

# BENSON POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL

## DESIGN ADVISORY GROUP SESSION #2

### SUMMARY AND NOTES





## MEETING DETAILS

### Meeting Location

Benson Polytechnic High School,  
546 NE 12th Ave, Portland, OR 97232

### Meeting Date:

November 1, 2018

### Attendees

#### PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS (PPS):

Jen Sohm, Design Project Manager  
Jeanne Yerkovich, Director of Career Learning/CTE  
Aurora Terry, Senior Director of College and Career Readiness  
Camille Idedevo, Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs

#### DESIGN ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS:

Curtis Wilson Jr., Principal  
Paul Anthony, Board of Education  
Roi San Anderson  
Brian Gerber  
Amy Henry  
Tammy Hite  
Luke Hotchkiss  
Dave Ketah  
Bryan Smith  
Amy Sutton  
Christina Thompson  
Todd Williams  
Janice Choy-Weber  
Kevin Clark  
Angel Dawson  
Jeanette DeCastro  
Reuben Gilmore  
Susan Hargrave  
Rob Johns  
Peter Koonce  
Heather Leek  
Elizabeth O'Malley  
Glen Pak (Co-Chair)  
Matt Pellico  
Dick Spies  
Brian Unflat  
Scott Bailey  
Drew Amrine  
Immacula Bixby  
Alan Campos  
Sophia Chin  
Hazel Curley O'Malley  
Henry Kirkpatrick  
James Littrell

Kailey Malynowski (Co-Chair)  
Adrian Sanchez-Hernandez  
Arlette Torres

#### PUBLIC

Parker McCollson, PPS Student  
Griffin Jackson, PPS Student  
William Horner, PPS Student  
Henry Seters, PPS Student  
Joshua Weber, PPS Student  
Russ Altermatt, Alumnus  
Cassandra Tyler, SERA Architects, Parent

#### DESIGN TEAM

Lorne McConachie, Bassetti Architects  
Joe Echeverri, Bassetti Architects  
Aydin Ebran, Bassetti Architects  
Holly Grosvenor, Bassetti Architects  
Dianna Montzka, Bassetti Architects  
Betty Lou Poston, Bassetti Architects

### Agenda

5:30 - 6:00	Arrival & Welcome
6:00 - 6:10	Subcommittee Idea - Rob Johns
6:10 - 6:20	Community Partnerships - PPS
6:20 - 7:10	Updated Master Plan Activity
7:10 - 7:35	Budget Overview
7:35 - 7:50	Update and Discussion: Multiple Pathways to Graduation, and CTE - PPS
7:50 - 8:00	Public Comment

## SUBCOMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Given the size of DAG, it offers an opportunity for subcommittees to form and provide specialized attention to different aspects of the modernization

- + A comment was shared that subcommittees are a good idea and division of labor is important but there was an attempt to form subcommittees of the MPC and they were not successful. How can we make the DAG subcommittees more successful?
  - Response: If the DAG committees have interest, they will succeed, if they do not have interest, they will not succeed. Hopefully the subcommittees would be able to use some DAG time to meet or meet right before or after the DAG. Jen noted that DAG time could be used by the subcommittees to report back to the DAG.
- + A potential list of subcommittee ideas were presented and the DAG was invited to write their names under committees they are interested in, or write down ideas for different subcommittees.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are very important to PPS and the Benson Tech process

- + An important planning document related to partnership is the District's Long Range Facility Plan – foundation process and document that launched the bond program that passed in 2012. It's important to reference because there is robust information in this document that was gathered over 6 months.
  - The document points out the need for an equitable learning environment for every student. It calls for safe, healthy, and accessible design to meet student's essential needs and to optimize utilization.
  - 'Develop partnerships' is one of the document's guiding principles.
  - 'Develop partnerships to leverage community support and innovation' is one of the documents recommendations
- + What were thought of as the most important pages of this long term facility plan were printed out and provided at each table at the DAG meeting. - It includes information about goals, principals and methodologies. Those are the basis for the districts capital improvement dollars and the starting point for re-building all of the schools.
- + Bond development committee – 2014 – that committee determined what schools were going to be on the bond after the 2012 bond. This outlines the criteria that was used to select the schools, one of which was 'leveraging program through partnerships' and Benson was selected in part due to that criteria. Benson was also selected for its unique CTE programs, its significant seismic needs, and the large percentage of historically under-served students.

