

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 4, 2026 6:00 PM

Dr. Matthew Prophet Education Center - Board
Auditorium
501 N. Dixon St
Portland, OR 97227

Agenda

1. 6:00 pm - Call to Order / Opening
2. 6:05 pm - Superintendent's Report
3. 6:15 pm - Student and Public Comment
4. 6:45 pm - Comments from our Union Partners
5. 6:50 pm - 2026-2027 Agreement between Portland Association of Substitute Teachers and School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon (Resolution 7356) Vote - Public Comment Accepted
6. 6:55 pm - 2026-2029 Agreement between Service Employees International Union and School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon (Resolution 7361)
7. 7:00 pm - Update: Southeast Enrollment and Program Balancing Equity Audit Recommendations
8. 7:45 pm - Annual Update: Fund for PPS
9. 8:00 pm - Resolution to Establish the Portland Public Schools Standing Committees for the 2026-27 School Year (Resolution 7357) Vote - Public Comment Accepted
10. 8:15 pm - Second Reading of Policies Vote - Public Comment Accepted
 - 10.(a) Resolution to Adopt Revised Policies: 2.10.010-P Racial Educational Equity Policy; 2.20.010-P Naming School District Property; 2.30.010-P Religious and Cultural Observances; 2.50.0101-P Public Access to District Records; 2.50.020-P Student Education Records (Resolution 7358)
 - 10.(b) Resolution to Rescind 2.40.020-P Student Participation Policy (Resolution 7359)
 - 10.(c) Resolution to Adopt the Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools Policy (Resolution 7360)
11. 8:20 pm - Board Committee and Conference Reports
12. 8:20 pm - Consent Agenda: Resolutions 7351 through 7355 and 7364 Vote- Public Comment Accepted
 - 12.(a) Resolution 7351 - Expenditure Contract
 - 12.(b) Resolution 7352 - Expenditure Contracts
 - 12.(c) Resolution 7353 - Revenue Contracts
 - 12.(d) Resolution 7354 - Resolution to Approve the Formula for Distribution of Funding to Individual Schools Administered by the Fund for PPS
 - 12.(e) Resolution 7355 - Settlement Agreement
 - 12.(f) Resolution 7362 - Adoption of the Minutes
 - 12.(g) Resolution 7363 - Revised Calendar of Board Meetings School Year 2026-2027
 - 12.(h) Resolution 7364 - Settlement Agreement
13. 8:25 pm - Other Business, Committee Referrals, and Future Agenda Items
14. 8:30 pm - Adjourn

RESOLUTION No. 7356

2026-2027 Agreement between Portland Association of Substitute Teachers and School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon

RECITALS

The 2026-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement between School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon (Portland Public Schools) and the Portland Association of Substitute Teachers expired on June 30, 2026.

RESOLUTION

The Portland Public Schools Board of Education (Board) adopts and approves the 2026–2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Portland Public Schools and the Portland Association of Substitute Teachers, attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to make technical corrections to the Agreement in order to correct typographical and spelling errors, make formatting changes, or renumber provisions, so long as the intended meaning of the Agreement is not thereby altered.

PPS Package Proposal # 7

June 17, 2026

This Agreement is an amendment to the 2023-2026 collective bargaining agreement (“the collective bargaining agreement”) between School District 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon, Portland Public Schools (“PPS”) and the Portland Association of Substitute Teachers (“the Association”).

Recitals:

- In light of the significant budgetary constraints identified for the current and next school year, the parties have agreed to the limited changes outlined below to the collective bargaining agreement through June 30, 2027.

The Parties therefore agree as follows:

* * * * *

For this limited-term Agreement, PPS Package Proposal #5 includes the following:

Article 7 - Substitute Rights

Article 8 - Work Hours and Work Days

Article 13 - Duration

ARTICLE 7 – SUBSTITUTE RIGHTS

A. Physical Examinations

Physical examinations of substitutes shall not be required. However, the District may require that the substitute provide medical documentation that they are medically and physically able to perform the job duties of a substitute.

B. Nondiscrimination

In matters of wages, hours and employment relations, or any other matter covered by this Agreement, the District agrees to follow a policy of not discriminating against any substitute on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, weight, height, marital status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, lawful off-duty political activity or associations, membership or non-membership in the Association or participation in its activities, the fact that the substitute's residence is outside the District, association with another person within a class or with a status listed in this paragraph, or as otherwise provided by School Board policy. However, this provision shall not be construed to prevent the following:

1. District participation in programs conducted in an effort to increase opportunities for historically underserved groups, subject to the provisions of this Agreement.
2. Distinctions resulting from a bona fide occupational requirement reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the District, including, but not limited to, distinctions due to the physical requirements of the employment, lack of adequate facilities to accommodate both sexes, or other distinctions authorized by law including retirement requirements.
3. Consequences of District policies pertaining to assignment of spouses both employed by the District if one is an administrative or supervisory employee.
4. It is the intention of the parties that the interpretation given to this Article shall be consistent with the proper interpretation of the provisions of the Oregon Fair Employment Practices law contained in ORS 659A. A grievance alleging violation of this article may not be appealed to arbitration if the alleged discrimination is based on one or more legally protected classes.

C. Non-reprisal for Grievances

A reprisal shall not be taken against a substitute in response to their right to file a grievance as provided in this Agreement.

D. Academic Freedom

A substitute shall have the same Academic Freedom rights as provided in the PAT Teachers' Contract when the substitute is responsible for lesson plans. Examples include when lesson plans are not provided by the classroom educator or when students finish the planned lesson early.

E. Student Grades, ~~and Discipline,~~ and Health Procedures

1. When the substitute is responsible for grading, and issues student grades in accordance with District policies, a supervisor shall not change them unless a substantive reason exists. This provision shall not be interpreted to allow a substitute to assign grades in any manner which deviates from general District-wide practices.

