

# Portland Public Schools District # 1J

## 2021-22 Hearing Minutes

Tuesday, June 15, 2021  
4:30 pm  
501 North Dixon Street  
Portland, Oregon  
Via Zoom Meeting

Present:

**TSCC:**

Chair David Barringer, Vice-Chair James Ofsink, Commissioner Margo Norton, Commissioner Mark Wubbold, Commissioner Harmony Quiroz, Executive Director Craig Gibons and Budget Analyst Tunie Betschart

**Absent: None**

**Portland Public Schools:**

PPS Board Members: Board Chair Eilidh Lowery, Rita Moore, Amy Kohnstamm and Andrew Scott

PPS Staff: Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations Claire Hertz, Chief Financial Officer Nolberto Delgadillo, Chief Operations Officer Dan Jung, Executive Assistant to the Board Kara Bradshaw

Chair Barringer opened the hearing with introductions of the Commissioners and TSCC Staff. He asked if any Commissioners have business relationships with the school district that could be perceived as a conflict of interest. The Commissioners each said they had no conflict of interest.

Chair Barringer asked the Portland Public School Board and staff to introduce themselves. Following their introductions, he said the commissioners had prepared questions they would ask, following that, they would take testimony from anyone wishing to speak. But first, he would turn the floor over to Superintendent Guerrero to make any comments regarding the budget.

Superintendent Guerrero thanked the commission for holding the hearing. He gave the following presentation on the 2021-22 budget, saying:

The budget prioritizes and reflects our continued priorities that raise student achievement. What's a little bit different is the circumstances that we have found ourselves in and making sure that we're addressing those. I am referring to the pandemic and the disproportionate impact that it has had an impact on all students and our students in communities of color in particular.

Hopefully, what you see reflected in the budget is attention and investment in addressing those impacts. That includes specific attention to the health and safety of our students and our staff; thinking about what is the most comprehensive summer programming catalog that the district's ever produced look like; and how do we prepare for a robust full reopening where our students are supported.

Our budget continues to be consistent with our core mission, with our values of continuing to be a dynamic premier school district serving a diverse community. It reflects and supports aspects of our community-constructed vision; student outcome goals that our Board of Education has set, agreements that we've come to terms with our various employee groups; and state and federal policy and state laws that satisfy all of those regulatory requirements.

It continues to be our belief that if we focus on a clearly defined set of strategies which includes improving our organizational capacity, investing in the development of the talent within the school system, investing in differentiating resources and attention on equity to our underserved school communities that this kind of a budget supports our commitment to racial equity and more than ever, has attempted to incorporate the input and feedback of our diverse stakeholders and community and lives and emulates the theory of action that commits to our black and native students, in particular, so they have equitable opportunities supports and outcomes.

I hope that you'll recognize that in continuing to try to meet all the challenges in front of us that we are remaining undeterred in our journey towards realizing our district vision. We're excited about a very ambitious multi Year Strategic Plan, which is just coming to light.

We have a budget here that supports a lot of initial activity at implementing that strategic plan. Hopefully, you do find a school budget that we've published that makes transparent those commitments.

#### **TSCC Questions:**

**Chair Barringer had lost connection, so Vice-Chair Ofsink asked the following question:**

Can you give us the big picture of the impact that the epidemic pandemic has had on the district and what you have learned as you adapted to it?

Ms. Eilidh Lowery responded, saying first and foremost, the district learned that the students and staff are incredibly resilient. In addition to staff, students, and their families adjusting to comprehensive distance learning, the district also took business functions and other processes that have been in-house for decades and almost overnight learned how to function virtually. In addition to impacting the core academic and business functions, the pandemic affected enrollment, a phenomenon seen across the country, as distance learning posed a significant challenge for many families. This challenge further highlighted the importance of working together with community partners and leveraging collective efforts to support those students in need, especially communities of color, which Covid-19 disproportionately impacted.

One key thing from the pandemic was the incredible nutrition services. They didn't skip a beat. Staff worked hard with the community to make sure that children in Portland were fed. There was no interruption to children having access to meals.

What the district does is beyond just academic delivery. The district is about child welfare in the city and community. They played a crucial role in the stability of families and children both in nutrition services and online learning capacity. That was a collective effort across the district and through the community. PPS is grateful for how everybody came together in this incredibly challenging time.

Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero added that Chair Lowery covered many of the extensive system shifts that school systems have been challenged to implement. Fundamentally it represents a service delivery model that hasn't changed since public education launched in the United States. That PPS could make that pivot and maintain a continuity of learning and support services is not a small thing for any school system, regardless of size. The district has done its best to meet the needs required.

