



Jefferson High School Modernization Swing Site Frequently Asked Questions Fall 2023

Swing site location

Where will Jefferson students go during construction?

From the fall of 2024 until the school reopens for the 27-28 school year, we anticipate the Demos attending school at the old Marshall High School campus. This was a difficult decision because we recognize the logistical and cultural impacts of this temporary move. We know that leaving the historic Albina area will be hard on both the Jefferson community and the surrounding neighborhood. We are committed to supporting students and families during this transition. We ask that families and students share their concerns with a Jefferson administrator directly. These conversations will help us identify additional supports we might offer.

PCC Middle College partnership at Marshall

How will the Middle College partnership work at the Marshall Campus?

We are still working out the details and we will update you regularly, with a first update before the end of September. PCC operates on a number of campuses and we will work closely with our PCC partners to see how we can support student learning during this time. For example, PCC's Southeast Campus is not far from the Marshall campus, and we are exploring how we can utilize that. We can promise the Jefferson community that the partnership will continue, and students will continue to have the opportunity to earn college credit at the same rates as they have on the Jefferson campus.

Will the same instructors from PCC North move over?

PCC schedules their instructors, some work at one campus, others work on multiple campuses. We work closely with the Middle College office at PCC to help students select courses that meet their needs including time, place and method of delivery (some are in person, others are online). This is our current practice and will continue.

Will there be a process to set up PCC classes only in the mornings? This will help ensure transportation time is reduced and if students are in sports, they will be at Marshall.

PCC offers a wide variety of times for classes, including mornings, afternoon, weekends, evenings and on line. We work with individual students to build a learning plan that meets their needs, is coordinated with their classes at Jefferson and fits their schedule. This is our regular practice and it will continue.

Transportation to Marshall

How will you provide transportation for students? Buses?

As with previous high school modernizations, we will provide a variety of transportation options. These include direct yellow bus service between the neighborhood and Marshall, shuttle bus service to public transportation, and public transportation. We are reviewing where students currently live to optimize our possible options, and will share more specific information at Jefferson's 8th Grade Information Night, if not sooner.

I am concerned about PPS Yellow bus service, I hear that routes are regularly being canceled because of a driver shortage. Are there enough drivers?

It is impossible to predict staffing levels for the next three school years, but currently, we are fully staffed with bus drivers for the 23-24 school year.

Is it realistic for parents to drive the kids all the way to Marshall high school?

We recognize the daily pick-up and drop-off would be a significant burden for families, so no, we are not asking families to drive students to Marshall. They are welcome to if they so choose, but we will provide transportation to and from school.

Will you be supplying shuttles to get students to other activities including sports practices and/or games?

Yes.

Staffing during the modernization

Will JHS staff be reduced or moved elsewhere if fewer students decide to come to Jeff due to the modernization process?

It is important to us that the programming offered at Jefferson remain intact and we will ensure that staffing remains as not to affect this.

How long students are off-site

Why is it a 3 year construction period when other schools did it in two?

The Jefferson school community will move to Marshall for three years starting with the 2024-25 school year. They will return to a fully modernized school at the start of the 2027-28 school year. The period of time at Marshall depends on the required construction schedule. While some school construction has required 2 years to complete, others, like both Benson & Jefferson, have a level of complexity that requires 3 years to complete.

Safety at Marshall

Is safety an issue around Marshall? There are reports of drug dealers, shootings at Lent. How do we protect our students outside and outside?

Over the past two years, while at the Marshall campus, Benson students have not experienced greater safety issues. While we do not anticipate that will change when Demos are on the campus, we will continue to keep the campus safe using the same systems we have used with Benson students there.

Other swing site locations

Why can't the Jefferson students go to Benson? Since Benson will have capacity for both the currently enrolled Benson students and currently enrolled Jefferson students.

