

School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon
Board Work Session of May 30, 2018

INFORMAL MINUTES

A Work Session of the Board of Directors came to order at 3:40pm at the call of Chair Julia Brim-Edwards in the Mazama Conference Room at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon, 97227.

There were present:

Board of Directors:

Julia Brim-Edwards, Chair
Rita Moore, Vice-Chair
Julie Esparza Brown, Vice-Chair
Am Kohnstamm
Paul Anthony
Scott Bailey
Mike Rosen
Moses Tran, Student Representative

Staff:

Guadalupe Guerrero, Superintendent
Yvonne Curtis, Deputy Superintendent
Stephanie Cameron, Senior Director of Communications
Teri Brady, Assistant Director Transportation
Sara King, Director Planning and Asset Management
Rosanne Powell, Board Office Manager
Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk

Superintendent Guerrero provided a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal to co-locate the ACCESS Program at two schools. Due to the middle school conversion project, Rose City Park, the current home for the ACCESS Academy, becomes a K-5 school feeding into Roseway Heights Middle School, leaving ACCESS students without a location starting in fall 2018. He added that none of the options were ideal and that the District does not have a single site for ACCESS. We must co-locate grades 1-5 in one building and grades 6-8 in a different building. Deputy Superintendent Curtis described the co-location process that was used. Two options were narrowed down:

- Option A: Vestal for grades 1-5, and Lane for grades 6-8
- Option B: Peninsula for grades 1-5, and Woodlawn for grades 6-8

Director Kohnstamm questioned if a co-location occurred at Lane, would the two programs remain segregated or could they be blended. Superintendent Guerrero responded that he hopes it would not just be cohabitation with no relationships. Perhaps elective offerings could be increased to be available to all middle school students. He would like to see a more inclusive, overall school environment. Director Rosen noted that if Option A was chosen, that the two schools could not share buses and would double the routes. With Option B, the buses could be shared.

Chair Brim-Edwards asked if ACCESS was located at two sites, were there concerns about the services provided to the students. Superintendent Guerrero responded no. The only thing that would be change was the address; we must meet all legal obligations.

Vice-Chair Moore stated that the PreK programs at Lane were already proposed to be moved and asked they would be going. Ms. Curtis responded that there were multiple schools where they could be located.

Director Anthony questioned why we couldn't just leave ACCESS at Rose City Park and distribute the projected students for Rose City Park to Lee, Scott, and Vestal. Ms. Curtis responded that staff did not look at that as the decision as already made by the Board to open more middle schools. Chair Brim-Edwards agreed, stating that the Board adopted a resolution that designated boundaries for Rose City Park and where those students would go and staff felt that was a done deal.

Student Representative Tran asked if grades 6-8 would be re-introduced at Woodlawn. Ms. Curtis responded yes.

Director Anthony asked what each of the proposed schools would be giving up in order for there to be enough room for ACCESS to move in. Superintendent Guerrero responded that it vary depending upon the site. The principal from each proposed school provided a list of what would need to change in their school.

Vice-Chair Moore indicated that on the analysis sheet, it states that Vestal would not have enough classroom space. Ms. King responded that the analysis sheet was the initial review of the sites by facilities. Once a second review was conducted with the academia team, it was determined that there would be enough room, Vice-Chair Esparza Brown questioned why daVinci wasn't considered. Ms. Curtis responded that daVinci did not have a significant number of classrooms vacant and no gym.

Director Rosen questioned how temporary or permanent the decision will be and whether it will be reviewed every year. Superintendent Guerrero responded that review could be two years out and the he looks forward to doing the work with the Board. Director Kohnstamm asked if Woodlawn was chosen, would it affect their Title 1 status. Ms. Curtis responded that staff worked with the Title 1 Coordinator who stated that Title 1 status would not be affected as ACCESS is a Program and not a School. Director Bailey questioned before and after school care. The Principal of each proposed school provided information on their childcare.

School Community Representatives

Anna deVill (Vestal): the Vestal community was complex. Co-locating at Vestal is an equity issue. Students in the building will double. The majority of students of color at Vestal will lose their community when 67% of white ACCESS students arrive. She asked how distribution of resources would work at Vestal and added that the building would be beyond capacity.

Kate Sage (Vestal): many ACCESS students have had setbacks and struggles in their lives, but the struggles of Vestal students are those of the world and racism. We must prioritize the need of the most vulnerable.

Connie Umphrie (Woodlawn): PPS was putting them in a terrible spot. Woodlawn was the result of a closed school merger. They were able to save their school. There are inadequate educational opportunities in the Jefferson cluster for K-8, and they were working hard to adapt to a gentrified community. Right now, Woodlawn has adequate class space and has built an amazing scheme of curriculum. Woodlawn could not get advanced classes for their school, but now ACCESS could come in be a predominantly white program.

Ry Wassman (Woodlawn): concerned about co-locating ACCESS at Woodlawn as they could lose ESL reading and behavioral support rooms. The school will be crowded. They have already gone through a massive gentrification, and will be outsiders in their own community. Co-location would be a big step backwards.

Jenny Gapp (Peninsula): Peninsula was a successful K-8 and asked why we couldn't have K-8 and middle schools co-exist in the District. There is a strain when two programs are located in one school. They already have two lunch periods, will they then have four?

Martha Ruttle (ACCESS): there is a false sense of urgency and the last minute decision making process was inadequate. The District has failed for years to modify boundaries and share distribution of students. Leave ACCESS at Rose City Park. You should have discussed that plan in public, but you didn't. Take more time to gather the information you need.

Chris Wold: presented Dr. Cal Johnson, child psychiatrist. Dr. Johnston stated that children are under considerable emotional strain, and there is only seven days until the school year ends and they were facing a hasty Board decision. You have delayed your decision to May 30th, and the students have anxiety. This year's uncertainty has harmed the children. You do not need to vote today. When you are under strain, it is best to step back and regroup. Leave things as they are.

Nicole Eroz Ilardo: disappointed that TAGAC has never been offered a time to speak until during public comment. They did not have time to put their thoughts together. Ms. Eroz Ilardo read the definition of TAG per the State of Oregon. ACCESS serves a specific need and the District has failed in identifying TAG students. The District has been out of compliance with OAR for 15 out of 20 years.

Adjourn

Chair Brim-Edwards adjourned the Work Session at 5:15pm.

Submitted by:

Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk
PPS Board of Education