At this point, Chair Barringer was reconnected to the hearing.

**Commissioner Wubbold asked the following questions:**

You've already touched on some of the expanded services you provide and thank you for that. The community certainly appreciates that. Fortunately, there's some federal money available to help pay for some of those services. As the pandemic ebbs, will you need to or choose to continue any of these expanded services? If you do, how will you fund the programs that need to continue when federal support is no longer available?

Mr. Nolberto Delgadillo fielded these questions saying as federal resources became available, the initial investment focus was to address immediate and urgent needs to get schools ready for in-person learning such as air filtration units & HVAC needs, prepping for hybrid, building/room space modifications, prep and ensuring there is enough personal protective equipment, which would all primarily be one time investments, therefore, mitigating the concerns about sustainability.

However, as the pandemic continued and additional needs began to surface, the second and third rounds of federal relief were or will be primarily invested across five broad areas related to the pandemic:

- Facility Projects
- Technology Initiatives
- Social Emotional & Mental Health Services
- Safe Operation of Schools and Covid Costs
- Addressing Student Learning Needs

Engaging with the community and subsequently investing with these five themes in mind allows PPS to assess sustainability and better determine if and how a program could continue. Overall, these themes will enable the district to better categorize one time spends against investment to build capacity or investments towards enhancing capacity.

He said they are simultaneously finalizing the strategic plan, which will serve as a framework for prioritizing and further assisting them in aligning resources towards a long term investment plan, mainly as federal stimulus funds go away after September-2024.

Is there a specific example you can give me of an expanded or new service, besides PPE or some specific expenditures resulting from the pandemic you envision continuing? Then could you tell me how you would pay for those?

Mr. Delgadillo responded by saying something that comes to mind is professional development. The investment in staff will pay for itself.

There are other investments, unknown before-such as zoom-that staff has learned to do through the pandemic. The district recently renewed the licenses and are going to continue with zoom. Another example is thinking about virtual options and how will they evolve.

To the core of your question, how does the district then pay for that and what will it look like? That's the meat of the work as we prioritize what the strategic plan intends to do against some of the existing investments. They will start assessing investments based on proven outcomes and best practices and will need to have this conversation around assessing.

**Commissioner Norton asked the following questions:**

We have a good idea now about how you have applied the federal resources. One of the questions we've been asking all of our districts who have received this money is how have you measured the impact of your federal dollars and the accountability of those? More importantly, what lessons have you learned that would be adapted as you restore more regular school services?

Superintendent Guerrero answered that the district has learned that public school systems have no shortage of ideas for spending large sums of money towards raising student achievement. There is a long-time debt in services and supports. As you go down the long list of things that that district is investing in to support students, whether it's social-emotional support, or academic supports or extended learning opportunities in the summer, or as the school year kicks off, or fueling and resourcing an ambitious strategic plan, or working towards a vision, resources make a difference.

He said what he hears in the question is how PPS makes sure there's accountability there, which has been a little bit tough to measure because they haven't had in-person learning with students in the classroom. However, they found a way to do some range of formative assessments virtually or remotely.

He went on to say they are looking forward to the coming school year when they actually can implement a complete and balanced assessment calendar, as the board has requested through a resolution to make sure that the district is noticing that there have been or haven't been impacts, or what the learning loss or impact has been and start to measure whether the supports interventions are helping. Of course, resources matter. There should be accountability that they are being used in a wise, efficient, and impactful way.

Mr. Delgadillo added the district had this considerable dollar infusion with the Student Investment Account. Therefore, when they start thinking about the lessons learned, it's taking this example with the SBA process and applying it to the one-time stimulus funding. That's one of the keywords, understanding one-time funding.

It is important to ensure investments support the strategic plan and have evidence of success. The key point in managing the infusion of money is a continued conversation with the community and holding the district accountable.

Ms. Amy Kohnstamm added she had the opportunity this year to participate in a working group of the Council of Great City Schools that was developing guidelines for districts across the country on these federal funds concerning what districts should and should not do with those funds. One of the things that has not been touched on much in these conversations tonight is the sustainability of the investments.

PPS doesn't want to invest in all sorts of employees or programs that would fall off a cliff. It's very tempting to do that. But the district has been thoughtful in figuring out how to meet the urgent needs but do it in a way that provides long-term benefit, like in terms of real professional development, where you make that investment that continues to bear fruit, even when that funding dries up. It is essential that PPS not fall for the temptation of new programs and new employees.

