



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227
Telephone: (503) 916-3205 / Fax: (503) 916-3699

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To: School Board

From: Claire Hertz, Deputy Superintendent, Business and Operations
Dr. Esther Omogbehin, Regional Superintendent
Dani Ledezma, Senior Advisor, Racial Equity and Social Justice
Shanice Clarke, Director, Community Engagement
Judy Brennan, Director, Enrollment and Transfer

Subject: Scope and timing options for Southeast enrollment balancing Phase 2 draft charge

BACKGROUND

In June of 2019, the Portland Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education adopted an ambitious vision, *PPS reimagined*, co-constructed by a broad coalition of students, staff, and community stakeholders, that provides an aspirational North Star, core values, and direction to guide the transformation of our school system. While PPS engages in multi-pronged efforts to improve student outcomes through the implementation of academic strategies and social-emotional support for our students, the district also has several system issues related to the use of its physical facilities that impact student success. To address these issues, the Board of Education and the Superintendent launched an enrollment and program balancing process, contracting with FLO Analytics to lead data analysis and modeling, and co-develop community engagement strategies.

In February 2020 the Board adopted in Resolution 6059 a scope of work for a first phase of the charge which addressed schools in the southeast quadrant of the district, due to a high number of small K-8 neighborhood schools and the imminent opening of Kellogg Middle School.

Drawn from our community-created vision, Partnerships and Collaboration is a core value that shaped the overall design and roles for the Phase 1 process. A Southeast Guiding Coalition (SEGC) comprised of parents, guardians, principals, students, met twelve times in Fall 2020, gaining a shared understanding of district-wide enrollment and program data and racial equity and social justice tools before launching into an iterative review of more than a dozen boundary change and program relocation scenarios. The SEGC considered feedback from hundreds of community stakeholders gathered through surveys, focus groups, and individual submissions and hosted a virtual open house attended by more than 800 community members. On

December 17, 2020, they submitted a recommendation for Kellogg Middle School feeder schools and programs.

On January 26, 2021, the Board of Education approved a modified version of the SEGC recommendation, converting Bridger and Creston to K-5 schools, while keeping Spanish Immersion at Mt. Tabor and limiting transfers into Kellogg. Four weeks later, the Board held a three-hour worksession to consider the next phase of enrollment balancing work in the context of other district initiatives. Directors maintained a strong resolve to open Harrison Park Middle School in 2022-23, while agreeing to limit other enrollment balancing work in order to preserve staff and community resources for other vital initiatives, including safely returning to schools full-time, planning the Center for Black Student Excellence, middle school redesign, and strategic planning.

This report provides results of an exercise in narrowing the Phase 2 scope of work, including timing options and a staff recommendation.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

Related Policy: 4.10.045-P Student Assignment to Neighborhood Schools

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

The Phase 2 scoping exercise began with recognition of unresolved issues from Phase I, including:

- No middle school assignment for Harrison Park and Bridger neighborhood students
- Widespread enrollment imbalances across SE elementary, middle and high schools, with notable instances of under-enrollment and overcrowding at all levels
- Single-strand neighborhood or immersion programs at several schools
- Forecasts for declining enrollment in the region that will exacerbate the impact of under-enrollment at small schools and single-strand programs in the next five years

In keeping with Board direction for narrowing the scope of Phase 2, the team developed four possible levels of middle school-focused work, leaving most elementary and high school enrollment challenges for a later phase. The team also contemplated the impact of postponing the restart of any enrollment balancing process until January 2022 at the earliest, which would result in Harrison Park remaining a K-8 until the 2023-24 school year.

A summary of the scoping exercise process, including key questions from SEGC members is attached to this report along with charts, tables and maps with enrollment, demographic, program and boundary data used in the scoping exercise.

FOCUS ON HARRISON PARK

The exercise showed that even a narrow process focused on opening Harrison Park Middle School (Level 2 in the attached document) will still be very intensive and require the involvement of many stakeholder groups. Since all neighborhood K-8 schools, with the exception of Harrison Park, were converted to K-5s in Phase 1, new Harrison Park MS students will need to come from neighborhoods currently assigned to other middle schools. This could entail major changes to the SE middle school landscape, including assigning elementary schools to different MS feeder patterns (even those recently assigned to Kellogg) and/or re-location of middle school-level dual language immersion programs. Additionally, assigning the Kellogg building and nearby blocks into the Kellogg and feeder school boundaries will be a priority for Phase 2.

To make space for new middle schoolers, Harrison Park K-5 students must move to a different school. Community members have requested that Clark building return to service as their neighborhood school so K-5 students can remain together and attend a school that is close to the Harrison Park building and walkable for many families. Opening Clark for neighborhood students requires the relocation and/or reconfiguration of Creative Science School, which currently serves 450 K-8 students, about one third of whom reside in the adjacent Bridger, Harrison Park and Vestal neighborhoods.

The team recommends that Harrison Park-focused Phase 2 include SE Guiding Coalition representatives from 16 schools, including those with dual language immersion programs that could be impacted by the opening of Harrison Park Middle School.

LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL

It became clear during the scoping exercise that bringing in four additional K-5 schools would allow the scope to broaden to include Lane Middle School. A list of proposed representatives for a Harrison Park and Lane-focused Phase 2 of the SE Guiding Coalition is attached.

Lane has had the lowest middle school enrollment in the region for many years, and, like Harrison Park, serves a high rate of historically underserved students. ACCESS Academy is expected to move out of Lane by the end of the 2021-22 school year, making space for additional Lane students.

