

# SELLWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL CONVERSATION

June 21, 2006 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Sellwood Middle School Gymnasium

## Meeting Summary

Summary prepared by Zenn Associates

### Participants:

#### *Sellwood:*

Karen Dean  
Debbie Greene  
Kevin George

#### *Duniway:*

Rossana Wong  
Carol Samuels  
Alex Duarte

#### *Grout:*

Terri Burk  
Aimee Bochsler  
Kirsten Labudda

#### *Lewis:*

Gregory NacNaughton  
Amy Spring  
Pat Reilley

#### *Llewellyn:*

Sandy Hubbard  
Catherine Alexander  
Mike Rosen

#### *Winterhaven:*

Rita Moore  
Michele Schultz  
Leslie Jones

#### *Portland Public Schools Staff:*

Jean Fischer  
Sara Allan

#### *Facilitators:*

Mike Dahlstrom, Zenn Associates  
Marlys Mock, Zenn Associates

### Summary

Approximately 140 community members attended the second community conversation about reconfiguration of the Sellwood Middle School cluster, including Winterhaven and Grout. Also present were three-member teams (the Team in aggregate) representing the six schools involved: Sellwood, Lewis, Llewellyn, Duniway, Grout and Winterhaven.

Portland Public School Board of Education member present was Dilafruz Williams.

After a round of introductions, the Agenda was reviewed. Next the June 7 Summary was reviewed and amended. The amended Summary will be posted to the Portland Public School website.

The Team discussed capacity figures for the district. It was agreed to use total available capacity of 54,350 for future discussions. Currently there is room for an estimated additional 10,000 – 12,000 more students. Enrollment is projected to level out around 44,000.

Team appeals to the School Board for a changes in the charge were discussed. The Team was informed that meetings are open to the public for input. Also, School Board members may put forth motions for consideration.

The Team reviewed and commented on the charge clarification from Superintendent Phillips. The clarification memo is attached as Addendum C. Some of the discussions and conclusions were:

- Defining if the Team was responsible to consider Cleveland High School populations (the Team does not have to consider it)
- Understanding the “highest potential in the buildings” (those with the least maintenance and capital expenditure needs have the highest potential)
- Understanding Winterhaven’s role in this process (closing Winterhaven does not meet the charge, but their input is valuable)

Staff proposed an additional alternative. As there are many cluster conversations going on simultaneously, new resolutions are taking shape. Staff proposed that by possibly changing some boundaries, those schools in the cluster not in the target range of 400 – 600 students might be able to substantially increase their enrollment. Although this alternative does not meet the charge, staff said it may be an acceptable alternative to closing a building if the statistics support it.

If this option is a viable alternative, the Team requested the charge be re-written. The re-written charge would include not closing a building if those schools currently under-capacity could develop a plan to approach the target numbers of 400 – 600 students.

There was much discussion on this type of option including, among others:

- Impact of the current transfer policy
- Impact of immersion programs
- Impact of special option programs
- Impact on surrounding school clusters

The Team agreed to add this option to the potential list:

**Option 16:** *Re-boundary change to bolster enrollment to 400 in Cleveland cluster and not close any schools in the cluster.* It is recognized that this option is outside of the charge and may not be considered by the Board or may not be supported by viable numbers. However, if this option proves viable and acceptable, it is likely the preferred option. This option would look at maintaining the current K-5 model.

Data supplied to the Team was discussed. Staff said the original purposed options came from conversations by the principals. No reports or other criteria were supplied to them by staff. The principals were given the charge and they worked within their groups to present initial options.

The Team asked for additional information from each school, for instance: break-downs of rooms included in existing statistics, number of students, Life Skill program attendance vs. Learning Center attendance, and number of students in Special Education programs. The Team also asked that staff provide reports with more consistency in data for each of the schools, to make comparisons easier.

Costs for reconfiguration, closure, decommissioning, lease preparation and non-leased building maintenance were presented by staff and discussed. Also Title 1 funding impacts were discussed as a part of reconfigurations. It was noted by staff that most funding changes through reconfiguration are not immediate and are generally given a grace period for transition.

Transportation costs were discussed. Staff said transportation is not given to transfers unless the home school is not making progress to fulfill need. Any student choosing a special option school must provide their own transportation. All non-mandated transfers are being phased out.

Staff agreed to provide, if possible, maps showing re-boundary areas for the next meeting. Staff hopes to email those analysis by late July.

PSU demographers will meet with the Team at the next meeting. Staff asked that the Team email her with an initial set of questions for the demographers.