2. A substitute shall have the same rights in administering student discipline and student health procedures as the classroom educator for whom they are substituting. The building discipline plan shall be included in the substitute building folder at each site and such plan shall conform with District policies and regulations.

F. Personal Injury Benefits and Property Loss

1. The District shall reimburse substitutes for loss or destruction of personal property, excluding vehicles, under the following circumstances:

a. When the loss is a result of any assault on the substitute's person suffered during the course of employment.

b. When the substitute has exercised reasonable care to protect their personal property.

c. When use of personal property for instructional purposes has been approved in writing by the building administrator and the substitute has exercised reasonable care to protect such property.

2. Reimbursement shall be at replacement cost (not to exceed actual cost) less any insurance or worker's compensation reimbursement. Reimbursement shall not be made for losses of less than five dollars (\$5.00) or that portion in excess of four hundred dollars (\$400.00) and shall not be made when carelessness or negligence on the part of the substitute was evident. The substitute shall cooperate and support the District in its investigation and resolution of any reported loss. The District will provide assistance in attempting to investigate and/or reclaim other stolen or damaged personal property including automobiles.

G. Liability Insurance

The District shall provide, on a fully paid basis, bodily injury, liability and property damage insurance coverage, to the limits carried by the District for the use of automobiles owned, leased or hired by a substitute while in the normal course of their duties as an employee of the District. This coverage shall apply only as excess insurance over and above other valid and collectible liability insurance carried by the substitute. The District may require as a condition to this coverage that

before the vehicle is used on District business, the substitute provide a valid driver's license and proof of insurance showing that they have at least the minimum amount of insurance required to license a vehicle in the State of Oregon. The District will reimburse the substitute for any deductible cost the substitute is required to pay, as a result of an on-duty accident, not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00). Reimbursement will not be made if the substitute is convicted of or admits to driving under the influence of intoxicants or with a suspended license.

H. Safety

1. Building Conditions

a. A substitute shall have the right to refuse to expose themselves to immediate danger created by unsafe working conditions when such danger threatens ~~substantial~~ **considerable** bodily injury or would be a significant health hazard to the substitute. The substitute shall give notice of the condition to their supervisor and shall be subject to assignment to another location or duty while the condition is being investigated and/or corrected.

b. The District recognizes the responsibility to make every reasonable effort to enhance the security of building and grounds as may be required through the use of necessary lighting and other safety precautions. The District will post a notice when non-routine cleaners, paints, sealant, and other chemicals are to be used at the work site.

2. Personal Safety of Substitutes

a. An allegation that a student has committed assault or battery upon a unit member shall result in the removal of the student from the responsibility of the unit member pending administrative investigation of the incident. The administrator shall exercise appropriate progressive discipline. If the investigation shows battery did occur and the unit member so recommends, the student will not be returned to the affected member's responsibility.

b. Any student making a serious or menacing threat of harm to the person, property or family members of a substitute shall be immediately subject to appropriate discipline in accordance with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

c. Student behavioral records shall be accessible to the affected substitute. School officials will set up procedures so that information about students with records of violence including weapon violations will be available, in accordance with the law, to members who "need to know" as a result of an assignment to teach or supervise the student.

d. Any student found to have committed assault or battery upon a unit member shall be immediately subject to appropriate discipline in accordance with the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. However, there shall be a minimum of five (5) days suspension for a threat (assault) and mandatory expulsion for the remainder of the year for battery. The Superintendent may modify the disciplinary consequences on a case-by-case basis.

e. Substitute educators working with students ~~and in hard-to-reach locations~~, shall have functioning Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) device or other communication device (e.g. walkie-talkie) access.

f. If a substitute has classroom management concerns, substitute educators may request school staff support in the substitute's classroom. Staff support may be provided as available.

g. Any case of assault upon a substitute while acting within the scope of their duties shall be promptly reported in writing to the building administrator who shall forward a copy to the appropriate Central Office Administrator for investigation and resolution.

3. School Expectations

a. Professional educator-provided ~~substitute plans~~ **materials** will include class list(s) or caseload(s) with relevant behavioral or medical needs. This includes a schedule of IEP services required for the day(s) the professional educator is out, including service minutes, with specific directions that include the relevant academic and behavioral needed medical protocols required to provide the special educator instruction to the student.

b. School climate plans will be available to substitute educators.

c. To the extent possible, substitutes ~~will~~ **shall** be notified of scheduled safety drills.

I. Personal Life of a Substitute

The personal life of a substitute is not an appropriate concern of the District, except as it affects the substitute's fitness for or performance of their duties.

J. Keys *and Electronic Badges*

Whenever possible, substitutes shall have access to keys **and all electronic badges** necessary for their assignment in a building and shall be accountable for safeguarding keys in accordance with District regulations. Building administrators are strongly encouraged to determine, and have available, the necessary number of extra keys available for substitutes based on the day with the most regular educator absences in the previous school year. If there are not enough keys, the administrator must request additional keys.

K. Class Lists

The school office must provide substitutes with one printed attendance list that does not need to be submitted to the school office.

L. Substitute Site Report Form

The Site Report Form is a data-gathering tool meant to ensure continued improvement of working conditions for substitutes.

1. The District and the Association shall use a mutually agreed-upon electronic Site Report Form for use by substitutes to identify those buildings which do not provide building information, up-to-date attendance lists, keys, secure locations for personal belongings, and/or other information or tools necessary to the substitute teaching assignment.
2. The Human Resources department shall review submitted Site Report Forms and promptly work with site administrators to ensure that substitutes are provided with needed materials and information. The Human Resources department shall, upon request, provide this information at substitute contract administration meetings.

3. No reprisal shall be taken against a substitute for exercising their right to file a Site Report Form, as provided in this Agreement.

