



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Carole Smith
Superintendent

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 14, 2015

To the Portland School Board:

Tonight I am presenting my eighth budget message as Superintendent of Portland Public Schools. I am proposing a \$579 million general fund budget for our district. Our ability to continue to invest in programs and services for our students is, in large part, thanks to the generosity of PPS voters who supported a renewal of our local option levy in November last year.

I am pleased to report that student outcomes are continuing to improve at PPS. Last year (2013-14) we had a 70% four-year cohort graduation rate – a 3 percentage point increase over the prior year and 17 percentage point increase since 2008-09. Our five-year completion rate was 82% last year. We remain committed to continuing this progress and improving outcomes for all students.

This proposed budget again prioritizes resources to our students and staff in schools. We are able to invest in additional staffing in our schools this coming year because of an increase in our local option revenue, continued growth in student enrollment and the increased state funding that follows from those higher student numbers.

This proposed budget increases funding directed to students and schools in support of the District's three strategic priorities.

To accelerate the **third grade reading** initiative, I have proposed adding educational assistants in kindergarten classes at schools with the highest concentrations of historically underserved students; and adding a teacher to each of eight focus and priority schools with the most urgent need to improve outcomes for students. This budget funds full-day kindergarten in all schools through the general fund (previously funded by Title I and tuition) and adds another early learning center in southeast Portland to meet the needs of our youngest learners.

In support of accelerating **high school graduation and completion** rates, this budget adds teaching staff to all high schools to improve student:teacher ratios and provide

additional courses; adds coordinating support for college and career readiness programs for every high school; and centralizes and makes all high school athletic directors full-time. It also includes resources to maintain successful initiatives such as our High School Graduation Initiative and early warning system as those grants expire. The proposed budget matches funds from the Nike School Innovation Fund and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation to expand AVID to additional high schools and middle grade programs and provides staff to middle grade programs to support college and career readiness and electives. This investment ensures that there will be arts in every school for all grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

This budget provides additional resources for strategies to **reduce exclusionary discipline** by improving the allocation of counselors to K-5, K-8 and middle schools by ensuring at least a full-time counselor in all these schools and using a rounded 400:1 ratio to allocate additional counseling staff. It also leverages resources to match grants from Multnomah County for attendance and mental health initiatives. I am proposing adding resources to provide support and training for our staff around equity, school climate and restorative practices in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for our students to learn and our staff to work.

The proposed budget also:

Ensures that every school has at least two full-time (40 hours/week) secretaries; and adds five full-time educational assistant substitutes and five full-time paraeducator substitutes to support schools.

Funds the work to implement the revised Enrollment and Transfer Policy and the boundary review process.

Adds transportation services to improve equitable access to dual language immersion programs.

Three quarters of PPS funding comes via the state school fund. The legislature has approved an appropriation of \$7.255 billion for K-12 education for the 2015/17 biennium. This proposed budget was initially developed with an assumption of a \$7.235 billion legislative appropriation, allocated 49% in the first year. It includes a substantial spending of beginning fund balance and an unassigned contingency of only 3.5%.

Decisions about the use of any additional revenue in 2015-16 over and above that included in this proposed budget should carefully consider the implications for 2016-17 and whether those expenditures are sustainable in the second year of the biennium.

With those considerations in mind, when revised estimates of funding for next year became available after we had developed the initial budget proposal, I added recommendations for additional spending – most of which allows us to ensure that there is a media specialist

(librarian) in all our elementary schools and a Career Technical Educational experience for all seventh graders. To preserve the 49%/51% allocation between the years of the biennium, we balanced these increases to planned spending by assigning some of the estimated increase in revenue to assigned contingency, which increases the likelihood of being able to sustain these budget proposals.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to lead this great school district for the past eight years, and I am thankful for the support our community has provided to the students we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this budget proposal.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carole Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carole" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Smith".

Carole Smith
Superintendent

The Superintendent outlined the proposed budget with a PowerPoint presentation on April 14. That presentation can be found at http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/budget/Final_Proposed_Budget_Framework_and_Staffing_4.14.2015.pdf