



# BIG IDEAS

FOR BETTER HIGH SCHOOLS

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## We want to hear what you think.

Portland needs high schools that inspire and challenge all students. Based on research and community input, we've developed three Big Ideas for how we can make that happen.

The overview inside shows how each Big Idea could potentially change our high school system. These ideas are not the complete answer. They are not set in stone.

Tell us your ideas and help us refine ours. Your feedback will help us create a solution that reflects both the needs of our students and the values of our community.



FUNDING FOR THIS BROCHURE WAS GENEROUSLY DONATED.

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"ALL KIDS SHOULD GRADUATE READY FOR CAREER TRAINING OR COLLEGE." PARENT

# Special Focus Campuses

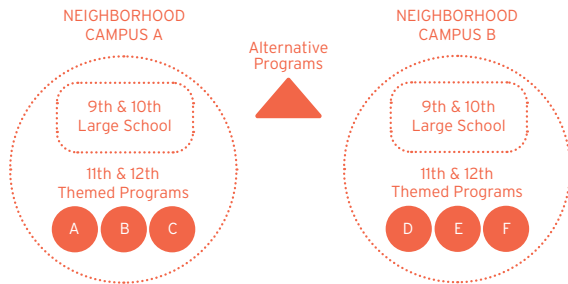


STUDENTS ENGAGE IN RELEVANT COURSES

## HOW IT WORKS

Imagine Portland's high schools giving the horsepower to every student to go deep into a potential career or interest – or, at the very least, explore the range of possibilities with dozens of in-depth courses at every campus. As they learn by doing, students experience a link between the classroom and the rest of their lives.

In this idea, 9th and 10th graders would ease into high schools with small academies that are personal, nurturing and familiar. Students would move within their academies as a group, sharing three classes with the same teachers. At the end of 10th grade, students could choose from at least three different career/interest pathways for 11th and 12th grade in their neighborhood campus (a campus might have an arts, health care and engineering program).



## A DAY IN THE LIFE MIGHT LOOK LIKE ...

I'm a junior this year. After spending 9th and 10th grade taking core courses, I chose to take mostly health care-related electives. Now, I'm learning Chemistry and Human Physiology and going to a nearby hospital to see how they're put into action. Last week nurses taught us a new system for charting pain levels. I don't know for sure what I want to do, but seeing how my classes relate to real life makes school exciting every day.

## ADVANTAGES

- + Students guaranteed enrollment in their neighborhood campus
- + Common academic platform for 9th and 10th grade; themed programs around specific careers and interests available for 11th and 12th grades
- + Strong partnerships with community and business organizations

## DISADVANTAGES

- Larger high schools might make it more difficult to create individual student-teacher relationships
- Required choice of a pathway for 11th and 12th graders may disengage some students

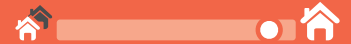
## YOUR IDEAS

- What do you like about this idea?
- How would you make it better?

## FAST FACTS

### SCHOOL SIZE

- Average campus between 1,400-1,600 students



### PROGRAM BREADTH VS. DEPTH

- 9th and 10th grade core and basic electives at every neighborhood campus
- Program depth and specialization in career or interest themed programs on each campus



### ENROLLMENT CHOICE

- Guaranteed enrollment in neighborhood campus; some ability to transfer to other neighborhood campuses
- Students choose a themed program for 11th & 12th grade



### INCREASED DIVERSITY

- Neighborhood diversity is reflected in the neighborhood campuses
- Larger size likely to increase diversity

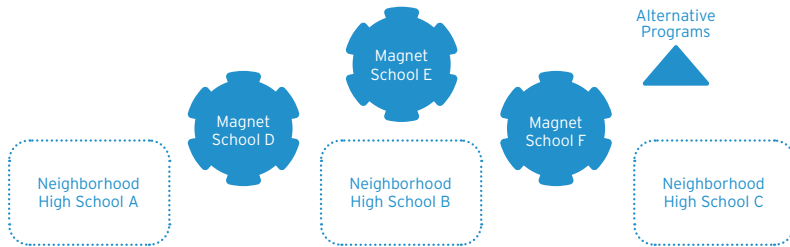


# Neighborhood High Schools & Flagship Magnets

## HOW IT WORKS

**Portlanders value strong neighborhoods.** Neighborhood schools help make that happen by being the hubs of activity for families and neighbors. Friday night football, back-to-school barbecues, and vibrant arts and music programs bring together families and help students feel part of a community that supports them, which can increase their engagement and ability to prepare for the next step.

In this idea, students would attend their neighborhood school while having access to a wide range of courses and activities to deepen engagement. This collection of larger neighborhood high schools would also include a few flagship magnet schools open to all students in the school district. All high schools would offer a wide cross-section of similar courses and programs, but the magnets would appeal to students looking for a deeper focus in a specialty area.



### A DAY IN THE LIFE MIGHT LOOK LIKE ...

I go to my neighborhood school, so my friends and I ride our bikes together. We usually stop for a snack at the corner store, where we know the owner. He displays our work from painting class, which is my first class of the day. After painting, I go down the hall to American Lit and then head to AP Calculus and French. My favorite class is Chemistry because the lab work is cool. After school, I'm off to basketball practice to get ready for Friday's game.



## ADVANTAGES

- + Students guaranteed enrollment in their neighborhood school
- + A wide range of similar courses and programs at every school for every student, including art, music, college credit classes and at least one career pathway
- + A few flagship magnet schools open to students district-wide



## DISADVANTAGES

- Program choice beyond your neighborhood school is limited
- Students can't transfer to another school unless they opt to attend a magnet school



## YOUR IDEAS

- What do you like about this idea?
- How would you make it better?