M. The Substitute Folder

A substitute folder contains the necessary items listed below:

- a. Class Lists: The school office ~~must~~ shall provide substitutes with one printed attendance list that does not need to be submitted to the school office.
- b. *A printout that includes a guest password.*
- c. *A map of the building.*
- d. *A schedule of periods taught by day for the assignment.*
- e. *Staff phone numbers.*
- f. *Hall pass policies, including times allowed to use and where students may go with the pass.*
- g. *Information concerning if, when, and how substitutes are allowed to write passes for students to leave the classroom to go to other areas of the school such as counselors' offices, administration office, library, and other teachers' classrooms.*
- h. *Student health information, where applicable, risks, and emergency treatment directives. (Example: Hazardous allergies, exemptions from strenuous activities, etc.)*
- i. *How to access and utilize classroom computers, projectors, speakers, and all electronic devices.*
- j. *QR code for the Site Report Form.*
- k. *Instructions to utilize the printing software used in the building and if the access is separate from the building access badge.*

Additional information can be found on the school's website or on the Portland Public Schools (PPS) website. To find school policies, visit the School Climate section on the school website. For additional printing instructions, visit the IT Department webpage.

ARTICLE 8 – WORK HOURS & WORK DAYS

A. The work day for full-day substitutes shall start fifteen (15) minutes before the student day and end fifteen (15) minutes after the last regular student period, but shall not be less than seven (7) hours.

B. Substitutes will be called for work at least one-half (1/2) day at a time. Half days shall be no more than half the full day substitute schedule for the individual school.

C. Administrators may not direct a substitute to switch to an assignment other than the one they have accepted, but an administrator may request such a change which a substitute may accept.

D. When a substitute is paid the extended rate of pay pursuant to Article 12.B, the workday and schedule for full-day substitutes shall be the same as that for classroom educators.

E. ~~If a substitute accepts an assignment that was entered into the absence management system in error by the Human Resources department and reports, or if, or the substitute is not needed after reporting to work, or if the substitute shall be paid for a half-day but shall be subject to a different PAT assignment by the building principal or supervisor. If another need for a substitute opens in that building during the day, the substitute may be placed in that PAT assignment(s) and:~~ *or a job is cancelled sixty (60) minutes or less before the scheduled start time of the assignment and reports, the substitute shall be paid for a half-day. The Building Administrator will have the discretion to utilize that substitute or reassign the substitute to an unfilled assignment.* If the substitute declines the PAT assignment they will not be paid.

F. The general times adhered to shall be outlined in the Portland Public Schools Schedule of School Starting/Ending Times (Substitute Work Day Schedule). These times shall coincide with the contractual workday for substitutes. A non-standard assignment (e.g. a half-day long, midday assignment) shall count as a full-day assignment for purposes of determining insurance eligibility per Article 11.C.

G. The building principal shall ensure that arrangements are made for restroom breaks for unit members in the same manner as such breaks are provided to the educators for whom they are substituting.

H. Substitute teaching in regularly-scheduled night school and year-round school shall be counted as half-day or full-day as outlined 8.A and B for the purpose of calculating benefits eligibility.

I. The parties agree that orientation and professional development for substitutes is a desired operational goal. The District will provide paid orientation for substitutes. When funds are

available, the District will provide a one-half day paid professional development for substitutes. The Contract Administration committee shall provide input on the elements of the program and its implementation.

J. The District may provide trainings to a limited numbers of substitutes in the substitute pool to improve those substitutes' abilities to succeed in particular areas or programs. Substitutes shall be paid for such trainings at the hourly rate (Daily Rate of Pay divided by 7.5).

The District may incorporate completion of such trainings into the job assignment process, provided it does not interfere with absent educators' ability to offer jobs directly to their preferred substitute.

K. Substitutes must complete the District's annual mandatory trainings to be eligible to accept substitute assignments and remain on the substitute list. After the Human Resources department verifies completion of such trainings, the substitute will be paid for the trainings at the per diem hourly rate (Daily Rate of Pay divided by 7.5).

L. Any substitute may engage in asynchronous District approved trainings during the classroom educators planning period, time permitting.

M. Minimum Workday Requirements

A substitute who does not work a minimum of twenty (20) days per school year may be removed from the list, providing there was adequate work available during that school year. The requirements of this subsection M do not apply to District regular part-time educators.

N. When the District creates a summer list of substitutes, it may establish a reasonable deadline by which substitutes may submit their names for consideration. Only substitutes who volunteer their names by the deadline shall be on the summer list.

O. However, a substitute on either list may remove themselves from further assignment during a period of a lawful work stoppage by regular teachers by notifying the District in writing.

P. Two worked student contact half days are equal to one full student contact day for the purposes of calculating renewals and insurance eligibility.

ARTICLE 13 – DURATION

A. Except as otherwise provided elsewhere in this Agreement or in this Article, this Agreement shall become effective the day following ratification by the parties and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2026~~27~~.

B. The District agrees to print 200 additional copies as needed of this Agreement to be delivered to the Association to provide to substitutes. A copy of the Agreement shall also be provided to any newly hired substitute, upon request.

C. This Agreement shall take precedence over any District policy, rule or regulation, which may be inconsistent with the Agreement.

D. During its duration, the Agreement may only be modified by the mutual consent of the Association and the District.

E. Should any part of this Agreement be declared illegal by a court or agency of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the Agreement shall continue in effect and the parties shall enter into negotiations the section declared to be illegal within thirty (30) days of such decision



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Human Resources

501 North Dixon Street

Portland, OR 97227

Telephone: (503) 916-2000

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3107 / 97208-3107

Date: August 4, 2026

To: School Board

From: Kimberly Gibson, Senior Director - Employee and Labor Relations

CC: Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

Subject: Recommended Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement with PAT Substitute Educators

We are pleased to present the attached tentative agreement for your ratification. Key terms are:

Duration	One year - through 6/30/2027
Wages	2% increase effective the pay period including January 1, 2027
Substitute Folder	Establishes a baseline of the necessary information substitutes need to prepare themselves to serve students
Substitute Reassignment	Allows administrators to reassign a substitute when a job is cancelled 60 minutes or less before the scheduled start time and the substitute has already reported.