It is difficult to house two schools in a building, let alone two high schools. For example, the two schools have different bell schedules. Jefferson's bell schedule is designed to accommodate students taking classes for the Middle College at PCC. As the district's only focus option high schools, Jefferson and Benson also have very different school community focuses. The new Benson building has been planned for the Benson model to include extensive career technical education spaces. It was not planned with Jefferson's programs in mind—the Jefferson Dancers, Middle College, specific community partnerships, and other unique programs. Jefferson and Benson are also rival schools in sports and school pride. Placing them together in one space and forcing them to share gyms, locker rooms, and other spaces will likely accelerate rivalry and could create safety issues. We are very cognizant about maintaining the identity of the Jefferson school community and do not want to impact this in any way. We would be thinking about the Benson community in this regard as well.

Why can't the city make an exception for accelerated rezoning with the PCC idea? What are the barriers at PCC with zoning?

We apologize to the community and the City's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability for giving the incorrect impression that zoning is the primary barrier to using PCC-Cascade. It was one barrier identified during our review of potential swing sites. City and Bureau officials have expressed their interest in working with PCC and the district to swiftly resolve existing zoning issues if need be.

While zoning issues are one barrier, the larger issues are tied to the space itself. PCC agrees with our assessment that they do not have the overall capacity and availability of specialized classrooms (for example, science labs and career and technological education spaces) that we need for a full enrollment of our students to meet graduation criteria. We would also have significant challenges in providing school lunches, safety and security appropriate for high school students, and school-based technology.

Staying on the Jefferson site versus swinging off site during construction

The community was told they would be able to stay on site or in the neighborhood. Why did PPS say that if you knew moving to Marshall was a possibility?

The project team's goal was to keep students on site during the construction process. As Jefferson's design progressed, the design team provided their estimate of the project's cost. When we hired a general contractor, they reviewed the design and, with their level of expertise, determined that structural and safety requirements would significantly raise the cost of keeping students on campus. As soon as we learned this, we convened a working group including community members who weighed various options for modernizing Jefferson with the finite money we have. Their work made it clear we would need to move students off-site during construction or we would not have enough money to build the school we had promised to the community.

If we lower student numbers, could we still keep the students on site?

Lowering the number of students staying on site would not change the need to phase the construction or change the available buildings in which students could be phased. This means the project would still cost more money than we have available.

Preservation of the Demos community

There is a rumor that this is part of a plan to change the school and erase its cultural significance to the community?

Absolutely not. Throughout this process, we have tried to modernize the Jefferson campus to build on its cultural significance to the community. The design team spent dozens of hours working with the community to preserve the 1909 building based on community input. We will continue to work hand-in-hand with the community to not only modernize Jefferson, but to establish a Center for Black Student Excellence in the neighborhood to establish a premier social and cultural learning experience.

Big concern: will the new Jefferson reinforce the fear that the neighborhood and PPS want to “take back the neighborhood” by changing the boundary and the student population. Is this move to Marshall another way to dismantle and change Jeff?

No. The move to Marshall is in no way an effort to “dismantle or change Jeff.” The move is, however, necessary to achieve the goal of building a new Jefferson High School that is being designed and built with broad and meaningful community engagement, to provide each student with an equitable, individualized, high-quality learning experience along with the tools to reach their full potential within an environment that is safe, healthy, and joyful. This has been long overdue for the Jefferson community. It has always been the hope of the design team that by working with the community we can create an inspirational and beautiful space that community members can be proud of and that represents, demonstrates and celebrates the inherent value of the Jefferson community, culture and history. Our driving mission is to deliver an amazing new school that is befitting the rich and living history of the Jefferson and Albina communities without delay.

Once students have been moved offsite, who is going to come back in 3 years? If you are taking kids away from Jefferson now won't there be a smaller number than before at that school when it returns? How will this impact Jefferson's currently small enrollment, won't people opt out now that they have to move across town?

Once a new school is complete, new project elements, such as new athletic fields, career technical education spaces, expanded science and general classrooms, and modernized infrastructure to better support staff and students of the future, have been successful in drawing back students who are devoted to their neighborhood school. Many district modernization projects experience a small reduction in enrollment during construction and then recover with increased enrollment once construction is complete. In the case of the most recent modernizations, McDaniel HS experienced a dip of approximately 6% during construction, but gained 19% by 2022 from pre-construction enrollment levels.

