



**PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION & SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

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**Date:** October 25, 2022  
**To:** Portland Public Schools School Board  
**From:** Dr. Jon Franco, Chief of Schools  
**Subject:** Follow up to RESOLUTION No. 6513 SE Enrollment and Program Balancing-Phase 2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In May, 2022, the Board voted on boundary and program changes for 19 Southeast schools, but deferred a decision on the future location of the Lent English Scholar program. The Lent English Scholar program is composed of neighborhood students who do not enroll in Spanish Immersion. The Deputy Superintendent for Business & Operations had proposed moving the single-strand program to Marysville school so English Scholar students could benefit from a more supportive academic experience by creating opportunities for teacher collaboration and student socio-emotional growth. However, few English Scholar community members had provided input on the proposal, and those who had provided feedback expressed concerns about a) the added distance to Marysville and b) being split from friends in the Spanish Immersion program. Portland Public School staff was directed by the Board to re-engage with the Lent community to ensure all voices are heard.

Planning began over the summer to construct an intentional outreach plan and engagement strategy to connect with English Scholar families. Immediately after the start of the school year, community engagement staff began outreach to all English Scholar families to hear their concerns, questions and ideas (for details, see: Community Engagement section). This effort also involved staff from a number of offices, departments, and the leadership at Lent Elementary working together in concert to engage English Scholar families across several linguistic and cultural groups to ensure that their perspectives would be obtained, understood, and shared.

Staff recognizes that fundamental enrollment and resource conditions have not changed, and no feasible options have emerged to grow the Lent English Scholar program into two sections per grade while also consolidating Spanish Immersion at Lent. **As a result, the recommendation remains to relocate the English Scholar program to Marysville, while expanding opportunities for neighborhood students to enroll in Lent Spanish Immersion.** Based on community requests, this memo also includes analysis of continuing the English Scholar program at Lent or allowing a program to phase-out. District staff sincerely thanks the Lent staff and community for their participation in and contributions to this process, and truly believes that this recommendation is in service of our commitment to ensure all students receive the best academic experience possible at PPS.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In early August, a team of cross-departmental leads came together to discuss an engagement plan for re-engaging the Lent English Scholar community. In partnership with school leaders,

the team decided on a multi-pronged approach to offer different types of engagement opportunities through different mediums and at different times to appeal to as many English Scholar families as possible. Throughout all efforts to engage with families, it was clear that there were varying levels of knowledge around the past Southeast Guiding Coalition (SEGC) efforts, the SEGC goals/recommendations, and the implication for Lent Elementary's English Scholars. Much of the connecting time with families was used to provide information about the SEGC timeline, the earlier recommendation to move the Lent English Scholars to Marysville Elementary, listening to feedback on what the community needed, and answering straightforward questions about things like transportation and the difference between co-located programs and neighborhood programs. We also invited the Marysville Principal to the forum to share the program at her school.

For all formal meetings, translation was provided in Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. For in-person meetings, child care and food were provided.

### **Initial Outreach**

Synergy data provided the team with contact information for all families of the 127 students enrolled in the PK-5 English Scholar classrooms at Lent. Families were invited by personal phone call to the following engagement opportunities :

- An in-person meeting at Lent on September 19th at 6:00pm
- A virtual meeting via the school's Zoom account on September 27th at 10:00am
- Drop-in engagement availability at Lent on September 29th between 8:15am-3:30pm

Phone calls were assigned to staff and made in the home language listed for each family in Synergy. Initial phone calls resulted in direct contact with 45% of the English Scholar families. Any family that did not answer was left a voicemail, and a number of these families called back after receiving a voicemail.

A number of respondents expressed gratitude for being called directly by PPS staff. They often asked questions during these conversations, and staff was able to answer nearly all of them. All families were invited to the event of their choice to learn more, ask questions, and share their open and honest feedback.

