

SELLWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL CONVERSATION

June 7, 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 150 community members attended the first 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 members present were Dilafruz Williams and Trudy Sargent.

The Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) is in the process of selecting a representative to participate with the Team. This representative will serve as a conduit for information to the neighborhood associations within the cluster.

After a round of introductions, the Team discussed the charge as presented:

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent to undertake a facilitated planning process with Sellwood Middle School, Llewellyn, Grout, Lewis and Duniway neighborhood Elementary Schools, and Winterhaven K-8 School.

The recommendations may include reconfigurations and must include a closure of one building in the Cleveland cluster by the beginning of the 2007-08 school-year.

The Team (and the community members present) agreed unanimously that they prefer no school be closed. Reversal of the charge was briefly discussed. PPS Staff noted a building closure is part of a School Board decision. Reversal of this decision is not an alternative in this process. The charge was clarified by PPS Staff. All buildings in the cluster are under consideration but no program closure is being sought. The Team agreed to proceed with fulfillment of the charge.

The Team identified four possible outcomes:

- The Team reaches consensus and delivers a recommendation(s)
- The Team does not reach consensus but delivers a majority/minority report
- The Team delivers options with pros and cons
- The Team does not deliver any recommendation

Several questions arose about the K-8 reconfiguration. PPS Staff said the Superintendent asked that K-8 be considered for low performing areas. For this discussion K-8 is an option, but not a mandate. The Team agreed to defer further discussion of the K-8 model until options have been developed and reviewed.

The Team was asked to act as school and community liaisons for this process. They agreed to inform, and solicit input from, their respective communities. Principals will provide assistance in posting information.

Many Team members said confusion exists concerning available data. Additional information was requested to help develop options. The Team finds the summary reports of the schools helpful. PPS Staff committed to determine the availability of the following data, and provide it where possible:

- Data or criteria used by cluster Principals to develop the initial options
- Expansion potential for each school as determined by the respective Principals
- Costs associated with closing a school
- Costs associated with retrofitting a school
- Costs associated with moving a program
- Maintenance costs of closed school facilities
- Transportation impacts
- Impacts on students due to a move
- Individual school profiles (enrollment, building condition, capital expenditures needed)
- Title 1 impacts
- Maps showing potential boundary reconfigurations
- Existing boundary sizes and enrollments

- Existing PPS facilities that could house Winterhaven focus program
- Costs associated with transferring students (if available)
- Impact on qualification for Cleveland's IB program by K-8 students vs. middle school students
- Costs to the neighboring community associated with a school's closure

Team members asked how data is used by PPS to reach closure decisions. PPS Staff said a School Closure Report is distributed to the School Board. No School Closure Report has been generated for this cluster. Staff said there is no specific formula for closure but the following are among factors considered:

- Enrollment trends
- Building capacity, utilization, condition
- Vibrancy of the school programs
- Capture rate
- Achievement rate
- Community involvement in the school

The Team developed the following options for consideration:

1. Grout and Winterhaven merge in the Grout building; Winterhaven building closes. Two programs would share an administrative program (still a special program)
2. Grout and Winterhaven merge in the Grout building; Brooklyn building closes. Resulting program could become a neighborhood school (Winterhaven becomes part of the cluster – no longer a focus program) with neighborhood boundaries; kids move on to Cleveland
3. Grout closes (over 2 year period), the area is then re-boundaried (redistribute Grout students)
4. Winterhaven closes building and program
5. Winterhaven moves to another program out of cluster (merge with another underutilized site) such as the Creative Science program
6. Split Winterhaven into K-5 and 6-8; move elementary kids to another building; move middle school kids to Sellwood. Move Winterhaven program to Sellwood. Close the building
7. Change the configuration of all elementary schools to k-6; Sellwood to 7-8; Move Hosford kids to Sellwood; close Hosford
8. Move Winterhaven to Richmond building
9. Winterhaven move to Rieke to improve performance there
10. Small focus option programs (Winterhaven, Sunnyside, Creative Science.) move to Marshall over a two year period. Combine into science HS. Separate until 9th grade