**Commissioner Quiroz asked the following questions:**

What additional work is being done to prepare facilities for kids to return to full in-person, five days a week, school in the Fall? How are buildings being prepared? Also, we noted that there had been a pretty significant increase in custodial staffing. Can you explain that increase and the purpose of that investment?

Mr. Dan Jung responded, saying, similar to preparations for returning students to in-person learning in the 2020-21 school year, PPS will follow public health guidance and closely coordinate with public health agencies and experts.

Physical changes made to date to accommodate in-person learning have included:

- Installation of health and safety signage
- Providing portable air purifier units in each classroom
- Modifying the building ventilation systems to run longer and continuously throughout the day, upgrading filters, completing routine ventilation facility assessments and repairs
- Creating unique Covid symptom rooms
- Supplying personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to all schools

PPS has created standard operating procedures addressing:

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Bus loading and unloading
- Restroom use
- Physical distancing
- Respiratory etiquette
- Daily symptom screening
- Technology device usage

All schools created individualized school safety plans that illustrated how each building would operationalize the standardized procedures.

The district anticipates many of these physical and operational changes will remain for Fall; however, many will also change. Final health and safety guidance from the Oregon Department of Education is anticipated in July. PPS will review and conform to all provided guidance. Additionally, PPS will continue to communicate and coordinate with public health partners, including PPS's own Health Advisory Panel, contracted Certified Industrial Hygienists, and Multnomah County Public Health. Standard operating procedures will be updated based on new guidance. Physical changes will be made at each site. Safety plans will be updated, and staff training will be conducted before students return.

Plans have already been put in motion in anticipation of the Fall opening, including updated

classroom capacity estimates, purchase of new furniture to accommodate special requirements, and to hire additional custodial staff.

That feels comprehensive to me. I've watched my first grader go into the buildings and experienced firsthand all those safety upgrades. We're very thankful for keeping our students healthy and safe this spring.

He continued by stating, in answer to the custodial portion, in the 2020-21 school year PPS budgeted for 341.25 custodial FTE. This decision allowed for approximately 2-3 custodians at a typical grade school and 7-9 at a typical high school. As noted above, many new operational procedures have been implemented during the Covid pandemic, inducing several specific to cleaning and disinfection. The additional custodial staff affords resources to help support the new cleaning protocols, allow custodial staff to backfill daily absenteeism throughout the district - effectively ensuring all schools have adequate staff each school day. The district also created a 'roving crew,' a team of five to six custodians to provide additional cleaning help to individual schools that may need additional support.

Are these temporary or permanent positions?

Mr. Jung said they are anticipating these will be permanent positions. The district has an outside consultant to help measure where they are on the national standard custodial rating scale. They have checklists to ensure they are meeting that standard. They are currently hitting the level three standard, which is the middle of the road.

Ms. Claire Hertz said they had improved their standard from "Moderately Dingy" to Level 3, which is ordinary tidiness.

Given the long backlog of maintenance and issues, I think it's a timely and much-needed investment in the custodial facilities staff.

**Commissioner Ofsink asked the following questions:**

Students who will return to the classroom this Fall will do so having been through a variety of learning experiences over the last 18 months. We imagine that students will be returning to the classroom with various pandemic-related inequities in skills and knowledge. How is the district preparing to address this situation for both the students and the teachers?

Mr. Gregg Cuellar responded by saying PPS knows that students are all in different places as they exit the 16 months space of distance learning. The first strategy is going to start with summer learning. He said they have a roadmap that Dana Nerenberg is going to share.

The superintendent had the vision to put in place a Department of Learning Acceleration. This department will address the immediate need for the pandemic and address a paramount need moving forward. Learning acceleration will be continuous and will meet the requirements as the district looks at how it aligns with the strategic plan.

This is a very innovative approach for how the district will target and focus on meeting the students where they are. Dana will talk about the district's professional development approach and strategy for how they are going to work with not only teachers but all of the school-based staff to make sure they are equipped with the most robust professional development needs,

strategies, new learning, and new skills to ensure that they are prepared to be able to meet the kids and take them to the next level.

Dana will share what the professional development plan looks like, starting in the summer, and PPS has a variety of different learning acceleration summits scheduled.

Then he introduced Dana Nerenberg, who has joined PPS recently as Principal of Students. She is the director of the Learning Acceleration, and will talk more about what this work looks like moving into the summer space, then moving into Fall.