### **Informational Blasts and Reminders**

Informational blasts and reminders were provided a number of times to keep the outreach flowing and continue to promote engagement opportunities. They included paper flyers sent home with students, personal phone calls (in each family's home language), translated digital messages, translated School Messenger messages, and translated text messages.

### **September 19 In-Person Meeting Recap**

Eighteen parents/guardians representing 21 English Scholar students attended the in-person meeting on September 19th. A presentation was co-led by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Esther Omogbehin, Lent Principal Dr. Olgamar Amor, Marysville Elementary Principal Cathy Murray, and Director of Enrollment and Transfer Judy Brennan. The presentation shared a timeline of SEGC developments, achievement data for Lent Elementary and Marysville Elementary, and a comparison of achievement trends for English Scholars in co-located vs. neighborhood schools. The presentation also provided a space for Principal Murray to share information about Marysville and for Director Brennan to share information related to potential enrollment and

transfer questions, and address questions related to transportation if the board were to vote to move the Lent English Scholar program to Marysville beginning in the fall of 2023.

Following the presentation, there was a robust question and answer session. Families had many questions and varying degrees of knowledge about the SEGC process.

Questions and feedback tended to align with a few key themes:

- The potential for current English Scholars to transfer to the current DLI program
  - A couple of families stated that they had tried to enroll their student(s) in the Spanish DLI program but were ultimately unsuccessful and wondered if it was still possible to enroll them in the Spanish DLI program.
- The potential for current English Scholars to transfer to Marysville Elementary during the current school year if it is determined that they will be attending Marysville next school year
- The assurance that transportation will be provided to Lent English Scholars if they are to attend Marysville Elementary next year

Answers were provided in all instances where staff knew the answer. For unanswered questions, they were recorded and answers were reported back to the community in a written format on September 23rd as part of an ongoing series of engagement recaps to communicate information to stakeholders.

Interpreters were provided for this meeting in Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. Child care was coordinated and hosted for this meeting, and dinner was provided.

### **September 27 Virtual Meeting Recap**

Three parents/guardians representing four English Scholar students attended the virtual meeting on September 27th. A presentation, mirroring the one provided on September 19th, was given and followed by a question and answer session. The team responded to the questions asked though we had a small number of participants. For more information, be sure to see the document linked at the bottom of this section.

Staff were able to speak to all questions and provide answers during the meeting. Interpreters were provided for this meeting in Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

### **September 29 Drop-In Availability**

Seven parents/guardians representing 13 English Scholar students attended the drop-in availability on September 29th, often around drop-off or pick-up times. PPS staff also connected with a couple families who currently have students in Pre-K at Lent who could be English Scholars in the future. All families were given an overview of the staff recommendation to move the Lent English Scholars to Marysville Elementary, offered an opportunity to ask clarifying questions, provide feedback, and then provided a paper copy of the survey tool to complete, which they did.

Parents/guardians who stopped by to connect with PPS staff showcased varying levels of understanding about the SEGC work and the status of Lent Elementary's English Scholar program. . Their questions and concerns tracked very closely with those expressed during the

September 19th in-person meeting, including assurances around transportation and the potential for transferring their students to the DLI program to stay at Lent.

### **Survey Tool**

The survey tool was created after the robust conversation during the in-person meeting on September 19th. Because there were some clear, consistent concerns (i.e., persistent achievement gaps, transportation, transfer, etc.) that arose from that conversation, the survey tool sought to continue assessing those trends to help identify the supports families are interested in receiving if the board votes to confirm the move of the Lent English Scholars to Marysville. There was also an open-ended portion where families could raise new questions and/or share general feedback. The survey tool was translated into Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

The team recognized the complexity of the issue at hand and, in order to help meet families where they are, linked a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document in the introduction of the survey tool with a recommendation that respondents review that FAQ before completing the survey. Staff also wove the recommendation to review the FAQ (before completing the survey) into language promoting the survey tool through School Messenger. The FAQ was also translated into Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

25 family surveys, representing 17% of all English Scholar students, were returned in four languages. The survey tool indicated that most families who responded would most likely or certainly need transportation to attend Marysville Elementary. It also indicated that some families of Kindergarten students would like the opportunity to transition their child to the Spanish DLI program while the families of older students (grades three and four) were more inclined to either like to stay at Lent for an additional year or be allowed to seek a transfer to a different school. For a more detailed look at the responses to the survey tool, please see [here](#).

