

**Portland Public School District 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon  
Board of Education's  
Work Session**

**January 9, 2010  
Informal Minutes**

The Work Session of the Board of Education convened on the above date at 8:10am at the call of Co-Chair Trudy Sargent in the Wy'East Conference Room of the Blanchard Education Service center, located at 501 N. Dixon, Portland, Oregon.

Present were:

Board Members

Martin Gonzalez  
Bobbie Regan - *absent*  
Ruth Adkins, Co-Chair  
Trudy Sargent, Co-Chair  
David Wynde  
Pam Knowles  
Dilafruz Williams - *absent*  
Henry Johnson, Student Representative

Guests

Kim Melton, The Oregonian  
Beryl Morrison, PTA  
Will Fuller, CBRC  
Scott 'Bailey, CPPS  
15 Citizens

Staff

Xavier Botana, Chief Academic Officer  
Lynda Rose, Senior Board Manager  
Zeke Smith, Chief of Staff  
Sarah Singer, Senior Manager  
Judy Brennan, Director School Choice  
Carole Smith, Superintendent  
CJ Sylvester, Executive Director of Operations  
Sara Allan, Executive Director Systems Planning  
John Wilhelmi, High School Redesign  
Mark Davalos, Deputy Superintendent  
Robb Cowie, Executive Director Community Involvement  
Sarah Ames, Director Government Relations  
Peter Hamilton, Director College Partnerships  
Jollee Patterson, General Counsel

**HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM DESIGN**

Zeke Smith provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Enrollment Scenarios, Tradeoffs and Criteria*. Net migration of families with children moving in and out of the District is determining the three different futures (low, mid and high range) of high school enrollment. Scenarios to frame understanding include: Beware False Precision; Small Change in Assumptions can Produce Big Difference; and, Tensions Become Apparent. Five scenarios were presented on enrollment: low projection, conservative projections, conservative enrollment modest capture, realistic enrollment modest capture, and high enrollment. Director Wynde stated that it was very important that whatever is done is based on current resource levels.

Director Knowles questioned if more Focus schools were added, such as arts or health care, would that draw more students out so that the capture rate would be lower. Also, students may take classes on-line or the District may have additional partners. Staff and the Board need to look 20 years ahead and take everything into consideration.

Director Wynde commented that, in regards to No Child Left Behind, the law was up for review in two years. In the PPS District, we are using the Free or Reduced Lunch threshold. If we were to go to a system of 7 or 8 community high schools with redrawn boundaries and a robust program where we had 70% of the students in each attendance area, his supposition was that we could be in a position where none of the schools were at the 75% Free or Reduced Lunch threshold, so the issue of transfers would be a moot point.

Co-Chair Adkins questioned how flexible the District could be and what would the trade-offs be in being flexible. We need to play out the "what if" scenarios. We need to know the worst case scenario. She was not at a comfort level with any of the data because of the need for flexibility. We need to be clear about the downsides and benefits of closing campuses and she wants to thoroughly explore that before decisions are made.

Director Wynde stated that he needs to understand what staff was talking about regarding immersion in high schools and how it relates to the proposed model(s). Also, clarity was needed on the transfer policy and Pathways, and to a lesser extent, the AP/IB issue. Xavier Botana commented that staff would be presenting a revised graduation policy to the Board at the next Board meeting which deals to a large extent with some of the Pathways issues. The District has a robust process in place regarding Immersion; however, it was clear from community meetings that what staff had laid out was not acceptable to parents. He had met with principals the previous week to discuss more robust options in terms of Immersion. Co-Chair Adkins stated that the Board also needs to take into account Talented and Gifted and ELL issues. Director Wynde mentioned that the Board will want some assurance that no matter what is chosen that there will be an ability to accommodate all desired programs.

Director Knowles asked if staff had considered Special Education students in the high schools. Mr. Botana responded no; staff has approached Special Education in terms of accommodation of students in the new schools and their IEP's. There was one global problem: for students to have access to their neighborhood school. The District currently has limited space for Special Education students. Director Knowles stated that she thought it was important to make contact with the Special Education parent community as there are things about the core program that you should hear from those parents. In regards to Pathways, she was concerned about what we were doing in addition to telling students that have to take three classes; we need to make sure there is a continuum for students that talks about career education and that there is a plan in place for each student and a person in each school to help them; we have fallen down in that area. Director Wynde mentioned that whatever the required number is for Pathways, all students need equal access to those classes. Co-Chair Adkins stated that Director Williams would like more clarity on Benson and the numbers for them and the issue of Franklin and whether it was sustainable. Director Williams had angst in light of past trauma and not wanting to create more trauma.

At 10:20am, the Board took a ten minute break.

Mr. Smith provided the Optimal Site/Boundary Criteria: Sources (public input to date and Board policy); Proximity; Enrollment Diversity; Stability; and, Optimal Utilization. Co-Chair Sargent questioned the use of racial diversity in drawing boundaries as we were trying to create a system where our high schools can be as similar as possible, so you need similar populations for that to occur. Co-Chair Adkins commented that she would support hiring someone who could crunch the numbers for us; if we can determine quantitative ranges of measures, that would be the only way we could do this and have any kind of reliability to it. Mr. Smith responded that staff was prepared to do the multivariate analysis that the Board had requested. His understanding of that was the more we can provide objective, quantifiable criteria, the better that analysis will be. The more we add subjectivity to the process, the less the outcome that we could rely on. Ms. Brennan added that staff needed as much criteria as could be quantitatively defined.

Mr. Smith reported that in February, the Board will review a resolution that will basically state: that the assumptions chosen on enrollment were valid and reasonable; agreement with a core program that will be available in our Community Comprehensive high schools and what it will take today to accomplish that. Then staff will want direction from the Board on how many community schools we should have in the system. The Board would affirm that we should have a Focus Option school system designed for a certain percentage of students and what it looks like. In order to accomplish these outcomes, certain changes to our enrollment and transfer system will be required. Staff will need guidance on how flexible or rigid to be in that system. The Board will need to affirm what the criteria are that we should utilize to run the analysis and bring forward a set of recommendations for the campuses and initial recommendations around boundary changes. It was staff's intent to bring a resolution to the Board on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Additional community input would be accepted between February 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and then a Board decision would occur on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Those timeframes may not be feasible, so staff would like to leave some flexibility in those dates.

Director Wynde stated that proximity was part of the criteria to be considered, along with travel time. Director Wynde added that he was more concerned about what the aggregate travel time would be. Also, if using stability as an indicator, were there places where we might want to modify existing K5/K8/middle school boundaries in order to meet the goal of parity across new community high school attendance areas?

Student Representative Johnson commented that he did not see where staff had addressed the impact to students who would be affected with the new high school system design. Co-Chair Sargent stated that the District usually guarantees a student that once they are in a high school, they are there to stay. Co-Chair Adkins mentioned that she did not know if that would be feasible with the new plan. Director Wynde stated that we have to remember that it is different if you close a school vs. a boundary change on where a student would attend school.

Director Knowles stated that, as a District, we can put buildings and a program in place, but it was the community that makes the school a success.

Co-Chair Sargent adjourned the meeting at Noon.

Submitted by:

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Caren Huson-Quiniones, Board Senior Specialist  
PPS Board of Education