

**Portland Public School District 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon  
Board of Education Study Session**

**May 27, 2014  
Informal Minutes**

The study session of the Board of Education came to order at 7:30pm at the call of Co-Chair Pam Knowles in the Board Auditorium of the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon St, Portland, Oregon.

There were present:

Pam Knowles, Co-Chair  
Ruth Adkins  
Bobbie Regan  
Tom Koehler  
Steve Buel  
Matt Morton - *absent*  
Greg Belisle, Co-Chair

Andrew Davidson, Student Representative

Staff

Carole Smith, Superintendent  
Caren Huson Quiniones, Board Clerk

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Greg Burrill spoke on the topic of racism, stating that people can choose to see it or not see it. MLC was founded on a model of collaboration between students, parents and faculty. It makes no difference what color the administrator is. MLC parents are not interested in being told what to do. Teachers have told him that there is a body of evidence to this effect. It was racism at the District level.

Josh Himel stated that he has had a long-term interest in the safety of PPS schools and asked the Board to please vote no on taking money from the seismic bond work and applying it to the high school revised criteria. Safety must come before educational goals.

Edward Wolf, Our Portland Our Schools (OPOS) Board Member, asked the Board to not put the District's commitment to seismic safety in jeopardy. He supports the revised high school criteria plan and they bring the greatest seismic safety in the bond, but that should not diminish the importance of the summer seismic work.

Joshua Curtis, Co-Chair of OPOS, spoke in favor of the proposed changes to the high school criteria. The changes were necessary to provide students with a full high school education. We need to build schools that allow students to take more than 24 credits.

Sarah Witter asked the Board to not approve the additional funds for the revised high school criteria. The public voted on the wording of the Bond itself, and many schools have a high chance on collapsing if an earthquake were to occur. She asked that the Board follow-through with what the Bond promised to do and provide the seismic upgrades to the schools.

Scott Bailey indicated that he was speaking on behalf of OPOS and stated that they would like to see the math going forward to understand exactly what it would mean to shave off a couple classrooms here and there. They understand the high school space is needed for basic core

needs, but they don't know what the costs are going to be for the Bond work going forward; we don't know what the actual construction tab will be.

### **QUARTERLY UPDATE: OFFICE OF SCHOOL MODERNIZATION**

Jim Owens, Executive Director of School Modernization, provided a PowerPoint presentation and stated the concerns over the schedules of the projects. There was good news with students being engaged in the work.

Co-Chair Belisle asked if there were any concerns on market conditions. Mr. Owens responded that he was noticing trends in the market that are reducing competition on our work with not as many firms pursuing the work.

### **FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL SCHEMATIC DESIGN**

Debbie Pearson, Franklin Project Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation and stated that the Franklin community stands united on the proposed design. The project is in scope and on budget and schedule.

Director Regan commented that it was a beautiful design and questioned how many fields will be on the property. Ms. Pearson responded that the softball field could be installed on the northwest corner of the site, and there would be a football field that will also serve as a soccer field. Director Regan asked when the District would bring in public safety experts to look at the design and provide feedback. Ms. Pearson responded that they have already met with the Portland Fire and Police, and also District Security and Safety Officers.

Director Koehler questioned if a preschool in our high school was a must have. Superintendent Smith responded that it was in our educational specifications for all high schools. They provide a service in the community and services to our students who have children. Director Buel asked if we could move the preschool over to Atkinson and then use the Franklin space for two additional classrooms. Mr. Owens responded that staff was trying to align the design with the Board approved educational specifications. Director Regan mentioned that the "brain bar" area in the Franklin design could also be two additional classroom spaces and suggested that staff look into that. Director Adkins and Co-Chair Knowles stated that they liked the idea of a "brain bar".

Tom Peterson, member of the Bond Accountability Committee (BAC), reported that they had received a briefing from staff the previous week on the additional criteria and financing. The Board had received a letter from the Chair of the BAC which indicated that the Committee now understood the issue. What the Board has is a situation where there is more scope and it will cost more and the Board needs to figure out how they will fund that. There will still be adequate contingency. The budget increase was pretty reasonable on what has been added to the Franklin scope.