### **October 4 Lent Staff Meeting Q&A**

On October 4th, Director of Enrollment and Transfer Judy Brennan and Program Manager of Community Engagement and Student Voice Jeffrey Wiser attended the regularly scheduled Lent Elementary staff meeting. During that meeting, a recap of engagement efforts was provided to staff members along with trends in the concerns heard from families. Staff asked questions about implications for staff, including questions around staffing and job retention. Staff also asked why the focus for engagement has been on the English Scholar families and students.

### **Community Updates**

A series of community updates have been shared with the Lent community in an effort to close the loop with stakeholders, acknowledge their questions and concerns, and provide answers and updates. Updates were sent on [September 23](#) and [October 3](#). Additionally a postcard was sent to families the week of October 17th informing them of the planned Board vote on October 25.

### **10/18/22 Community Meeting**

A final meeting with the Lent community was held October 18th at 6:30 pm. Both in-person and online attendance was possible and the entire community was invited to participate. In-person attendance included 17 family members, eight with children in the English Scholar program, eight Lent staff members, two students, PPS Board member Julia Brim-Edwards and several

district staff and translators. Fifteen participants logged on to the Zoom version of the meeting. District staff presented a summary of the community engagement received to date and attendees offered questions and comments verbally and through feedback forms. The primary topics were concerns about splitting up the Lent community, and how families learned about and participated (or did not participate) in the survey and feedback opportunities.

### Emerging Themes

Community member and student input centered on four themes:

- Interest in remaining at Lent
  - This was the prevailing, but not universal, theme
  - 9 of 26 (32%) family surveys and 14 of 40 (35%) 3rd/4th grade surveys indicated a preference for remaining at Lent for at least one more year
  - Distance to school, and community familiarity were the top reasons given for remaining at Lent.
- Interest in joining Spanish Immersion and concerns about the lottery
  - 9 of 26 (32%) family surveys indicated an interest in transferring their children into Spanish Immersion—particularly families of Kindergarten students. No 3rd/4th grade students showed interest in this option
- Curiosity and concern about Marysville
  - Family questions covered transportation, childcare, school capacity, class sizes, time with quality teachers and student supports
  - 14 of 21 (66%) of family survey respondents would need transportation if their children move to Marysville
- Timing, process and transfer options
  - 8 of 26 families (31%) were interested in transferring to Marysville this year
  - 8 of 26 families (31%) were interested in transferring to other schools
  - 15 of 40 (38%) 3rd/4th graders were interested in transferring to Marysville this year—almost all were in 3rd grade
  - 54 of 66 (82%) 3rd/4th/5th graders were not aware of the proposed changes prior to receiving the survey
  - Questions ranged from “Why are these decisions being made?” to “If we know if this is going to happen, can we move our kids now?”

For a more detailed summary of community engagement efforts, please click [here](#).

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

### **SEGC Background**

The PPS Board of Directors adopted a Scope of Work for District-wide Enrollment and Program Balancing in February 2020, including the following rationale:

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.

Based on these and other factors, the Board directed that the process of District-Wide Enrollment and Program Balancing begin with a focus on southeast schools. In Phase 1 of the process, a volunteer group of parents, principals, teachers, students and other stakeholders, the Southeast Guiding Coalition (SEGC), recommended a feeder pattern for Kellogg Middle School and the conversion of five K-8 schools into K-5s.

