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Executive Summary

The Southeast Guiding Coalition (SEGC)—a group of 36 parent and community member volunteers and 21 Portland Public School (PPS) principals commissioned by the PPS Board of Education—met 19 times between May 2021 and April 2022 to develop the second phase of a plan for enrollment and program balancing in Southeast Portland. Building on its work in 2020-21 to set an initial feeder pattern for Kellogg Middle School, the SEGC focused on balancing enrollment, optimizing use of facilities, and supporting equitable access to programs and services, while accomplishing three specific goals set by the Board:

- Establishing an attendance area and special program assignments for Harrison Park Middle School
- Developing a plan to relocate K-5 students and programs currently served at Harrison Park
- Developing a plan to increase enrollment at Lane Middle School

During the course of its work, the SEGC weighed extensive feedback from community members, advice from PPS academic and enrollment experts, and data on the projected impact of different solutions. In all, coalition members considered 15 scenarios and evaluated each through the district’s [Racial Equity and Social Justice Lens](#).

The SEGC achieved consensus on several elements of a rebalancing plan, including a new location for Harrison Park’s elementary school and for Creative Science School, the location for K-5 Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs, and boundary changes to bolster enrollment at Lane MS and many K-5 schools. But the group could not find a full solution that earned consensus or even majority support among coalition members.

This report shares details of the proposal that earned the most support: 13 of 32 voting SEGC members (41%) supported it in a final vote, while 5 supported an alternate proposal and 14 chose not to support either. Highlights of this proposal, which is planned to take effect in Fall 2023, include:

- Harrison Park K-8 will convert to a middle school, and its current K-5 students will attend a new elementary school at the Clark building (the current home of Creative Science School)



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- Creative Science School (CSS) will relocate to Bridger K-5 and become a focus option school with priority for the Bridger neighborhood.
- The two-strand K-5 Spanish Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program at Bridger will relocate to Lent K-5 to create a whole-school K-5 Spanish DLI program with guaranteed admission for the current Lent neighborhood. Students in the Lent neighborhood who opt out of the Spanish DLI program will attend Marysville K-5.
- At the middle school level: Mandarin DLI will consolidate at Harrison Park, with the Mandarin DLI program currently at Hosford MS joining the program already at Harrison Park. Spanish DLI at the middle school level will consolidate at Kellogg MS, with the program currently at Mt. Tabor joining the one already at Kellogg.
- Several neighborhood middle school feeder patterns will shift to help balance enrollment: Atkinson and Vestal will shift to Harrison Park (from Mt. Tabor and Roseway Heights, respectively), Creston will shift to Hosford (from Kellogg), and Woodstock will shift to Lane (from Hosford).
- Attendance boundaries will change at many K-5 schools to help meet minimum enrollment targets. Virtually all schools that were part of the SEGC process will experience boundary changes, including Arleta, Atkinson, Bridger, Creston, Glencoe, Lent, Lewis, Marysville, Vestal, Whitman, Woodmere and Woodstock.

If adopted, this proposal would make progress toward several important goals, including:

- Converting Harrison Park to a middle school and allowing its current K-5 students—which make up one of the most diverse communities in PPS—to relocate to a single new school.
- Ensuring projected enrollment (based on benchmarks set by district staff) at Harrison Park MS, Lane MS, and many K-5 schools will be sufficient to offer equitable programming for students. Notably, the increase in enrollment at Lane would result entirely from attendance boundary changes—an approach the Lane community supports and the coalition believes will be more sustainable over time than increasing enrollment through program relocations.
- Relocating Creative Science School to a community that is open to receiving it.
- Maintaining and growing the Spanish DLI program that started at Kellogg MS this school year—a priority cited by community members and principals.
- Implementing PPS staff’s recommendation to move away from single-strand neighborhood programs at Bridger and Lent, which data show may not serve students—particularly students of color—effectively.
- Creating more consolidated DLI programs at the middle school level and creating a new whole-school K-5 DLI option—both strongly recommended by principals and PPS staff.

