

## RESOLUTION NO. 6150

### Resolution in Support of the Center for Black Student Excellence in Portland Public Schools Recitals

- A. In 2019, the Board of Education adopted “PPS reimagined,” a community-driven vision for what we want for the graduates, system, and educators of the Portland Public Schools (PPS). This ambitious vision represents the values and aspirations of thousands of Portland students, families, staff, partners, and members of the community, and articulates our foundational and enduring belief in Racial Equity and Social Justice and that all students can succeed academically: We believe in the fundamental right to human dignity and also believe that generating an equitable world requires an educational system that intentionally disrupts—and builds leaders to disrupt—systems of oppression.
- B. A decade after the PPS Board adopted a historic Racial Educational Equity Policy that held racial equity and social justice as central tenets to our decisions and actions, PPS is determined to bring about racial justice and equity in our District, espousing a counter-narrative for our Black, Native and Students of Color. Through an updated [Racial Equity and Social Justice Framework and Plan](#), PPS continues its steadfast commitment to creating access to an array of opportunities for students, especially students of color, aligning our cultural norms, practices, and structures so that they center the lived experiences and hopes of our Black, Native, and Students of Color, developing culturally responsive practices, including equitable budgeting, and strengthening our partnerships with culturally specific, community-based providers to tailor individual supports to the needs of our students.
- C. An important aspect of this work is acknowledging the cultural and institutional racism that has existed in our system since its inception. Over our history, PPS has promoted racist policies, protocols, and procedures, helping reinforce racist cultural narratives, beliefs, and norms. Six years before Oregon proposed a state constitution banning Black people from entering, residing, or acquiring property, Portland Public Schools, Oregon’s now-largest school system, was established. For close to 170 years, PPS has failed communities of color - especially Black and Native American students - from the time of its founding, when William Brown, a resident of Portland in the 1860s, was denied the right to enroll his children in one of Portland’s only two public elementary schools, launching what would be the first recorded case of racism against Black children in Portland Public Schools.
- D. While our commitment to calling out and eradicating systems of oppression is clear in our vision, we also know that cultural and institutional racism continues to produce disparities and negatively impacts the lives of our students of color, specifically Black students. Reflecting on our community’s vision for PPS, our core values and educational system shifts along with the acknowledgement of persistent, racialized predictors for student outcomes, PPS must strategically utilize and invest resources in a targeted and culturally responsive manner to achieve racial equity and social justice. Culturally specific organizations are uniquely positioned to partner with PPS to support our racial equity and social justice goals, and we rely on our continued partnership with them to implement culturally responsive family engagement, mentoring, wrap-around services and support.
- E. On June 11, 2020, the Board unanimously approved [Resolution 6130](#), declaring that the lives of Black students and our Black community matter and committing to working with the Portland community to create the conditions for every student, especially our Black and Native students who experience the greatest challenges, to realize the vision of the Graduate Portrait.
- F. The Albina Vision Trust (AVT) is a nonprofit organization facilitating the thoughtful reinvention and transformation of the 94-acres of lower Albina, from which thousands of primarily Black residents were forcibly displaced over decades of urban renewal. Recognizing the power and importance of education, AVT seeks to develop a youth-centered community in lower Albina that creates opportunities for Portland’s next generation of Black people to learn, build wealth and reclaim home. This Albina neighborhood would allow for intentional design for the safety of Black and brown children in the urban environment while at the same time providing the housing and community stability that supports education.
- G. Equitable access to public education has long been a key component of the civil rights movement and

fight for racial justice. Building on the legacy of advocacy for Black children in Portland, and catalyzed by the social movement for Black Lives, Black Portland community leaders have put forth the concept of the Center for Black Student Excellence (CBSE). This concept endeavors to center the experience, promote opportunities, accelerate outcomes, and celebrate the achievements of Portland's Black children. This new collective impact effort channels the decades of visionary leadership and culturally responsive and pedagogically sustaining approaches of community-based nonprofits like Self Enhancement, Inc., and KairosPDX, among other Black-led, culturally specific organizations here in Portland. This emerging community-led concept seeks to unify and elevate the educational experience of Portland's Black children and their families, connecting a constellation of community schools, such as Boise Eliot/ Humboldt Elementary, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary, Tubman Middle School, and Jefferson High School, and Black-led community-based organizations in the Albina Neighborhood. The CBSE will work with the students, families, and community stakeholders to develop a coherent set of strategies that will positively impact student achievement and outcomes while affirming student identity, and will include promoting and supporting culturally responsive/sustaining teaching and learning, from cradle to career. The CBSE will serve as a living expression of Portland Public Schools' expressed commitment to Black Lives and will help advance PPS's mission to prepare students to be compassionate critical thinkers, able to collaborate and solve problems, and prepared to lead a more socially just world.

- H. On July 28, 2020, the PPS Board of Education will consider adopting a resolution to place a general obligation bond on the November 3, 2020, ballot. If approved, the proposed bond would allocate up to \$371 million to modernize Jefferson High School and will launch the design and implementation of the Center for Black Student Excellence in neighborhood schools and facilities in North and Northeast Portland, especially in the heart of the historic Albina neighborhood.

## RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Education:

- A. Affirms that it will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Black community, who continue to be central to building this nation and who have fought and continue to fight for more just and equitable opportunities here in Portland and across the United States.
- B. Stands strongly in its commitment to authentically listen, learn, and partner with our community's Black elders and listen to our Black youth to address the cultural and institutional racism that has existed in our system since its inception.
- C. Commits to affirming its long-held belief to lead with a robust Racial Equity and Social Justice agenda, and centering the lived experiences of our Black students, families, educators, and staff in our actions, decisions, and words.
- D. Firmly stands behind the community-inspired idea of the [Center for Black Student Excellence](#), both as a physically built environment and as a designated set of culturally responsive strategies, immediate and long-term plans, and culturally specific partnerships to advance Black student achievement in PPS.
- E. Affirms the phased approach to implementation based on the Center for Black Student Excellence conceptual design and overall plan, starting with Phase 1 focused investments in North and Northeast Portland facilities funded through the general obligation bond referred to the November 3, 2020, ballot, if approved by voters.
- F. Directs the Superintendent to resource and develop a clear roadmap for the design of the Center for Black Student Excellence - an initiative that focuses on a group of community schools by supporting optimal teaching and learning environments and promoting culturally-responsive strategies - and to continue to partner with culturally specific, Black-led and Black-serving community-based organizations to develop these plans.

- G. Requests that the Superintendent provide regular public updates to the Board of Education on the progress made towards the conceptual design and implementation of the Center for Black Student Excellence.