

## RESOLUTION No. 6581

### Resolution Approving Agreement to Collaborate with the *Center for Black Excellence* to Advance Black Student Excellence at Portland Public Schools

#### RECITALS

- A. Black student achievement has struggled for decades due to racism and under-investment in predominantly black schools, forced busing, the removal of black teachers and administrators from schools and a series of churning reforms that have come at the cost of black student achievement. While this has impacted many students and neighborhoods the acute impact on the black community has been well documented. Racist practices that advantage white students and disadvantage students of color have been reinforced by 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 failed to respond to struggles of communities of color--especially Black and Native American students. This pattern started when William Brown, a resident of Portland in the 1860s, tried 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.
- B. Similarly, Albina was once a thriving, creative, and affordable neighborhood consisting of Black-owned businesses, homes, and faith institutions. It was the cultural capital of Portland with world class jazz venues, environmental justice initiatives, and education models created for and by Black Portlanders. Decades of disinvestment, urban renewal, and racist public policy disintegrated the neighborhood.
- C. The Albina Vision Trust ("AVT") is a nonprofit organization created to steward the neighborhood's rebirth through the thoughtful transformation of the 94-acres of lower Albina. AVT seeks to create a youth-centered community in lower Albina designed to create opportunities for Portland's next generation of Black people to build wealth and reclaim home.
- D. Several Black-led organizations have spent anywhere between 10, 20 and 30 years filling the gap in services and supports for Black students and families that the school district has left behind. These organizations include Self-Enhancement Inc, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, KairosPDX, and Albina Headstart. Collectively, these organizations approached the district in 2019 to discuss new pathways for Black students.
- E. Black community-led organizations in Portland joined forces in 2020 to the push for equitable access to public education, especially for our Black students and their families. This push has long been a key component of the civil rights movement and fight for racial justice and builds on the legacy of advocacy for Black children in Portland and catalyzed by the social movements for Black Lives. KairosPDX and AVT specifically approached the district about inclusion of a Center for Black Excellence in the 2020 Bond Campaign with the support of several black leaders and Black-led organizations serving children.
- F. On June 11, 2020, the PPS 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 PPS Graduate Portrait.
- G. On July 28, 2020, the PPS Board unanimously approved Resolution 6150. In that resolution, the Board included in the proposed 2020 bond the modernization of Jefferson High School and the development of a community-inspired Center for Black Student Excellence ("CBSE"), as a physically built environment and as a designated hub for culturally specific partnerships to

advance Black student achievement in PPS by supporting Black students, families, and educators. On November 3, 2020, the voters of Portland approved the 2020 general obligation bond, Bond Measure 26-215, with an overwhelming 75-percent approval, making way for the first phase of design and planning of investments in Albina facilities, and designating intentional investment in the Black community that is co-created and co-led by the community itself.

- H. The Portland Public Schools responsiveness to Black-led educational organizations signals a new day that recognizes the atrocities of the past and how they have impacted black students and families; and sets a foundation to chart a new course where this specific community can access strategic, intentional and coordinated pathways to thrive. Together, the CBSE and the Jefferson High School modernization will engage students, families, and community stakeholders to develop a coherent set of strategies that will positively impact student achievement and outcomes while affirming Black student identity and will include promoting and supporting culturally responsive/sustaining teaching and learning, beginning with the youngest students and throughout their educational journeys. These two investments towards the schools in the heart of the Albina community will serve as a concrete—literally and figuratively—investment in our Black communities. It will reinforce and anchor our schools as centers of our communities, connecting a constellation of community schools, such as Boise Eliot/ Humboldt Elementary, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary, Harriet Tubman Middle School, and Jefferson High School, and Black-led community-based organizations in the Albina neighborhood.
- I. The approval of the 2020 PPS Bond enables Black-led and -serving educational organizations in the Albina community to engage in the design and implementation of the CBSE as a physical environment, focused on centering the experience, promoting opportunities, accelerating outcomes, and celebrating the achievements of Portland’s Black children, families, and educators. The engagement of, and consistent support from, Portland’s Black community in connection with the passage of the 2020 PPS Bond and the focus on improving the educational environment and outcomes for Black students, has created a foundation for the creation of the CBE and the implementation of its goals.
- J. Inherently connected to the development and success of the physical place of CBSE is the formation and leadership of the Center for Black Excellence (“CBE”), a to-be-formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization envisioned and created by Black-led community organizations working together to unify and elevate the Black educational experience and improve outcomes for Black children, youth, and families. This new community-led collective-impact effort channels the decades of visionary leadership and culturally responsive and pedagogically sustaining approaches of culturally specific organizations. AVT, along with senior leaders from other established, Black-led organizations that are serving the Black community, Black community leaders that are influencing change within the community, as well as leaders along the educational continuum (among them, Albina Head Start, Black Parent Initiative, Kairos PDX, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, REAP and Self-Enhancement, Inc.) (together, the “CBE Steering Committee”) continue the Black community’s critical leadership, advocacy and thought partnership in the new vehicle of the CBE.
- K. The CBE Steering Committee will form the CBE to continue to work with community leaders, families, students, educators, and staff to design and develop the CBSE and other investments in Albina, furthering the shared goals and commitment to Black excellence.
- L. CBE has invited PPS to participate in the CBE, and PPS welcomes the opportunity to partner with the CBE and Black community leaders more formally and fully. This innovative and powerful governance structure is designed to provide visionary leadership in the design and development of the PPS CBSE and also provide robust community engagement, fundraising, the synergy between CBE and CBSE, and, among other things, educational planning for CBSE and the JHS master plan and HTMS relocation.

- M. The vision of the CBSE is one of collaboration, among Black-led community organizations and PPS, through the coordination and leadership of CBE, working together to advance a culture of Black excellence, unify, and elevate the Black educational experience, and improve outcomes for Black students, families, and educators.

### **RESOLUTION**

The Portland Public Schools Board of Education hereby:

- A. Authorizes the Superintendent or his designee to enter into the Cooperation Agreement attached hereto as Exhibit A;
- B. Commits to selecting two (2) members of the PPS Board to serve on the CBE Board no later than 30 days after the CBE entity is formed; and
- C. Requests that the Superintendent or his designee develop and present a plan to identify and recommend candidates for the PPS Board to select three (3) PPS representatives to the CBE Board. The PPS Board will approve the three (3) PPS representatives no later than 30 days after the selection process is presented to the PPS Board or the CBE entity is formed, whichever is later.