

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEAD START PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT MODIFICATION NARRATIVE

FEDERAL HEAD START GRANT #10CH010719

FISCAL YEAR 2022

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Goal: Provide increased access to extended day services and supports to children and families eligible for Head Start.

Proposal: Convert remaining state part-day slots to extended day slots and not create any additional classrooms.

Rationale: Enrollment trends and our Community Needs Assessment show that the majority of families prefer and need access to full day services for their children. Historically, part-day slots have been extremely difficult to fill and presented a challenge in terms of reaching full enrollment. These classrooms also experience high turnover rates as families found full-day care options. Research suggests that children may progress further and more quickly given increased contact time in high quality early learning environments.

In addition, our county is experiencing an increase in access to universal preschool. New city and state funding sources have resulted in increased competition for enrollment as there is no regulatory distinction in income levels for eligibility. In essence, families who may be eligible for Head Start may also be eligible for Preschool Promise and Preschool For All spaces. Portland Public Schools itself is expanding its preschool slots by 90 spaces.

As of this amendment submission (August 16, 2022), we have 500 families engaged in the enrollment process for Head Start. Our hypothesis is that many families may still be reluctant to send their children to in-person school, haven't yet vaccinated their children, have sought other forms of care as COVID variants continue to persist, and/or may have been displaced out of our service area by COVID.

By not adding classrooms, this reduces overall center-based enrollment by 112 total slots (760 to 648). This also results in an increase in our state grant of over \$500,000. An added benefit is that

class size in each of our extended day classrooms will decrease from 20 students per class to 18 students per class. This should provide a higher quality early learning experience for children and families.

The additional state grant funds will be used to expand and improve our mental health services and supports to children, families, and staff. A new Health Coordinator position will be funded by these additional funds.

Plan: PPS Head Start applied for conversion to duration slots with the Oregon Department of Education Early Learning Division. Our application was approved and we will be funded accordingly. The plan is to reduce overall slots from 760 to 648, maintain 36 extended day classrooms, and reduce classroom size from 20 to 18 students each. Additional state grant funds will be used to expand and improve our mental health consultation services and supports. We have already hired an additional full-time mental health consultant and a new full-time Health Coordinator. These positions increase and improve our internal capacity to respond to the needs of our children, families, and staff.