In May 2021, the Board provided a charge for Phase 2 of SE Enrollment and Program Balancing through Resolution No. 6315. Key directions were to recommend 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 to the Clark building, and a plan to increase enrollment at Lane Middle School. Phase 2 occurred from Spring 2021 - Spring 2022. On May 24, 2022, The Board of Education adopted the Phase 2 recommendations through [Resolution No. 6513](#).

Some highlights from the Resolution:

- The Board directs that the proposal to change the neighborhood's English Scholars program at Lent is deferred for no more than a year.
- Initiate the opening of Clark Elementary School and Harrison Park Middle School
- Relocate the Creative Science School to Bridger ES,
- Bridger Spanish Immersion to Lent ES
- Mt. Tabor Spanish Immersion to Kellogg MS,
- Harrison Park K-5 Chinese Immersion to Clark ES
- Hosford Chinese Immersion to Harrison Park MS

### **Rationale for Single-Strand Program Consolidations**

PPS instructional leaders encouraged SEGC to consider proposals that offered neighborhood students programs that were at least two strands per grade level, especially if the program shared space with a Dual Language Immersion program. This was supported by [analysis](#) from Research, Assessment, and Accountability, showing that, within co-located schools, Direct Certification rates are consistently higher for neighborhood strands and lower for the DLI strands. This can lead to disparities in needs vs. resources when funding is allocated at a school level.

When controlling for Direct Certification rates, we consistently see lower performance on SBAC (OSAS) testing for students in the neighborhood strand at co-located programs than students in schools with co-located programs (except in our highest SES schools). Root causes for these challenges and outcomes include:

- Lack of opportunities for educator collaboration
- Limited resources that have to be shared across two separate programs
- Limited opportunities for specific professional development
- Lack of opportunities for building social skills with students who are together for multiple years
- Lack of opportunities to provide differentiation
- Limited academic experiences

Additionally, Spanish and Chinese Limited English Proficient students in immersion programs perform higher on English & Language Arts SBAC (OSAS) tests than their peers in later grades. Creating whole-DLI schools, as well as whole-neighborhood schools, could result in more robust and efficient staffing and professional development, positively affecting instruction and student outcomes, particularly for native speakers of the DLI language.

The SEGC Phase 2 recommendation and Board decision resulted in the planned 2023-24 consolidation of Bridger ES and Lent ES Spanish DLI, Kellogg MS and Mt. Tabor MS Spanish DLI, and Harrison Park MS and Hosford MS DLI programs. Since the neighborhood strands at Bridger will no longer be a separate single-strand program when they are combined with the Creative Science School, the Lent English Scholar (neighborhood) program would remain the only single-strand neighborhood program in SE.