### Presentation by Camille Idedevbo

- + Camille Idedevbo, representing the Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs department at the BESC, spoke to the DAG about the work of the department, which is to engage private and philanthropic dollars for innovation, and to create bridges and foster community between the school districts and the greater Portland community.
  - This hasn't historically been a priority on the district level
  - The new superintendent established this department

- This department will be working in partnership with Curtis Wilson and the department of College and Career Readiness to develop 'program strands' and find partners they want to engage to create a fundraising plan.
- The superintendent is passionate about the question, 'what does it look like to make the city a classroom?' - This can translate to, how are we making sure that the students are having academic preparation, engagement, and exposure.
- + The different levels of engagement were outlined:
  - High Leverage Volunteerism (speaking, job shadowing, etc.)
  - Investment levels
    - a. \$1,000-\$99,000
    - b. \$100,000-\$999,999
    - c. \$1 Million and up
- + Innovation: we want to be thinking about the future and be responsive and relevant in our programming
- + Two quotes were shared
  - "When Henry Ford made cheap reliable cars, people said, nah, what's wrong with a horse? That was a huge bet he made, and it worked" - Elon Musk
  - "I can either watch it happen, or be a part of it." - Elon Musk
- + As we think about innovation and the future of PPS and Benson, know that they want to keep up, stay relevant, and be forward thinking

### Comments by DAG Members, Responses from Camille

Luke Hotchkiss

- + Feels that the district is its own worst enemy in creating community partnerships. Community partners are going to be more interested in partnering with a specific school rather than with the whole school district. It needs to be said that all of the things that the school board is talking about, that they're considering for the school, undermines everything that was just said (by Camille).
  - Response: It's going to be an ongoing conversation. It involves working with schools and the principals to find out who they're working with in the community, who are they connected to, to create some transparency in conversation.

Amy Sutton

- + With previous experience in partnerships in community and educational organizations, Amy has often heard that it has been difficult (5-10 years ago) to partnership with PPS. The barriers included finding someone that would talk to them that would move the partnership forward.
  - Response: This is precisely the reason that the superintendent established a department that was dedicated to moving partnerships forward.

Bryan Smith

- + If someone approached Bryan wanting to donate time, resources, money, employee mentorship, etc. to Benson specially, what is the road to do that without PPS pulling an equity card? Frequently PPS says no, it has to go to all schools, not just Benson, even though the interest is specific to Benson because perhaps they are alumni and have done something very successfully, and feels Benson was a big part of that, how does that work? Bryan expressed that he wouldn't want to approach, or be approached, without having a very succinct plan to move partnerships forward that doesn't include PPS as a barrier. Investors don't want to have lip service and don't want to be turned off.
  - Response: As it concerns Benson, it's going to be a collaborative effort. If that particular program or person wanting to donate doesn't fall into the 'category' or 'strand' that is originally set up by Curtis, Aurora, and Camille, then they would have to go back to the drawing board and think about what it looks like to build that capacity and create strands that accommodate that particular donation. However, they want to be careful about one-off projects that are not sustainable. If they are not able to make a stand that accommodates the particular donation, they want to keep the conversation going.

Unknown

- + Comment was made in effort to remind the group that the Benson Foundation is a pathway that has allowed successful partnerships and donations to robotics, math tech, etc. They are currently grassroots efforts, \$1,000 here and there but it's meaningful, and that money is there when the program needs it, it doesn't have to cross many barriers before it can benefit the program directly.
  - Response: That pathway can continue to be successful, but when capacity expansion is being discussed, that turns into a larger conversation and there needs to be a lot more players at the table.

