detailed in the K-8 recommendations.

West Side Boundaries

West Side Advice 1st – Scenario 2b

Superintendent Smith should forward Scenario 2b to the School Board for implementation in the 2016 school year with the following exceptions:

1. Odyssey program location:
 - a. The committee recommends opening Smith to relieve Hayhurst over other available options. Odyssey would remain at Hayhurst for the 2016-17 school year and move for the 2017-18 school year. Details about potential

co-location of other programs at Smith should be worked out well in advance of the school's opening.

- b. The next order of preference is a move to Jackson Middle School beginning in the 2016 School Year. If such a move is made, it should be long-term, and not as a stop-gap while Smith is being readied to re-open.
- c. The committee is reluctant to recommend placing modular buildings at Hayhurst, due to cost, time needed for construction.

West Side Advice 2nd – Boundary Change Guidance

1. Boundary change guidance

- a. The committee generally endorses the boundary changes described in Scenario 2b, but sees potential for small improvements in the following areas:
 - i. Neighborhoods directly west of Chapman Elementary proposed to move to Ainsworth should be reconsidered so that students who can walk to Chapman now remain in that boundary.
 - ii. Hayhurst will be underutilized as a result of changes in Scenario 2b, while Maplewood will exceed utilization by 2020. Additional boundary changes should be considered to better balance enrollment between the two schools.
 - iii. Bridlemile will be underutilized as a result of changes in Scenario 2b. Small revisions should be considered to better use the classrooms in that school, so long as the K-5 attendance boundary does not result in overcrowding at Gray Middle School.
 - iv. Stephenson is experiencing growth and could be considered for additional boundary changes.
 - v. Minor shifts to optimize exact placement of boundary lines should be considered based on community input and evaluation of any unintended negative impacts to students.
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West Side Advice 3rd – Implementation Guidance

Implementation Guidance

Wherever possible, the committee suggests following current PPS policy of allowing students to attend their current school to the highest grade. If there is a pressing need for more rapid shifts of students, potentially such as serious overcrowding and continuing growth at Chapman or Lincoln, exceptions to the policy should be considered. In the case that exceptions are determined to be required, extra effort and care should be taken to make the transition as smooth as possible and minimize any negative impacts to students/families that are required to change schools.