



Portland Public Schools Board of Education

Work Session

INFORMAL MINUTES

Thursday, July 9, 2020 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Opening

The virtual meeting opened for attendees to arrive at 5:45pm. No deliberation or decisions were made prior to the start of the meeting. The Board of Education Work Session came to order at 6:02 pm at the call of Chair Amy Kohnstamm. This meeting was held virtually due to Covid-19 and streamed live at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ppscmms/videos>

Public Comment

- Winta Yohannes: Managing director of Albina Vision Trust. Albina Vision Trust put forth the concept of the Center for Black Excellence with hope that it will be integrated into the Bond proposal. The built environment is never neutral, most often negative, but can be positive for all. PPS is a partner. Look at whole life of children in the city, especially black kids, and look at the whole investment by all partners.
- Kali Thorn-Ladd: KairosPDX. Center for Black Excellence. Kairos is a partner with Albina Trust. Opportunity to write a new narrative. Supports centering black excellence. Have opportunity for center decision making to make sure that black students thrive academically, emotionally and culturally. Many organizations are ready to serve the students in partnership with the district.

Update and Overview of Community Engagement and Poll Results

Luke Martin, with ALG Research, summarized the results of polling 600 potential voters. He noted that two thirds of the people polled thought that their finances would get worse, that there was a normal amount of dissatisfaction with education, that there was a net positive rating on tax satisfaction, and that the support for the bond clears the viability threshold, which reflects 66% of potential voters polled strongly or somewhat favored the bond, with only 22% responding negatively. He shared that they tested three bond package options, and that the majority of voters favoring the largest 1.1 billion dollar bond, with decrease support for the smallest bond package option. He noted that the top priorities were increased educational opportunities, through updated modern curriculum, improved access for students with disabilities, and performing critical maintenance projects, increased access to technology, and an emphasis on diversity and a community vision for Jefferson. He added that voters additionally want independent accountability and that people are less enthusiastic about security upgrades. He explained that polled potential voters who originally answered don't know or with opposition to the bond, moved to an in favor vote once they heard more about the bond. The board directors asked questions of Mr. Martin.

Russell Brown shared an overview of the results of the PPS Bond Survey that was sent out, noting that more than 2000 people responded. He noted that the top educational investment priorities were curriculum, technology, and ADA access, in that order, with security upgrades shown to be less important, and that the bond package with the most support was the 1.1 billion dollar proposal, with a focus on Jefferson. Jonathan Garcia shared an overview of the messages heard in the Bond Town Hall, noting that about 120 people participated. He stated that the most commonly mentioned focuses were

education investments (infrastructure, with strong desire for SPED classroom funding), Health and safety (including ADA), and support for modernization Jefferson, with expressed support for a Center for Black Excellence. Shanice Clarke highlighted that focus groups were held with the District Student Counsel (DSC), NAYA, SEI, Latino network, and Opal School, noting that across focus groups there was a heightened priority for educational investments and a preference to modernized Jefferson, as well as a Center for Black Excellence emerging with significant support.

There was board responses to the polling data.

Board Discussion of Bond Packages

A bond package option which, includes modernization of Jefferson HS and a Center for Black Excellence, was looked at and there was board discussion. It was noted that the 60 million for planning, design and pre-construction, which includes work an A-typical planning process to work with black community members and the Jefferson cluster. Director Scott noted that they can't state exactly what the funds would cover because they don't know what they are going to build yet, but that it includes capital/pre-building. Director DePass added that an expanded engagement would be an important part of building the center for black excellence because the black community should lead the development. Jonathan Garcia, Chief Engagement Officer, added that the Center for Black Excellence may include more than one site.

It was noted that the dollar amount for ADA improvements include one fully accessible K-5, middle school and high school in each cluster. Dan Jung added that some of the numbers provided might change slightly as they look at more cost details, but that they shouldn't change much. There was discussion regard the security line item and what it would include. There was a discussion regarding middle school redesign funds allocated in bond package. There was discussion regarding the estimates and anticipated cost escalation. It was noted that is why there is contingency. There was discussion regarding enrollment estimates, and how they may or may not effect schools. The board shared their questions and concerns so that staff can address them. There was a request to see the different iterations of proposed packages to see how they've changed over time.

Superintendent Guerrero shared that all of the polling showed that the highest priority to voters is curriculum which aligns with district goals. Dr. Valentino, Chief Academic Officer, shared what the district could use more funds to better improve curriculum, including finding the right curriculum and continual adoption, allow for more innovate in the work they do, including a pk-12 continue of climate justice and ethnic studies, which requires PD and resources. There was a request to receive realistic numbers of what it would take to improve curriculum.

There was discussion regarding the referral language, with general consensus that it would be important to use less specific in language, while also creating transparency.

Student Representative Shue shared that he thinks the package looks overall good, and is happy to see the full amount for Jefferson, and suggested that seismic upgrades be increased.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Kohnstamm at 8:17 pm.

Kara Bradshaw

Board Secretary