



Portland Public Schools

HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM DESIGN

Portland School Board Work Session on High School System Design Saturday, January 9, 2010

As the school board directors discussed criteria for optimal site locations for community schools and potential boundaries, PPS Chief of Staff Zeke Smith kept running notes projected on screen. These are not intended to be word-for-word notes, but rather were a tool for recording the conversation and questions for further development of the criteria.

Criteria Discussion:

- Enrollment Diversity as an indicator
 - Need more info on our ability to use different diversity measures (including race, ethnicity, ELL, academic priority) within our legal bounds.
- Staff plan is to hire a contractor (funded through a Federal grant) to support multi-variate analysis to determine viable options for site utilization (community school versus focus school) and for initial boundary change considerations.
 - This analysis will be more useful, the more the criteria are measurable and readily available.
 - We do not necessarily need to rank these criteria.
 - Providing a sense of acceptable range/variance for each of these criteria will increase usefulness of the analysis.
 - Staff will provide Board with existing external white paper on multi-variate analysis.
- Proximity as an indicator
 - Not sure how important increased travel time is (or if so, we should also consider less time). More interested in aggregate travel time.
 - How do we quantify the avoidance of crazy commutes?
- Stability as an indicator
 - Are there places where we might want to modify existing K5/8/Middle School boundaries in order to meet goals of parity across new community high school attendance areas?
 - Impact on current high school students who will live through the transition should be measured and incorporated as a criterion. This is definitively a management and implementation issue.
- Quantitative measures alone are not sufficient. Other factors to consider:
 - Current success rates of schools at meeting academic needs of specific student populations
 - Community assets in place

- Question of the degree to which some of these factors may be economically determined
- Why can't we identify schools that have success with low-income students and replicate across the district -- what has stopped us from accomplishing this to date?
- We need to build on current strengths.
- As a district we can only identify the program to place in a school/on a campus, and draw boundaries to enhance ability to build community support across the portfolio -- at the same time, the community will be responsible for building the support for the school.
- Potential qualitative measures:
 - Community support
 - Parental engagement
- Need to balance the over-emphasis of "successful schools" and the de-emphasis of the connection between current programs offered and the role of the community surrounding each campus