### **Review Existing Options**

The Team requested the opportunity to review those options that staff had identified as not feasible. The Team would like to review the criteria and possibly mine elements of those options. The Team, in meetings held between June 7 and June 21 identified the following options for removal from consideration.

Options 6, 10, 12, 12A and 13 will be removed from consideration based on Team consensus.

### **Next Steps**

The group agreed to the next meeting date, Wednesday, August 2, 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. And they agreed to meet every two weeks from that date on until a conclusion is reached.

The next meeting will open with the PSU demographers' discussion. If possible a Portland City planner for the SE area will also be present. The remainder of the meeting will be focused on the options.

Staff will provide, if possible, a plan from each principal on how to deal with expanded enrollment. Principals are not due back in their schools until mid-August. Staff also will provide a list of facilities for Winterhaven's program and expansion consideration

Enclosures:

Addendum A – June 21 Meeting Agenda

Addendum B – Raw notes from June 21 meeting

Addendum C – Memo on charge clarification from Superintendent Philips.



Addendum A.

## **Sellwood Middle School Conversation**

**June 21, 2006  
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Sellwood Middle School Gymnasium**

### **Agenda**

- I. Introductions/ Agenda**
- II. June 7 Summary Review and Amendment**
- III. Charge Clarification**
- IV. Data update**
- V. PSU Demographer Question Development**
- VI. Options Review Approach**
- VII. Options Review**
- VIII. Next Steps**

## Addendum B

### IX.

Summary Review and Amendment:

*The following amendments were received for inclusion in the summary:*

1. Note board members Dilafruz Williams and Trudy Sargent were present. - OK
2. In paragraph 1: restate to Sellwood Middle School cluster, including Winterhaven and Grout. - OK

Grout doesn't feed to Sellwood; Winterhaven is city wide focus school  
Charge: group doesn't need to find a home for Winterhaven in remaining 5 schools

3. Clarify: Re: "All buildings in the cluster are under consideration but no program closure is being sought": this seems like a misleading understatement. Weren't we told by Jean Fischer that Winterhaven's program was \*required\* to continue, and that it is \*required\* to stay in our cluster? I don't believe we were told it has to have a new building. “ -
4. In paragraph 8: “Many Team members said confusion exists...” add; The Team finds the summary reports of the schools helpful. – Add that the information supplied by PPS is helpful.
5. In paragraph 8: add the following requests to the summary (currently in Addendum B):  
Impact on qualification for Cleveland's IB program by K-8 students vs. middle school students  
Costs to the community associated with a school's closure – add to data request in summary
6. Clarify: “Concerning building capacity: my notes reflect some discussion of that issue that doesn't appear in the Conversation write up. Someone said capacity information doesn't seem to accurately reflect the room left in buildings as they are really used. Either Sara or Jean explained that they use the same assumptions across the district: 25 students/classroom, pre-K set aside, and no counting of rooms for SpEd, ESL, computers, or social services. Rooms for electives are NOT accounted for.”  
- People felt there were discrepancies; will clear those up throughout conversation
7. Option 5: restate to (merge with another underutilized site), such as the Creative Science program. – In summary list of options - OK
8. Option 13: add: Binnsmead is an underutilized building with no nearby Focus program. – OK
9. Meeting summary prepared by Zenn Associates. Clarify role of Sara Allan. Broad Foundation grant helps to pay salary. Has kids that will attend PPS.

Identified four possible outcomes: Group highlighted that Sellwood is not under performing.

Available capacity: Not 1000 as quoted. Available capacity 54350. No longer have capacity for 80,000 kids anymore. Buildings closed, uses changes, accommodate special needs, provide more services. Historic number only. Schools are not half empty. Have capacity for 10-12,000 more students. Declining enrollment over past 15 years. Level out at 44,000.

Appeal Board decision not previously noted. Information on process not included in follow up information. How does the group bring the charge back to the board. Process is to speak with board members to change the charge – outside of this process.

Actual document about revisiting a board decision? No formal board policy for appeal. Talk with board members, they would put a motion forward. A board can take motions forward. The committees are aware of these conversations. Public does contact board and come to meetings. Based on feedback, things can change. A motion can be brought forward.

Charge Clarification:

First set of bullet points: concentrated operations/highest potential building? Buildings with the least maintenance needs are considered “highest potential” building.  
Concentrated operations: Consistent size range needed to best use resources. Around 400 students/school supports the desired program. Makes PPS resources more effective.

Strengthened HS Feeder pattern? We want to ensure high schools are maintaining enrollment. K-8 model holds kids in their neighborhood longer. Builds stronger community relationships which may keep kids in their high school rather than transferring.