11. All elementary schools go K-6. Sellwood goes to 7-9. Close Marshall put students into Cleveland
12. Grout, Duniway, Sellwood all become k-8; Lewis and/or Llewlyn close
13. Several focus option schools are already close by. Winterhaven moves to Binnsmead. Binnsmead is an underutilized building with no nearby Focus program.
14. Close Sellwood, move students to Lewis, Llewellyn, Duniway. Winterhaven moves into the Sellwood building

The four options proposed by the cluster Principals include:

15. Close Llewellyn and move current Llewellyn students to Sellwood to create a K-8
16. Lewis and Duniway move to K-6 and feed Sellwood K-8 at seventh grade
17. Close Lewis and move current Lewis students to Duniway
18. Close Duniway and move students to Sellwood to form a K-8

Next Steps

PPS Staff will format all current options in a similar manner. The option analysis will include the cost of each option including revenues and expenditures. It will also include:

- How much does it save
- What are the offset costs for moving students
- Costs for capital improvements
- Transportation costs
- Title 1 fund impacts

The Team also requested information on how school populations need to be split to accommodate each option.

The Team will determine the prioritization approach they will use and suggest removing the current “Education Strengths and Education Challenges” from the format.

Initial option drafts will be distributed by Friday, June 9. Additional data will be distributed as it is developed.

At the June 21 meeting, the Team will compare options. After initial review and comment, the Team will discuss pros and cons and refine and/or develop further options.

PPS Staff is working on scheduling a tour of all facilities for the Team and has asked for available dates.

PPS Staff also is working on scheduling a meeting with the PSU demographers to discuss and review the data available on each school.

The Agenda is attached as Addendum A.

Raw notes from the meeting are attached as Addendum B.

Addendum A.

Sellwood Middle School Conversation

June 7, 2006, 6:30 – 9 p.m.
Sellwood Middle School, 8300 SE 15th Ave., Big Gym

Agenda

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. ASSESSMENTS AND CHARGE

III. RECOMMENDATION ALTERNATIVES

IV. GROUND RULES

V. AGENDA

VI. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

BREAK

VII. DISCUSS OPTIONS 1, 1A, 2, 3

VIII. ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES DISCUSSION

Addendum B

More information requested on process and request that facilitator start at “ground zero”.

Charge clarified to include every building in the cluster; programs will be maintained.

Concern that the charge is inconsistent with the discussions that have taken place. Parents think of Winterhaven as a focus option program that can be located anywhere in the city. There students don’t automatically feed into Cleveland and is not part of the cluster.

A new alternative could be developed tonight. The group can provide additional pros and cons to each option.

Lots of data, lots of confusion in community. Request for complete review of demographic data. PPS will make this information available and set times to meet with demographers. The data needs to be presented. More emphasis needs to be placed on existing data rather than projections.

Data is used to determine closures.

Duniway requested capacity, etc. PPS will email the data. PPS data needed.

Concerns about inaccuracies.

The group will determine the criteria for recommendations. Would like to know what was provided to principals. Group needs to be informed of what was given to principals.

This is the starting point in the conversation.

There is a perception that the options are based on data.

Concern that the principals are not present tonight.

Question regarding specific data used to make recommendations on clusters required to make changes. PPS uses enrollment trends, building capacity, building utilization, building condition, vibrancy of school program, capture rate, achievement rate, community involvement in the school.

Are there summary documents available? School Closure Reports are distributed to School Board. No School Closure Reports have been generated for this cluster. Why did the school board pick these six areas? Logical candidates became clear.

Would like information on existing capacity from each principal. Capacity information are used for programs. Principals have up to date information on capacity. Special needs programs use more space.

Would like to know the cost of closing a school to the community.

Teachers should have been given an opportunity to give their opinion.

Why Grout? Grout has more floor space (in the Cleveland Cluster) to add additional people to the building. Might be considered as part of this discussion. Concern that Grout was included because parents wouldn’t be involved in process.

Would like more information on cost to move a program.

Discussions with Cleveland is needed (impacts on IB program/children from K-8 vs. middle school).

Suggest that the group put other options on the table before discussion the offered options.

Request that the group decide if k-8 is desired or not.

Question about k-8 proposals only on East side. Superintendent asked that the low performing areas be considered for k-8. K-8 is not a mandate.

Would like an opportunity to brainstorm solutions. Prefers to leave k-5/k-8 option open.

Concern that standards would be difficult to maintain in a k-8.