Ms. Dana Nerenberg said, as Kregg described, it's both a combination of being responsive, so when students walk in the doors that PPs is ready to welcome them, and also really being proactive. She explained she wants to make sure everyone was on the same page about the language of acceleration, as opposed to remediation. When thinking about acceleration, it's about identifying the highest leverage skills and strategies needed to go to the next level instead of a remediation approach.

For the summer curriculum, they pick the major work of the grade that students should have experienced this past year. Then, they give them another opportunity to practice that work so when they enter the future grade, they are ready to go with those excellent skills and the most important learning from that previous grade level.

PPS has the summer programming in the catalog, and that's about more of the enrichment opportunities. The district is expanding the summer scholars in academic opportunities, which is the credit completion program for high school students. They are also launching a new Summer Acceleration Academy for students entering second through eighth grade. It is a three-week program, 60 hours of instruction, providing opportunities for students to connect socially, emotionally, work around literacy, specifically foundational skills and writing in the younger grades, and content area reading, writing, and discussion in the middle school grades, the opportunity for some discrete practice around math skills and concepts, hands-on STEM, both with elementary students and middle school students. So that is the academic component of that program.

The district also strengthens and expands many of the other summer offerings, including Leap Into Ninth Grade and Early Kindergarten Transition. In addition, they have expanded to include first graders this year to welcome students back into the buildings.

In terms of professional development, she was just in a meeting today with K-5 Summer Acceleration Summit team. They are hosting an extraordinary summit twice, once next week and once in August. There is a team of educators from various departments aligning with some specific tools and high-leverage strategies to welcome students back.

The three high-level strategies they are focusing specifically for K-5 are:

- Social-emotional learning and those three signature practices from Castle that the district has been implementing.
- Opportunities for discourse and student engagement; so opportunities for students to respond, dialogue, debate, discuss and strengthen their ideas, through oral language development.

- Goal setting, offering best practices around how to support some of the unfinished learning the students have, empowering them to set goals and work towards achieving them, giving them skills that will last long-term.

Those are some of the pieces happening right now. There's a whole range of summer professional development happening, including the new math adoption and other elements around the science topics for secondary programs.

She said as PPS looks toward the Fall, she is creating a think tank of educators to synthesize some of their ideas and make sure that whatever they implement, they can implement in a systemic way that's supportive and aligns with the other initiatives within the district. So taking the already strong practices they have in place and leveraging the various teams and departments to strengthen the district's implementation through the lens of learning acceleration focusing on:

- What is that unfinished learning?
- How do we know?
- How are we going to provide support?
- How are we continuing to provide students the opportunity to access grade-level learning?

Some of the things the district sees in the future are Saturday Academy, considering some of the academic support to the SUN programs and high dosage tutoring.

I understand the overarching framework. The way your answer was divided up, it seemed like there's some hope for many students. Will this be based on their self-identifying, or are you going to be using assessments to determine which students are most in need of the programming you're offering over the summer? It seems like the district is hoping that as many students as possible will take advantage of the summer offerings. Did I hear correctly that there are after-school and Saturday opportunities in the Fall that would be used to put students who didn't know to self-select during the summer into learning opportunities to get up to their grade level?

Ms. Nerenberg responded by saying yes, the district is still designing some of the things for the Fall. Many programs are still in the design phase. Summer is happening fast. She said they are prepared for all the safety pieces that Dan described and the high-quality curricular pieces. For the summer, there's an enrichment piece, which is open to students. The elective of letting students and families choose is a fundamental value PPS holds.

In terms of Summer Celebration Academy, educators help decide who they thought would most benefit from the program. For example, those students whose attendance or engagement may have been lower than expected this past year, students whose school teams are supporting them through intervention, and students who educators know have gaps. There are a variety of data tools to use. But also, teachers get to know their students fast. They identify those students who would most benefit from the program.

Thinking ahead, knowing that families plans change, she asked them to identify three times as many students as they had spots allocated so they can make sure they will continue to fill the program up to ensure serving as many students as possible

**Commissioner Quiroz asked this follow-up questions:**

I have a question about the Fall in terms of staffing. I know there were declines in enrollment across the district. And uncertainties leading into the Fall with regard to enrollment. I know



that staffing is tied very closely to enrollment in schools. What kind of investments and stabilizing forces are in place to ensure stability in the Fall once students return to school? When the typical balancing effort happens in the Fall, especially in light of the learning losses and in the learning acceleration that we hope to see, what is the district planning for in those terms?

