



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD AND STAFF REPORT

TITLE: MIDDLE SCHOOL GUARANTEES STAFF REPORT

Board Committee Meeting Date: N/A

District Priority: 6 and 8

Board Meeting Date: January 23, 2012

Executive Committee Lead: Zeke Smith/
Carla Randall

Department: Office of Schools/Enrollment & Transfer

Staff Lead: Karl Logan/Sascha Perrins/Judy
Brennan

I. ISSUE STATEMENT

(Use this section to briefly explain the subject—2-3 sentences)

During the 2005-06 school year, the School Board provided guarantees for Skyline students to attend West Sylvan Middle School and Sabin students to attend Beaumont Middle School as part of the K-8 school conversions. The guarantees included transportation to the middle schools, and were subject to review in 2011. This fall, staff has analyzed the impacts of the guarantees, and gathered input from staff, parents and community members in the Sabin and Skyline communities.

II. BACKGROUND

(Include information related to the history of the item and any relevant timing issues)

The middle school guarantees began fully in the 2007-08 school year. Students interested in transferring to their guaranteed middle school have completed an on-time school choice application during the standard transfer cycle, and were approved to the middle schools without filling a lottery slot. Students have been provided transportation from stops near their homes to and from their middle schools.

Staff measured the effects of the guarantees by looking at the number of transfers, the performance of students who remained at a K-8 or transferred to a guaranteed middle school, the estimated transportation cost and the estimated staff impact related to the transfers. We also gathered community feedback through numerous meetings and e-mails received from Sabin over the past year, and from Skyline through this fall.

Details of our analyses are attached to this document. In summary:

- The guarantees resulted in an average of 38 Skyline students per year attending grades 6-8 at West Sylvan, while 22 Sabin students on average attended Beaumont.
- Test scores for a cohort of students who were at Skyline or Sabin in 5th grade and then attended either West Sylvan or Beaumont through the guarantee did not provide clear evidence that either model resulted in more students meeting or exceeding benchmarks.
- Total estimated transportation cost over the five-year period was \$1,650,000, 70% of which (\$1,155,000) was reimbursed by the State of Oregon. Of the net PPS costs (\$495,000), 85% was allocated toward Skyline buses because of the higher number of students participating in that guarantee and the low density and large size of that neighborhood.
- Had the guarantee not been in place, it is estimated that enough additional students would have attended Skyline and Sabin to warrant on average .8 FTE annually at each school.

Feedback from community members has been mixed. Some strongly support ending the guarantee (particularly Sabin parents seeking support for their K-8 program) and others advocate

for the guarantee to continue, as it provides access to a program they believe best serves their students.

III. RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

(Explain how the item relates to the District's policies. Also describe any best practice research used to lead staff to their recommendation)

Resolution 3403 (December 12, 2005): Expansion of Skyline Elementary to a K-8 School
Resolution x3497A (May 4, 2006): Expansion of Sabin Elementary to a K-8 School
Policy 4.10.051-P, Student Enrollment & Transfer
Administrative Directive 4.10.054-AD, Student Transfers

IV. FISCAL IMPACT

(Use this section to outline the financial implications of the action requested.)

Total transportation funds related to the guarantee are estimated at \$330,000 per year, with the net PPS portion \$99,000 per year.

Modifying transportation from Skyline to West Sylvan would reduce that cost by about \$24,750 each year until phased out, while ending transportation procedures for Sabin would reduce costs by an additional \$16,500.

Differences in student enrollment are expected to be cost neutral, as more FTE needed at one school is expected to mean fewer FTE needed elsewhere. Staff will be determined through the annual staffing and budget procedures.

V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(Review of all stakeholders, including students and union partners, involved in the development of the proposed policy or resolution)

Feedback has been gathered through public meetings at both schools, and through e-mails sent in from stakeholders. Outreach occurred through news advisories and fact sheets (distributed to media, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Central Northeast Neighborhoods, pre-K providers), PPS Pulse e-newsletter, PPS web site and social media; sabinparents.org website, school auto-dialers, meeting fliers and parent-to-parent efforts.

Discussion of this issue began in the Sabin community as part of the Boundary Advisory Committee (BAC) process that occurred last school year, and was picked up again this fall. In addition to announced community meetings, district staff met numerous times with Sabin Site Council, and attended a Principal's Coffee in November.

District staff attended a PTA meeting at Skyline November 1, and held a separate community meeting there December 1.

VI. BOARD OPTIONS

(What action is requested? Outline options and acknowledge other perspectives. Financial costs associated with specific options should be included if relevant.)

Based on the data and feedback available, staff has focused on the following two ways to proceed:

1. Continue with reduced transportation: Allow the transfer guarantee mechanism to continue, but reduce transportation down to centralized stops for Skyline and eliminate transportation completely for Sabin, trimming transportation costs by two-thirds.
2. End the guarantee, and phase-out transportation: Skyline and Sabin students would have equal transfer rights into West Sylvan and Beaumont as other non-neighborhood students, including sibling preference. Transportation would be phased out to provide educational

stability for current students, possibly with the conversion to centralized stops for Skyline students.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

(Convey the specific recommendation on any and all of the options listed or overall recommendation regarding the item.)

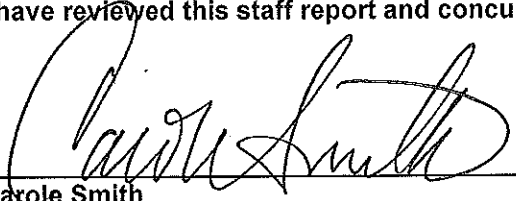
Because of the high cost of maintaining transportation and the goal of stabilizing enrollment at small K-8 schools, staff recommends that a middle school guarantee no longer be available for Sabin and Skyline students. We recommend that transportation be phased out for Skyline students, utilizing the most efficient centralized routing system possible, and be eliminated for Sabin students beginning in September 2012.

VIII. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

(What is the timeline? How will progress be measured?)

Phase out of the guarantee, including changes in transportation, would begin for the coming transfer cycle and 2012-13 school year. Families would be notified of the change prior to the start of the coming transfer cycle. Lottery transfer remains an option for Sabin and Skyline options, but within the slots available and under the same policies as other PPS applicants. Slots at Beaumont and West Sylvan will be set in accordance with guidelines other PPS middle schools.

I have reviewed this staff report and concur with the recommendation to the Board.



Carole Smith
Superintendent
Portland Public Schools



Date

ATTACHMENTS

(List all supporting documentation, including resolution, etc.)

- A. K-8 to Middle Schools transfer guarantees report
- B.
- C.

PPS District Priorities FY 2011-12

1. Improve Milestone outcomes
2. Successful implementation of High School System Design
3. Improve English Language Learners and Special Education Services
4. Increase cultural competence and diversity of staff
5. Build shared leadership and accountability for results
6. Measure and report on effectiveness of schools and programs
7. Design and implement Capital Improvement Plan
8. Deepen community and student engagement