RESOLUTION No. 7361

2026-2029 Agreement between Service Employees International Union and School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon

RECITALS

The 2026-2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement between School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon (Portland Public Schools) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) expired on June 30, 2026.

RESOLUTION

The Portland Public Schools Board of Education (Board) adopts and approves the 2026–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Portland Public Schools and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to make technical corrections to the Agreement in order to correct typographical and spelling errors, make formatting changes, or renumber provisions, so long as the intended meaning of the Agreement is not thereby altered.



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Human Resources

501 North Dixon Street

Portland, OR 97227

Telephone: (503) 916-2000

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3107 / 97208-3107

Date: August 4, 2026
To: School Board
From: Kimberly Gibson, Senior Director - Employee and Labor Relations
CC: Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent
Subject: Recommended Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement with SEIU

We are pleased to present the attached tentative agreement for your ratification. Key terms are:

Duration	Three years - July 1, 2026 to 6/30/2029
Wages & Step Movement	2% increase effective 1/1/2027 2.75% increase effective 10/01/2027 3.00% increase effective 7/01/2028 One step advancement will occur on July 1 annually for employees who have not reached the top step. No other step advancements will occur regardless of wage effective dates.
Insurance	Maintains the existing insurance contribution rates effective October 1, 2026.
Substitute Reassignments	Allows administrators to reassign a substitute when a job is cancelled 60 minutes or less before the scheduled start time and the substitute has already reported.
Administrative Updates	Administratively updated language to more clearly reflect current practices on processes such as: grievance process, personnel files, employee evaluations, and overtime.

NOTE: This is a package proposal, meaning it must be accepted in full to reach a tentative agreement in all articles that have a financial impact. PPS is willing to discuss any aspect of this proposal separately, but the terms offered in this proposal are contingent on one another.

Below is a list of closed articles, tentative agreements previously reached by the parties, rejections to SEIU proposals, and counter proposals to open articles discussed during these negotiations.

CLOSED ARTICLES

Article 1 - Recognition and Application of the agreement

Article 2 - Temporary Employees

Article 3 - Status of Agreement

Article 5 - No Strike Clause

Article 6 - Management Rights Clause

Article 7 - Payroll

Article 8 - Entire Agreement

Article 11 - NonDiscrimination

Article 19 - Reduction of Staff

Article 22 - Nutrition Services Extra Work

TENTATIVE AGREEMENTS

Article 4 -Union Rights

Article 9 - Grievance Procedure

Article 10 - Discipline, Demotion and Discharge

Article 13 - Employee Evaluation

Article 16 - Leaves

Article 17 - Insurance

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PPS Package **Final**
July 1, 2026
11:20 AM

OPEN ARTICLES

Article 12 - Personnel File

Article 14 - Overtime and Call Back

Article 15 - Lunch and Rest Periods

Article 18 - Safety

Article 20 - Vacations and Holidays

Article 21 - Compensation

Article 23 - Transfers and Vacancies

Article 24 - Duration

Appendix A - Nutrition Services

Appendix B - Custodians

KEY

Bold underlined: new proposed language

~~Strikethrough: proposing to remove current contract language~~

TA'd 6/16/26 @ 5:36pm



Exhibit "A"

PPS/SEIU Bargaining
PPS Package Proposal #2
June 16, 2026
2:00 pm

ARTICLE 4 – UNION RIGHTS

- A. The Union, through its representatives, shall have the right to transact official Union business relevant to employees on School District property at all reasonable times, provided that it does not interfere with or interrupt classes or other normal School District operations. Such rooms or other appropriate meeting facilities shall be made available for Union use as requested without charge to the Union, except that the Board may make reasonable charge when special service is required beyond normal operational practice.
- B. The Union representative shall have the right to use School District facilities and equipment, including photocopiers, and all types of audiovisual equipment at reasonable times, when the same are not otherwise in use. This shall not include use of, or access to, the District's computer equipment and systems, including but not limited to, equipment used for its HRMS, financial, purchasing and inventory administration. The Union agrees to pay the cost of all materials and supplies incidental to such use.
- C. Union representatives shall make their presence known to the appropriate administrative authority when visiting School District facilities. Such visits shall not interrupt work or disrupt normal School District functions.
- D. The Union shall have the right to make non-controversial announcements at employee staff meetings or by use of any existing communication procedures not ordinarily available to students including e-mail if appropriate. The District will distribute to each new hire a Union New Employee Packet. The Union will provide the packets to the District.
- E. The Union and its representatives shall have the right to post notices of activities and matters of Union business and concern on staff bulletin boards. At least one such bulletin board shall be in each School District building. The Union may use the District mailboxes for communications.
- F. The District shall make available to the Union upon ample request to the Office of the Superintendent any and all reasonably available information, statistics and records which are relevant to negotiations or necessary for the proper enforcement of the terms of this Agreement including the processing of grievances pursuant to **Article 9**. Should such requests exceed more than two (2) per month, or fifty (50) pages total, the Union shall upon written request, reimburse the District for the costs involved in fulfilling the Union's request at the loaded hourly rate(s) and the number of hours worked by the person(s) fulfilling the request. Printed and copied documents shall be invoiced at the rate of four cents (4¢) per page. Other materials shall be invoiced at their actual cost to the District. This provision does not apply to, nor include, the periodic lists of bargaining unit members that are provided to the Union. Upon Union request, documents that relate to disciplinary action will be

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provided to the Union free of charge.

