



**PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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**Date:** July 23, 2020

**To:** Board of Education

**From:** Claire Hertz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations  
Kregg Cuellar, Deputy Superintendent of Instruction and School Communities  
Dan Jung, Chief Operations Officer

**Subject:** General Obligation Bond Referral

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Following the July 14, 2020, and July 21, 2020 board meetings staff has developed a ballot title, summary, explanatory statement and resolution referring a general obligation bond measure to voters in the November 2020 general election. This staff report and related attachments summarize the school construction bond proposal identified by the Board.

**BACKGROUND**

PPS's adopted Long Range Facilities Plan identifies the District's intent to request voter approval on capital construction bonds on a 4-year cycle, aligned with the presidential election. This plan and ballot cycle is intended to support a multi-decade, multi-billion-dollar capital improvement program designed to modernize PPS's aging building portfolio.

Voters approved capital construction bonds in November 2012 and July 2017 for \$482 million and \$790 million, respectively. These bond proceeds have funded capital projects to fully renovate or replace Roosevelt High School, Franklin High School, Grant High School, Lincoln High School, Madison High School, Benson Polytechnic High School with Multiple Pathways to Graduation programs, Faubion PK-8, and Kellogg Middle School. Additional critical improvements funded by the 2012 and 2017 bonds include school roof replacements, seismic strengthening, improved building accessibility, middle school science lab updates, fire alarm and sprinkler system improvements, clean water upgrades, among many others.

In early 2019 staff began planning efforts to explore options for a capital construction bond on the November 2020 ballot. Meetings with the School Improvement Bond Committee began in October 2019. Over the last 9 months staff and the Board of Education have met to discuss district capital planning documents and guidance, educational and facility needs assessments and priorities, cost estimates and financing options, potential bond projects and scenarios, and community and stakeholder input. For reference, here is a list of meetings:

- October 18, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)
- November 07, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)

- November 21, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)
- December 04, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)
- December 19, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)
- January 16, 2019 (school improvement bond committee)
- February 13, 2020 (school improvement bond committee)
- February 18, 2020 (work session)
- March 12, 2020 (school improvement bond committee)
- March 17, 2020 (work session) - CANCELLED DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH CLOSURE
- May 07, 2020 (school improvement bond committee)
- May 19, 2020 (work session)
- June 02, 2020 (work session)
- June 03, 2020 (school improvement bond committee)
- June 25, 2020 (town hall)
- June 30, 2020 (school improvement bond committee)
- July 09, 2020 (work session)
- July 14, 2020 (board meeting)
- July 21, 2020 (board meeting)

Additionally, staff has met with the Bond Accountability Committee 6 times between November 2019 and June 2020 to review bond budgeting methodology, assumptions, cost data, and master plan cost estimates.

At the July 14 and July 21 meetings, the Board of Education identified its preferred bond option and directed staff to prepare materials for a bond referral.

### **ANALYSIS OF SITUATION**

The Board has identified a preferred bond option that includes funds to complete the building of Benson Polytechnic High School and the Multiple Pathways to Graduation programs, fully modernize Jefferson High School, design work for future added programmatic capacity at Roosevelt High School, develop and begin implementation of the concept of a Center for Black Student Excellence, finalize master planning and design of Cleveland High School and Wilson High School, adopt comprehensive instructional and resource materials, invest in technology upgrades and devices to support student learning, work towards objective of main-level ADA accessibility at all PPS buildings, and complete critical health and safety improvements throughout the district.

If approved by the voters, the identified improvements will be managed and completed by the Office of School Modernization as a part of PPS's long-term capital improvement program.

### **RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES**

A decade after the PPS Board of Education adopted a historic Racial Educational Equity Policy (2.10.010-P) that held racial equity and social justice as central tenets to our organization's decisions and actions, PPS is determined to bring about racial justice, pushing 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

possibilities and new 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.

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 idea to center Portland's Black children in both geography and strategy channels the 40 year legacy of Self Enhancement Inc., in North/Northeast Portland, the culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogical approach of community-based nonprofit, KairosPDX, and several other Black-led, culturally specific efforts and organizations here in Portland. It also aligns to our PPS Racial Equity Policy, Core Value, Framework and Plan towards Racial Equity and Social Justice. This emerging community-led concept seeks to unify and elevate the educational experience of Portland's Black children, youth and their families, centering and connecting a set of schools and Black-led community-based organizations in the Albina Neighborhood. The CBSE will elevate culturally-responsive/sustaining teaching and learning, from cradle to career, guiding PPS to adopt culturally-responsive strategies proven examples of historical Black excellence. As a concept, the CBSE will serve as a living expression of Portland Public Schools' expressed commitment to Black Lives and will help advance PPS' mission to prepare students to be compassionate critical thinkers, able to collaborate and solve problems, and be prepared to lead a more socially just world.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed general obligation bond of \$1,208,000,000 is estimated to not cause the levy rate to increase above the rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000, the same rate that was projected in the 2017 bond issue.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In addition to the meetings listed above, to realize our commitment to creating flexible, future-focused environments where Black, Native, and students of color can thrive, small focus groups were held for additional feedback. Between Monday, July 6th through July 8th, PPS invited Black, Native, multilingual, and diverse students and families to garner further priorities that inform the future of school communities.

On Thursday, June 25, 2020, PPS welcomed all community members to join a PPS 2020 Bond Renewal Virtual Town Hall to provide feedback, share their collective discoveries and explore the questions that matter for the future of our city's public school infrastructure.

Small groups of students and families elevated priorities to inform the future of school communities, where community groups worked with us as thought partners in the planning process, including:

- District Student Council, Self Enhancement Inc., Latino Network, NAYA, Coalition of Black Men, and Open School.

As a result of the focus groups and town hall, two primary themes were considered in the PPS 2020 Bond Referral.

1. A value for educational investments, especially within the transition to a virtual-based setting in the day-to-day lives of students and families.
2. Bond Option #3 was greatly preferred, in support of comprehensively funding Jefferson High School's modernization. The Center for Black Student Excellence has emerged as an idea, which has received enthusiastic support, and is aligned to our District's core value of Racial Equity and Social Justice and, more importantly, aligned to our commitment to ensuring every Black student thrives at PPS.

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### **TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION**

At the July 28, 2020 meeting, the board will vote to refer a school improvement bond measure to the November 3, 2020 general election ballot. Once referred, PPS staff file the Notice of Ballot Title with Multnomah County Elections, and then Notice of District Measure once the public notice period for the ballot title is complete. These filings submit the ballot title, question, summary, and explanatory statement for the November 3 ballot.

As with past bonds and levy measures, Portland Public Schools will work with the Secretary of State's elections staff to review impartial informational materials about this measure for compliance with ORS 260.432, and share these impartial materials with the PPS and broader community.

The voter registration deadline is October 13, and ballots begin to be mailed to voters on October 14. Ballots must be received at the elections office or an official drop site by 8pm on November 3, 2020; as of this year in Oregon, no postage is required to return a ballot by mail.

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends referring to voters a general obligation bond in the amount of **\$1,208,000,000**.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Ballot Title and Summary