

Portland Public Schools  
Enrollment Data Analysis: Framework for Decision-making  
**Recommendation For Board and Community Consideration**  
March 7, 2005

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**Section 1: School Information**

**School:**

**Edwards Elementary School**  
1715 SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Place  
Portland, OR 97214

**Abernethy Elementary School**  
2421 SE Orange Street  
Portland Oregon 97214

**Cluster: Cleveland/Franklin**

**Section 2: Nature of Proposal** (Select appropriate boxes.)

- Boundary Alignments
- Program Initiation, **Expansion** or Closure (**Year Round School**)
- School Initiation or Closure/ **Merger**
- Restructuring the delivery of effective instruction, e.g. full-day kindergarten, alternative configurations, such as K-8, K-6, 7-12).

**Section 3: Description of Proposal**

The proposal is to merge Edwards and Abernethy Elementary School into a single year-round school. The merger would occur at the end of the 2004-05 school year. The program would be located at the Abernethy site and the Edwards building would be closed. The school-age population in these inner Southeast neighborhoods is projected to continue to drop significantly over the next several years. This proposal will address that population trend, and will provide continuity to the year-round program and stability for two small school populations.

The closure will also offer the potential to enhance program offerings and provide greater instructional flexibility in teacher and student assignments and groupings. In addition, the merger will allow the district to realize administrative and operational savings, especially in 2006-07 and thereafter. The location of two very small schools adjacent to each other with similar achievement records offers the opportunity to merge the schools.

The Edwards neighborhood boundary would be redrawn so that all Edwards neighborhood students would be included in the Abernethy boundary. The new Abernethy proposed boundary would extend east on Hawthorne to 39<sup>th</sup> St., South on 39<sup>th</sup> St. to Division, west on Division to 34<sup>th</sup> St., south on 34<sup>th</sup> to Woodward and west on Woodward.

The feeder pattern would continue to be Abernethy/Hosford/Cleveland.

The District will give the school a two-year timeframe to ensure adequate enrollment. In addition, the district will facilitate a conversation between the two school communities in order to address the benefits of year-round education and ensure the continuation of a year-round calendar that is family-friendly and aligned wherever possible with the district calendar.

#### **Section 4: Rationale based on data and research supporting change.**

##### **Background:**

Edwards is a small year-round school that splits between the Franklin and Cleveland clusters. There are 199 students enrolled at Edwards, which has only 9 classrooms. There are 10 more students this year than last year and their density index is 22. Edwards was reviewed because of their capture rate and as a part of a cluster analysis that included Abernethy, Richmond, and Creston. Edwards has a very small neighborhood boundary. Of the 60 students living in the Edwards neighborhood in October, only 32 were attending Edwards, with 28 attending a different PPS school.

Abernethy is currently a small traditional elementary school that feeds Hosford Middle School and Cleveland High School. There are 203 students enrolled, but the building has 21 classrooms, a density index of 10. The school has had stable enrollment and captures 67% of its neighborhood students. The neighborhood population is 218 students; 145 of those students attend Abernethy. The school was reviewed because of its density index and then as part of the overall cluster analysis.

Schools with less than 250 students are limited in their curricular offerings based on staffing. Edwards has the least number of FTE for any school in the district at 9.56. Since the initial recommendation for closure two years ago, Edwards has been in a position of instability. It is unclear whether this or other reasons are responsible for the school's low capture rate. Of the 60 PPS students living in the Edwards neighborhood in October, 32 attended Edwards and 28 had transferred to the following schools:

7 to Richmond  
1 to Sunnyside  
6 to Atkinson  
3 to Buckman

- 2 to Woodstock
- 1 to Garden Laboratory Charter School
- 3 to Winterhaven
- 2 to Laurelhurst
- 1 to Duniway
- 1 to Bridger
- 1 to Grout

As noted, Edwards has a very small neighborhood boundary. The actual capture rate may vary during the course of the year as students move.

In October, of the 60 PPS students living in the Edwards neighborhood, 32 attended Edwards for a capture rate of 53%. In late February, when the data was rechecked, there were 70 students in the Edwards neighborhood; 41 were attending Edwards, raising the capture rate to 58%.