- G. Copies of written work rules which are applicable to a classification of employees and issued by supervision after the execution of this Agreement, for which failure to comply may result in discipline of an employee, shall be provided to the Union.
- H. The Union shall provide the District with the names of authorized Union stewards and PPS-employed designated union representatives and their work locations. The District will grant reasonable time for stewards and PPS-employed designated union representatives to engage in representation activities described in ORS 243.798 without loss of compensation, seniority, leave accrual or any other benefits.
- I. The Union shall reimburse the District for the salary and benefit costs of any employee released from their work assignment to conduct business on behalf of the Union excluding business conducted with the District.
- J. Upon request of the Union, the District shall provide an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed two (2) years for a bargaining unit employee to serve as an officer of the Union. Time spent on such leave shall not count toward longevity pay but the employee shall retain their promotion eligibility seniority.
- K. With one week's advance notice by employee, District may grant leave for Union business subject to operational needs. Such leave may not be unreasonably denied. An employee may utilize vacation leave consistent with Article 20 of this Agreement or Emergency/Personal Business Leave. Otherwise, such leave will be unpaid.
- L. Two Labor Management Committees shall be formed. The Union shall select three (3) employees each from the Nutrition Services department and the Custodial department to meet with the Managers, Directors and/or designees of those departments three times per year (approximately October 15, January 30, and April 15). Either LMC may have additional meetings as needed. LMC Topics for discussion may include but are not limited to:
 - Training
 - Quantities and Qualities of Equipment and Supplies
 - Absenteeism
 - Recruitment
 - Staffing Levels
 - Workplace Temperature
 - Efficiency of operations
 - Health and safety as it relates to labor allocation
 - Labor allocation/formulas
 - Respectful work environment
 - Nutrition Services LMC may also discuss job classification changes, additions or deletions.

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- APPA Facilities Management Evaluation Plan (FMEP)
- ~~The District is contracting with APPA to complete a FMEP. The District expects to receive the report prior to June 30, 2024.~~
- ~~The District will share the results with SEIU Local 503 and will discuss the report at the labor-management committee meeting.~~

~~If the report recommends the District increase staffing levels, then the parties will discuss options to adjust staffing.~~

The decision of the Directors or Managers regarding staffing formulas shall be final. Nothing herein shall preclude an employee or the Union, on behalf of an employee, at other times, from bringing a specific urgent concern to the attention of the Directors or Managers, and upon mutual agreement the parties shall have a supplemental LMC meeting.

- M. New Employee Orientation. The District shall make new employees in the bargaining unit available for thirty (30) minutes on paid time to attend a union-led new employee orientation (NEO) within thirty (30) calendar days. For nutrition services employees, the thirty (30) calendar days does not include summer break. The District will schedule thirty (30) minutes for the NEO during the regular orientation schedule. The District will provide the Union representative with three (3) business days' notice prior to the scheduled NEO. A Union steward or designated union representative may conduct the NEO on paid time with reasonable notice to the steward's supervisor. If no Union representative is available to present the NEO, an alternative time may be scheduled upon mutual agreement.
- N. The District will provide Union representatives time to speak at regular public School Board meetings apart from the public comment period provided the Union gives the Board Office at least 7 calendar days' written advance notice of its intent to address the Board.

TA'd 6/16/26 @ 5:35pm

Exhibit "A"

PPS/SEIU Bargaining
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June 16, 2026
2:00 pm

ARTICLE 9 – GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide for an orderly adjustment of grievances contended by an employee or group of employees.

SECTION 1 – Definitions

1. A "grievant" is an employee or group of employees who initiates a complaint alleging that they have been directly injured through a violation of the terms of this Agreement. The term "grievant" shall also include the Union with respect to alleged violations of its organizational rights under this Agreement.
2. A "grievance" is an allegation by an employee that they have been directly injured by a violation of this Agreement.
3. When processing a grievance, the term "days" shall refer to calendar days except for traditional recess periods (winter break, spring break, summer), which are part of the employee's established work year.
4. A group grievance is an allegation by a group of employees or the Union that a group of employees have been directly injured by a violation of the Agreement.

SECTION 2 – Grievance Process

Grievance Filing Timelines and Steps:

- **Discharge - Grievances regarding discharge shall be filed at Step 3 within thirty (30) calendar days of the issuance of the discharge.**
- **Discipline - Grievances regarding discipline must be filed at Step 2 within fourteen (14) calendar days of the issuance of the discipline.**
- **Group Grievances - Group grievances must be filed at Step 2 within thirty (30) calendar days of when the employees knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation.**
- **All other grievances - All other grievances must be filed at Step 1 within thirty (30) calendar days of when the employee knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation.**

At each step, the grievance shall be submitted in writing by the grievant with union representation, and include a statement of the grievance, citing the specific provisions of the Agreement alleged to be violated, a clear explanation of the alleged violation including the date of the occurrence, and the remedy requested. The District shall not be obligated to process any grievance that does not comply with the requirements of this Section.

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The grievant, with or without union representation, may discuss any potential grievance with their immediate supervisor or manager. Such discussion does not otherwise extend the applicable timeline to file the grievance.

STEP 1

The parties will meet to discuss the grievance. The manager shall respond in writing to the grievant with a copy to the Union within fourteen (14) calendar days of the meeting.