Capture rate for Cleveland:

Heard that we lose more students because they go to private HS; not that there aren't enough kids in feeder schools.

PPS students: 1378 HS students in Cleveland Cluster. 946 choosing Cleveland. Others transferring to other schools in PPS.

How many that enter elem. Schools then leave before HS?

Is capture rate at Sellwood higher than capture rate at Cleveland? PPS doesn't think Cleveland is having a problem with holding onto their kids (memo makes reference to it).

Memo makes reference to Cleveland cluster. Cleveland Cluster is not represented here. We should have the other cluster reps here. Group wants to invite them. We're not responsible to impact population at Cleveland.

Cleveland is growing. Applaud feeder schools/communities.

Grout is not in 400-600 range.

Charge is not to stabilize HS population. Most kids go to Cleveland.

Underperforming middle schools – confusing. Not sure why issues at other middle school are not being addressed.

19% drop in Cleveland Cluster. Drop across cluster. Not at HS.

PPS: get schools to 400, including Grout, into that size.

Group is to close one of six buildings? Memo says we're closing one of five buildings. Winterhaven no longer on the table.

IF Winterhaven moves within another school – shooting for size range. Closing Winterhaven outside the cluster is not an option. That can happen, but it won't impact the size of Llewlyn, Grout.

Why is Winterhaven at the table? At this point not comfortable walking away.

If schools get to 400-600, no building has to close?? Yes, if we can figure out how to do it, without taking from other schools. Closing buildings doesn't save that much \$, it's the variable school populations that use more resources.

If Winterhaven moves to another building, would they still need to grow? Would need to be a Sunnyside type model.

Lots of schools not at 400 (in Cleveland cluster). Some schools don't have capacity for 400, but get to stay open. PPS: all of those programs are expected to grow to over 400. Woodstock, Abernathy, Reike, exception is Skyline – geographically isolated. Area continues to grow.

One of the options can be, we don't need to close a building or program, if we can come up with a strategy to raise population to 400, we're done?

PPS: One idea, Feeder schools to Lane – rapidly growing (already over 400); Possible to change some boundaries that would increase the Cleveland Cluster side. Some programs would move out of Lewis. Schools there may become overcrowded. If there are enough kids, then Lewis could grow to 400 and wouldn't negatively impact those schools.

Need to plot where every kid lives and where they're going to school and confirm that they're not already going to Lewis.

Llewlyn – shift piece of Duniway to LLeWlyn. Would give LLeWlyn 400 – then starve Duniway? Can we redraw boundaries better?

Lewis drawn small.

What about Grout: allow Lewis to grow – move special ed rooms out. Creston to K-8 with lots of head start kids – allow Grout to better utilize it's facility.

Grout has large area. Maybe increased capture rate for Grout.

If Chinese Immersion - 6 additional classrooms - is slated to grow...kids will be pushed out. Brooklyn N'd used to feed into Sellwood – could feed LLeWlyn. PPS will look at all of these issues.

The transfer policy stays same: go wherever they want, system won't support change. What will be done to change that? Not directly part of this discussion.

Will PPS staff acknowledge transfer policy is relevant? Yes. Don't have power here to change it. PPS is looking at it.

Duniway is in excess of 400 – perfect size. Some are transfers. Would like to stay at this size.

Transfer policy has benefited schools; needs to be addressed and equitable. PPS: choice is important; can't negotiate it now. Does affect scenarios.

Surprised about border idea. What about Marshall? There is commitment in Lane community. Marshall is growing; will be over 1000 this year. Looking to grow through k-8's; felt like it could be achieved without redrawing boundaries.

400-600 in relationship to transfer policy. Focus option schools...need to look closely at transfers. Not sustainable if we continue with transfer policy. Transfer policy needs to be studied. Audit has raised awareness.

Not gone into committee/board; PPS will look at patterns in these schools. Find out how it would impact Duniway, etc. There will be opportunities for the public to weigh in on transfer policy.

Transfer attendance page broken out by focus options. In some cases, kids are choosing to transfer out of neighborhood schools, not always because of a focus option.

How many parents end up in different neighborhood school; because they couldn't get into the focus option school? Grout is a great school. Want people to come to Grout, not transfer.

Winterhaven is a focus option. Have same FTE as other schools.

Charge was to close a school; if redrawing boundaries will do it, would like charge rewritten. Ideas developing everyday. Looking for best option. Until it's analyzed, can't say that it is a viable option until that's determined.

Group member asks board members to communicate with each other about redrawing boundaries.

