



MEMO

TO: Claire Hertz, Deputy Superintendent, Business Operations
Dr. Russell Brown, Chief of Systems Performance

FROM: Dr. Christine Pitts, Research and Evaluation Manager, System Planning and Performance

DATE: October 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Southeast Guiding Coalition Survey Summary

Background

As part of the Enrollment and Program Balancing process, the Southeast Guiding Coalition has met six times over the past two months to begin the initial planning for the reopening of Kellogg Middle School. The [Coalition](#) includes students, parents, and principals who represent a variety of stakeholder groups, schools, and communities in Southeast Portland. The broad process includes two phases, (a) Phase 1 focuses on middle grades and ends with a recommendation in mid-December and (b) Phase 2 focuses on preschool to grade 5 and will begin in spring 2021. The Coalition meetings held to date aimed to develop a shared understanding of the overall charge and the process for developing the proposals and final recommendations. Using data, community input, and facilitated conversations the coalition has discussed and evaluated several scenarios for the Enrollment and Program Balancing process.

In response to the Coalition's inquiries about the lived experiences of the PPS families representing historically underserved communities a survey was released in 6 languages in September and October of fall 2020. The survey aimed to gather the public's perceived concerns and priorities about the Enrollment and Program Balancing process. The following is a summary of the results of the Coalition survey.

Respondents

A total of 540 respondents completed the closed-question portion of the English ($N = 523$), Spanish ($N = 6$), Chinese ($N = 9$), and Russian ($N = 2$) surveys. A total of 478 individuals completed both of the open-ended questions. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive information about respondents who completed the entire survey by race/ ethnicity (Table 1) and region/ cluster (Table 2). A large majority of the respondents identified themselves as white ($N = 297$). The majority of respondents also identified themselves as belonging to the Franklin ($N = 236$) and Cleveland ($N = 164$) clusters.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (*N* = 464)

Race/ ethnicity	<i>n</i>	%
White	297	64
Multi-Racial	66	14
Asian	57	12
Latino	27	6
African American	3	0.6
Pacific Islander	2	0.4
Native American	1	0.2
Other*	11	2

*Write-in responses for Other included “Asian-American”; “Asian/White”; “Family both White and Asian”; “Hmong”; “I am white, my child is multi Racial”; “Jewish”, “Mixed”; “Native American & Black and has European heritages”

Table 2
Cluster Characteristics of Respondents (*N* = 476)

Cluster	<i>n</i>	%
Franklin	236	50
Cleveland	164	34
Madison	45	9
Alternative/ Focus Option	26	5
Grant	3	0.6
Lincoln	1	0.2
Jefferson	1	0.2

Response Summary

The survey asked respondents 4 closed questions about challenges, opportunities, district vision, and their preferences related to boundary setting, as well as 2 open-ended questions about their top concerns and priorities. Below is a summary of the responses for each portion of the survey.

Challenges, opportunities, vision, and values

Table 3 summarizes the responses for the questions about opportunities, challenges, and vision. Overall, the survey respondents were mostly aware of the challenges PPS faces with enrollment and program balancing, as well as the existence of the Southeast Guiding Coalition. Half or less of survey respondents indicated they were aware of the PPS vision for the “district's long-term aspiration for what we want our students to realize for themselves.”

Table 3 Percentage of Yes Responses to Survey Questions about Opportunities, Challenges, and Vision by Language			
	Chinese	Spanish	English
Have you been aware of challenges or opportunities that the Portland Public Schools District is facing regarding enrollment and program balancing?	56	67	81
Are you aware the District is currently forming a Guiding Coalition committee to study and ultimately provide a recommendation on enrollment and program balancing, including an attendance area for a new middle school in SE Portland by the end of 2020?	33	83	87
Are you aware of the PPS Vision that describes the District's long-term aspiration for what we want our students to realize for themselves?	44	17	50
<i>Note.</i> Russian language responses are not included due to limited sample size.			

Table 4 summarizes the responses to the survey question about values. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of a list of values on a scale from 1 (No importance whatsoever) to 5 (extremely important). There was little variance across the survey questions with average rankings ranging from 3.01 to 4.20. The values ranked most important include remaining on their current middle school path ($M = 4.20$), proximity of school to home ($M = 4.16$), and the importance of class size ($M = 4.10$).

Table 4

Responses to Survey Question “Rank the importance of ____ to you as a parent regarding your student's school.”

	Average Ranking
The importance to remain on the same Middle School and/or High School feeder path as they currently are on	4.20
Proximity or nearness of the school to your home	4.16
The importance of a small class size for your student	4.10
The importance of your child/children to attend the same school as their siblings have attended or will attend	3.95
Your child attending the same school as their nearby neighbor friends	3.87
The ability of your child to not cross any busy roads or streets on their walk to and from school	3.54
The importance of eliminating most portable classrooms to the extent possible	3.01
<i>Note.</i> These data include the 540 total survey responses from the English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian surveys.	

Concerns and Priorities

The information below summarizes the two open-ended questions included in the survey:

1. In regard to enrollment and program balancing, which will include Kellogg Middle School opening and grade reconfigurations, along with possible boundary adjustments and optimizing program offerings and locations, are there any other concerns you would have should your student end up attending another school? What are those concerns?
2. When you thoughtfully consider the whole picture and the challenges and opportunities Portland Public School District has for enrollment and program balancing, what is the most important thing or things for them to consider?