Since Jefferson is being designed to be a high school for 1,700 students and current enrollment is less than 600, what is the plan to increase enrollment at Jefferson once the rebuilt campus opens in 2027?

The trend has been, when we open up a new school or an existing school in a new building, there is always an enrollment bump. Also, the answer to this question cannot be identified now but encompasses a larger conversation with stakeholders, the superintendent and the Board of Education regarding enrollment balancing similar to what we did with the Southeast Guiding Coalition recommendations.

The updated single-phase Jefferson design

Are we losing classrooms, classroom size, hallway size in the modernization of the school?

The condensed plan has the same number and size of classrooms as the prior version of the plan.

The building itself is more efficient in its layout because we are no longer having to design duplicate spaces for different phases of occupancy. It provides less overall length of hallway for students to have to traverse in walking from classroom to classroom, and allows different types of spaces to be laid out in a more usable way.

Can we change the decision about moving students off-site during construction

What happens when a large number of the community pushes back? Will PPS consider making a change?

We are operating within firm limitations – finite funding, a tight construction timeline beginning next fall, and physical and organizational limits. We are eager to continue exploring community-driven solutions, but we also want to be transparent about how limited our options are.

Can we pause this process and re-engage the community to make this decision? Why don't we go back and restart the design decision process now that we know this?

The project as it was designed with students staying on site could not be built for the money we have available. Pausing the process now would also cost more money than what is available, due to the impact of inflation on construction costs during a delay of the construction. We would need to return to the Board of Education to consider another site layout or building option, and further changes could require land use approval from the City of Portland. The more the construction costs, the less space we can afford to build with the money we have. Pausing the project means not being able to build the school to a target capacity of 1,700 students. This goes against what was planned with extensive community involvement and approved by the Board of Education.

How can we go to taxpayers and ask for more money? Isn't there is precedent for this with Lincoln and Benson? What about an addendum to the bond?

It would have to compete with other school needs, including funding for the modernizations of two other high schools that were delayed from the last bond. Bonds are assembled through a community process, too, and there is significant desire in the broader community for health and safety investments such as hazardous material mitigation, seismic upgrades, and accessibility improvements. It is challenging to predict how voters would feel about paying significantly more cost per square foot for the Jefferson modernization than for other district high school modernizations. And finally, the timing of the next bond measure has not been finalized – meaning that, even in the best case scenario of a November 2024 bond, we would need to pause the project until we knew whether voters voted for additional funding. And yes, that delay might result in increased funds, but the delay would also surely increase the project costs even more – so the additional money we got would not go as far.

Exploring other design options

Why can't you build it on the North Side? Why can't we just rebuild it like Lincoln and stay onsite? Can you clarify why the South option and new options were not feasible?

During the Comprehensive Planning process, the project team reviewed and got community input on multiple options. Some of these options included demolishing the 1909 building and building all new construction, either on the north side or on the south side. When the recent cost estimates showed us that we could not afford to build the current design (keeping the 1909 building and building additional new construction, as part of a phased design), we went back and reviewed updated versions of those prior options as part of a working group including community members that looked at what we needed to do to build a modernized Jefferson with the money we have.

***The updated north side option** was similar to how Lincoln HS was rebuilt, with students swinging on site. Because the new building would be built on top of the existing track and the south side of the site would be used by the contractor, all athletics would have to move off-site during construction. The existing track and field on the north side of the site is grandfathered in to newer City site development requirements. Removing it would require that any new development be built to current, standard City requirements, which would end up allowing less space for athletic fields. Changes to the Comprehensive Plan approved by the Board of Education in 2020 would require going back to the Board of Education for a new approval with new design. Additionally, because of the added time necessary to redesign the project and re-approve it, it would push out the construction schedule and add cost to the project because of inflation. In addition to the program, schedule & budget impacts, this option would trigger a land use review process for demolishing the 1909 building. The land use review process could be lengthy (if appealed), publicly divisive, and might not be resolved quickly, assuming that it resolved in favor of demolishing the 1909 building (see more below under Removal of the 1909 Building).*