Superintendent Guerrero responded, saying there have been enrollment fluctuations at every school district. However, for PPS, they know that the pattern has been more in the early grades. This is because most enrollment fluctuation is with students not showing up for kindergarten or first grade with fewer students at other grade levels.

What was necessary for the district in the budget was to maintain classroom stability. He said they believe that the majority of those students will be returning in the Fall. What the district didn't want to do in the springtime was say, "Sorry school, you are 70 kids down, so we are going to cut two teachers". Then have them all show up in September and then go through a whole new staffing cycle. PPS went ahead and budgeted all schools to maintain that stability in their school budgets. They planned, as they would in any given year, knowing that there's probably some level of risk, but one that staff feels confident about regarding a student's return to the district in person.

Mr. Cuellar added that it is important to the superintendent that the district continues the same approach for staffing, ensuring that all schools are adequately staffed with counselors. The district has made a myriad of investments around mental health supports as well. The district has been adamant about the continued commitment to supporting mental health. Leadership is also committed to the continuation of the same ratio of staffing in the buildings.

They realize they will have to make some adjustments in some schools. But the commitment stays the same and true to that. Through investments, the general fund, and even investments through the SIA, Portland Public Schools will still see an increase of supports, even moving into the Fall for the reopening plans, because students and the communities will need all those supports.

What number of set aside is available for that fall balancing process?

Mr. Cuellar said in normal years, as PPS is looking at set aside FTE, they look at set aside in the following three different phases:

- Phase one is when the district looks at staffing and schools. There is a staffing review before summer, and that staffing review is done in late March or early April. Some minimal decisions are made at that point addressing significant gaps in the schools.
- Phase two is in the summer, looking at only kindergarten because the district wants to avoid putting babies through a transition period where they are moving teachers in the Fall after kindergarten students are starting in their program with their teacher.
- Phase three happens after school has been going for a couple of weeks. Then the district will look at set aside FTE by a committee comprised of schools, budget, and finance individuals who will meet and look at the numbers.

The set aside can look different. It was very nominal in the spring in terms of addressing some set-aside FTE. The district will probably add about eight FTE to address some critical shortages and specific schools. They are still looking at the numbers for kindergarten. That will be a continuous process throughout the summer before deciding on kindergarten FTE and kindergarten educational assistance. Then they get into the Fall.

Mr. Delgadillo said he had seen an article about this massive influx of kindergarteners across the country and what is that going to look like. PPS needs to be prepared to support that and be able to mitigate fluctuations. PPS is creating that ability to be flexible by assessing through the summer and being ready then come September. Then reassessing the first few weeks into September to ensure the district is providing appropriate staffing to support families and all those kindergarteners.

Ms. Claire Hertz explained that the district was very conservative in the revenue projection. They only counted as if half of the students came back, which gives the district the other 50% of that revenue for enrollment if it shows up. Then PPS immediately has resources to allocate additional classroom teachers. So they are always looking at both the money coming in and the expenses going out. So with that, the district does have an extra built-in set aside for staffing next Fall.

There's a hold harmless in the State School Fund. The 2019-20 enrollment count was carried through for 2021, so the district is held harmless in 2021-22. But they anticipate enrollment going back up next year. That's why she said they were conservative and not counting that all the students would return so that the district would have that built-in reserve.

They didn't want to pull teachers out and create a mass shifting of teachers because of changes in enrollment. They wanted to develop their hold harmless, and so they were conservative on the revenue side. If the students come, the district will have additional resources, and they can immediately allocate them.

**Commissioner Norton had these follow-up questions:**

When James introduced his question, he talked about the difference in the learning levels of students. Students may have progressed, while other students may have had learning loss. We've been assaulted in the media, so that we're all carrying along with an expectation that there has been a significant learning loss. When will we know this? How will this be reported to the community? The board's goals are based on certain types of proficiency at specific grade levels. Testing has gone crazy. It's not regularized any longer; the district's website reports proficiency from two years back. How are we going to know what effect this pandemic has had on learning? When will assessments be conducted? And when will the community know how PPS is doing?

Superintendent Guerrero answered, saying PPS proceeded with the mid-year formative assessment, the NWA map assessments measurements of academic progress. The district had a board meeting agenda item that was dedicated to evaluations. So at the mid-year point, the district was able to assess and get a sense of where students were relative to a year when they were not in a pandemic and were not learning remotely. Have there been these significant learning losses, or are students generally showing that there has been learning that has taken place? Staff didn't see the dramatic backslide that everybody has been dramatizing. They saw some content areas of some grade levels, and kids generally did on par with what staff may have expected. Not as negative as maybe one would think.