Across the 478 survey responses for the first open-ended question about top concerns 8 themes emerged. Table 5 outlines the descriptive information for each theme by race/ethnicity. The most common concerns across all respondents included transportation (30%) and maintaining community and continuity (21%).

	African American	Native American	Pacific Islander	Latino	Asian	Multi-Racial	Other	White	Grand Total
Transportation	-	-	100	22	33	24	45	32	30
Community/ continuity	67	-	100	33	16	21	36	20	21
Focus option/ DLI disruption	33	100	-	15	26	17	36	13	16
Inequity	67	-	50	7	23	23	18	12	15
COVID-19	33	-	-	4	7	9	36	11	10
IB/ AP Choice	33	-	-	-	11	20	18	5	8
Diversity	33	-	-	4	11	12	-	4	6
Lack of outreach	33	-	50	4	4	3	-	3	3

Note. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents in which the denominator represents the total respondents identifying within their racial/ ethnic subgroup.

The following are representative statements from the open-ended question about top concerns including transportation and community/ continuity:

“The current proposal to move DLI programs to the far eastern edge of Portland, thus creating segregated schools and leaving the wealthier white families in the schools is particularly problematic to us. Our 3 children are Chinese, and we do not wish to see them segregated, with their Chinese and caucasian classmates and friends, to the outskirts of the city. The proposed change will leave Hosford and Cleveland a far less diverse population.”

“If the new location for the program were further away (how is currently being planned in the school we are at) we may have to choose to prioritize either sticking with the program or choosing the school that is close in distance which I would hate to happen. I am also concerned about having multiple children in multiple schools complicating our drop-off and pick-up routines.”

Across the 478 survey responses for the first open-ended question about top priorities 12 themes emerged. Table 6 outlines the descriptive information for each theme. The most common concerns across all respondents included racial equity (25%), equitable funding (23%), community and relationships (22%), geographic spread (20%), and focus options/ DLI (15%).

	African American	Native American	Pacific Islander	Latino	Asian	Multi-Racial	Other	White	Grand Total
Racial equity	33	-	-	30	16	32	9	26	24
Equitable funding	67	-	-	22	11	26	-	26	23
Relationships/ community	100	-	-	15	21	20	18	24	22
Geographic spread	-	-	50	4	19	6	9	27	20
Focus option/ DLI	-	100	-	11	25	23	18	11	15
Commute	-	-	50	4	12	3	18	16	13
Quality of school	-	-	100	11	18	17	-	10	12
Health and safety	-	-	-	11	14	6	9	11	10
Class size	-	-	-	15	4	5	-	10	8
Input	-	-	50	4	12	6	9	7	8
Choice	-	-	-	7	4	6	-	9	7
Outcomes	-	-	-	-	9	3	-	2	3

Note. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents in which the denominator represents the total respondents identifying within their racial/ ethnic subgroup.

The following are representative statements from the open-ended question about top priorities including racial equity, equitable funding, community and relationships, geographic spread, and focus options/ DLI.

“Justice for Black and Brown folks must always come first. Always. White folks need to put their needs aside for once. That includes my family as well..”

“we need to take into account the tapestry of Portland neighborhoods and communities, and should make every consideration to not disrupt them further during these times. In talking with our neighbors, they unanimously share these concerns and strongly advocate for trying to maintain a semblance of these connections and normalcy for our children. Sending them miles away to school as part of their “neighborhood” program will strongly affect how they perceive the community and any effort we can expect from them to grow, shape and uphold it.”

“I would like all boundaries to be considered. It seems like higher income schools are getting little or no changes and lower income schools are seeing huge changes.”

“Balanced outcome, balanced changes, and least amount of disruption to current plan. I enrolled my children in their current school with the expectation they would be able to go to their nearest/neighborhood schools from K-12. They would be able to safely travel to and from each school on their own as needed. As a solo parent of three, it is extremely important they be able to be independent. If the boundaries had not been what they are now, I may not have enrolled them where they are. Changes come, and nothing is guaranteed, I understand and accept that. However, some proposed changes are greater for some than others. If the end goal is balance, should there not be some consideration of balance within those changes?”

“Supporting at risk youth and people of color to have equity in education. Supporting strong and successful neighborhood schools.”

“DLI programs provide more than language, they also provide children from multi-race families a sense of community when they are surrounded by children from similar households. Considering the communities, keeping students from within programs together as much as possible, or giving location options to a closer program if programs significantly shift locations is helpful for families. Considering options that would limit the number of families being impacted is also important.”

Key Takeaways

- The vast majority of survey respondents identified as white individuals (64%) and the majority of respondents identified themselves as being from the Franklin (50%) and Cleveland (34%) clusters.
- Nearly a quarter of respondents identified racial equity (25%) and equitable funding (23%) as the top priorities in the whole-picture planning for the Enrollment and Program Balancing process.
- In comparing the closed and open-ended survey items there were contradictory results around class size as a value and priority. While class size was a highly important value

(M = 4.10) when included in the ranking question, class size was mentioned in only 8% of the respondents mentions of priority.

- There were also findings across the closed and open-ended responses that converged into a common set of values and priorities about continuity, community, and relationships. Twenty-two percent of respondents noted that community and relationships were important priorities to consider in the whole picture planning process. In addition, community/ continuity was mentioned as a top concern for 21% of respondents.
- As a complimentary finding, the highest rated values included “remain on the same Middle School and/or High School feeder path as they currently are on” (M = 4.20) and “Proximity or nearness of the school to your home” (M = 4.16).