Coalition members noted that the proposal also has significant shortcomings. Concerns cited among members not supporting it included:

- Middle school enrollment will likely remain imbalanced, leaving Kellogg MS well over 80% utilization (the district’s definition of “overcrowded”) and several schools—most notably Harrison Park MS—below or at risk of dropping below the district’s minimum enrollment threshold over the long run.



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- The process excluded inner Southeast schools, which are relatively overcrowded and more affluent compared to outer Southeast schools. This decision by the Board concentrated disruption in the highest-need communities while limiting the coalition's ability to balance enrollment.
- District staff denied requests to analyze whether reconfiguring Creative Science School as a K-5 would help address the remaining imbalances in middle school enrollment.
- Some Lent community members strongly oppose relocation of the school's neighborhood program.
- Lack of consistency and clarity in the process itself eroded confidence in the work and contributed to the coalition's inability to reach consensus.

In light of these challenges, the coalition recommends that PPS and the Board take the following actions in implementing any plan that is adopted:

- Provide capital improvements and additional budget support as necessary to sustain equitable programming, particularly at Harrison Park.
- Provide clear implementation details and timelines to all school communities experiencing program or boundary changes.
- Facilitate community building among programs that will be relocating or receiving relocated programs, most notably Creative Science School/Bridger and Marysville/Lent.
- To the greatest degree possible, maintain the current legacy policy for boundary changes to ease the burden on students and families. Community members have shared that this would ease the hardships of the transition period, especially for those with siblings and students in different grade levels.
- Plan with PBOT and Safe Routes to School for the transportation needs and challenges that the new boundaries and feeder paths will create.
- Set a goal to minimize the impact of any future enrollment balancing process on students who will be required to move as a result of the current process.
- Study the impact of maintaining K-8 focus options on enrollment at comprehensive middle schools, for consideration during any future enrollment balancing efforts.
- Conduct a review of the SEGC process in partnership with any interested coalition members before moving forward with any future enrollment balancing efforts.

Scope of Work

The SEGC was tasked with balancing enrollment to help increase access to equitable programming across 21 schools in Southeast Portland. Phase 2 of the work began in May 2021 and concluded in April 2022. The coalition is made up of 57 parents, community members, school principals, and stakeholders who attended regular evening meetings totalling over 50 hours, along with additional “homework,” work sessions, and office hours.

The Board's [charge](#) to the SEGC for Phase 2 cited three goals:



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- Balance enrollment across Southeast middle schools, ensuring Harrison Park and Lane middle schools have sufficient enrollment to offer full programming. This may be accomplished through boundary adjustments, whole-school feeder pattern changes, and specialized program movement.
- Realign middle school boundaries so that the Kellogg building is located within its own attendance area.
- Determine the future location for Harrison Park K-5 students, and related boundary changes and specialized program moves.

In meeting these goals, the Board asked the coalition to submit a recommendation that created the following:

- Attendance area and special program assignments for Harrison Park Middle School
- A plan to relocate K-5 students and programs currently served at Harrison Park
- A plan to increase enrollment at Lane Middle School

In addition to the charge set by the PPS School Board, the SEGC also held in consideration the following key objectives under the guidance of PPS and FLO Analytics:

- Listen to community members, particularly People of Color, and follow their input as often as possible
- Increase racial equity for all students with a particular focus on Black and Native students
- Where possible, create whole-school K-5 programming—all DLI or all neighborhood—instead of co-located structures
- Eliminate single-strand neighborhood programs
- Consolidate DLI programs of the same target language at the middle school level, with only one DLI program per middle school
- Maintain CSS as a K-8 school in Southeast
- Keep Harrison Park K-5 students together (including Mandarin DLI students)
- Ensure that enrollment is above 270 students at each K-5 school and above 500 students at each comprehensive middle school
- Keep classroom utilization at or below 80% of building capacity (the district's definition of "overcrowded")
- Avoid split feeder patterns (sending students from a single K-5 neighborhood program to different middle schools).
- Do not increase—and decrease if possible—students who must cross major roads to access their neighborhood schools (i.e. Cesar Chavez, 82nd, Division, and Powell).