Unknown

- + Is there currently a prioritization for strands?
  - Response: Those have not yet been decided on

Dick Spies

- + In support of partnerships and wants to help with the effort, but it needs to be acknowledged over the years how frustrating it has been to be successful with PPS in this effort. It's embarrassing to gather a lot of support and excitement from the industry side, only to have the district turn their backs. The industries need to be convinced that the PPS is ready to embrace them. Dick recommends that the district involve potential industry partners early on so they can be a part in advising program strands. They are the ones who know what kind of talent they want to hire, so it only makes sense to get their input on it from the beginning. They have to be players at the table.
  - Response: In the early stages of strategic partnerships, PPS has been creating relationships across the city. They currently have a network of hundreds of key stakeholders, so if individuals know people who should be in contact with Camille and the Strategic Partnerships and External Affairs department, she wants there to be transparency and conversation.

Kevin Clark

- + Recently brought high level HP executives to a meeting with Jen, Curtis, Jeanne, and others to develop district wide partnerships and focused partnerships at Benson, and the conversation went nowhere. The district needs to view partnerships more favorably and have a stronger strategic approach to partnerships, especially in times where there is a financial crisis, partners can not only bring in technology but other types of support. When Kevin introduces people to the district, he expects the district will follow up on those conversations, especially when they are a global giant in high tech.

**Additional Comments from PPS**

- + \$100,000 was given to Benson for the Engineering program by PGE Foundation and was matched by Jim Pyro. It was a very successful partnership that will sustain the program for a long time and enable it to be developed and grow capacity.
- + The Health Clinic partnership with OHSU took years but is now very successful and is being used as a model for Grant and Lincoln High Schools.
- + Of the industry outreach that was done in the past 9 months, many of the industries that were visited wanted to have partnerships with Benson Tech.
- + The district wants to continue to address the concerns and make sure that we are improving moving forward.

## ACTIVITY #1 - UPDATED MASTER PLAN

### General Information

- + The master plan aims to establish a strong STEAM approach.
- + Concern about how the CTE courtyard will be secured – There has been conversations with the district security about using fences and gates
- + Bike parking will be provided and spread throughout the site, and there will be covered bike parking as well, per code
- + The space on the second floor of the auditorium could be used as support spaces for the theater, space for a theater tech program, or space for a future CTE program. There is currently no elevator access directly to this space.
- + Alternative program space – if the direction were to change on this matter, the architect team would be taking the time to redesign and include those programs into the design
- + Teen Program and food and clothes closet– currently a part of the wrap around services in the PPS comprehensive ed spec. Question from the DAG if we know the % of teen parents in the district at this time
- + The social courtyard is not currently covered but there is a potential that it could be covered
- + The idea of the breakout spaces is that they are not just a hallway but they can be flexible teaching spaces, hangout spaces between classes with movable furniture, etc.
- + The new courtyard spaces will provide the new social areas. The new commons is going to be a large space with light and the learning stair connecting to the second level.
- + The green space in the CTE courtyard is a placeholder for water retention or a rain garden.

### Positive Feedback

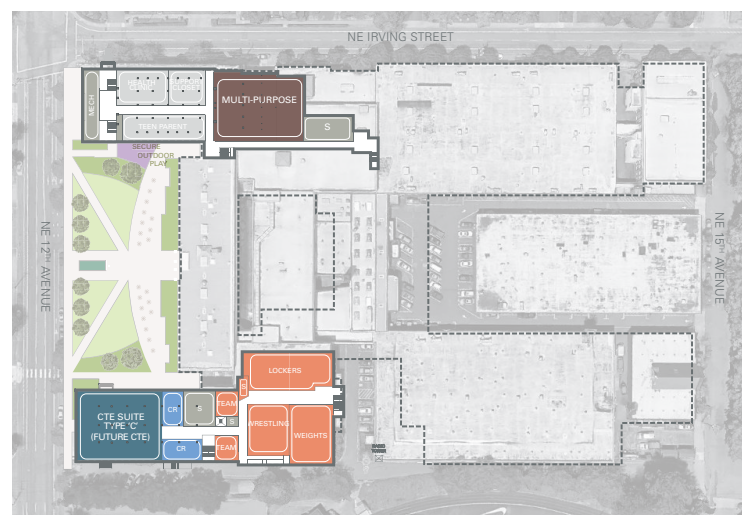
- + The co-location of classrooms and CTE allows more adults to be evenly spread throughout the building. This has value for “eyes on the street”
- + The DAG gave positive feedback on the commons and the classroom spaces off the social courtyard on the 1st and 2nd stories – visibility to the space around it is good
- + Architecture likes being located above construction



