



## INFORMAL MINUTES

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A Board of Education Work Session came to order at 6:03 pm at the call of Chair Amy Kohnstamm in the Mazama Conference Room at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon.

### There were present:

#### Board Directors

Chair Kohnstamm; Directors Bailey, Brim-Edwards, Lowery, Moore, Scott; Student Representative Latterell; with Director DePass absent

#### Staff and Community Partners

Dr. Russell Brown – Chief of Systems Performance  
 Dr. Gregg Cueller – Deputy Superintendent, Instruction and School Communities  
 Guadalupe Guerrero – Superintendent  
 Claire Hertz – Deputy Superintendent, Business and Operations  
 Dr. Ester Omogbehin – Regional Superintendent  
 Dr. Keeley Simpson – Regional Superintendent  
 Marie Sneed – Facilitator

### Business Agenda

The Board of Education voted on the Business agenda, containing resolutions 5995 through 6000. The business agenda was approved by a vote of 6 (yes) – 0 (no); with Director DePass absent. Prior to the vote, it was confirmed that the approval of resolution 5996 would not result in additional district funds being allocated to Head Start. There was no public comment for the business agenda. The Board of Directors held a vote for the OSBA Elections.

### Work Session

Claire Hertz introduced facilitator Marie Sneed. She stated that the district is looking at enrollment balancing and enrollment boundaries at this time in order to create student assignments that support academic programs, to align with middle school redesign projects and future bonds, and to create diversity in schools across the district. The goals of the work session are to frame the boundary and balancing work that will be done in the equity policy, to review the relevant board policies, and to begin to establish board values, priorities and policies that will guide the district work.

### Racial Education Equity Policy 2.10.010

Facilitator Marie Sneed provided an overview of the Racial Education Equity Policy and asked the group to think about the policy in more than just racial equity and include special education, financial differences, and language differences. She noted that it is proven that in having diverse students learning together, their education becomes richer.

Ms. Sneed asked the group what issues and concerns they have with the policy, and which parts of the policy stands out. Responses to the policy include the desire to make sure to focus on changing actual practices, remembering who is not at the table and working to amplify and listen to those voices, and questioning what the structural changes that need to take place to align the district's enrollment balancing to the equity values.

### Student Assignment to Neighborhood Schools Policy 4.10.010

Ms. Sneed questioned whether the district should continue with the legacy policy, which allows siblings to attend a school that an older sibling attends even if the family is no longer within the boundaries. It was noted that because of the legacy policy, it takes a very long time for the effects of the changes to play out in the schools, which often means that by the time the boundary change effects are seen in the schools, the reason for the changes are often no longer pertinent. The board discussed the pros and cons to making large broad changes or small changes that don't impact as many students. It was noted that the option with the most positive outcomes should be focused on, as opposed to how many students will be affected.

Ms. Sneed asked what it means to the board when the policy says "anticipate the need for school boundary changes and consider other viable options"? Grade reconfiguration, the moving of programs (such as kindergarten) to alternative locations, and adding portables were mentioned. Ms. Sneed commented that focus options schools, which are often called magnet schools in other districts, could also be used as alternatives to changing boundaries.

### **Student Enrollment and Transfers Policy 4.10.051**

Ms. Sneed summarized the policy. She commented that the district currently has no portfolio of schools, which lists the schools in the district and their options. The group discussed focus option schools and how to use them to balance enrollment, and how to keep them without taking away from neighborhood schools. Focus option schools are not allowed to market which could allow programs to include a more diverse population. It was noted that marketing doesn't usually catch students from diverse backgrounds because focus option schools can't provide things such as transportation and after school programming. The lack of which makes it hard for low income families to attend schools outside of their neighborhood. Transparency regarding hardship transfers was requested.

### **Educational Options Policy 6.10.022**

Ms. Sneed asked the board to think about the statement "Promote equity and diversity in the admission of students to educational options and minimize barriers to participation in educational options". It was noted that there are only a few focus options in middle and high school choices, which is when the students are at an age that they can actually make a choice. Concern regarding focus option / magnet schools taking away from neighborhood schools were expressed. It was noted that the conversation on focus options schools would be different if there were no failing schools, because magnets would not be a negative effect on a neighborhood school if all schools were successful schools. It was noted to use caution when discussing failing schools, because failing is often decided by test scores, when test scores are not the only indicator of success.

It was noted that the birthrate in Portland is down, and that enrollment needs are constantly shifting. It will be important to do a good job on the policies, to create framework that can model future enrollment balancing.

### **Values and Priorities**

The board discussed their values and priorities in the following categories: commitment to inclusive and equitable schools and programs, diverse enrollments, portfolio of neighborhood schools and focus option schools and programs, K-8 and or K-5 Middle School programs, optimal capacities for programs and facilities, and feeder patterns. Some values that were mentioned were having neighborhood schools that families want to go to, making sure that neighborhood schools have the supports that they need to serve the students who live in their neighborhood, focus on student outcomes, strategic planning regarding focus options schools, and making sure that the schools that have the most students of color and lower income families have neighborhood programs that offer more than the minimum.

It was noted that there are time constraints on the enrollment balancing work because there is a new middle school opening and some schools are overcrowded, both of which need to be addressed soon.

### **Public Comment**

Steve Buel: The district needs to create equity for all schools across the district, making sure that they all have the same access to programs.

Beth Cavanaugh: As the board is looking at Kellogg, remember that it's important it is to look at the concentration of focus options in south east Portland.

Jessica Colby: Adding focus options on the front end is important. Some schools are doing good work on helping students and some are not. She is a supporter of alternative options, however the focus options have become havens for privilege and do not offer diversity or inclusion, which needs to be changed.

**Adjourn**

Chair Kohnstamm adjourned the meeting at 9:23 pm.

Submitted by:

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Kara Bradshaw, Executive Assistant  
PPS Board of Education