### **Lent Enrollment Analysis**

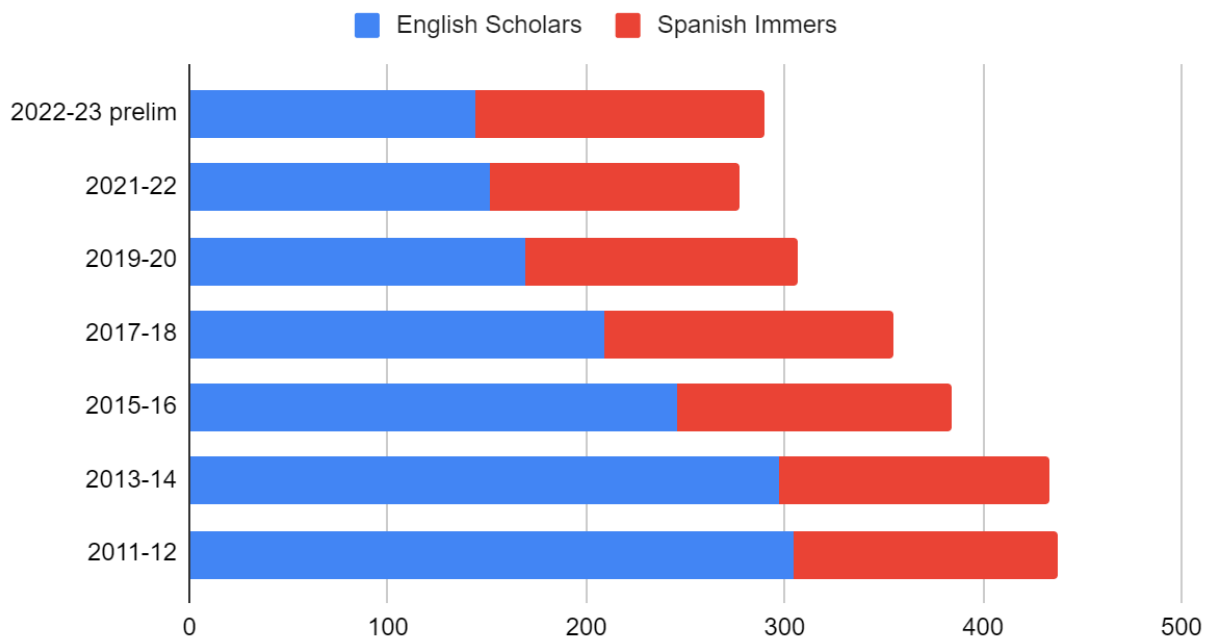
Spanish Dual Language Immersion was added to Lent Elementary in 2006, the same year Lent converted from a K-5 to a K-8 by adding one grade per year. The school changed back to a K-5 structure in 2021 when grades 6-8 were assigned to Kellogg Middle School.

Lent enrollment has declined by about a third in the past decade. Most of the change is due to lower enrollment in the English Scholar program, which corresponds with a 36% drop in total K-5 neighborhood students.

Current class size at Lent shows enrollment per class in both DLI and English Scholars.

| Grade | Spanish Immersion Class Size | Spanish Immersion Number of Teachers | English Scholars Class Size | English Scholars Number of Teachers |
|-------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| KG    | 20                           | 1                                    | 16                          | 1                                   |
| 1     | 23                           | 1                                    | 13.5                        | 2                                   |
| 2     | 15.5                         | 2                                    | 19                          | 1                                   |
| 3     | 15                           | 1                                    | 19                          | 1                                   |
| 4     | 21                           | 1                                    | 21                          | 1                                   |
| 5     | 19                           | 1                                    | 24                          | 1                                   |

### Lent K-5 Enrollment by Program



Both Lent programs serve primarily students of color, with notable differences in the proportion of Latino and Black students. See this [analysis](#) for more historical enrollment details.

#### Lent Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity: 2021-22

|                          | Latino | Black | Asian | Native American | Pacific Islander | White | Multi-Racial |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------|--------------|
| <b>Spanish Immersion</b> | 69%    | 2%    | 2%    | 1%              | 0%               | 24%   | 4%           |

|                         |     |     |     |    |    |     |     |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|
| <b>English Scholars</b> | 29% | 14% | 15% | 0% | 1% | 34% | 11% |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|

### **Highlights of Joining Marysville**

Marysville offers several advantages for Lent English Scholar students, including:

- Stable and growing PK-5 enrollment, which provides assurance that Lent students will have larger peer groups and teachers will have more opportunities for collaboration and focused professional development
- Long-term, experienced staff who utilize a deeply embedded and integrated Social Emotional Learning program throughout the school
- Space to open up to six additional classrooms
- Robust support programs, including on-site child care through YMCA and a full SUN program

All students in the Lent boundary will have transportation to Marysville. Routes will be established later in the school year based on the home addresses of transitioning students.

### **Options for Joining Spanish Immersion or Transferring to Other Schools**

While there are important advantages available at Marysville for Lent English Scholar students, families asked us whether other options could be available for their children, including moving from English Scholars into Spanish Immersion so their children could remain at Lent, or transferring to other PPS schools.

