



Board of Education Informational Report

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 28, 2017

To: PPS Board of Directors

From: Harry Esteve; *Dir. of Strategic Communications*

Subject: Middle School Community Engagement

Community engagement on the Harriet Tubman and Roseway Heights is well underway once again. You have had two robust listening sessions, and there is a lot more to come. The purpose of community engagement sessions is to inform stakeholders of what the District is proposing as well as to solicit responses that will ultimately improve the proposal at hand.

The proposal to open two middle schools at Harriet Tubman and Roseway Heights has been the subject of District conversation for more than three years. In the spring of 2016, DBRAC held a series of community engagement sessions on enrollment balancing in the Jefferson, Madison and Grant cluster in preparation for opening the two schools in time for the 2017-18 school year. These sessions resulted in a 20-page memo which DBRAC presented to then-Superintendent Carole Smith. That work was put on hold by interim Superintendent Bob McKean following the departure of Superintendent Smith. The work was restarted in 2017, with emphasis on middle school framework, led by the Office of Teaching and Learning, who prioritized work on feeder patterns and boundaries. An initial proposal was vetted through superintendent direct reports, DBRAC, and a group of principals and senior directors, after which significant changes were made. Once we felt the proposal was suitably composed and vetted the community engagement process was restarted.

To date we have had the following engagement sessions:

- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) leadership input regarding placement of Vietnamese DLI.
- Roseway Heights-area parents and principals to discuss K-8 conversions, boundary changes, other issues.
- SuperSAC meeting, where students discussed middle school experience and aspirations for new middle schools.
- Two board listening sessions, one at Madison High School and one at BESC, with emphasis on Tubman community.
- DBRAC work session to highlight pros and cons.
- Additionally, there has been testimony in front of the Enrollment and Forecasting Committee and before the Board at regular meetings.

In addition to listening sessions, we have solicited community input online and through a targeted email account. To date we have received nearly 200 comments online, 38 comments on paper and 10 emails sent to the targeted account. These are in addition to the more than 70 people who spoke at the two listening sessions, which totals more than 300 individual comments. I have read all the comments and attended all of the engagement and listening sessions.

Here are some of the major themes that have emerged:

- Broad sentiment that the District is doing the right thing to open these schools.
- Relocation of Kairos has prompted concern.
- Relocation of ACCESS program needs to be re-examined.
- Vestal capture rate and size is a concern.
- Rose City Park would start out at 100 percent capacity.
- The proposal is very courageous – stand firm against detractors.
- Some confusion over sibling and grandfathering policies.
- Tubman is too far to go, including crossing several busy streets, for some families who would be redrawn out of the Beaumont area.
- Concerns over the state of facilities at Rose City Park and Tubman.
- Students are resilient, and can handle changes better than adults may think.
- Parents at Lee, Scott and Vestal are excited about the opportunity for their children to attend a middle school.
- Will there be additional resources to ensure newly formed K-5s have robust staffing?
- Who goes to Madison vs. who goes to Grant high concerns.
- Desire to keep K-4 students at Roseway Heights together as a cohort – also concern that keeping that cohort isn't equitable.

Community engagement will continue. Two community meetings are currently scheduled: One at Madison on October 2nd; and one at Sabin on October 5th. Notifications about these meetings include emails and post cards to all households affected by proposed changes. We are also working with an outside group to design and facilitate these meetings in an effort to make them as useful as possible. Culturally specific meetings are also planned. On October 9th there will be a meeting for Spanish speaking families at Scott; and on October 10th there will be a meeting for Vietnamese speaking families at Roseway Heights. We are currently working to schedule a meeting for African American families. Additionally, our planning principals have been meeting or have scheduled meetings with PTAs and site councils of feeder schools, with parents, and with SEI, Black Parent Initiative. The Board will be provided with summaries and copies of all comments received, and we will highlight where community input has influenced the plan.