Challenges and Lack of Consensus

Over the course of nearly a year, the SEGC attempted to balance program locations, the wishes of 21 school communities, and the overarching goal of increasing equitable access to programs and services. The coalition considered seven possible solutions (including many variations of each), encountering many challenges along the way.



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One significant hurdle was the Board’s decision to limit potential changes to only 21 schools, all in Outer Southeast, instead of also considering schools in Inner Southeast (many of which are overcrowded). This made it almost impossible to balance enrollment across the entire region. It also ensured any changes would mainly disrupt the relatively more diverse, lower-income schools in Outer Southeast, while more affluent communities in Inner Southeast would experience no changes.

Options for relocating Creative Science School were limited by the district’s decision to maintain it as a K-8 school and the difficulty in finding a school community willing to convert back to a K-8 to receive it. The decision to place Creative Science at Bridger, which is adjacent to Harrison Park MS, impeded the coalition's ability to increase neighborhood enrollment at Harrison Park.

An additional limitation was the low engagement of Black and Native families in the process. While PPS and the coalition made many efforts to reach Black and Native families, we struggled to obtain enough input, which limited the voice of these communities in the decision making process.

The coalition could not find a solution that met racial equity and social justice goals for all students. In particular, every scenario failed to adequately address equity goals for Black and Native communities by ensuring their race and culture would be reflected and honored in the curriculum, instructional practices, and social-emotional supports offered across Southeast schools.

Many coalition members also cited concerns with the process itself. Guidelines for decision-making were applied inconsistently, and guardrails were added and removed at various stages of the work. A debrief of the SEGC process could help future PPS efforts create a more positive and productive outcome. This process could consider the process for selecting committee members, ideas for improved decision-making, the need for neutral facilitation, additional support for community engagement, and clarity around required outcomes and preferences.

Partly as a result of the factors above, the coalition could not reach a consensus or even majority support for a full proposal. After an initial vote on the final proposal (known as “F3”), a majority of SEGC members submitted a request to develop another option to address specific shortcomings in that proposal. In response, PPS allowed members to work with FLO Analytics to develop a set of “G” scenarios and extended the process to include two additional meetings. On March 31, 2022, the SEGC held a final vote to decide which scenario to recommend to the Deputy Superintendent. The vote breakdown was as follows:

- Proposal F3: 13 (41%)
- Proposal G2: 5 (16%)
- No Preference: 6 (19%)
- Abstention: 8 (25%)

During this meeting, time was given for each SEGC member to give a statement on their experience, the proposals, and how they felt about the process going into the final vote. Those statements can be seen [here](#).



Key Decision Points

It became clear early on in the Phase 2 work that the large program placement decisions (where to relocate Creative Science School, and where to locate Spanish and Mandarin DLI at the K-5 and middle school levels) would guide many other decisions. The chart below offers a look at the ripple effect of these decisions, based on the “F3” proposal that received the most support among coalition members. Decisions that had consensus or majority support from the coalition are indicated in bold in the “Action” column; other decisions received support from less than a majority of coalition members.

Goal	Action	Impact	Next Steps
Designate a new location for Harrison Park K-5 students when it converts to a middle school.	Consensus decision: The Clark building (current Creative Science location) will be converted back to a neighborhood K-5; all Harrison Park K-5 students will relocate there	Harrison Park K-5 students can all attend the same elementary school and be close to their assigned MS Creative Science is displaced and needs a new location	Find a new location in SE for Creative Science
Find a new location in Southeast for Creative Science	Consensus decision: Move Creative Science to Bridger and convert from a full lottery program to a neighborhood based focus option	Creative Science relocates to a location with support from both CSS and the receiving community Current Bridger neighborhood will still have a neighborhood program in the area Bridger’s neighborhood program is no longer a single strand (as recommended by PPS and available data).	Find a new location for Bridger Spanish DLI strands