It was reading where they saw some slippage. The district does have a snapshot and will have a fuller assessment calendar. As kids get back, PPS will do their fall assessment. That will be an essential baseline because as teachers receive students back into the promoting grade level, the district will want to know where they are in their reading level and where they are in

their proficiency. Is the district on track predictive-wise with the State assessment? There is the full battery of assessments that will be happening in the springtime. That'll be the first vast comprehensive state and federal accountability measure to compare against prior years.

Mr. Cuellar added that one of the most significant components of this is around Central Office supports. He is working on a plan that will double efforts from taking over 90 Central Office instructional staff and ensuring that PPS has consistent instructional walk-through periods weekly, to be taking principals and leaders into classrooms and helping teachers with this work. He said they would have to be side by side with teachers to help them lift this Herculean effort to return to school for children. Also, be providing schools with the necessary resources and support they need promptly.

In addition to all of the assessment tools and measures that PPS is going to be utilizing, part of that is the school centered service approach, which is going to be critical in terms of how the district is supporting schools.

Thank you. I think the community sincerely will be interested in hearing how you find students and testing this assumption that there has been massive learning loss.

**Chair Barringer asked this follow-up question:**

On the subject of summer school, you've described some great opportunities for students. Do you have any assessment, or is it too early to determine the summer programs' demand?

Ms. Nerenberg fielded this question by saying, for the Summer Academy, it was staff school educators who are making those recommendations. There are some communities where there's been great interest and others where it's been a little less. She said they don't have good data on that. As soon as the catalog gets out about the RFP programs, the district will have a better sense of the demand. They are doing so much all at once. There are some families who make plans far in advance. With the funding coming out from the state, with the timing, the district is designing as much as they can, as quickly as they can, and some families have already secured other plans.

**Commissioner Wubbold asked the following question:**

My question has to do with the professional development and support for teachers, but I'm also interested in staff. PPS has several new custodians. Staff is critical in getting students to graduation. So can you share what work you're doing, specifically with staff, in addition to professional development for teachers?

Ms. Nerenberg said that the district's vision and supporting documents consider educators anyone who influences children. So whether it's someone who holds a formal teaching license, someone who's a building administrator, custodian, lunch worker, all those people influence the children. So the various departments offer additional professional development.

On a school level, there certainly are opportunities where those who are more student-facing educators engage in the professional development together. A few years ago, the district extended the paraeducators' schedules, and they could be part of that planning and professional development. In addition, the district often hosts day-long training for Portland Federation of School Professional workers.

Mr. Cuellar said as they are gearing up for the return to school and teachers in the Fall, the district is planning a robust professional development catalog. The district is preparing for the Teachers Institute they will be hosting. There will be a variety of different types of professional development that's going to span across a variety of specific pieces around guaranteed and viable curriculum. There will be offerings that are specific to multi-tiered system supports, looking at:

- Universal Design Learning
- Middle school health and science
- Science and mathematics at the high school level
- Standards-based grading practices in secondary schools
- Effective teaching strategies that teachers are going to have to be equipped with as they are entering into the in-person learning
- Special ED Professional Development especially around inclusion and around special education supports.

They will have various institutes throughout the summer. This will be a touchpoint starting for teachers getting into the professional development work. PPS is also going to have this professional development series that's going to span across the year. The district is going to be focusing on multi-tiered system supports. That's the model for how they support students in classroom instruction and equipping teachers with various skills and resources to differentiate and be individualized for students.

The district will be doing a host of Professional Development Seminars throughout the year. They will be curriculum specific, and a lot of the district's teacher teams are helping write this curriculum and helping shape the professional development needs. Collaborative and connected are some of the key themes that have emerged.

He said they are going to have a Professional Development Catalog. The pandemic has taught staff how to be very technologically savvy. They are going to utilize technology to where they can currently have professional development in person and be able to get into small groups and do that work.. A variety of school and central office-based staff will be able to access professional development in a myriad of different ways.

With PPS bolstering the technology platform, the district will have just a myriad and a plethora of a variety of professional development at educators' fingertips at any given time.

I'm concerned about social-emotional return to the classroom of teachers as part of their professional development, and if they're ready, socially and emotionally, to be there. Is there some orientation or something to help them return to the classrooms?

