



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 3107 / Portland, Oregon 97208-3107

Telephone: (503) 916-3741 • FAX: (503) 916-2724

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD AND STAFF REPORT

TITLE: 2011-12 BOUNDARY CHANGE AND GRADE RECONFIGURATION STAFF REPORT

Board Committee Meeting Date:

District Priority: 6 & 8

Board Meeting Date: January 23, 2012

**Executive Committee Lead: Carla
Randall/Zeke Smith**

Department: Office of Schools/Enrollment & Transfer

Staff Lead: Karl Logan/Judy Brennan

I. ISSUE STATEMENT

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

Each year Portland Public Schools follows an enrollment data analysis process to identify schools outside of district target-size ranges. The priority schools for change this year all had enrollment change procedures that began last year. After considering numerous options to balance enrollment between these schools and consulting with stakeholders, staff supports a set of interrelated boundary and grade configuration changes to begin in September 2012.

II. BACKGROUND

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

Enrollment balancing is a multi-year initiative to improve access to rigorous programs as well as to increase resource efficiency. Enrollment at about a third of schools at the K-5, K-8 or middle school level is either below program targets or above student capacity. The set of schools subject to change through this process is relatively small this year, with further activity expected in other quadrants of PPS in subsequent years.

Two major enrollment change processes began for schools in Northeast Portland last year:

- The Boundary Advisory Committee (BAC) process for Alameda, Beaumont, Sabin and ACCESS schools ran from November 2010-January 2011, convening a committee of parents from each school, as well as related neighborhood associations, to consider possible adjustments to provide enrollment relief for Alameda, reduce dependency on transfers at Beaumont, and increase and stabilize student population at Sabin while resolving location issues for ACCESS. The committee met several times and hosted a public forum to deliberate on options. It then selected a plan that prioritized a boundary change area between Alameda and Sabin and recommended a transfer preference for Grant cluster students to Beaumont and for Alameda students to Sabin. The process was criticized for moving too quickly with too little quality data and too small a group of key stakeholders. Superintendent Smith chose to temporarily halt the process until community concerns could be addressed, enacting only the Alameda to Sabin priority.
- Rigler School has experienced crowding for several years because of neighborhood growth and grade-level expansion of the neighborhood and Spanish immersion programs. Rigler would have been rebuilt as a larger school had the Capital Bond Plan passed last May. When the Bond did not pass, district and school staff conducted a rapid process to identify options to relieve overcrowding. After a brief period of outreach to Rigler and Vernon families, grades 7 and 8 shifted from Rigler to Vernon for a two-year period, until a full process could produce a more permanent solution.

These two previous processes were merged this fall and considered in light of new school size targets. A new community engagement protocol has been used to guide interaction between district staff and school staff, parents, students and community members. Staff attended more than 20 meetings across 10 Northeast Portland schools to share information and gather enrollment-related ideas, concerns and questions before releasing a set of enrollment balancing options that directly impact six of those schools: Alameda, Beaumont, Irvington, Rigler, Sabin and Vernon.

Throughout the process, community members were also eager to discuss district-wide program issues, including the parity and equity of middle-grade programs in K-8 and middle schools, the status and future of special programs such as immersion, International Baccalaureate and ACCESS, and the purpose and effectiveness of the lottery transfer system. While these issues may not all be resolved through enrollment balancing work, dialogue around them is expected to continue in the coming year and to expand to include additional stakeholders.

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)

The process for completing an annual enrollment data analysis and conducting boundary changes, including implementation procedures, is defined in Policy 4.10.051-P, Student Enrollment & Transfer and Administrative Directive 4.10.054-AD, Student Transfers

Additional Board actions for specific schools:

- Resolution x3497A (May 4, 2006): Expansion of Sabin Elementary to a K-8 School
- Resolution 4406: Temporary Relief Measure for Alameda
- Resolution xxxx: Rigler

IV. FISCAL IMPACT

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

No facility impacts are anticipated as a result of changes outlined in this plan. Current transportation routes for Rigler students, including two routes that serve Vernon, are expected to be sufficient for transportation needs to Beaumont, with the exception of next year when a bus will still be needed to support Rigler 8th graders attending Vernon.