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		Bridger's Spanish DLI classes need a new location (not enough space for CSS/Bridger neighborhood and the DLI classes)	
Find a new location for Bridger's Spanish DLI program	Majority decision, with notable objections: Convert Lent to a whole-school Spanish DLI program, with Bridger's program joining the existing one; students in Lent neighborhood who aren't in the DLI program attend Marysville	Lent's neighborhood program is no longer a single strand (as recommended by PPS and available data). Marysville receives a needed enrollment boost Bridger's two DLI classes can move together to the same location. Creates a robust Spanish DLI program in a neighborhood with one of the highest concentrations of native Spanish speakers in Southeast	Lent neighborhood students who wish to opt out of the Spanish DLI move to Marysville.
Consolidate middle school Spanish DLI programs at one school	Relocate Spanish DLI program at Mt. Tabor MS to join existing Spanish DLI program at Kellogg MS	Retains and grows the program at Kellogg that started this year—a priority of community members and principals. Implements PPS staff recommendation to consolidate all middle school Spanish DLI at one location	Ensure adequate enrollment for Harrison Park MS; consolidate middle school Mandarin DLI programs at one school



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		<p>Creston must be reassigned from Kellogg to Hosford to make space for additional Spanish DLI enrollment.</p> <p>Even with the change to Creston’s middle school assignment, Kellogg MS still has a high building utilization near 90%—well past the threshold for “overcrowded.”</p> <p>Retaining the large Spanish DLI program at Kellogg limits options for boosting enrollment at Harrison Park MS.</p>	
<p>Ensure adequate enrollment for Harrison Park MS; consolidate Mandarin DLI at one middle school</p>	<p>Relocate Mandarin DLI program at Hosford to join the existing one at Harrison Park MS</p> <p>Reassign Atkinson’s neighborhood program from Mt Tabor MS to Harrison Park MS; reassign Vestal’s neighborhood program from Roseway Heights MS to Harrison Park MS.</p>	<p>Fulfills the desire of the Harrison Park community to keep their neighborhood and Mandarin DLI programs together.</p> <p>Implements PPS staff recommendation to consolidate middle school Mandarin DLI at one school.</p> <p>Harrison Park MS will open with lower enrollment (550-575), and building utilization (65%) than Kellogg; overall enrollment will be highly dependent on robust</p>	<p>Improve enrollment at Lane MS</p>



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		<p>enrollment in the Mandarin DLI program.</p> <p>Harrison Park's percentage of low-income families will drop to 25%, which could cause it to lose Title I funding.</p>	
<p>Improve enrollment at Lane MS</p>	<p>Consensus decision: Reassign Woodstock neighborhood program from Hosford MS to Lane MS.</p>	<p>Increases Lane MS enrollment to just above the minimum goal—but entirely with boundary changes, which is likely sustainable and in line with the Lane community's preference.</p> <p>Lane's percentage of low-income families will drop and could cause it to lose Title I funding.</p> <p>Assigns Woodstock to a more proximate neighborhood location and eliminates the current transportation burden to Hosford.</p>	<p>Address remaining K-5 enrollment imbalances</p>
<p>Address remaining K-5 enrollment imbalances (to get as many schools as possible above 270 students)</p>	<p>Consensus decision: Multiple K-5 boundary changes affecting Arleta, Atkinson, Bridger, Creston, Glencoe, Lent, Lewis, Marysville, Vestal, Whitman, Woodmere and Woodstock.</p>	<p>More K-5 schools will have enrollment above 270 compared to the 2021-22 baseline.</p> <p>Many schools will still be very close to (or even slightly under) the minimum enrollment target.</p>	



		<p>Large enrollment imbalances remain between Outer Southeast schools and Inner Southeast schools that were excluded from this process.</p>	
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Implementation Recommendations

The coalition recommends that the Board take action on the following to successfully implement the “F3” proposal, should it be adopted. Items listed under “Short Term Implementation Recommendations” can be implemented now, without any extension of the SEGC process. Those listed under “Long Term Implementation Recommendations” may require an extension of the process, further community outreach, or extended work with PPS.