All future Lent neighborhood families will have improved access to Spanish Immersion, with automatic assignment for neighborhood kindergartners and a simplified process for determining eligibility of upper grade students. During the community engagement process, many families expressed interest in having their existing English Scholar students transition to Spanish Immersion next year. In response to these requests, there will be enhanced opportunities for current Lent English Scholars to transition to Spanish Immersion:

- The language assessment requirement will be waived for current English Scholar kindergartners interested in joining Spanish Immersion as first graders.
- Additional information about the Spanish Immersion [Late Entry Procedures](#) will be available for English Scholars, including automatic placement for those who speak Spanish at home.

Each Lent English Scholar family will also be offered priority for transfer to another school that meets their needs and interests. Approval will be based on space availability, and transportation will be the responsibility of the family.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Relocating the Lent English Scholar program to Marysville could improve the efficiency of staffing allocations over time, while increasing student opportunities.

Additional transportation routing will be required for Lent neighborhood students to access Marysville. Routes will be established in spring 2023.

### **TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation is for all grades of the English Scholar program to move to Marysville at the end of the 2022-23 school year, so that staff and resources associated with both programs can be consolidated and strengthened as quickly as possible.



To prepare for the changes, school leaders would begin informally bringing together communities in fall 2022 to give families more opportunities to learn about Marysville, as well as options for transitioning to Spanish Immersion or transferring to other schools.

Central departments, including transportation, early education, dual language immersion, special education, human resources, facilities, school modernizations, enrollment and transfer, and community partnerships, will support school leaders in assuring a smooth transition in fall 2023. Human Resources and labor partners are in the midst of planning a fall staffing process for schools significantly impacted by enrollment changes, including Lent. The process will commence as soon as the English Scholar program location is determined.

### **BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS**

As noted elsewhere in this report, single-strand neighborhood programs have resulted in inequitable opportunities and lower achievement for historically underserved students.

However, the Lent English Scholar community members have asked to remain at the Lent for numerous reasons, including because it is closest to their homes and is a safe and welcoming community. The Board could decide to keep English Scholars at Lent or phase it out over time.

There are 28 classrooms in the main Lent building, along with three modular classrooms. There is enough space to have 18 Bridger and Lent Spanish Immersion classrooms (the goal is three sections per each grade level), two pre-kindergarten classrooms, and six English Scholar classrooms, but that would require the long-term use of modulars for elective, support or regular classrooms. The greater challenge is in assuring a robust experience for students and teachers in a building shared with another program and for which a single-strand program would remain.

If the Board were to decide to phase out the English Scholar program, current students would remain, but the program would stop admitting new English Scholar students starting at the Kindergarten-level, and phase-out a grade-level per year through 2028-29. There would be enough space for the phase-out with less chance of needing to use modular classrooms. Under a phase-out, English Scholar classrooms would likely have very small cohorts who would have limited opportunities to mix with other English Scholar students. Similarly, English Scholars teachers would have no grade-level peers with which to plan and collaborate on program-specific curriculum and each year would lose a member of their cohort.

### **CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS**

As part of the Board's charge, PPS staff were asked to provide guidance on preferred locations and configurations of dual-language immersion programs, special education services, focus option programs, and pre-K services. The charge for the SE process includes a focus on sufficient enrollment to offer full programming for some of our most vulnerable students. The intent is to create robust and stable enrollment to support the implementation of academic strategies and create conditions in our physical spaces that enable student success. And to address the issue that 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"

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board approve changing the location of the English Scholar program for Lent neighborhood students from Lent to Marysville, beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Future Lent neighborhood kindergarten students will be assigned to Lent Spanish Immersion, but may opt-out and enroll at Marysville instead. New students in grades one through five who

move into the Lent neighborhood will be assigned to Marysville or may attend Lent Spanish Immersion if they meet program language requirements.

**RELATED POLICIES**

4.10.045-P Student Assignment to Neighborhood Schools

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*As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.*

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