~~The grievant, with or without union representation, must discuss any grievance with their immediate supervisor outside the bargaining unit prior to submitting a written grievance. The grievant must state they are initiating the Step 1 grievance process. The purpose of this discussion is to attempt to resolve the issue informally. Grievances resolved at Step 1 will not be precedent setting, except by mutual agreement of the Union and the District.~~

STEP 2

If the grievance remains unresolved at Step 1, the Union may appeal the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the response at Step 1 to the employee's department director. ~~submit a Step 2 grievance in writing to the affected employee's department director within thirty (30) calendar days of when the employee knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation. The written grievance shall include a statement of the grievance, citing the specific provisions of the Agreement alleged to be violated, a clear explanation of the alleged violation including the date of the occurrence, and the remedy requested. The District shall not be obligated to process any grievance that does not comply with the requirements of this Section. The department director will hold a Step 2 grievance meeting within fourteen (14) ~~thirty (30)~~ calendar days from the Step 2 filing date. The department director shall respond to the grievance, in writing, within fourteen (14) calendar days following the Step 2 grievance meeting.~~

~~Grievances regarding discipline must be filed at Step 2 within fourteen (14) calendar days of the issuance of the discipline. Group grievances must be filed at Step 2.~~

STEP 3

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, the Union may appeal the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days of the ~~due date of the response~~ at Step 2 to the Director of Employee and Labor Relations ~~(or the designee)~~, who may either review the grievance or ~~appoint~~ designate an appropriate administrator to conduct a review. The Step 3 grievance meeting shall be completed within fourteen (14) ~~thirty (30)~~ calendar days. The Director of Employee and Labor Relations (or designee) shall respond, in writing, to

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the Union within fourteen (14) ~~seven (7)~~ calendar days of the Step 3 grievance meeting completion of the review. ~~Grievances regarding discharge shall be filed at Step 3 within fourteen (14) calendar days of the issuance of the discharge.~~

STEP 4

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 3, the Union may, within forty-five (45) ~~thirty (30)~~ calendar days ~~of the due date~~ of the response at Step 3, notify the District, in writing, of its intent to arbitrate and within seven (7) calendar days of such notice, the Union shall request a list of arbitrators from the Employment Relations Board as provided below.

Grievances regarding discharge of employees subject to the Custodian Civil Service Law where the employee has elected to appeal the discharge pursuant to the Civil Service Board Rules may not be submitted to arbitration under this Agreement.

The grievance may be submitted to arbitration according to the following procedures:

- A. The arbitrator shall be selected from a list of five (5) Oregon arbitrators provided by the Employment Relations Board who are also certified by the American Arbitration Association. Each party shall then alternately strike one name from the list until one remains and such person shall be the arbitrator. Nothing is intended to preclude the parties from mutually agreeing on an arbitrator.
- B. Only the Union may file a grievance at Step 2; advance a grievance to Step 3, and appeal a grievance to arbitration with notice to the District of the appeal to arbitration.
- C. In reviewing disciplinary cases, the arbitrator may not use a work performance standard other than the one adopted by the District. The arbitrator must render his/her decision in writing within thirty (30) days following completion of the hearings. The arbitrator's decision shall be final and binding unless properly appealed and set aside. Any such appeal must be filed in the forum of competent jurisdiction within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the arbitrator's decision.
- D. The decision of the arbitrator shall be binding on all parties, provided: (1) the arbitrator must restrict his/her decision to interpretation of the Agreement, (2) it is in accordance with the legal meaning of this Agreement, and (3) it is based on substantial evidence.
- E. The costs of the arbitration shall be shared equally by the parties.
- F. The arbitrator's decision shall be confined exclusively to the explicit provision(s) of this Agreement at issue between the parties. The arbitrator shall have no authority to add to, detract from, remove, alter or amend or in any other way modify any provision of this Agreement or impose on any party hereto a limitation or obligation

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not explicitly provided for in this Agreement. The arbitrator shall not substitute his/her judgment for that of either the District or the Union.

SECTION 3 – General Procedures

- A. The grievant must be present at Steps 1 and 2 and may be present at all other steps. In processing the grievance, the grievant may:
 - 1. Represent themselves at Step 1 of this grievance procedure, or
 - 2. Be represented by their Union at the Union's expense.
- B. It may at times become necessary to extend time limits. These extensions are to be kept to a minimum and must be mutually consented to in writing by the parties involved.
- C. Failure at any step of this procedure to communicate the decision in writing on a grievance within the specified time limits shall permit the grievant to proceed to the next step. Failure at any step of this procedure to appeal a decision to the next step within the specified time limits shall be deemed to be acceptance of the decision rendered at that step.
- D. The Board and its administrators shall cooperate with the grievant in the investigations of any grievance, and further will furnish the grievant or his/her representative with such necessary and readily available information as requested for the processing of any grievance.
- E. Except as otherwise provided by law, an employee shall invoke and exhaust the grievance procedure remedies before resorting to any other legal or administrative remedies for the conduct complained of, and failure to do so shall preclude resorting to such other remedies.
- F. A representative of the Union may be present at all steps of the procedure.

SECTION 4 – Article 11 Grievances

- A. The following procedure applies to any grievance alleging a violation of Article 11 (Nondiscrimination)
- B. Any Grievance alleging a violation of Article 12 (Nondiscrimination) must be submitted to the employee's Department Head or designee within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the grievant or the union knew or by reasonable diligence should have known of the alleged grievances.
- C. The Department Head or Designee must respond within thirty (30) calendar days

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after receipt of the grievance.