Above-formula staff allocations are likely at Vernon next year to stabilize that program as Rigler students phase out.

Additional fiscal impacts based on enrollment changes will be addressed through the staffing and budget process, and based on 2012 staffing ratios.

V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Enrollment balancing utilized a new school district protocol for community engagement this fall. Regional Administrator Karl Logan and Enrollment and Transfer Director Judy Brennan led more than two dozen meetings on this topic at 10 schools and involving several community-partner organizations. The meetings ranged from small group sessions convened by a community partner and conducted in Spanish, to meetings with each of the potentially affected school communities, to large community forums with more than 150 attendees. Parents and principals also helped design, lead and facilitate school-based meetings.

A website on the district's main page provided access to detailed enrollment data, proposed enrollment balancing options, maps and other information. Staff also provided direct information to families and community members through: postcards mailed to all residents in potential boundary change areas; autodialer messages, family advisories and information tables at schools; outreach to neighborhood associations and other community partners; and media advisories, news releases and articles in PPS print and electronic publications.

A complete engagement plan is attached to this document. Notebooks with transcripts and summaries of community meetings, as well as e-mails and letters submitted by community members, are available in the Board office.

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 current and forecast enrollment data and feedback received from staff and community members, the following scenarios were proposed to balance enrollment between schools:

- Boundary changes from the western edge of the Alameda/Beaumont attendance area to Irvington and Sabin schools.
- Conversion of Rigler or Sabin to K-5 schools, with middle-grade students assigned to either Beaumont MS or Vernon PK-8 (only in the case of Rigler).
- Addition of a feeder school to Beaumont, either Rigler or Sabin.

Staff also considered numerous other options, including boundary changes to allow Rigler to continue as a K-8 school and shifting areas of the Alameda boundary to the north or east, instead of to the west. The attached chart shows staff's assessment of these options when weighed against the minimal factors for consideration outlined in Policy 4.10.045-P and Administrative Directive 4.10.049-AD.

Programmatic features associated with the options include the continuation of Spanish Immersion from Rigler to either Beaumont or Vernon, additional supports to Vernon to maintain programs if Rigler students are phased out and the future of the Sabin Middle Years IB program should that school convert to a K-5 and feed to Beaumont. As community members and staff from several schools requested that 6th grade slots be better controlled through the annual lottery, that topic was handed to the Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Enrollment and Transfer (SACET) for consideration and recommendation.

Community feedback was collected on the staff proposals at information tables set up at each affected school during parent-teacher conferences, and at three community forums held in late November-early December. Notice of the plans was communicated through fliers home to parents, postcards to households in the Alameda boundary change area, as well as the District website, PPS Pulse, social media site and information releases to media and community partner organizations.

In summary:

- While Rigler parents were reluctant to end the K-8 program at their school, they overwhelmingly supported Beaumont as the location for their middle-grade students, citing proximity, program variety and the equalizing factor of all students being new at 6th grade in a middle school.
- Sabin families spoke in support of remaining a PK-8 school and offering an IB program through 8th grade, while raising concern about the impact on the ACCESS program.
- Many responses from Alameda families were neutral, with acknowledgement that change is necessary. Residents from the east end of the boundary were grateful that their students were not affected by change, whereas families from the proposed boundary change area were unhappy that their homes would no longer be assigned to Alameda, which is closer for some than Irvington or Sabin. A number of families requested that current Alameda students in the boundary change area be allowed to continue on to Beaumont with their cohort.
- The Alameda Neighborhood Association requested that the area east of the Alameda boundary be moved instead of the west end, that current Alameda students who do not live in the boundary be returned to their neighborhood school to speed the rate of change at Alameda, and that current Alameda students affected by change be assured a place at Beaumont and Grant.
- The King School PTA raised the concern that the current process did not take into consideration a broad enough group of schools, and that a boundary change between Sabin and King is needed to increase enrollment at King.
- SACET is interested in pursuing the middle-grade transfer limit issue, but suggested that there is not sufficient time to respond to this matter and engage stakeholders before the start of the coming transfer cycle.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

No single set of changes meets all criteria, and all options bring some level of change and loss to the affected schools. Staff supports the following enrollment changes:

- **Boundary changes from the western edge of the Alameda/Beaumont attendance area to Irvington and Sabin schools.**
- **Conversion of Rigler to a K-5 school, with middle-grade students assigned to Beaumont MS.**
- **Above-formula supports at Vernon next year, to ease the phase-out of Rigler students.**

Staff feels that this set of changes will provide relief to overcrowded schools (Alameda and Rigler), and best use available space at under-enrolled schools (Sabin and Beaumont), without limiting the district's ability to make other changes as warranted to balance enrollment at other nearby schools in the future. Estimated enrollment at all six schools moves closer to district enrollment targets with these proposed changes. Further, by adding Rigler as a feeder school, Beaumont will increase its diversity while reducing dependence on transfers, which should strengthen programs at other North and Northeast schools serving middle grades.

For the most part, homes in the Alameda boundary change zone are several blocks closer to Alameda than to Sabin or Irvington. However, there is space at those schools to easily absorb additional students without causing feeder pattern changes or impacting additional enrollment balancing efforts that are needed in other schools. Therefore, staff recommends that the west edge of Alameda change at this time. Additional shifts to other parts of the Alameda boundary may be considered in future years if needed to manage unanticipated growth.

The proposed changes would cause a split middle-school feeder pattern, as Rigler students would continue on to Madison after Beaumont, while Alameda students are assigned to Grant. When considering student stability, this plan appears to offer a stable assignment plan, particularly for Rigler middle-grade students. As a result of closures and reconfigurations over the past 12 years, students in the Rigler boundary have had eight different middle grade assignments. Stability for these students was one of the most compelling criteria for staff during this process.

VIII. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

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

Proposed changes would begin in September 2012 as follows, in accordance with Board Policy 4.10.045-P and Administrative Directive 4.10.049-AD:

- Boundary change from Alameda to Irvington and Sabin: Kindergartners and new students at other grades would attend the new neighborhood school. Current students from the boundary change area who are attending Alameda now may remain through 5th grade, and, their younger brothers and sisters have a guarantee to co-enroll with them at Alameda.
- Boundary change from Rigler to Beaumont: Current 5th and 6th grade students at Rigler would be assigned to Beaumont, including students in the Spanish Immersion program. Current 7th grade students who moved from Rigler to Vernon this year have the right to complete the 8th grade at Vernon. However, in recognition that this could result in some families with students split between three schools, individual contact will be made with the 7th graders and, where possible, changes to different schools either for these students or for their younger siblings will be honored.

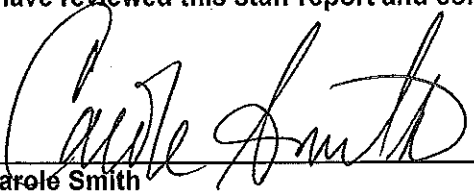
To minimize the negative impact of additional transitions, staff supports the community request to allow all current Rigler students to continue together on to Beaumont for grades 6-8. Additionally, all Alameda students residing in the boundary change area should be allowed to continue on to Beaumont for middle school. This modification from existing Board policy will allow students who expected to be together through 8th grade to do so, and will ease the rate of transition at Sabin, which will have very limited space until ACCESS is relocated.

We acknowledge that this measure adds yet another layer of exemptions from the proposed boundary change, which slows the pace of change and requires additional attention for years to come. We support the request of several School Board members to review our boundary change policy and make adjustments as necessary to ensure a clear, fair and consistent approach to implementation. In the absence of that additional guidance, however, we support maintaining K-8 consistency, especially for non-neighborhood Rigler students who have been affected by overcrowding and change at that school over the years, and should not be excluded from moving to Beaumont with their cohort.

If approved, staff and community members across all affected schools will begin planning for, among other needs:

- The smooth transition of students and teachers.
- The development and implementation of a Spanish Immersion program at Beaumont.
- Supports as needed to maintain program stability at Vernon throughout the phase-out of Rigler students.
- A timeline and location plan for ACCESS to move from Sabin to a larger space.
- Consideration of additional supports at affected schools as identified by an implementation team.

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



Carole Smith
Superintendent
Portland Public Schools

12.18.2011

Date

ATTACHMENTS

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

- A. Boundary map
- B. Enrollment change worksheet
- C. Analysis of factors for consideration

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