

BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1J, MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1J, MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON
BLANCHARD EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
PORTLAND, OREGON

The Study Session of the Board of Education came to order at 6:01pm at the call of Co-Chair Martin Gonzalez in the Board Auditorium of the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St, Portland, Oregon.

There were present:

Pam Knowles
Ruth Adkins
Bobbie Regan
Trudy Sargent - *absent*
Martin Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Matt Morton
Greg Belisle, Co-Chair

Alexia Garcia, Student Representative

Staff

Carole Smith, Superintendent
Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Senior Specialist

Co-Chair Gonzalez announced that interpreters were available in the five major languages. Superintendent Smith announced that the Grant High School Constitution Team took State Championship, with Lincoln High School placing second. Franklin High School also went to the state championships. The Board read an op-ed piece into the record that would be submitted to the editorial boards of The Oregonian, The Tribune, and Willamette Week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Trace Salmon stated that King school was the success story of the Jefferson cluster with a well-rounded curriculum. King has done more to narrow the achievement gap and both enrollment balancing options would give King more students; however, what will happen to King's model with the proposed changes.

Pamela Kislak shared the impact that ACCESS has had on her son. The school challenges him. He strives socially and emotionally. ACCESS parents have created a vision for the program and she was concerned with the two enrollment balancing options as they won't be able to meet the needs of ACCESS students. Maxine Dexter commented that ACCESS needs to grow. The current state of limited enrollment to ACCESS is a detriment. ACCESS belongs in the Jefferson Cluster and has room to grow to 500 students. Kristen Sheeran thanked the Board for their ten years of support for the ACCESS program. ACCESS was a highly successful program in PPS and she hoped that through the enrollment balancing process that they would find a new home for ACCESS. If ACCESS cannot have its own building, she preferred Option 1.

Patrick Joyce provided a brief summary and analysis of the enrollment balancing planning meetings. He had attended all of the meetings; the planning team was a focus group that provided thoughts and feelings. Meetings were well facilitated and well represented by staff and Board members. But the process should not be used to finalize the plan. Different strategies will be needed in the future; the planning team was not successful. He suggested: that an investment be made in District resources to narrow the achievement gap; do not close neighborhood schools; fix the transfer process immediately; accept accountability for marketing low capture rate schools; create an equitable unitary vision for the District; and, think outside the Jefferson Cluster when considering enroll balancing options. People's fears for the process came true and their hopes were dashed.

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Sarah Cloud stated that she has been frustrated with the mismanaged process for Jefferson enrollment balancing. The six scenarios that were first presented were very bad. The final two options solve none of the problems that they are supposed to correct. Middle school students will continue to be underserved. She has found only constant inequity throughout the District. She asked the Board to stop the Jefferson enrollment balancing process and direct staff to develop a plan that will address the District as a whole and develop a standard that would apply to all schools. Cluster-by-cluster enrollment balancing does nothing. All they have is constant change in the Jefferson cluster and it was not good change.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) UPDATE

Melissa Goff, Director of Teaching and Learning, reported that the focus is for rapid change to students in school right now and that she was proud of the work that the ESL team has done this year.

Van Truong, Director of ESL, presented her report in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Ms. Truong stated that knowing every student by name was crucial for student success and listed the goals of ESL: conceptually change the thinking and language we use for ELL; all Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) move up at least one proficiency level; and all EB high school seniors on track to graduate. Ms. Truong added that the challenges ESL faces include: need for intensive language support for newcomers, and reading and math support; increased sheltered instruction for content course, ensuring students obtain credit; and, the need for a culture change to be at the center of supporting student transition to the U.S. educational system.

Ms. Truong reported on what staff was doing this year to change ESL student achievement: professional development; ESL program progress and action plans draft; curriculum/instruction assessment; pilot content based English language development model; individual student data; parent/community involvement; student leadership; walkthroughs; collaboration with other departments and communities; and, Special Education/ESL collaboration.

Co-Chair Gonzalez suggested that information should be edited into the different languages as an educational tool for families and staff.

Director Morton stated that there are a number of community-based, culturally related organizations in Portland and asked whether the ESL department partnered with them. Ms. Truong responded that she works closely with the District Equity department as they are the liaison to community events. ESL staff attends as many of those events that they can as staff learns more at those informal events. ESL staff has met with the Coalition of Communities of Color several times.

Director Knowles asked where the District was in making sure we have curriculum in the languages needed. Ms. Truong responded that staff was working hard on that. The District only has the Spanish curriculum materials; other immersion programs do not have the materials in the appropriate language, only in English and the teacher has to translate the materials.

Co-Chair Gonzalez commented that the District was not being effective in changing the fact that our students have a lack of credits to graduate. He still has not seen a clear plan for changing that fact.

Director Adkins requested that the Co-Chairs talk with the Superintendent about creating a resolution on the urgency around the culture shift.

Co-Chair Belisle questioned if the District has the tools to remove a staff member or teacher who does not believe a student can learn. Superintendent Smith responded no. Co-Chair Belisle suggested that maybe the Board could do something to make that happen.