D. Grievances alleging a violation of Article 11 (Nondiscrimination) are not arbitrable.

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ARTICLE 10 – DISCIPLINE, DEMOTION AND DISCHARGE

- A. No employee shall be disciplined without just cause. Discipline shall include written reprimands (excluding evaluations) placed in the employee's personnel file, suspension without pay, demotion or discharge. A written reprimand shall be stated as such and becomes part of the employee's personnel file. An evaluation or matters related thereto involving comments regarding the employee's performance do not constitute a reprimand.
- B. The District agrees to follow progressive discipline and any disciplinary action taken against an employee shall be appropriate to the behavior that precipitates said action. The nature and seriousness of the offense shall determine at which level progressive discipline is initiated.
- C. The specific grounds forming the basis for disciplinary action will be made available to the employee and the Union in writing. If the District issues a written discipline, then the discipline will contain the following notice: "Employees who wish to challenge this discipline must contact SEIU Local 503 no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date of issuance of this discipline."
- D. If a complaint based on an allegation brought by a community member or non-supervisory third-party is used to support disciplinary action, the supervisor shall cause the complaint to be reduced to writing and placed in the personnel file. Subject to the district's legal obligations and restrictions, the names of the complainant shall be disclosed if the employee so requests.
- E. An employee shall have the right to request and have a Union representative present at any meeting that the employee reasonably believes may result in their ~~his/her~~ discipline. Prior to such a meeting, the employee will be notified of its purpose and afforded an opportunity to consult with their ~~his/her~~ representative. The right of representation will not exist when the meeting relates solely to evaluation of the employee's work performance.
- F. When a video recording is used as part of an investigatory meeting, the District will allow the employee and the employee's representative to view the video recording during that investigatory meeting.**
- G. In the event that an employee is scheduled for a meeting which may result in disciplinary action** ~~disciplinary conference~~, the District shall give a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours' notice to the employee of such meeting ~~conference~~, unless the matter is one of unusual urgency.
- H. The probationary period for newly hired employees will be one (1) calendar year.

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Periodic written evaluations will be done on each probationary employee. Termination of probationary employees shall not be subject to appeal except as provided by statute.

I. Training coursework test results shall not be grounds for discipline.

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ARTICLE 12 – PERSONNEL FILE

- A. Each employee shall have the right, upon request, to review the contents of their personnel records (whether located in the official personnel or building personnel file) in accordance with ORS 652.750. Only one official personnel file shall be maintained by the District.
- B. A representative of the Union or counsel for the employee may, (1) at the employee's request, accompany ~~their~~ **them** in this review and/or (2) be authorized by the employee in writing to review the file and/or obtain a complete unredacted copy of the personnel file.
- C. An employee may request that reprimands (excluding evaluations) be removed from their personnel file after two (2) years, provided that no subsequent such entries of the same nature have been made into that file. **Such requests shall be made to Human Resources and reviewed with the employee, Facilities Department leadership, and a Human Resources representative.**
The District retains discretion on whether to agree to remove the reprimand upon request and will consider the severity and nature of the misconduct in making its decision.
- Material relating to disciplinary action, but not taken, will not be included in the employee's personnel file. The following material in the personnel file shall be removed: (i) disciplinary action recommended but not taken; and (ii) disciplinary action which has been overturned.**
- The District will comply with all public record retention laws.
- D. The District shall provide an employee with a copy of any materials placed in their official personnel and building personnel file. Materials placed in an employee's file shall bear the date of such placement. An employee may respond in writing within thirty (30) days to any material placed in such file and the response shall become part of the file.
- E. Anonymous materials shall not be placed in the personnel file.
- F. The employee may request materials which they feels pertinent to their professional career, performance and qualifications be placed in **their** ~~his/her~~ personnel file.
- G. Any official grievance filed by an employee shall not be placed in the official personnel file of the employee, and shall not be used in any connection with or recommendation for job placement or performance.

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- H. The reference to an employee's personnel file used herein is not intended to show an employee's possession or ownership; rather, it refers to the District's records of personnel- related information for the individual employee.

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ARTICLE 13 – EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

- A. Formal evaluation of employees shall be in writing and shall be for the purpose of establishing a record of the employee's work performance. The employee's job description shall be a basis for the evaluation. When the District makes changes in job descriptions, they shall be given to the Union and the affected employees. If the changes involve additional certification or change the minimum qualifications for the position, the District will provide the Union with reasonable advanced notice and an opportunity to meet and discuss the impact of the change on current employees.

The evaluator shall be the employee's manager or their designee and shall review the written evaluation with the employee and provide the employee with a copy. The employee shall sign the evaluation acknowledging receipt. If the employee has objections to the evaluation, they may within thirty (30) calendar days following receipt of the evaluation put such objections in writing and have them attached to the evaluation report and placed in their personnel file.

- B. The District will continue its practice and current policy of employee evaluations on regular and probationary employees. Should budget reductions result in the inability of the District to complete annual evaluations, the District may opt to perform evaluations every other year after written notification of such change to the Union.
- C. Employee evaluations are not grievable.
- D. On an annual basis, the District will provide an anonymous survey to allow employees to provide feedback on their work environment.
- E. No employee evaluations shall be used as part of the disciplinary process.
- F. Employees will be given the opportunity annually to complete a self-evaluation.

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11:20 AM**ARTICLE 14 – OVERTIME AND CALL BACK****A. OVERTIME**

1. Overtime shall be compensated at time and one-half the employee's hourly rate of pay and will be paid for all work time scheduled by the District in excess of eight (8) hours in one day or forty (40) hours in one week. The overtime rate shall also apply to work performed on Saturdays and Sundays unless such days fall within an employee's regular workweek assignment.

2. ~~The District will attempt to solicit volunteers Districtwide prior to assigning mandatory overtime.~~

If overtime is necessary, the District will attempt to solicit volunteers first at the site and will award the overtime based on seniority. If no one at the site volunteers, the District will solicit volunteers Districtwide and award the overtime based on seniority. If no one volunteers, mandatory overtime will be assigned within the site on a rotating basis, starting with the least senior qualified employee.

3. An employee scheduled to work on their regular day off shall be guaranteed a minimum of four (4) hours of work or actual time worked should the employee choose to leave sooner than four (4) hours.

B. CALL BACK

1. An employee called back to work after completing a shift shall be compensated at the greater of the following:
 - a. Overtime rate times actual hours worked (which shall include reasonable time of travel to and from their home, not to exceed twenty (20) minutes each way); or
 - b. Four (4) hours of straight-time pay or actual time worked should the employee choose to leave sooner than four (4) hours.
2. If the employee is called back to work on their regular day off, the minimum provided in A.3 will apply.

C. EXTENSION OF WORK YEAR

For employees in positions with a work year of less than twelve (12) months, work performed outside an employee's regular work year shall not be viewed as call back.