Mr. Cuellar responded, saying absolutely. They embed the SEL curriculum into the content curriculum and embedded Social-Emotional Learning into the Professional Development Catalog for this summer. The district has anchored the Social-Emotional Learning with all of the content-based learning. PPS feels that they can't do one without the other. Therefore, the district will have various offerings for teachers on how to address multiple social-emotional needs from children.

PPS is partnering with Castle, a consultant who is helping bolster all of the professional development offerings but specifically around the SEL component. It's expanding and

continuing to weave itself into the curriculum and standards-based practice in terms of all of the training and how PPS is uplifting the work with teachers.

Ms. Nerenberg added that at every interval of the restart, whether it was the restart for distance learning this Fall, hybrid learning, or getting ready for the summer, tending to the social-emotional adult needs is essential to how all of the leaders operate to create those spaces.

**Commissioner Quiroz asked these questions:**

The Student Investment Act will be at full funding next year, and you will add targeted education specialists and supports. When we meet again next year, what do you plan to be telling us about the results of this infusion of funding? Do you have tangible, measurable objectives for its use?

Mr. Delgadillo fielded this question, saying that within the current models and structures for addressing students who need additional academic support, PPS will begin by measuring the increase in the number of students served by the increase in the SIA funded instructional specialists.

The increase in these positions is targeted at schools designated for improvement, TSI and CSI, schools and inclusive of title schools. The district will track the student progress and growth over time, using the progress monitoring tools available to measure outcomes, and be ready to make recommendations by the next school year for continuous improvement using this investment. Part of the district's commitment is a constant improvement and constant analysis of their work to assess how they invest these funds.

Superintendent Guerrero added that even with receiving the SIA money's PPS had to articulate what they felt the impact would be and it's in the content area of learning. Another area that they identified was support so that it could be attendance, student engagement, or other areas. The district is interested in making sure that they can document the impact of those resources.

Ms. Amy Kohnstamm said she would add to that the allocations and prioritization for the federal funds, especially this third round of ESSR funds, will essentially track the strategic priorities for the Student Investment Account funds.

Dr. Rita Moore added that as grateful as the district is that the SIA funding is fully funded this year, it's also important to note that the State School Fund, the most significant component of the district revenue, is underfunded at least \$300 million. The State School Fund does not reflect the funding level necessary to maintain current service levels. The district is having to use some position cuts and some reserve money to backfill that.

Yes, I agreed on all fronts. Additional work needs to be done at the state level.

**Commissioner Norton asked the following questions:**

As much as we would like to think that next year will be just like we always knew, we know that's not going to be true, and the superintendent teased that out somewhat in his budget message. So we'd like to know, what are the top three uncertainties or vulnerabilities in the coming school year?

Superintendent Guerrero responded, saying there were considerable uncertainties, that even now, the district has learned are becoming a little more clear. One of them is just the funding. What level of revenue can PPS count on? Until just several days ago, the district wasn't sure if the statewide commitment to K-12 would be \$9.1 billion or \$9.3 billion, or the \$9.6. That gives them a clear picture because that's a bit of uncertainty, whether there would be another \$500 million in the public school system in the state of Oregon or not. Now the district can begin to plan accordingly. It still means some level of loss but, at least there is a certainty now.

The second one is the health and safety issues, such as under what guidelines do we need to operate? PPS still doesn't have complete certainty there. They are waiting for the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidelines to be published with confidence for Fall reopening for school districts in the state of Oregon. The district is anticipating hearing about that in a week or so. That has been a fluid, dynamic, and ever-changing set of guidelines, with districts having to make those pivots over the last 14 months or so. As soon as the district has certainty there, then they will plan accordingly. Hopefully, conditions have improved enough, immunization rates are up, although they are a little lower in the county here but they'll afford the school district an ability to operate school knowing what those physical distancing requirements, for instance, might look like. The good thing is that PPS is prepared for the more extreme measures they would need to take. So that's just another uncertainty that the district hopes will become apparent in the upcoming week or two.

The other of course is student enrollment because it's such a variable and a factor in how PPS plans, whether it's at the school level or the district level. They know that it's mainly in those earlier grades, but they count on families bringing students back in the Fall. The question is, will they be enrolling them as entering first graders, or will they have redshirted them as big kindergarteners. That's probably a question all of the elementary schools are going to be curious to find out. Hopefully, the district will have an indication of what that looks like, whether any staffing re-assignments might need to occur, and make sure that the district had classrooms setup accordingly. That might set up a bubble for PPS as a school system and every other school system across the country. That's something that they will have to spend some time thinking about, and of course, the revenue implication that comes with it.