Short Term Implementation Recommendations

- Create a board mandate that would ensure equitable staffing and programming for all middle schools not meeting enrollment targets. Due to the unpredictability of the phase-in process, opt outs, and the legacy policy some middle schools are at risk of falling below 500 students (the district’s minimum enrollment target), especially in the initial years of implementation. For example, the Board could add funding equivalent to 1 FTE to every school with enrollment under the district’s minimum target (both K-5 and MS).
- Require PPS to complete the planned Harrison Park facilities improvements before opening in 2023.
- Support Harrison Park in intentionally hiring new staff to support the diverse students at Harrison Park, including a priority on bilingual and BIPOC support staff and teachers.
- Communicate effectively with all families and community members affected by changes, including an implementation timeline and options for families to potentially access new assignments before Fall 2023.
- To the greatest degree possible, maintain the current legacy policy for boundary changes to ease the burden on students and families. Community members have shared that this would ease the hardships of the transition period, especially for those with siblings and students in different grade levels.
- Maintain the integrity of RESJ support for underrepresented students of color who are being disproportionately affected and vulnerable to loss of services during implementation of these changes. Work with RESJ partners in the affected schools to ensure that families are well supported, for example:



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- The transition of Bridger to CSS will result in a significantly less diverse population and will leave remaining Bridger students of color, particularly Black and Native students, with significantly less representation and resources.
- The addition of the southern portion of the current Bridger boundary to Atkinson and Marysville may result in a loss of culturally sensitive supports that need to be re-established quickly and intentionally in these students' new communities.
- Prior to finalizing boundary changes, consider targeted changes that include some Inner Southeast schools to balance enrollment more effectively. For example, allowing adjustments to Grout, Abernethy, Llewellyn, and Duniway ES could ease their overcrowding and provide healthier enrollments at Creston, Atkinson, Woodstock neighborhood, Whitman, and Woodmere. These changes will also further boost Lane MS's enrollment, which was one of the charges of the SEGEC.

Long Term Implementation Recommendations

- There are several K-8 schools in Southeast and Northeast (Creative Science School, Winterhaven, Sunnyside Environmental, Laurelhurst) that create challenges in properly planning for stable enrollment in surrounding middle schools. The Board should review the goals and policies around K-8 schools with a holistic, districtwide, and equity-based/RESJ lens with the goal of creating clear and consistent guidelines to inform future enrollment balancing work.
- The changes being proposed in the report have the potential to create significant disruption and erosion to the programs and communities being moved. In keeping with the goals of centering BIPOC students, PPS should be required to create and implement transportation plans designed to help students attending in their current neighborhood to continue to access the programs in their new locations.
 - For example, neighborhood students currently in the Mandarin DLI program at Hosford and the Spanish DLI program at Bridger should be provided transportation for the remainder of their time in those programs to their new locations.
 - The district should consider a permanent transportation solution for the Mandarin DLI middle school students from the Woodstock neighborhood as the new middle school assignment at Harrison Park is different from the proposed neighborhood middle school (Lane).
 - Transportation into Harrison Park Mandarin DLI should be open to all students, to promote diversity and enrollment stability.
- PPS should work with the Spanish DLI communities from Bridger and Lent to clarify how the transition of Lent to a whole-school Spanish DLI school will be phased in, address transportation and other necessary supports and to build community among the programs that will be merging. Clear, strong and well-planned resources should be provided to neighborhood students who will be leaving Lent ES to neighboring schools.
- PPS should work with culturally responsive partners to identify needs, barriers, challenges and burdens these



changes have on historically underserved communities.

- PPS should intensify recruitment efforts to increase teachers and administration representation of historically underrepresented communities of color.
- The Board should set a goal to minimize the impact of any future enrollment balancing process on students who will be required to move as a result of the current process.
- PPS should conduct a review of the SEGC process in partnership with any interested coalition members before moving forward with any future enrollment balancing efforts.

Additional Comments

SEGC members would like to share an addendum that was originally submitted on Feb. 24, 2022 with the dissenting opinion statement. This supplement expands on the challenges and limitations caused by excluding overcrowded and affluent inner SE schools from the rebalancing process. The document will be submitted with this SEGC report, and can also be viewed here: [SEGC Supplement \(Inner SE School Exclusion\)](#).