



INFORMAL MINUTES

A meeting of the board's Policy Committee meeting came to order at 11:34 am at the call of Committee Chair Eilidh Lowery in the Willamette Conference Room at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon, 97227.

There were present:

Committee Members

Eilidh Lowery – Committee Chair
Amy Kohnstamm
Scott Bailey

Staff and Other Attendees

Kara Bradshaw – Executive Assistant, Board of Education
Mary Catherine Moore – Auditor
Rosanne Powell – Senior Board Manager
Korrina Wolfe – Area Senior Director, Multiple Pathways to Graduation
Joseph LaFontaine – Regional Superintendent
Mary Sage Davis – Opal School
Beth Hutchins – Opal School
Susan Spreadborough – Portland Arthur Academy
Stephani Walker – Portland Arthur Academy
Tara O'Neil – Director, Charter Schools
Jessica Haughey – Portland Village School
Alison Day – Portland Village School
Jenni Stackhouse – Portland Village School
Kali Thorne Ladd – KairosPDX
Zalika Gardner – KairosPDX
Marsha Williams – KairosPDX
Sunita Sandoz – The Emerson School
Erica Stavis – Multiple Pathways to Graduation
Joe McFerrin II – Rosemary Anderson High School

Charter School Extension Requests

Korrina Wolfe introduced the timeline for the Charter School extension and renewal process, noting that they work backward from the end date of June 30, 2020. It was discussed whether or not the final vote would be on the same day as the presentation or not. It was decided that the presentation would occur on the same day as the vote, unless something changes.

Opal School

Tara O'Neil introduced a summary of the Opal School's State Report Card and Annual Performance Framework and Report. She shared that they are in the last year of the optional flexible renewal period and that next year they will be required to complete a full renewal. She noted that testing is difficult to evaluate because the school is so small, with only 88 students and only half of the students in a testing period per year. She noted that it is challenging for charter schools to pass the state requirements in some of the financial areas, because of the nature of charter schools and how close to the bone they run financially. She added that although there are "did not pass" ratings in finance areas, but that the Portland Public Schools financial department did not see any red flags. Representatives from Opal School, Mary Sage Davis and Beth Hutchins, shared what they are doing in math, as well as the challenges in providing Special Education Services without district provided curriculum.

Ms. Wolfe noted that if there were concerns at either schools requesting an extension that the District staff would have requested a full renewal instead of an extension.

Portland Arthur Academy

Ms. O'Neil shared a summary of the Portland Arthur Academy's State Report Card and Annual Performance Framework and Report, noting that because they have more than 500 students they have a more robust testing sampling of students and that the academic results are overall high. Susan Spreadborough, from Arthur Academy, shared that their attendance rate has been low in part due to many families taking month long trips, but that they are also working with other families to help them get to school daily. There was a question regarding teacher turn over, and Ms. O'Neil shared that it is normal for a charter school to have a 50% teacher retention rate, because they don't have the funding capacity to offer a pay package that meets what public districts can offer.

Charter School Full Renewal Requests

Kairos PDX

Ms. Wolfe introduced the renewal request for KairosPDX, sharing that the data on the state report card looks skewed because it doesn't take into account the demographics, and noting that the school is doing better than PPS in serving African American students. Ms. O'Neil summarized the school's State Report Card and Annual Performance Framework and Report. She noted that the school expanded their grade range from K-2 to 3-5 two years ago, and for that reason, there is no long term academic data grades 3-5. There was a request from Director Kohnstamm for data regarding how much it costs for the district to run charter schools as well as a summary of what other local districts are doing. The data would allow for a conversation regarding increasing the percentage of dollars that are passed to Charter schools. KairosPDX specifically asked for an increase in pass through dollars because they are serving a much high percentage of historically under served and impacted students. It was noted that all charter schools pay a high percentage in PERS which is an additional cost. Marsha Williams noted that KairosPDX is going to be increasing the enrollment from 244 to 255.

Portland Village School

It was noted by Ms. O'Neil that Portland Village School (PVS) was asked to go through the full renewal process a year early because they were on an intervention plan and they wanted to take a deeper look at the school. Ms. Wolfe shared that the results of the interventions over the past year has be successful. Ms. O'Neil shared some of the ways that they've improved, including a better teacher retention rate, recovery of the decrease in enrollment, and strong financials allowing them to invest in their improvement plan. She shared an overview of the school's State Report Card and framework. They were asked to improve grades 5-8 math and 3-5 LA and their overall results show a very notable increase, as well as increased their testing participation rate. Jenni Stackhouse shared that the attendance data on the state report card was not correct, with their actual attendance rate at about 85%, but they are additionally implementing Attendance Works program. Ms. O'Neil stated that the school has increase their growth metrics. Ms. Stackhouse shared they increased awareness of the importance of testing data to the staff and the community, they increased the amount of time students spend in math and specifically working to align to state standards, worked to get PVS staff to participate in Portland Public Schools trainings, hired outside mentors to support specific grades, are using different models of teaching math, hired a math specialist for upper grades to support teachers, purchased new math curriculum, and are teaching students how to take tests and build familiarity with technology, as they are historically a no technology school. Ms. O'Neil shared that there were concerns two years in a row by state auditors regarding their financials, and that was a result of being challenged by turnover in the financial office. Ms. Stackhouse noted that the school has hired an outside accounting service to help add stability to their financial office.

Ms. Stackhouse additionally noted that there is a Snap Bond available to charter schools that is more likely to be offered to schools and is less expensive in interest if they have a 10 year commitment, but that currently the district will not commit to more than 5 years at a time, with option for renewal.

Public Comment

None.

February 03, 2020

Committee Chair Eilidh Lowery Adjourned the meeting at 12:58 pm.

Submitted by:

Kara Bradshaw

Kara Bradshaw, Executive Assistant
Portland Public Schools Board of Education