GROUND LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL

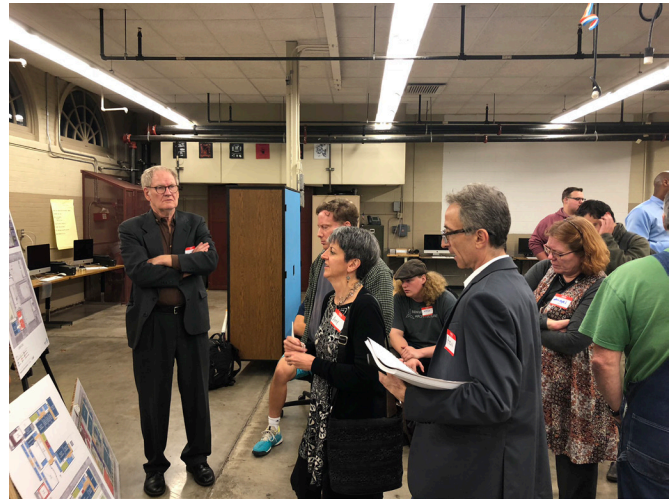


LOWER LEVEL

- + Positive feedback on the play area outside teen parent
- + Positive feedback on learning stair
- + Benson doesn't have any place to "just be" but the courtyard and commons will fill this void
- + The new entrance by the radio tower is a good addition
- + the walkway south of the school to the adjacent parking lot looks nice in the master plan and is an important walkway

### Suggestions / Considerations / items to change

- + Concern was expressed about the Health Clinic location in the basement. Extensive research was done when the new Health Clinic was designed in Benson and the basement was the least favorable location.
- + Concern was expressed about the size of the shop spaces
- + Mixed feelings were expressed about the upper balcony. Some DAG members felt the space would cause misbehavior from students (dropping things over the edge), and additional noise, while others felt it was a cool feature that gave a sense of a contemporary building.
- + DAG members continue to express a desire for a covered social courtyard
- + Some teachers expressed they would prefer straight hallways where they can see all the way down
- + Concern about acoustics between shop spaces and classrooms
  - Response: With the addition of support spaces off the hallway, as well as strong acoustical attenuation, acoustics between the classroom and shop spaces will be a strong consideration in the design
  - The increased/enhanced infrastructure is addressed by acoustics as well to make sure classroom spaces are acoustically isolated from shops spaces.
- + Computer carts could work more successfully than computer labs, depending on the intensity of programs being used by the class
  - Computer labs could be a fixed system, or a computer lab space could be chrome books and movable furniture that allows it to be more than a computer lab.
- + Recommendation to create spaces for teachers when they are not in their classrooms
  - Response: Teacher planning spaces are being



SITE PLAN





designed to support the classrooms, as offices, conference rooms, collaboration zones, etc.

- + Lockers: the current ed spec calls for one locker per student. How they are used is a better question. There was a comment from a student DAG member that lockers are not very effective at Benson, and because the school is so big, it is really hard to go to lockers between classes. Benson is different from the comprehensive ed spec in that there may be a need for larger project storage, whether it be in the labs and shops or outside of them.
- + CTE courtyard – concern about the outdoor space that will be allocated for each CTE program. Construction, for example, has vehicles with trailers that will have to park in their outdoor space. Each CTE space should have personal parking space outside of their shops and covered workspace.
- + Automotive is concerned with the new design because of the lack of drive-thru and amount of space shown in this master plan vs. the old master plan
  - Auto is discouraged with their suite design
- + Question regarding the difference in the two master plans and what drove the master plan to evolve in the way it has
  - The districts desire for flexibility, adaptability for future needs, as well as a more diverse mix of spaces throughout the building of academics and CTE.
- + There is a concern about ADA access at the front entry
  - Landscape is currently working on a updated plan
- + Concern that Heath Occ does not have big enough square footage
  - They are a suite type C at 7,200 sf. In comparison to the spaces they have now, there is a lot of the renovation can do to make their spaces work more effectively and allow them to have more flexibility between spaces
- + Question from a DAG member about why the Benson design needs to cut cost. If Benson is not getting what they need and if the kids are not getting what they need, time is being wasted. This design needs to be the best. It can't just be good enough. The money that is required for the best design needs to be established and executed.
- + Suggestion from a DAG student that Art could also