## FAST FACTS

### SCHOOL SIZE

- Neighborhood high schools with 1,100 students
- District-wide magnet schools with 400 to 1,100 students



### PROGRAM BREADTH VS. DEPTH

- Wide range of similar core and elective courses
- Program depth/specialization at three magnet high schools



### ENROLLMENT CHOICE

- Guaranteed enrollment for every neighborhood student
- Open enrollment in magnet schools, but limited by space and balanced by geography



### INCREASED DIVERSITY

- Neighborhoods' diversity reflected in the schools
- Magnets likely to attract a more geographically diverse student body



STUDENTS THRIVE IN STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS



# Regional Flex Network of Schools

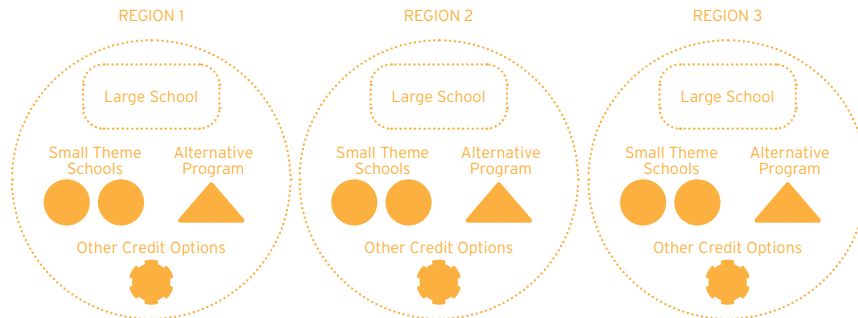


STUDENTS SUCCEED BY EXPLORING UNIQUE FOCUS

## HOW IT WORKS

**Flexibility and variety are the keys behind the regional flex high school system.** High achievement and strong student engagement happen in dynamic and varied settings where students have more of a hand in charting their own course. If this sounds different from Portland's high schools of today, it is.

In this idea, each region would have different types of schools, including a large school with a variety of core and elective courses, small schools with specific themes, and an alternative program. Schedules would be structured so students would have the option of traveling within their home region to maximize learning opportunities and take the courses they want and need. Online courses and credit by proficiency options are just some of the more flexible choices.



## A DAY IN THE LIFE MIGHT LOOK LIKE ...

Now that I'm a senior, the city is my school. I start the day at swim practice at a community center near my house, then I hop on a bus and head to my Spanish immersion school. My friends and I meet up for lunch between classes. In the afternoon, I take calculus and economics for college credit at PCC. It's fun to mix things up and meet new people. The best part is, I'm not limited by what one school has to offer, and I can manage my week to get what I need.



## ADVANTAGES

- + Lots of flexibility and opportunity for students to plug into schools with different focuses and sizes that work best for them
- + Programs distributed in a way that drives strong enrollment in all schools in every region
- + Students guaranteed enrollment in their home region



## DISADVANTAGES

- Travel can disrupt students' day and eat into instructional time
- Students may not get their first choice of schools/programs
- Puts a premium on students and families' ability to navigate and get to the different options



## YOUR IDEAS

- What do you like about this idea?
- How would you make it better?

## FAST FACTS

### SCHOOL SIZE

- Large schools with 1,000 to 1,200 students
- Small theme schools with 300 to 700 students



### PROGRAM BREADTH VS. DEPTH

- Core/basic electives at every large school
- Wide range of courses in a variety of school settings
- More program depth and specialization at theme schools



### ENROLLMENT CHOICE

- Guaranteed enrollment in home region
- Particular school choice is limited by availability



### INCREASED DIVERSITY

- Regions defined to reflect a balance of student needs, race/ethnicity and income





## YOUR BIG IDEAS

# GIVE FEEDBACK & LEARN MORE

- What do you like best about each of these Big Ideas?
- What don't you like about these Big Ideas?
- How would you make these Big Ideas better?
- Do you have your own Big Idea? What does it look like?



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## WHY ARE WE REDESIGNING OUR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS?

**Portland's high schools are doing a decent job despite unstable funding. But things should be better.** Too many students don't show up for class regularly, and too many drop out. Many students aren't challenged as much as they could be. All too often a student's race, ethnicity, home language or family income predicts how well they will fare in our schools. Our high school system simply fails too many students.

Things have to change. We need high schools that inspire and challenge all students. We must give every student what they need to prepare for the next step – because the job of high school is preparing students, not just for college or work, but to be responsible, involved citizens. We have to get this job done with the resources we have. And it starts now.

Portland Public Schools recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups and their roles in society. It is the policy of the Portland Public School Board that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups on the grounds of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation in any educational programs, activities or employment.

## SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM

# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Our high school system must be built around powerful teaching and learning, rigorous courses, engaged students, and supportive families and community. The essential elements support this educational core and help us measure the effectiveness of our high school system. **With all of these elements in place, every school and program will be in high demand.**

### 1. ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY, ESSENTIAL COURSES

Every student has access to art, music, world language, upper level math and college credit courses.

### 2. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The school district and staff connect families to their schools. Schools do so in a culturally competent way.

### 3. DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS

A variety of high schools, including large, small and special focus, allow students to choose schools that fit them best.

### 4. A FOCUS ON KNOWING STUDENTS

School policy and facilities encourage strong relationships between faculty and students, especially for those students at risk of dropping out.

### 5. OPTIONS TO EXPLORE CAREERS & INTERESTS

Every school has at least one high quality "career pathways" program. And all students have hands-on opportunities to develop work and life skills.

### 6. CONNECTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

Schools encourage connections among students, families and the community, including partnerships with employers, organizations and cultural groups.

### 7. A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Students of varying backgrounds and educational status are more equitably integrated across all campuses.