



**PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**OFFICE OF SCHOOL MODERNIZATION**  
501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227  
Telephone: (503) 916-2222

**Date:** February 13, 2020  
**To:** School Improvement Bond Committee  
**From:** Marina Cresswell, Senior Director, Office of School Modernization  
**Subject:** OSM Secure Schools Program Update

---

### **BACKGROUND**

The 2017 bond included \$5 million for security improvements at up to 11 schools. After the bond passed, PPS hired a professional security consultant to conduct an assessment of the district's physical security in 13 representative schools to help identify which improvements to prioritize with the funds. PPS convened a work group including the PPS Security department, representatives of Facilities, I/T, the Office of School Modernization, and Senior Leadership, with updates to the Office of School Performance. Using the security consultant's report, PPS identified the below scope as the highest priority:

- Electronic access control systems, including video intercoms and electronic locks at the main entrance and main ADA entrance of every school. This system gives school staff the ability to see who is at the front of the building, and control who may enter the site.
- Public address system speakers in common gathering areas such as hallways, gyms, cafeterias, auditoriums, and playgrounds.
- New signage as needed to help direct school visitors to the main entry and require check-in at the main office.
- Additional fencing and gates may also be added depending on the needs of a school site and available funding.

The work group determined that improvements were needed district-wide, not at limited schools as defined in the Bond language. The total cost estimate to complete this work at 88 sites across the district was approximately \$9 million, \$4 million higher than originally allocated in the Bond. Understanding the importance of this work, PPS allocated the additional funds to support these improvements.

With the scope identified and the funds secured, the next step was to sequence the order in which schools were to receive work. To accomplish this, schools were separated into 3 groups to efficiently manage and construct the improvements in as short a time period as possible. In order to further shorten the time from design to construction, the three groups were bid out as design-build contracts. In design-build contracting, a contractor is tasked with doing both the design (following PPS-specified standards) and the construction, rather than having those go through separate procurements.

During the Summer of 2019 the three contract groups were bid out consecutively within a short timeframe. The intent was to have three different contractors able to work at the same time on their respective groupings. The first package, Group 1, received two bids with the highest ranked bidder being awarded the work. The second package, Group 2, was out to bid while the first package was being awarded. This package received one bid, by the same contractor that was being awarded Group 1. Upon assurances that they could manage both packages effectively and on schedule, Group 2 was awarded to the same contractor as Group 1.

After the first two packages were bid, the project team reached out to other potential contractors for feedback on how best to increase the number of bidders. After listening to constructive suggestions, the team modified the bidding requirements to maximize competition, however only 1 bid was received for Group 3 and at a substantially higher cost than Group 1 and 2 (for a comparable scope of work). In order to keep Group 3 progressing forward, the team modified the Group 3 contract to award only the design portion of the contract (excluding the construction scope), with the intent of getting more accurate pricing after the design was complete. Unfortunately, making these changes to accommodate Group 3 created an initial schedule delay.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

Each of the 88 schools requires a site specific design and individual site assessment for the construction work. Many historical locations also require special approvals from the State Historic Preservation Office, and all sites need to be reviewed for potential hazardous materials to be abated prior to construction. Design progress has largely gone well and construction has begun on the first and second group of schools. Design for schools in the third package is underway.

That said, our contractor for Groups 1 and 2 has struggled with manpower in this busy market. They are scheduled to have full crews working on four sites at any given time, but have not typically been able to achieve the necessary level of staffing to stay on schedule. As we work our way through each school, we have also had to address unique issues and significant unforeseen conditions. In practice, this has meant that contractor crews are split up to address specific issues and working simultaneously on more sites than previously anticipated. Quality control has been harder to maintain, and crew questions take longer to answer, when contractor leads are split between multiple sites.

To help address these challenges, the Bond program has taken several steps. We have assigned additional OSM construction managers to the Secure Schools team to provide better oversight of quality across multiple sites and help address crew questions. Device programming and testing has been accelerated by hiring a network engineer dedicated to Bond projects. In coordination with the contractor, we have reviewed an OSM fire alarm installation project in progress also with this contractor, and determined that some workers could be shifted to the Secure Schools projects without negatively affecting the fire alarm project schedule. Additionally, OSM is providing third party professional scheduling assistance to the contractor to assist them in forecasting manpower capabilities. Options for the contractor to partner with other companies to complete portions of the work are also being explored.

We initially communicated to staff and community stakeholders that our target is to complete all work by Spring 2020. After bidding the three groups in 2019, we modified that target to completing Groups 1 and 2 by late Spring 2020, and Group 3 in Summer 2020. We continue to target these dates but are still working through the detailed schedule analysis noted above to verify that is within the staffing capabilities of the contractor. We expect to have a schedule update within a couple weeks and will communicate to schools and stakeholders.

## **COMMUNICATION**

OSM provides updates on its website regarding the Secure Schools program. Additionally, OSM provides monthly updates to the Office of School Performance leadership, and has provided written updates for OSP to share with school administrators. School administrators play an active role in reaching out to their school communities to share information regarding the program. The Secure Schools project team has also gone to several PTA meetings over the last year to discuss the program directly with parents.