Our analysis included a review of individual schools, and a review of neighboring schools to determine how changes in the cluster can best serve students in the greater neighborhood.

## **Section 5: Educational Impact**

### **1. How will the proposal impact student achievement?**

Student achievement should remain high because neighborhood students will join an equally achieving school in an educational setting with more variety in curriculum. Abernethy would provide neighborhood students with both a full day Kindergarten and half day Kindergarten option. Both schools are strong supporters of the arts and music. Both are solid schools and rank well on the state report card. During the last three years, each school has had two exceptional and one strong rating.

### **2. How will the proposal meet the needs of low achieving, special needs, ELL, and TAG students?**

Edwards has 12.2% of its students on Free and Reduced Lunch. Abernethy has 31.7%. Edwards and Abernethy both have less than 5% ESL students. Edwards has 20% TAG students and Abernethy has 27%. The amount of time teachers spend at the school delivering services will be adjusted to ensure that student needs are being met.

### **3. Based on projected enrollment, how does the proposal meet the needs of the students in that school community?**

Abernethy is expected to have an enrollment decline over the next five years. Through this realignment, fewer schools with more students will mean that supports beyond the basic classroom will be available for the students now attending Edwards.

Additionally, Abernethy will convert to a year-round school thus still meeting the needs of the year-round families. This will provide stability for both schools and their neighborhoods.

Under the PAT contract, teachers generally follow the students when schools are merged. This will enable the new school to capture the expertise of the teachers in operating a year-round program.

The proposal has engendered considerable discussion from both communities concerning the merits and specifics of year round scheduling. As part of the implementation plan, I will direct the Assistant Superintendent to arrange for the two communities to have a facilitated conversation concerning the type of schedule that will work best for all.

## **Section 6: Cluster Analysis**

### **1. How will the proposed change affect equity of access to schools offering high quality educational choices?**

Edwards and Abernethy both use Art for Life to provide before and after school care. Edwards and Abernethy both have active gardens associated with the schools. Abernethy has a full day and half day Kindergarten option. Abernethy has a computer lab, library, cafeteria, gym, art/science lab, new playground and covered play area. Edwards has a basic skills teacher, a character education grant that brings a ½ time counselor and professional development for the next two years, and offers before-school Spanish.

### **2. How will the proposed change affect other schools within the cluster, both in the quality of their educational programs and in the number of students attending them including feeder patterns.**

Abernethy would become a year round school, which would be a change for the Abernethy neighborhood families.

By creating larger enrollment and surrounding neighborhood schools, the proposal would bring stability of curriculum to the cluster.

If all Edwards students went to Abernethy, Mt. Tabor and Franklin would lose approximately 30 additional students in their feeder pattern.

### **3. How will the proposed change affect schools outside the cluster both in quality of their education programs and the number of students attending them?**

By moving the year-round curriculum to Abernethy, a larger school, there would be more spaces available for the transfer of interested students outside of the cluster.

## **Section 7: Implementation Strategy**

### **1. Action Steps/Timeline:**

- a. Communication to families regarding placement/articulation patterns.
- b. Staffing reassignments/scheduling/room assignments.
- c. Professional Development for new staff/new program/new group of students.
- d. Reallocation of ELL, Special Ed, TAG due to relocation of students.
- e. Examination of current programs located at receiving schools.
- f. Creation of new neighborhood PTAs/LSACs/afterschool programs/partners.
- g. Welcoming activities for new neighborhood attendance area for beginning of school.
- h. Redesign of new transportation routes/opening/ending times may have to change.
- i. Development of a special year round calendar for the merged program.
- j. Development of a facilities plan for options for reuse of the school.
- k. Assistance to Abernethy in explaining the benefits of the new, year round program to a larger community.

### **2. What kind of assistance is needed? (e.g. facilities, nutrition services, transportation, staffing, materials/curriculum)**

Transportation would need to assess whether the new boundaries would create any transportation requirements.

The Assistant to the Superintendent will facilitate the calendar development.