



School building improvements: Accountability, transparency and public involvement

Fall 2012

Who would oversee implementation of a school construction bond? PPS is chartering a Citizens Accountability Committee that would oversee the budget and projects of school construction programs and would include a mix of individuals with a reputation in the community for fairness and transparency.

- A majority of the committee will be people with a combination of experience in design; construction; construction financing; public contracting; budgeting, and/or auditing.

Committee members are appointed by the Portland School Board and charged with reviewing and commenting on budget and schedule updates as well as considering a variety of other issues that would impact the course of the program.

- The committee will follow the guiding principles of the PPS Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). The LRFP was crafted by 39 educators and community members along with district staff and calls for transparent budgets, responsible expenditures and audited financial statements in school building upgrades.

How would school design and construction be integrated with learning needs? The Long Range Facilities Plan recommends renovating and upgrading schools to provide more effective learning environments and educational programs.

- Schools would be renovated based on how classrooms should function, how space within schools should be utilized, and which fixtures, furnishing and equipment best serve learning.
- Students, teachers, parents, businesses leaders, community members and local experts will be involved in the design process to create a learning-centered, learner-guided vision of modern learning that incorporates student needs, learning styles and teaching methods.
- This work will begin in late fall 2012 with a collaborative visioning process around the future of PPS school buildings that promotes ownership of and interest in the success of all students, honors and supports learning and teaching, and translates the resulting vision into educational standards and specifications.

How much say would school communities have in the design of a new or renovated school? A design advisory group – unique to each school community – would have input into each renovation, full modernization or school replacement project.

- Each design advisory group would include such members as teachers, students, parents, neighbors, community business leaders and other interested parties. The advisory groups would work with district staff and the project design team and participate in the design process, including workshops that involve the larger school community. The groups would also work with district staff on groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

How would students contribute to and learn from school construction projects? The Long Range Facilities Plan recommends that students at schools undergoing full renovation be integrated into the work plans through curriculum, internships, job shadowing, career fairs, research, and inquiry projects.

- The plan envisions mentorships and collaboration between the design, development and sustainability communities and students, teachers and district staff.
- The school board adopted an “Equity in Public Purchasing and Contracting” policy in July, which includes a career learning component for students. PPS would integrate students into various aspects of school building planning, design and reconstruction.

What is the current bond proposal and what would it cost homeowners? Ballot Measure 26-144 would replace leaking, worn or deteriorating roofs; renovate Franklin, Grant and Roosevelt high schools and replace Faubion PK-8 School; reinforce schools against earthquakes; repay loans for nine roof replacements, 47 boiler conversions and construction of Rosa Parks School; increase access for people with disabilities; and upgrade middle grade science labs. For the first eight years, the cost of this \$482 million bond is estimated at \$1.10 per \$1,000 of assessed property value — dropping to about thirty cents per \$1,000 for an additional 12 years. For this measure, the cost for a house assessed at \$150,000 for property tax purposes would be about \$165 a year for eight years, then dropping to about \$45 per year for the remaining 12 years.