***The updated south side option** would allow students to swing on site by staying in the 1909 building while a completely new building was constructed next to Alberta Street. Because the new building would be built on top of the existing baseball field, all baseball use would have to move off-site during construction. The track and field would remain available for use during construction. Similar to the updated north option, this would require re-design, re-approval of a revised Comprehensive Plan, and a land use approval to demolish the 1909 building. The working group chose to look more closely at the cost and schedule implications of this option, versus the updated north option, because it had less impacts to program than the north option. While the cost of this option might be similar to the single phase design if all delays related to re-design, re-approval of Comprehensive Plan, and land use approval of 1909 building demolition were kept under one year, it was not realistic to assume a delay of only one year (see more below under Removal of the 1909 Building). In addition, when both the updated south side option and the single-phase design were viewed through the lens of the community-led narrative themes, the south side option fell significantly short compared to the single-phase design, in part because it ran counter to prior overwhelming community support for preserving the 1909 building.*

Removal of the 1909 Building

What is required to change the land use requirements? If community members had known they would/might have to move offsite for 3 years, they might not have selected to preserve the 1909 building. What are the barriers with the city in terms of the option of removing the historical 1909 building?

Jefferson High School is considered a Contributing Resource in the Piedmont Conservation District. This means the City has specific rules about how it can be changed or removed. In general, the rules are intended to help preserve historic resources. Based on what we know to date (including input from early conversations with the City), it seems likely that a request to demolish Jefferson High School would initially be denied. From the beginning of the Jefferson conceptual master planning process in fall 2019, through three+ years of community engagement, there was overwhelming community advocacy for retaining the 1909 building due to its cultural and historic significance. While there is opportunity to appeal an initial land use decision (such as a demolition approval), the appeal process can be lengthy and carries a lot of uncertainty. As part of the public land use process, there would be public hearings, at which the City would likely want to hear strong community support for demolition. It is possible that, while some community members would now prefer to demolish the 1909 building, others may still wish to keep it. This uncertainty about the length of time to come to a final decision, and what that final decision would be, means a delay in construction that causes an increase in cost.

Timing of the communications

Why did you take so long to tell us after you made the decision (to move to Marshall)?

As soon as we realized we would not be able to keep students on site during construction, we started looking for swing site options. Whenever we look at potential swing sites, though, our options are often limited by what meets our needs for school use. This leads us to prioritize PPS properties. Our available PPS properties were Kenton and Marshall. We were also asked to look at whether we could fully move Jefferson students and staff to PCC across the street, since we already have students that attend class there. With all of these options, we needed to make sure they could meet PPS' needs for academic spaces, spaces for athletics, cafeteria and library, administrative and partner spaces, access to PCC, and more. We walked sites with administrators and discussed with PCC, and developed scheduling to see what we could do with the available classrooms. While this took time, it was invaluable in helping us see which sites simply did not work. We shared the decision as soon as it became clear that Marshall was the only viable option.

Enrollment/Transfer Options

Who can help me with enrollment or transfer questions?

Families and students with concerns about the planned relocation should talk with a Jefferson administrator. Those considering immediate transfer may complete a hardship petition request at pps.net/Page/2341. Families interested in exploring other school options beginning in the 2024-25 school year can apply for transfer November 15-December 15, 2023.

Engagement & Communication

Where can we go for more information moving forward about the move?

For more information please visit the Jefferson Modernization website.

Website: <https://www.pps.net/JeffersonBond>

You may also email the project team at:

Email: JHSbond@pps.net

The phone number for the Office of School Modernization is: 503 916-2222

In addition to the contacts above, FAQ print-outs will soon be available online and distributed at Jefferson HS and Jefferson cluster schools. The information will also be shared with counselors; coaches; teachers; District office personnel; PTA; and associated summer program leaders for Jefferson and cluster schools.

Future public meeting dates and times will also be listed on the Jefferson Modernization website: :

<https://www.pps.net/JeffersonBond>.