



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Vicki L. Phillips
Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 15, 2006
To: Cleveland Cluster Community Teams
From: Vicki Phillips *Vicki L. 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.