



## **PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT**

501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227

Telephone: (503) 916-3962

**Date:** July 13, 2020

**To:** Board Policy Committee: Chair Rita Moore, Eilidh Lowery, Julia Brim-Edwards

**From:** Shanice Clarke, Director of Community Engagement

**CC:** Jonathan Garcia, Chief Engagement Officer  
Guadalupe Guerrero, Superintendent  
Liz Large, General Counsel

**Subject:** Search & Seizure Policy 4.30.040-P: Other Engagement Updates

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#### **Background**

In September 2019, Youth Portland Sub-Committee on Community Engaged Policing and Community Healing Initiative reviewed the Search and Seizure Policy. In November 2019, the Urban League of Portland reviewed the policy. During the month of July 2020, the following groups have reviewed the policy, or affirmed the priorities raised from student feedback:

- Stand for Children
- Community Healing Initiative
- Word is Bond

Stand for Children, Community Healing Initiative, and Word is Bond were invited to provide additional public comment and may elect to do so during the remaining public comment period.



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501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227  
Telephone: (503) 916-3962

**Date:** April 20, 2020

**To:** Board Policy Committee: Chair Rita Moore, Eilidh Lowery, Julia Brim-Edwards

**From:** Shanice Clarke, Director of Community Engagement

**CC:** Jonathan Garcia, Chief Engagement Officer  
Guadalupe Guerrero, Superintendent  
Liz Large, General Counsel

**Subject:** Search & Seizure Policy 4.30.040-P: Updated Student Engagement Memo

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## **Background**

On October 29th, 2019, the Board of Education and Superintendent Guerrero agreed that in order to fully adopt the Search and Seizure Policy, additional student engagement and input would be required to shape a strong and student-centered policy. Since then, the Community Engagement Department executed on a truncated—yet effective—student engagement plan, maximizing student input during the public comment period.

## **A Lens on Youth Voice**

Under the direction of Superintendent Guerrero and the Board of Education, Portland Public Schools is on a mission to cultivate student voices and student sense of belonging in our collective effort to transform and reimagine the district. We believe that when policy that impacts the lived experiences of young people in our school system centers the insight and foresight of the students, we will see a policy that is unwavering creating a positive culture and process for students in our buildings. Moreover, by seeking thoughtful student perspectives, we hope to elevate unintended consequences and concrete solutions in cross-functional district policy writing. Lastly, aligned with Portland Public Schools reimagined, our hope in our students is that they become critical thinkers committed to advocating for just environments.

## **Initial Community Engagement**

Between the month of October and November, Community Engagement staff visited freshman inquiry courses, student fairs, student-led organizations, and other school programming to review the proposed revisions of the Search and Seizure Policy. This includes the following meetings:

Sunday 9/8 Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing at Youth Subcommittee

Tuesday 10/29 Feedback Meeting at District Student Council

Monday 11/4 Class Visits at Madison High School

Wednesday 11/6 Student Organization Visit at Roosevelt High School

Friday 11/8 Class Visits at Jefferson High School

Wednesday 11/13 Student Assembly at Wilson High School

Wednesday 11/13 Class Visits at Cleveland High School

In total, we captured close to 200 comments from these engagements. Staff reviewed, categorized and created themes for ideas that were received by at least from two distinct voices. Table one provides student suggestions to strengthen the policy:

Table 1. Initial Student Suggestions on Search & Seizure Policy

Student Suggestions	Cumulative Percent
Add grievance reporting resources on staff misuse of policy	44%
Racial equity informed policy language to limit bias in interpretation of reasonable suspicion <sup>1</sup>	26%
Send parent communication prior to searches, especially those not involving imminent threat	15%
Accountability structure to track searches, disaggregate by race, gender, and ability	10%
Add policy language for marijuana suspicions to refer to Healthy Substance Use policy procedure	6%
Student option to select a preferred staff member to conduct the search and/or identify a support person to be present during the search	5%
Add acknowledgement that religious items that students wear should be avoided from removal in searches	2%

\*The total exceeds 100% as individuals could provide multiple forms of feedback.