Lose kids to immersion programs. Student enrollment doesn't identify different programs kids are in. Principals can give rough estimates. Trying to get that information.

New information is not what was expected. Thanks! Please do the boundary analysis. If we can't get board to redraft the resolution, then get Superintendent to rewrite letter.

Space at Woodstock. It seems they should be here. Chinese immersion grows and neighborhood kids could get pushed out. Solution may accommodate those kids. PPS – can bring Woodstock into conversation.

PPS will create, support, endorse special options or is the emphasis on neighborhood schools? Board decision. Most transfers happen between neighborhood schools and not special option schools.

Maybe PPS should focus on offering languages at every level to all schools rather than having different language immersion programs.

Break.

Return to agenda as written.

To talk about this, we have to bring up sensitive topics. We refer to special focus option schools. Don't want to convey disrespect to Winterhaven – or any special focus option school

Data Update:

-Develop initial options – no data (school principal options – basing their initial ideas on their data). No report given to help them.

Group asked for criteria or report used to come up with the initial options. Was there a memo? Just looked at charge and each area director worked with their group to come up with some options. Was just a starting point.

-Expansion potential – capacity document – edited for special rooms

Request principals give breakdown of rooms, which included/aren't ; how many kids, etc. Get more consistency between schools/data. Special ed classrooms vs. how many kids in each room is confusing. Learning centers are part of main school population – different than life skills program which are part of special ed population. May only be five kids in a special ed room. Want to know how many kids are in life skills classes. That number has implication on other services provided in the school.

-3 cost – general cost range estimate when closure or reconfiguration takes place. Costs savings when closed. Schools adding grades 65-85k expenses per school; closure – one time cost/move range from \$50-120k; lease prep

Decommission before lease, per sf.  
\$165-270 total cost  
Lease revenue per Between \$9-12/per sf

For instance, Brooklyn would be leased without fixing it? Depends on tenant. Sometimes fund capital work through lease.

PPS: Collinsview to Riverdale – they did the improvements.  
Cost side are added/net impact. Not suggesting need to do k-8 simultaneously.

Add cost for maintaining a building if it's not leased. Decommission cost is it. Within a year or two buildings are leased.

Building condition page provides operating costs (maintenance, custodial, utilities).

Do not have transportation impact – option and boundary specific.  
Can do when option list is shortened.

Gathering info on student achievement where there was a closure. Track how those kids are doing. Will bring that.

What buildings are unleased, how long vacant?  
Only a handful that are unoccupied. A few more next year. Only Whitaker-Lakeside for couple of years.  
Applegate looking. Kenton and Edwards leased.

Title I impact depends on option and demographics. If ratio of Title I schools changes, it impacts FTE. If option impacts Title I.

How does program currently work? If impacts on these kids, is there flexibility to manage it. Sabin and Hayhurst had population changes and lost title I. Given a grace period. Free and reduced lunch determines Title I. Title I dollars separate. If significant change, reasonable to provide a grace period. Depends on school goes from about 40% to below. FTE will increase/offset because of more enrollment.

Maps –will plot

Boundary on student attendance page.

Facilities map on web.

Existing facilities that could house Winterhaven – will email out.

Don't offer transportation unless transferring because school is not making progress. Incremental cost for transfer. A perception – any kid that picks special option school – has to find transportation. When Richmond first opened, they had transportation. Non mandated transportation is being taken away.

Completely phasing out non-mandated transfers. No elem. Schools are AYP (annual yearly progress).

PSU Demographer Questions: Ask to send your questions to Sara by Monday. Group will give two weeks notice to demographers. By June 30, Sara should have your questions. Schedule meeting last two weeks of July.

Propose meeting dates in August – one of these meetings as demographer meeting. Or special demographer meeting. If they could be available August 2, the group will have seen their answers. PPS asks that questions are batched. Every other Wednesday from August 2

How long to do the boundary analysis? Not long, probably third week of July. Send an email with the option and analysis before August 2.

Identify pros/cons on other options. Still unknown about new option. New option will probably be preferred option if numbers work out.

If board doesn't change the charge, there's no point considering it. Board could reject a recommendation, or change it to something else. The Superintendent is supportive of this idea.

Boundary option – if numbers work. Worst case: we make recommendation, gives it to Superintendent then to board...won't listen to it. If group can get consensus, the superintendent is likely to recommend it to the board.

No good reason the board won't consider it. Want to agree on something.

Resolution says a building must close. Worried about getting stuck in process. Want to take this opportunity, but would be nice to have Superintendent clarify the resolution. Sara will take it back to Superintendent.

