

Enrollment and Program Balancing Process

Proposed Scope of Work

Second Draft to Board

February 12, 2020

Introduction

In June of 2019, the Portland Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education adopted an ambitious vision, *PPS reImagined*, co-constructed by a broad coalition of students, staff and community stakeholders, that provides an aspirational North Star and direction to guide the transformation of our school system. While PPS engages in multi-pronged efforts to improve student outcomes through the implementation of academic strategies and social-emotional support for our students, the district also has several system issues related to the use of its physical facilities that impact student success. To address these issues, the Board of Education and the Superintendent will launch an enrollment and program balancing process.

Staff will develop short and long-term recommendations, with input from the community, for enrollment and program balancing in Portland Public Schools based on identified outcome goals (see below) and to support the access of historically underserved students to high quality learning environments. Enrollment and program balancing work will commence in spring 2020, beginning with southeast schools. The process will continue to the north/northeast areas to address over- and under-enrolled schools in the second year. In the third year, the process will continue in the west/southwest to address over enrollment of several schools. As defined in Board policy, proposals and recommendations will be considered by the Board on an annual basis with the intention that all changes be approved no later than January of the calendar year for the following school year.

Why are we doing this?

Enrollment and program imbalances across the district create inequities that impact student learning:

- Some of our school sites are either over- or under-enrolled:
 - Over-enrolled schools often don't have enough classroom space for optimal class sizes, PE, or multiple electives
 - Under-enrolled schools often have difficulty providing a robust array of programming; students and educators in single-strand program pathways are isolated from their peers

- Having programs co-located in a building often leads to isolation and programmatic inequities
- The ACCESS program was relocated and divided into two separate campuses and needs to be reunited and resituated.
- A new middle school is opening in 2021; we need to identify its feeder pattern and engaged the school communities that may be potentially reconfigured from K-8's to K-5's.
- A full continuum of special education services does not currently exist within each regional cluster with complete pathways and related supports.

Because we are inefficiently using facilities, we are addressing these problems by using scarce resources that would otherwise be available for direct student services.

Why now?

Enrollment imbalances have been recognized as problematic in PPS for many years, with multiple community processes over the last decade. While some adjustments were accomplished, problem areas still exist. The immediate impetus for re-starting this work is the opening of Kellogg Middle School in August 2021. In order to have a smooth transition for students, families, and educators, we will need to determine Kellogg's feeder pattern by January 2021. More broadly, we are committed to addressing the problems identified above to better serve our students.

Core Values

This process is grounded in our core values--ethical principles established in the development of our community-informed vision for the future of PPS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ● Students at the Center | ● Creativity and Innovation |
| ● Racial Equity and Social Justice | ● Partnerships and Collaboration |
| ● Honesty and Integrity | ● Grounded in the Spirit of Portland |
| ● Excellence | ● Joyful Learning and Leadership |
| ● Respect | |
| ● Relationships | |

Outcome Goals

The District's enrollment and program balancing goals to optimize student learning are:

- **Optimize the Use of Facilities** to enhance learning environments for all students. PPS wants to be a good steward of public assets and phase out portable classrooms when possible to create connected, safer schools.

- **Support Equitable Programming** to improve the student experience across all grade levels, and particularly in middle grades. This process will support continued educational program redesign at the middle grade levels, to include reconfiguration of identified K-8 neighborhood schools to K-5 elementary schools and creating new comprehensive middle schools while maintaining regional K-8 school options to support program pathway continuity (for example, Dual Language Immersion pathways).
- **Minimize Program Co-Locations** to create fewer shared facilities and co-located programs at K-5, K-8, and 6-8 schools

Approach and Sequence of Work

1. **Data-Informed District-Wide Plan** - In order to maintain equitable and fiscally sustainable schools, school districts should have a process in place that allows timely adjustments to population shifts on a regular basis. Since PPS has not had such a mechanism for many years, numerous imbalances have accumulated across the district. Data show that students' ability to thrive is challenged when there are schools across the district experiencing enrollment and program imbalances. Strategies that emerge to address these imbalances in PPS will be informed by a robust data analysis inclusive of multiple data sources. PPS will be transparent about the sources of data, as well as our analysis and utilization of the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) lens to inform decision making. The analysis will consider student demographics race/ethnicity, social economic status, special education, and English language learners. PPS also aspires to provide opportunities to enhance data literacy within our community in order to build our collective capacity and develop a shared analysis.
2. **Phased Implementation Plan Using Regional Approach/Focus** - While the master plan will use a district-wide perspective, its implementation will occur in phases over the next several years. PPS recognizes the unique neighborhood and geographic contexts in which our students live and our schools and programs are located. Since understanding and responding to local conditions requires some intensive work, our phased approach will address identified problem areas, while being mindful of the larger district context. Staff will begin with resolving multiple issues in the Southeast region. The most immediate task is identifying the schools that will feed into the new Kellogg Middle School that will be opening in August 2021. At the same time, we will need to prepare for opening a second middle school in the region within the next few years and resolving severe overcrowding at Bridger. As the district-wide plan identifies other regions experiencing imbalances, additional phased work will be added.

3. **Community Engagement** – As PPS staff generate recommendations for changes to bring to the School Board, we will engage the broader community in structured ways to both inform the community of the reasons why we are doing enrollment balancing, and to take advantage of the knowledge and experience of students, parents, and other community members in developing equitable solutions. Staff will seek input through advisory groups of school principals, parents, students and community, through broad outreach using open houses and surveys, as well as targeted engagement with students and historically underserved parents and community members. Community engagement will take place within the context of PPS Core Values, with an emphasis on racial equity. We are committed to sharing enrollment and related data with the public, and asking for input on scenarios generated by staff and for help in developing alternative scenarios that may lead to better, more equitable schools for our students. Final recommendations should recognize the multiple perspectives held by community members and clearly explain why some ideas were incorporated and some were not. The PPS Board will make the final decisions in the enrollment balancing process.

4. **Continuous Improvement** - As a learning organization, PPS is committed to processes that reinforce learning cycles. We intend to use a phased approach, learning from initial findings and strategies and making adjustments as the work progresses. This approach allows us to resolve problems as quickly as possible for maximum positive student impact.