Increasing enrollment at Harrison Park and Lane through changes to other SE middle schools will create improved conditions for implementing Middle School Redesign. This important initiative was launched earlier this year, and called out by board members during the February 22 worksession as a priority initiative for fall 2021.

The process is anchored to the middle school philosophy, and advocates that students are able to explore and establish their own identity. This can be accomplished by ensuring students have access to a variety of electives and avenues for exploring their interests. There will be opportunities for project-based learning that deepens students' understanding and extends learning through application in authentic settings.

Rethinking middle school also emphasizes the need to honor the whole child and build upon their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Middle School Redesign connects PPS Reimagined and the emerging strategic plan's priorities and goals to the middle school experience. Enrollment and program balancing will be informed by middle school enrollment targets, developed in collaboration with Middle School Redesign.

ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES NOT INCLUDED IN PHASE 2

At the February 22 worksession, board members indicated an interest in deferring major high school enrollment changes to a district-wide process, which would begin after plans have been drawn up for the Center for Black Student Excellence. While high school students, parents and staff will not be part of the SE Guiding Coalition in Phase 2, we will seek out their input during the community engagement portions of the process.

Similarly, concerns about low enrollment at several K-5 schools and single-strand K-5 neighborhood and Immersion programs will be addressed in a later phase of enrollment balancing work. While these serious issues will not be the focus of Phase 2, the SEGC can consider options that may improve enrollment conditions at any schools, even as they focus on

Harrison Park and Lane. Stakeholders from all schools are welcomed to offer feedback to SEGC proposals.

FISCAL IMPACT

With the transition to a model of comprehensive middle schools in the SE region, there will be facility upgrades needed in schools with increasing enrollment. The 2020 Bond program includes an allocation to support enrollment and capacity needs as Phase 2 is completed.

Staffing schools is based on enrollment, and allocations will follow the students as they are assigned to neighborhood and program-based schools. Most likely, there will not be significant operational staffing costs as changes are made for the region. There will be initial costs for setting up expanded elective programs for the middle schools with increasing enrollment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With the thought partnership of the SEGC, students, families, and community members, a diverse set of perspectives will help shape a recommendation from the SEGC. Racial Equity and Social Justice shapes the engagement design to help realize our vision, PPS reimagined.

SEGC Engagement Phases

1. Launch: Grounding, understand the charge, and review charter and goals.
2. Learn: Continue defining RESJ, identify top student needs, listen to school experiences.
3. Brainstorm: Brainstorm outcomes with RESJ
4. Testing: Collaboration for input from community, draft and test various solutions.
5. Recommend: Complete a recommendation process on a SEGC Phase 2 recommendation

Engagement Methods

- Website
- Survey
- Text Messaging
- Student Forums
- Focus Groups
- Open House
- RESJ Partners Advisory
- Tribal Community Engagement
- School-hosted Parent Meetings

Timeline

Community Outreach	Month	Phase 2 Element
Launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website (continuous) ● Surveying input from families ● Social media (continuous) ● Texting ● Principal’s messages (continuous) ● Public SE Guiding Coalition Meetings 	May	Launch

<p style="text-align: center;">Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing awareness with opportunities to share general feedback Results from messages and surveys prioritizing black families, indigenous families, and families of color Results from online survey of broader PPS community Student Forum and BIPOC focus groups Feedback on virtual open house 	May-June	Learn
<p style="text-align: center;">Brainstorm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing awareness with opportunities to share general feedback Outreach to focus groups (black and indigenous, Spanish speaking, Chinese Speaking, teachers, students) 	Fall 2021	Brainstorm
<p style="text-align: center;">Test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Education Public Worksession 	Fall 2021	Testing
<p style="text-align: center;">Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Stakeholder Engagement School Site-based Engagement Public Comment to the Board of Education 	December	Recommend

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

The majority of this process would happen this fall, with an SEGC recommendation ready for Board consideration by December 2021. See the attached draft schedule for details.

BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS

As an alternative to the proposed scope of work, the Board could postpone the start of the next phase of SE enrollment and program balancing until early 2022. Deferring the process would preserve community and staff capacity this fall for other important initiatives described during the February 22, 2021 worksession. It would also mean that the full range of SE K-8 enrollment challenges could be addressed together, instead of in multiple phases, and be better aligned with the implementation of middle school redesign.

However, the cost of deferring will be borne by Harrison Park and Bridger neighborhood middle grade students who will not have access to a full middle school until the 2023-24 school year, two years after students from Arleta, Creston, Lent and Marysville. Given the importance the Board has placed on accelerating access to middle schools, particularly for BIPOC students, staff recommends the process begin this spring, in time for implementation in Fall 2022.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Phase 2 of SE enrollment and program balancing launch in May 2021, with a focus on opening Harrison Park Middle School, relocating Harrison Park K-5, most likely

into the Clark building where the Creative Science School is now located, and increasing enrollment at Lane Middle School. A Guiding Coalition of stakeholders from potentially impacted schools and programs, along with representatives from community partner organizations and PPS departments will convene in Spring 2021 and complete a recommendation by the end of December 2021.

I have reviewed this staff report and concur with the recommendation to the Board.

Claire Hertz
Deputy Superintendent
Portland Public Schools

Date

ATTACHMENTS

- A. SEGC Phase 2 Scoping Options
- B. SE School Enrollment and Utilization- baseline data
- C. SE Middle School enrollment forecasts-2021-22 and 2025-26
- D. 2021-22 PPS school boundary map
- E. 2021-22 PPS boundary change and middle school enrollment map
- F. List of proposed SEGC schools, partners and supporting departments
- G. Draft SEGC Phase 2 charge
- H. Draft SEGC Phase 2 community engagement overview and timeline