Clarify boundary change idea: looking at maintaining a k-5 structure? Yes.

Possible to have rough map boundaries that correlate with each option? PPS transportation people would do this. Demographers use broad trends. PPS have real information for enrollment today.

Ask for demographer to attend on August 2. When is next update from demographers? Fall.

Add Option 16: Reboundary Change to bolster enrollment to 400 in Cleveland Cluster and not close any schools in cluster

Lewis adds 100 students from excess capacity from east Portland.

Llewlyn adds Brooklyn Neighborhood bringing enrollment to 380 also adding area south of Tacoma (tentative).

Duniway keeps current boundary for 440.

Grout through reboundary adds 120 students from Woodstock. Leaving Woodstock building for Mandarin program

Grout also picks up Creston as it converts to k8 due to transfers

Llewlyn Pick up population along Macadam/...

Grout would be increased to 400. Fill classroom space.

Provide resources such as psychologists, nurse, ada modification, services that attract neighborhood population

Some of Woodstock kids are closer to Lewis.

Can look at data for the other schools. Thinks the numbers could work.

What is the number to be concerned about? Be concerned about numbers falling – get close to 400.

PPS will analyze numbers.

Contingent on timeframe and making sure system was working. Provide grace period

Group could agree to eliminate options. Remove those options that Sara's data options are not feasible because....

Group wants to talk about each one....question rational.

Look at options tonight that groups want to remove. Not the same options that Sara suggested removing.

Group wants to remove Options #6, #10, #12 and #12A, #13

Why removing 12? K-8 declines to split

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 2

Which are listed as not feasible? Listed on information from Sara.

#15 is on same page as #10.

Additional data needs: Map of boundaries, view from district – from each principal...my plan on how to deal with 120-150 more kids. Principals don't come back until middle of August. Need to narrow options.

## **Addendum C.**

### **PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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### **OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

### **MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** June 15, 2006

**To:** Cleveland Cluster Community Teams

**From:** Vicki Phillips

**Re:** Cleveland Cluster Community Conversation

District staff, at the community's request, have asked me to clarify the parameters for the Cleveland cluster community conversation.

When we began the reconfiguration process across the district, we laid out the following goals for what our proposals must deliver:

- Strong and stable neighborhood schools
- Equitable levels of core curriculum and supports at all schools
- Communities kept intact, with continuity for families and teachers
- Reasonable class sizes and buildings that are not overcrowded
- Underperforming middle schools addressed
- Strengthened high school feeder patterns
- Concentrated operations \$, focused on our highest potential buildings

In order to achieve these goals, we have established the following parameters:

- Target school size will range from 400-600 students, with few exceptions. This allows us to deliver equitable levels of curriculum and supports with current resources.
- K-8 models will be introduced in areas where middle schools are failing to achieve adequate results. This allows us to build on strong elementary programs while making better use of facilities.
- We will follow a multi-year, thoughtful implementation process. Boundary changes will affect incoming Kindergartners. Affected middle school programs will phase out and K-8 programs will phase in over 2-3 years.

In the Cleveland cluster, the recommendation from this community process must address the fact that Lewis, Llewellyn and Grout have enrollments significantly below our target size of 400-600 students, with flat or declining enrollment over time. We have capacity within buildings in the area to house programs of at least 400 students with one fewer building than we operate today. Therefore we have asked the community to engage in a discussion to define the best option to reduce the number of buildings by one and to redraw boundaries to facilitate the appropriate balance of students across buildings over time.

The Board resolution clearly indicates that this process must result in the closure of a building in the Cleveland cluster.

One way to go about this would be to reconfigure to a K-8 model across the remaining schools – but this is not the only way, and it may not be the best fit for this community, given the strengths of the current middle school program at Sellwood. For that reason, the Board did not mandate that K-8 was the only model that the community must consider and the district remains very open to other alternatives.

We suggested that Winterhaven participate in this discussion because moving its program within the cluster could possibly be a part of the solution. However, closing the Brooklyn building and moving Winterhaven out of the cluster would not adequately solve the size and enrollment issues we have outlined. Winterhaven draws its students from across the district and so moving it out of the cluster would not significantly affect enrollments at surrounding schools. Our goal is to eventually find a location to allow the Winterhaven program to grow. However, a new location for Winterhaven doesn't necessarily need to be part of this recommendation.

Thank you all for committing your time, thinking and energy to this process. I recognize that it is very challenging and difficult and the Board and I appreciate your engagement. The district staff will work very hard to be as supportive as possible in providing data and analysis to support your work. I look forward to hearing your recommendations in October.