Director Regan stated that she was grateful that the BAC raised questions the previous week on the added criteria and additional funds. They were all experts and she appreciates that they helped the Board pause and have a much more intentional discussion.

### **BOND MARKET ADJUSTMENT ALIGNMENT**

Mr. Owens provided a PowerPoint presentation and stated that a memo was in the Board packet on the subject matter. Mr. Owens commented that staff has to take BOLI rates into consideration as they will change the account, as it does manifest in the cost per square foot. We estimated to

the midpoint of construction for Franklin; Grant was a little more difficult, but staff identified an amount based on what we are expecting to see at this point of time.

Director Regan stated that the Board had already approved \$10 million to support all three high school projects, and now staff was recommending that half of it be allocated to Franklin and she was surprised by that. Mr. Owens responded that it all goes back to the way the Bond is structured. Franklin started out at 240,000 square feet which is larger than its existing size; Grant also went with a larger amount of square footage. The need to adjust the program reserve to bring Grant down to the same size as Franklin brought it at a negative allocation. Franklin will be about 20% larger than currently is.

### **ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION SPECIFICATIONS**

Mr. Owens provided a PowerPoint presentation. The proposed additional criteria for high school education specifications would reduce the student to teacher ratio and provide greater opportunity for students. There were three alternatives to consider: Option 1 – no change; Option 2 - add half of the additional criteria; and, Option 3 - add full additional criteria.

Director Koehler stated that, essentially, staff assumed a cost based on a certain interest rate. Mr. Owens responded that it was a function of the face value of the Bond and for the rate \$1.10 per thousand assessed value. When the second issuance is performed next spring, we would receive feedback on the impact on the Bond premium if we keep that tax rate constant. David Wynde, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, added that until we are farther along in the bond program, we will not know if we can capture \$14 million as additional proceeds or not.

Director Buel commented that the District should stay true to what we promised the voters. Director Adkins mentioned that ADA and elevators were part of the promise to voters with the original bond.

Director Buel questioned how much money would need to do add all the additional criteria to Franklin. Mr. Owens responded about \$25 million. Director Buel suggested that the District cut \$7 million from contracts for the next four years to cover the \$25 million needed.

Director Adkins stated that she appreciates the work that staff has done, but she would rather stick with the master plan and the status quo. There will be changes down the road, guaranteed; but we cannot change what we promised the voters.

Director Koehler commented that he does not want to build a high school where students would be limited to six classes; yet, it was important to stick to what we said we were going to do. We need the public trust. Director Koehler requested additional information on what it means to build the high schools within the existing budget in terms of what we can do with different schedules, boundary changes, etc.

Student Representative Davidson stated that he was leaning towards Option 2. He was worried about presenting voters with the next Bond, but also concerned about not following through with the asks of the community for their high schools.

Director Adkins mentioned that she thought we would obtain a 21<sup>st</sup> century building either way.

Director Regan commented that her highest priority was to be true to the voters if we expect them to contribute again. We have always talked about this being a 30-year plan, and the only way to get there is to do what you say you are going to do. She would like more information on a staggered teacher schedule, and she did not think a “brain bar” was a must have. She was concerned about pushing \$25 million of summer projects off until the next bond as that will impact what we can do with the next bond.

Co-Chair Belisle stated that the bond was designed from community input; they wanted seismic upgrades. To begin pulling money from that to support a different high school scope would not be in keeping with what was promised,

Co-Chair Knowles agreed that we could not change what was promised the voters. There was too much uncertainty in the funds.

Superintendent Smith mentioned that a resolution would not be needed next week to move forward with the original plan; the Board would simply vote on the Franklin Schematic Design next week.

**ADJOURN**

Co-Chair Knowles adjourned the meeting at 10:37pm.

Submitted by:

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Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Clerk