work well next to Digital Media

- + Daylighting – It is recommended that the master plan consider what type of daylight is reaching each teaching space. Labs with computers might work better on north facing areas rather than south facing areas
  - There is a possibility on the second floor on the south side to have the classrooms at a lower roof height so that clerestory windows can bring more light into the north facing CTE spaces.
  - Art might benefit more from northern light exposure than southern light
- + Concern about the ratio of lab and shop CTE spaces that could end up being stacked rooms and the rooms the furthest in will have no natural daylight. That layout



is what Benson has now and it's not what they want for the future.

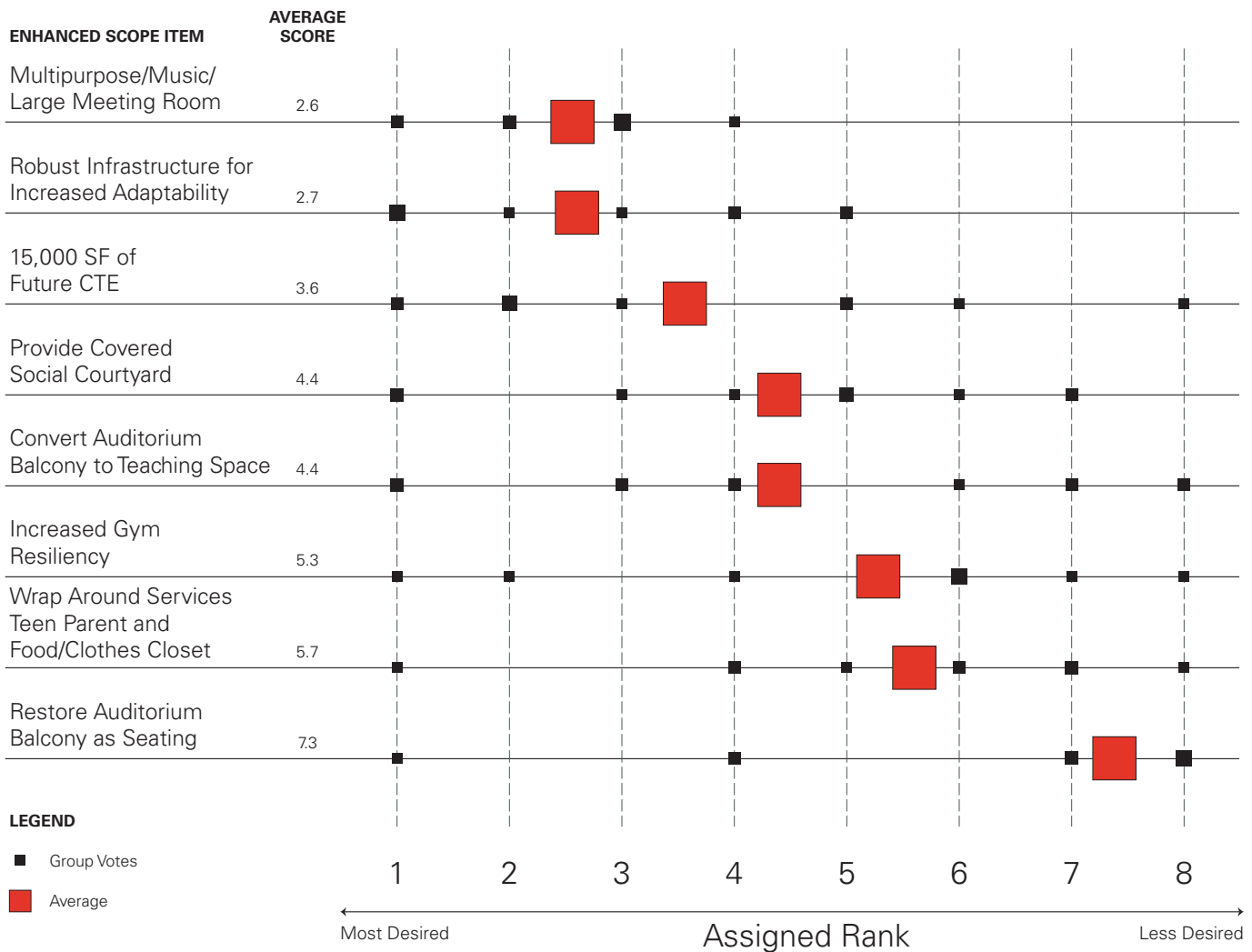
- + Kids do not have a way to get in from that side of the school. They presently have to go through other teaching spaces to get in.
- + Concern about the new scheme not allowing the trees along the sidewalk on the south side. Suggestion to trade the green strips along the sidewalk to bigger courtyards in the heart of the school. Courtyards are wide enough to bring light in most of the spaces.
- + Suggestion to disperse the water retention around the center building in the courtyard and put a green roof on a structure in the middle of the courtyard.
- + Wood and metal shops should be shared for more efficiency
- + Suggestion to put signs along the north side so drivers can identify and know about the school