As far as students coming back to in-person learning as PPS builds the virtual school plan, they are assuming that even students who are unable to come back onto campus will have that option to choose and benefit from a continuity of learning that the district is providing versus another virtual school option that maybe a provider outside of the school district might be offering. This option would be another opportunity to count that enrollment and minimize the enrollment loss.

So those are at least three significant uncertainties that have been in play for PPS for months that are just now starting to come into focus.

**Commissioner Ofsink asked the following question:**

On approving the budget, the board, acting as the budget committee, added \$600,000 to the budget for the Racial Equity and Social Justice Department. What investments is the district planning, and how will the use of the funds be evaluated?

Ms. Dani Ledezma fielded this question saying the funding will increase investments in (RESJ) Partnership Investment Strategy. The district's investment strategies are a research-backed strategy that outlines five research-proven strategies that, when implemented with fidelity through culturally specific or multiracial organizations, have proven to support academic and emotional achievement for students of color in helping to close gaps. Those five strategies include.

- Culturally Specific Family Engagement
- Wrap-Around Services
- Mentoring and Leadership Development
- Enrichment and Extended Learning
- Positive Cultural Identity Development

The district has over 16 partners who support this work. They are in over 50 different schools, with an emphasis on our CSI TSI schools. To gauge the collective impact, all partners report service accomplishments quarterly, and that data is published on the website. Additionally, they collaborate with the Office of Systems Performance to evaluate service accomplishments against district-wide data. They also partner with organizations like the Coalition of Communities of Color and their research Justice Department to develop a system-wide evaluation framework for this work.

To date, over 2,000 students have been served at over fifty identified schools. Students have received over 55,000 hours of direct service from these partnerships. In a very challenging year, the district's partners have stepped up to provide that bridge and to implement these strategies effectively.

**Chair Barringer asked the following question:**

The budget includes \$6 million for the Center for Black Student Excellence. What specific accomplishment do you expect to achieve in FY22 using this funding?

Ms. Ledezma responded by saying in partnership with black community leaders, education and youth development experts, and PPS educators, the community, will launch a year-long racial equity centered design and planning process that will inform both the educational program and the physical design and implementation of the Center for Black Student Excellence in schools and facilities in the heart of the historic Albina neighborhood around Jefferson High School—drawing from local, national and international expertise as well as student, family and community engagement. They will set the framework and design for implementation of the Center.

She said what makes Community Members, particularly black community members thrilled about this work is the superintendent's vision about this being a premier school district. This is the school of choice for black students, black families, black educators, and administrators.

She went on to say she was moved when Joyce Harris spoke about the Center for Black Student Excellence. At one point, she said, "This is going to be great!"

She said she is very optimistic about this work.

**Commissioner Quiroz asked the following questions:**

Is the district working with Multnomah County on its new preschool for all program? Are there opportunities to join forces in any areas?

Mr. Cuellar answered, saying the district's Director of Early Learning, Emily Glasgow, has been serving on the Technical Advisory Committee for the preschool for the past two years. She's been invited to join the Advisory Board for this specific initiative.

The Early Learning Department is currently working closely with the county and MESD for the Preschool For All planning. PPS anticipates applying for the first round of Preschool For All seats next Fall in coordination with other Pre-K funding streams throughout the state. In this round, two seats will be granted for Fall of 2022.

The district is working with partners around this important work. The Early Learning initiative is one of the most important initiatives that PPS is trying to drive forward.

Chair Barringer thanked Superintendent Guerrero, PPS Board Members, and staff for attending the hearing and answering the questions. He asked if anyone had any further questions or discussions. There were none.

Chair Barringer asked if there was anyone who had signed up to give testimony. There were none, so he closed the public hearing and opened a Regular Meeting of the TSCC. He asked if the commissioners had any comments to make.

Commissioner Ofsink said he appreciates the district's participation this year, and the board and staff seem to be able to speak with depth to the different areas discussed. The commissioners know the district is doing a lot under challenging circumstances. So he thanked them on behalf of the public for prioritizing this conversation.

Chair Barringer asked Mr. Gibons to give a staff report on recommendations or objections. Mr. Gibons said there were no recommendations or objections to the 2021-22 budget.

Chair Barringer said he would entertain a motion authorizing the commissioners to sign the certification letter as presented by staff. Commissioner Ofsink moved, and Commissioner Wubbold seconded the motion that carried with a unanimous vote (5).

Chair Barringer adjourned the meeting.

Minutes Approved at TSCC Regular Meeting 7/27/2021