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BUDGET DISCUSSION

David Wynde, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, reported that all budgets are built on estimates and forecasts that are received over time. A Budget Amendment would be presented to the Board the following week which will true-up the numbers in the budget. Sara Bottomley, Deputy Budget Officer, reviewed the proposed budget amendment. Director Regan mentioned that she was frustrated that Board members do not receive more information on budget issues throughout the year and thought that was due in part to no longer having a finance committee. She would like to have more budget discussions added to Board agendas.

Mr. Wynde provided forecast scenarios. Director Regan commented that the public needs to understand that given the Governor's budget and our true-up budget amendment, we will be facing a \$27 million or \$17 million cut.

At 8:02, the Board took a ten minute break.

JEFFERSON PK=8 ENROLLMENT BALANCING DISCUSSION

Superintendent Smith explained the entire Jefferson PK-8 Enrollment Balancing process, adding that we are still in the middle of the process. The priorities for the process included: student access to rigorous programs; community input; minimize disruption to current facilities; and sustainability of change. Judy Brennan, Director of Enrollment and Transfer, stated that viable numbers per grade were needed to staff schools for a rigorous and robust program. This would equate to 2-3 sessions per grade level, K-5 targets equaling 450 students, and K-8 targets of 500 students or more. 600 students were needed to meet the Middle School target. If a school is below the target, a serious concern is whether it was too small to offer a core program without supplemental funding. Targets are based on finances and the facility; they are not ideals. Many PPS school buildings were not large enough to handle over 600 students.

Harriet Adair, PK-8 Director, explained that a shared campus was not a new concept, and that it allows for right-sized grades and the freedom to make shifts as necessary based on building size and student population changes.

Director Adkins stated that she would like the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Enrollment and Transfer (SACET) to weigh in on the proposed enrollment balancing. Superintendent Smith responded that their charge is more systemic and their recommendations may be long-term changes. Ms. Brennan added that SACET has been meeting to look at the questions and they are working on a response for the Superintendent before the end of the following week. Director Morton commented that he would like to hear from the Committee about their discussions on the topic and how the Jefferson cluster is specifically affected by the District's transfer policy. Co-Chair Gonzalez mentioned that the issue of transfers is a big concern of the community. PPS has done a balancing act as a District. There are those who want a neighborhood school over everything else, and those who want choice. As Board members, they need to decide when they want to take up that discussion. Director Knowles commented that the goal two years ago was to do enrollment balancing district-wide, and we had the transfer discussion at that time also. The Board should address transfers sooner than later.

Director Morton stated that there were clearly key issues that the Board needs to address, and he can't help but be disappointed that when we continue to try to make short-term resolutions that we are not addressing the long-term issues in enrollment and transfer – especially in the Jefferson cluster. He was hesitant to make a decision between the two options without first taking a look at how it will affect the entire District. The Board has heard over and over again that we are always picking on the same clusters.

Director Adkins commented that it was important to hear from SACET very soon. Director Morton was curious to know from staff what they have heard from the community. Ms. Adair responded that she has heard that the District was in a never ending rolling cycle in the Jefferson cluster and that the constant changing over the years, for whatever reasons, then created issues for parents to say they

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don't want their kids caught up in it and they start looking to send their kids elsewhere. We need to take a strong look at the equity and transfer options policies. If better programming doesn't result for kids, then why are we doing this? And there are suspicions about why we are doing this. In those places where they have a strong sense of community, this will devastate that community which they have established in their schools. Many are disappointed in the process. The lack of specificity has come up over and over again. Co-Chair Gonzalez asked what would happen if we stopped the process right now, and Director Adkins questioned what would be the scenario if we did not make a change next year. She needs more information on what middle schools offer, or what a middle school could offer, or what a larger K-8 could offer. More time is needed for the Board to have dialogue. How can the Board respond to issues that they don't know anything about. She still does not understand how making a quick decision will lead to a strong result. Director Regan stated that she would like to understand whether there is an option to do nothing. If that is not an option, what are the next steps? Superintendent Smith responded that if we pause the process and want to take on the transfer policy, are there changes we would need to make immediately? Are there interim changes we can do to buy us more time? We do not want to take parents through disruptions like this. Director Adkins commented that the Board spends a lot of time talking about the process, but not possible solutions.

Sue Ann Higgins stated that staff would not have engaged in a process that asked this of the community if staff didn't feel urgency for the Jefferson cluster right now. This is the cluster that has the largest concentration of Title 1 schools and priority and focus schools. To stand down right now feels very complex. She understands the community's passion for their own neighborhood schools, but status quo was not working for all our kids. This is the most responsible thing we can be doing right now for the cluster. Staff has modeled out hundreds of options to come down to the two that are being proposed. Director Morton commented that he appreciated Ms. Higgins passion, and he could feel that passion, but he just wants to use all information he has when he makes a decision. We might be able to get there if we look at our enrollment and transfer policy, and he was interested in the equity impact with the two options. He wants to make his decision on what affect it will make.