## ACTIVITY #2 - BUDGET PRIORITIES

The DAG members were asked to consider eight scope items and prioritize them, reflecting what items were important to them in the Benson Modernization. #1 is represented as the highest priority, and #8 is represented as the least highest priority.

- \$ - Wrap Around Services: Teen Parent & Food/Clothes Closet
- \$ - Multipurpose / Music / Large Meeting Room
- \$ - Increased resiliency of existing gyms
- \$ - Convert the existing auditorium balcony space into teaching space
- \$\$ - Restore the existing auditorium balcony as seating
- \$\$ - Provide covered or enclosed social courtyard
- \$\$\$ - 15,000 sf of future CTE suites
- \$\$\$ - Robust infrastructure for increased adabtability

### Activity Results:



## PUBLIC COMMENT

Griffin Jackson

- + Given the fact that the engineering program was gifted a large amount of money and the opportunity to expand, the amount of square footage allotted in the plan seems too small

Russ Altermatt

- + Russ is a Benson Grad who is an advocate for a performing arts program at Benson. Benson used to have a band program, which Russ was a member of, and with a group of about 70-90 students, they participated in many community events including the Rose Parade and Tech Show. Russ is now an acoustical consulting engineer and has worked on over 60 k-12 school projects and 10+ new and renovated auditoriums. In his experience, all of the new schools have drama and music programs with facilities that support them and Benson shouldn't be any different. The band program he was a part of played a huge role in the trajectory of his career and he hopes that it could do the same for other students at Benson.

## CLOSING DISCUSSION

- + It was expressed that this is a design meeting and the architect team and Jen cannot address all the political questions regarding budget and other high level decisions. This group needs to stay together and move forward together in a positive manner. Frustrations with the budget need to be harvested and put towards board meetings where real change can be made.
- + There is an interest to have a subcommittee of the DAG who goes to the board meetings
- + There was a question from the DAG regarding the legality of the bond verbiage and how it is holding true to those words or not.
- + Several DAG members expressed the feeling that the credibility of the district is at an all time low
- + Several DAG members expressed that it is difficult to make design decisions when there is a constantly moving cost target and it is unclear why the target is moving.
- + The DAG members expressed the need to have confidence in a dollar amount moving forward. They need an assurance from the Board on funding
- + There was a question asking what is the fiscal impact to change the project scope
- + There was a question asking why Alliance did not have an MPC
- + Comment expressing confusion over Alliance and BOE resolution and how it's being presented
- + Some Benson supporters have signed up for Board meeting comment in the past, but weren't given the opportunity to speak (seemed rehearsed).
- + If Board adds ore program, then there needs to be additional SF/area added to the project.