BREAK

Communications plans for outreach to communities. The methods you will use to communicate with the rest of your school community.

Could be: local posting area, web, email, etc. Principals will help with this.

Want to know how much is being spent on maintaining closed buildings for PPS. Or buildings that are closed to school programs, but open to other uses.

PPS leases closed school sites to provide long-term revenue. Will provide costs on closed schools.

Identify data points:

What are the costs, impacts on transportation, impacts on students, impacts on communities.

Is there general acceptance that the group needs to close a school?

Concern that if the group doesn't provide input to the board, the voice of the community will not be heard.

Define charge. Question if it's possible to reverse the charge. The decision of the board is that a school will be closed. Members of the group want to know if it is possible to change the charge. Jean will send members of the group the process to overturn the charge.

These SE schools are being considered because they are in the same geographical area.

A neighborhood representative will provide information and report back to the neighborhood association.

Some prefers to have a rep from each neighborhood association.

Does the Winterhaven Program have to move out of the Brooklyn building? Winterhaven would like to grow.

Options

1. Grout and Winterhaven merge in the Grout building; Brooklyn building closes. Two programs would share an administrative program (still a special program).
2. Grout and Winterhaven merge in the Grout building; Brooklyn building closes. Resulting program could become a neighborhood school (Winterhaven becomes part of the cluster – no longer a focus program) with neighborhood boundaries; kids move on to Cleveland.
3. Grout closes (over 2 year period), the area then re-boundaried (redistribute Grout students).
4. Winterhaven closes building and program.
5. Winterhaven moves to another program out of cluster (merge with another site)/to creative sci program
6. Split Winterhaven into k-5 and 6-8; move elementary kids to another building; move middle school kids to Sellwood. Move Winterhaven program to Sellwood. Close the building.
7. Change the configuration of all elem.schools to k-6; Sellwood to 7-8; Move Hosford kids to Sellwood; close Hosford
8. Move Winterhaven to Richmond building.
9. Winterhaven to Rieke to improve performance there.

Concern that magnet programs are robbing neighborhood schools.

10. Small focus option programs (Winterhaven, Sunnyside, Creative Sci.) move to Marshall in two year period. Combine into science HS. Separate until 9th grade.

11. All elem. Schools go k-6. Sellwood goes to 7-9. Close Marshall put students into Cleveland.

Winterhaven isn't anchored to a neighborhood and can move someplace else and survive and probably flourish.

Most of the families at Winterhaven are from the geographical area.

12. Grout, Duniway, Sellwood all become k-8;
Lewis and/or LLewlyn closes.

13. Several focus option schools closeby. Winterhaven moves to Binnsmead.

14. Close Sellwood, move students to Lewis, LLewlyn, Duniway. Winterhaven moves into the Sellwood building

PPS will add the new options into the chart.
Educational strengths for initial options don't make sense.

NEXT STEPS

Data needed on the options:

Cost analysis of each of the options (how much does it save, what are the offset costs for moving kids, capital improvements, transportation costs, Title I funds). All of the revenues and expenditures for each option.

How would school populations need to be split?
Data on how many students we lose from public schools.

Community can lobby for support for staff.

Define and provide data on the real capacity of a building. How much capacity does each building have to add kids to?

Evaluate the impact on the neighborhood (closing a neighborhood school). Real estate prices, etc.

Format the options (remove educational impacts)
Keep: enrollment, boundary, facilities impacts

Follow up:
Analysis will take some time. Cost projections can be provided (general).

Options will be returned to group with more information added over time.

How many ESD students/classes district-wide?
Does the district have a white paper to support some level of transfer. That there is some level of transfer that is positive for a neighborhood/community.

Map boundaries: We need to know what the boundaries look like.
Total occupancy: clarify occupancy vs. rooms available.

Group wants to tour each of the buildings. Principals prefer tours be after school is out.

Map: what is the sq. mi. of boundary for each school and population within that boundary?

Look at other buildings that could hold Winterhaven.

Bring back suggestions from your community. Next meeting we'll review the options. Look at criteria to begin evaluating options.

Provide other initial options to the group.

Grout/Lewis on website is incorrect.
Process not being followed that is displayed on web.

Sellwood group is well represented. Any other options are appreciated.