



# School Modernization: A rebuilding program for Portland Public Schools

November 8, 2010

Portland Public Schools serves 47,000 students in 85 neighborhood and focus schools, as well as in special programs and alternative schools. Neighborhood schools are organized into zones in which elementary, K-8 and middle schools are located and feed into a community high school. Focus schools are located across the city.

Most of Portland Public Schools' buildings were built before 1960 — and many are more than 65 years old — and have never been modernized. The school district is proposing a program to rebuild eight schools; increase student safety and make structural updates to all other schools; and improve the learning environment in all schools by updating science labs, physical education spaces and more.

Portland Public Schools' goal is to graduate students prepared to succeed in college, the workplace and life. PPS strives to provide a rigorous, core curriculum to students in every classroom through the school district. Modern learning environments and up-to-date technology in schools are central to supporting this rigorous curriculum and student success.

Portland Public Schools is initiating the effort to rebuild and upgrade all school buildings over the coming 20 to 30 years. Using an innovative "pay as you go" model that minimizes long-term debt and interest costs, a cycle of bond measures could provide the funds to carry out the retrofitting of all PPS schools.



For more information, please see the list and map of the bond package. Go to [www.pps.k12.or.us](http://www.pps.k12.or.us): Click on the "School Modernization" link. You may also contact us by e-mail [schoolmodernization@pps.k12.or.us](mailto:schoolmodernization@pps.k12.or.us) or call 503-916-2801.

## ***A bond package***

The local bond measure on the May 2011 election ballot will allow voters to decide the first round of this rebuilding program. The measure's rate, about \$2 per \$1,000 of assessed value, would cost just under \$25 a month for the median household, with a home worth about \$275,000 and taxed at an assessed value of \$147,500. Work will begin in summer 2011 if voters pass the six-year, \$548 million bond measure. The package includes:

### **1. Major one-time safety and structural updates to school building systems.**

All 85 schools across Portland Public Schools will receive one-time major updates such as:

- Improving conditions at schools by replacing roofs and basic heating and ventilation systems and improving accessibility for disabled students and adults.
- Increasing student safety and security by installing new fire alarm systems, making seismic upgrades and providing secure access at entryways.

### **2. Rebuilding three high schools and five elementary and K-8 schools across the city.**

Three high schools would be rebuilt and modernized, so that Portland Public Schools students have the same technology, equipment and up-to-date learning environments as students in neighboring school districts with newer buildings.

The three high schools proposed for rebuilding under this bond measure are Cleveland, Jefferson and Roosevelt. In addition, planning and design work will be completed for a fourth high school, Lincoln so that the district can immediately break ground on a new building in the subsequent bond cycle.

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Elementary and K-8 schools to be rebuilt with bond funds are: Faubion, Laurelhurst, Markham, Marysville and Rigler.

Each neighborhood school will be rebuilt to specifications, including size, to support a defined core program for its grade-level configuration.

### **3. Interim updates to classroom learning environments and additional school facility support.**

- Science classrooms will be modernized and technology upgrades will be made in 37 PPS schools throughout Portland.
- Covered playground structures for outdoor physical education and recreational use will be provided to 33 schools across the school district.
- Six high schools not being rebuilt will have classroom updates tailored to their individual needs to support the recently adopted rigorous, comprehensive common curriculum. They also will receive updates to their sites, such as: landscaping, seed money for field upgrades, lighting, signage, walkways and renovated entrances.

### **4. Accountability and sound financial management**

Sound management of a major rebuilding initiative requires establishing a contingency reserve, and repaying existing capital improvement debt to improve the school district's financial position.

Citizen oversight is built into the proposal, with regular review by the Portland School Board's Finance, Audit and Operations Committee and the school district's Citizens Budget Review Committee. Annual financial audits will ensure accountability, with all reports and audits published on the PPS website.

## **Setting priorities**

A comprehensive review that identified deficiencies at every PPS school building — the newly built Rosa Parks Elementary is an exception — noted that it would be more cost effective to fully renovate individual schools rather than to address the deficiencies one at a time. Portland Public Schools will not take on more than can be effectively managed and accountably overseen. PPS leadership is using the following factors to set the order for rebuilding schools:

- **Providing rebuilt schools for as many students as possible**, particularly at the grade levels where the educational environment is most outdated compared to neighboring school districts.
- **Addressing school buildings with higher need** because of their physical condition, age and level of disrepair. The Facilities Condition Index (FCI) estimates the cost of addressing individual building deficiencies against the cost of full renovation, with higher index numbers indicating high need.
- **Renovating schools in each part of the school district.** Geographic diversity provides balance and equity, and helps ensure that "swing space" closer to the home school is used while students are displaced by construction.

## **Economic Impact**

Based on experience in other districts, school modernization work will increase local property values and city neighborhoods' appeal to families with children. It also would create thousands of jobs in the design and construction industries, with a total economic impact of roughly \$1 billion as money circulates among local businesses and households.

*For more information, please see the full bond measure list and map of proposed projects. That information and more is available at [www.pps.k12.or.us](http://www.pps.k12.or.us): click on the "School Modernization" link. You may also contact us by e-mail [schoolmodernization@pps.k12.or.us](mailto:schoolmodernization@pps.k12.or.us) or call 503-916-2801.*