*“..there are many of cases where students of color are regularly identified for searches, and nothing is found. How can the policy account for how the district identifies students? - Wilson student*

Responses were categorized into 7 themes. The first two themes had a significantly larger representation of community feedback (70%). By count, these two themes had over  $\frac{2}{3}$  of recurrences, compared to the remaining themes:

1. Adding grievance reporting resources on staff misuse of policy
2. Racial equity informed policy language to limit bias in interpretation (gang member, reasonable suspicion)

The next cluster represents (25%) and incorporated the following themes:

3. Send parent communication prior to searches, especially those not involving imminent threat
4. Accountability structure to track searches, disaggregate by race, gender, and ability

The final cluster represents (13%) of student feedback:

5. Add policy language for marijuana suspicions to refer to Healthy Substance Use policy procedure
6. Request to select the staff member who conducts search and/or a support person during search
7. Acknowledgement of refraining from removing religious items

*“I observed a student’s rights being violated through a search...he was searched because of the screensaver on his computer.” -Jefferson Student*

### **Second Phase of Community Engagement**

Staff reviewed, categorized and created themes for suggestions to strengthen the policy. Student Board of Education Director Latterell and the Senior Advisor for Racial Equity & Social Justice created a draft policy language with those suggestions, which were brought to additional engagement opportunities for student feedback. Those engagement opportunities included:

Thursday 2/20 PPS Gay Straight Alliance Middle School Summit Workshop

Friday 2/28 International Youth Leadership Conference Engagement

Monday 3/2 Class Visits at Madison High School

Monday 3/2-3/7 District Student Council Outreach at High Schools

In total, we captured 359 comments from these engagements. Staff reviewed, categorized and created themes for ideas that were received by at least from two distinct voices. Table two provides student suggestions on parental notification and a tracking system from all engagement except Madison High School:

Table 2. Student Feedback on Suggested Revisions for Search & Seizure Policy

Results from Additional Targeted Student Engagement	Cumulative Percent
Agrees with suggested revision language, <b>“Parents//guardians shall also be notified before any law enforcement conducts an interview of a student on District premises. Interviews shall take place with parental/guardian consent except in specific scenarios outlined in the administrative directive.”</b>	75%
Agrees that a tracking system should be created, in order to comply with PPS Racial Educational Equity Policy to eliminate racial disproportionality in discipline	45%

\*The total exceeds 100% as individuals could provide multiple forms of feedback.

Responses were categorized into 2 themes. The first two themes had a significantly larger representation of community feedback (40%). By count, these two themes had over 2/3 of recurrences, compared to the remaining themes:

1. Agrees with suggested revision language, “Parents//guardians shall also be notified before any law enforcement conducts an interview of a student on District premises. Interviews shall take place with parental/guardian consent except in specific scenarios outlined in the administrative directive.”
2. Agrees that a tracking system should be created, in order to comply with PPS Racial Educational Equity Policy to eliminate racial disproportionality in discipline

In alignment with the PPS Racial Education Equity Policy and resulting PPS Racial Equity and Social Justice Plan, PPS acknowledges the practices that lead to overrepresentation of students of color in discipline. We understand systemic and cultural racism in both the education and criminal justice system and resulting presence of bias in the interpretation in reasonable suspicion. In alignment with PPS vision and values, the district will adopt practices that confront and eliminate bias in interpretation of reasonable suspicion. Student feedback was solicited on additional language to limit the interpretation of bias in reasonable suspicion.

Table three provides student input of potential biases in staff interpretation of reasonable suspicion:

Table 3. Student Input on Potential Biases When Interpreting Reasonable Suspicion

<b>Racial Equity &amp; Social Justice informed policy language suggestions, to limit bias in interpretation of reasonable suspicion</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Appearance, including; clothing, piercings, weight, natural hair texture	42.6%
Race, ethnicity, accent, or cultural origin	41.5%
Gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation	10.8%
Rumors, reputation, friend association, attitude, personal opinions, mood, voice or tone, 'being a loner', personality traits	8.6%
Age	6.4%
Income	5%
Religion	2.8%

\*The total exceeds 100% as individuals could provide multiple forms of feedback.

Student input on potential biases when interpreting reasonable suspicion was categorized into 7 themes. The first two themes had a significantly larger representation of community feedback (84.1%). By count, these two themes had over 7/10 of recurrences, compared to the remaining themes:

1. Appearance, including; clothing, piercings, weight, or natural hair texture
2. Race, ethnicity, accent, or cultural origin

The next cluster represents (19.4%) and incorporated the following themes:

3. Gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation
4. Rumors, reputation, friend association, attitude, personal opinions, mood, voice or tone, 'being a loner', or personality traits

The final cluster represents (14.2%) of student themes:

5. Age
6. Income
7. Religion

### **Opportunity Analysis**

The Administrative Directive outlines the protocol for the policy, and there are opportunities to revise both documents to address areas that may be revised. Other comments made from students during engagement include a request for searches to happen in private settings, and clarification regarding students providing staff access to their cell phones.