Antonio Lopez, Regional Administrator, has consistently heard from the community, "this time, what is going to be different? Is there going to be a commitment for the long run?" The community has very little trust due to past District actions. They are looking for us to really come through and deliver what we say we will. We literally have two schools a few blocks away from each other; one is doing amazing things and one is struggling. All our kids deserve the best.

Student Representative Garcia thought we needed to take a step back as the correct solution was out there. Director Knowles commented that whatever staff expects to present to the Board, that it be in their packet prior to the Board meeting.

Co-Chair Belisle stated that the Board wants to make the right decision. He acknowledged that this was a high stress time, and he has had some sleepless nights in reviewing the options. The issues are very complex, and for every action, there could be one or 20 reactions.

Co-Chair Gonzalez requested the outcome of those schools that have been promoted by the District in terms of growth. The two options are just up for discussion. The outcome might not be what is moved forward based on Board discussion. No Board member has a hidden agenda on this topic.

Director Morton questioned what stability will the two options provide for individual schools; what is the equity impact; where is the money savings in the two options and how much; could we wait a year and give school communities time to develop ways to sustain their schools?.

BUSINESS AGENDA

Director Regan mentioned that there were two resolutions on the Consent Agenda: measures to increase school safety, and the second one is related to sequestration and the possible budget cuts that could happen in March.

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ADJOURN

Co-Chair Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 9:45pm.

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Other Matters Requiring Board Action

The Superintendent RECOMMENDED adoption of the following items:

Numbers 4705 and 4706

Director Adkins moved and Director Belisle seconded the motion to adopt the above numbered items. The motion was put to a voice vote and passed unanimously (vote: 6-yes, 0-no; with Director Sargent absent and Student Representative Garcia voting yes, unofficial).

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RESOLUTION No. 4705

Resolution Urging Congress and the Administration to Amend the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the American Taxpayer Relief Act

RECITALS

- A. A world class public education is essential for the future success of our nation and today's schoolchildren.
- B. The Budget Control Act of 2011 was amended by the American Taxpayer Relief Act, which includes provisions to impose more than \$1.1 trillion in across-the-board budget cuts to almost all federal programs including education that would become effective March 1, 2013.
- C. These across-the-board budget cuts, also known as sequestration, would have a dramatic impact on education funding and could result in larger class sizes, fewer course offerings, loss of extracurricular activities, and teacher and staff lay-offs.
- D. Portland Public Schools as well as other public schools throughout the nation, would be impacted by an estimated \$2 billion loss from just three programs alone – Title I grants (support for high poverty schools/students), IDEA (special education state grants) and Head Start (pre-kindergarten programs) – that serve a combined 30.7 million children. For PPS the loss is estimated to be between \$1.65 and \$2.3 million for the 2013-14 school year.
- E. Federal funding for K-12 programs was already reduced by more than \$835 million in Fiscal Year 2011, and state and local funding for education continues to be impacted by budget cuts and lower local property tax revenues.
- F. States and local governments have very limited capacity to absorb further budget cuts from sequestration, as Portland Public Schools has already implemented cuts commensurate to state and local budget conditions.

RESOLUTION

The Portland Public Schools Board of Education urges Congress and the Administration to take immediate action to avoid the drastic cuts to education that would affect our students and communities, and to protect education as an investment critical to economic stability and American competitiveness.

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RESOLUTION No. 4706

Resolution Encouraging Oregon's Congressional and State Delegations to
Enact Measures to Increase School Safety

RECITALS

- A. At Portland Public Schools the safety of students is one of our most important responsibilities; when parents entrust their children to us, we take this responsibility seriously.
- B. As we proactively review internal safety protocols and procedures, we acknowledge that some aspects of school safety must be addressed by federal and state elected officials.
- C. This resolution calls on Oregon's Congressional delegation and state Legislative leaders to enact common-sense measures to protect school children and our community from gun violence.
- D. In the past year, more than 30,000 Americans died by firearms. The Children's Defense Fund states, "In 2008 and 2009, gun homicide was the leading cause of death among black teens."
- E. Past violence on school grounds includes dozens of examples including Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in 2012; Virginia Tech in 2007; Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999; and Thurston High School in Oregon in 1998.

RESOLUTION

- 1. The PPS Board of Education calls on our Congressional delegation and the Oregon State Legislature to take action now that will keep our students from harm, enhance the security of the school environment and make our communities safer.
- 2. The Board of Education specifically calls on our various statewide and federal elected officials to enact legislation that would bring about common-sense gun control both in access to firearms as well as the ability of individuals to bring them onto school campuses.
- 3. Further, the Board of Education calls on Congress and the Oregon State Legislature to address the many contributing factors to gun violence, many of which were called out in President Obama's Gun Violence Initiative's report, including effective and universal background checks; closing loopholes that allow the purchase of prohibited guns or ammunition, or purchase by those who are otherwise prohibited from buying guns; more effective mental health supports; and a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines.
- 4. The Board of Education will support these and other common-sense measures to help ensure a more safe and secure environment for our children.