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Time worked beyond the normal work year is only paid at overtime rates under the circumstances described in paragraph A.1.

D. OVERTIME ON HOLIDAYS

An employee who works on a paid holiday (See Article 20) shall receive holiday pay plus their overtime rate for hours worked.

E. EXCEPTIONS TO THE MINIMUMS

Any minimum hours requirements in this Agreement shall not apply in situations where there is a lack of work due to power failure, lack of water, interruption of transportation services, or other utilities. This provision also includes acts of God and other situations and conditions beyond the control of the District such as restrictions imposed by municipal and other authorities including, but not limited to, curfews, evacuations, martial law etc. In these situations, pay shall be for time actually worked.

F. SHIFT ASSIGNMENTS

In the event multi-shifts are established within any department, employees in that department will be given the opportunity to indicate their shift preference. Shift assignments shall be determined first by asking for volunteers to work a particular shift. If there are more volunteers than are needed, when qualifications are equal, employees shall be selected based on seniority amongst the volunteers in the particular department. If there are not sufficient volunteers, then the District shall assign the least senior qualified employee in the department.

G. WEEKEND WORK

Work performed on Saturday or Sunday shall be compensated at the regular straight time rate unless such work is in excess of forty (40) hours in one workweek. The provisions of Article 14A.3. and 14B.2. do not apply. The District shall assign this work to employees who volunteer to work on Saturdays and Sundays.

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ARTICLE 15 – LUNCH AND REST PERIODS

- A. Employees (~~excluding head custodians~~) working ~~five (5)~~ **six (6)** or more hours per day shall be entitled to a minimum of one-half (1/2) hour duty-free lunch period without pay *in each workday*. Employees who are required to work during this time shall be compensated for such time worked unless the interruption is the result of employees choosing to take their lunch periods together.
- ~~B. Custodian In-service Training Days — Head Custodians will receive a minimum of one half (1/2) hour duty free lunch period without pay instead of an on-duty lunch when the In-Service Training is five (5) hours or more and the Head Custodian has been relieved of duties at their assigned school during the training.~~
- C. Employees shall receive a fifteen (15) minute rest period during each four (4) hours of work not to exceed two (2) such breaks during a regular eight (8) hour day, unless unusual circumstances prevent the taking of a particular break.

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ARTICLE 16 – LEAVES

Leaves provided under this Article are intended to meet the legitimate needs of employees and are granted to those employees who work on a regularly scheduled basis. The use of leaves must be limited to instances of personal need and are not to be abused. Use of accrued leave in accordance with the provisions below shall not be cause for discipline and shall not be counted as an occurrence under the District's attendance policy; however, any abuses may be subject to the provisions of Article 10 - Discipline, Demotion and Discharge. "Abuse" is defined as being improper or excessive use of leave or a pattern of use which is improper or excessive.

The District shall respond to all employee leave requests within fourteen (14) calendar days.

Sections A and B of this Article are intended to comply fully with the requirements of Oregon's Paid Sick Time law. Should the District deem it necessary, the District may grant paid leave to ensure compliance with the minimum requirements of Oregon's Paid Sick Time law as circumstances may require and notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement.

A. SICK LEAVE

1. Employees in paid status at least fifty percent (50%) of the month or more shall accrue sick leave at a rate equivalent to one (1) day per month, based upon the employee's scheduled workday. The use of sick pay shall be limited to purposes provided in the Oregon Sick Time Law and BOLI regulations including medical or dental appointments. When possible, the employee should schedule medical and dental appointments outside working hours.
2. Employees who have completed one (1) full year of service with the District shall be accredited with the equivalent annual sick leave at the beginning of each fiscal year for twelve (12) month employees or school year for ten (10) month employees. If an employee uses the advance credit in excess of that which would be normal accrual and terminates employment or goes on a leave of absence without pay, the District shall be entitled to recover from the employee's final paycheck, an amount of money equal to the amount paid for overused sick leave. Employees who have not completed one (1) full year of service with the District shall be credited with accrued sick leave on a monthly basis.
3. There is no limit on the amount of sick leave which can be accumulated.
4. When an employee has exhausted their accumulated sick leave credits, s/he shall be entitled, in the event of illness, to receive one (1) day for each year of service at two-thirds (2/3) of their daily rate of pay. Each year's allowance may only be used

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once.

5. The District will establish a Sick Leave Bank for use by employees who have exhausted their sick leave. The Union can solicit voluntary contributions from employees up to seven hundred hours (700) hours per year. The Union may carry over from one (1) fiscal year to the next the remaining balance of the unused employee contributions to the Sick Leave Bank. At no time may the balance of the Bank exceed seven hundred (700) hours. The guidelines for use of the Sick Leave Bank will be jointly developed by the District and the Union which will include the following:
 - a. Use of hours from the Bank shall be only in cases of critical illness or injury of an employee.
 - b. The employee must have exhausted all of their accumulated sick leave and vacation hours.
 - c. To be eligible, an employee must have been employed by the District for three (3) years or more.
 - d. Request for use of the Sick Leave Bank will be jointly approved by the Union and the District. Request of less than five (5) days or more than thirty (30) days will not be approved.
 - e. The Bank will not be used in association with a Workers' Compensation claim.
 - f. Employees' contribution to the Bank shall not be for less than four (4) hours nor more than forty (40) hours.
 - g. An employee who contributes sick leave hours to the bank must retain five (5) days' worth of sick leave hours in their own sick leave account.
6. The District shall continue its election pursuant to ORS 238.350 (sick leave credit for retirement benefits).
7. If an employee utilizes sick leave for at least half the workdays in a month while receiving Workers' Compensation time loss benefits, the District will provide contractual insurance benefits for the month. An employee who uses sick leave shall be entitled to insurance benefits only if the sick leave is used continuously until the sick leave is exhausted or the employee returns to work. Employees who have an accepted Workers' Compensation claim and are receiving time loss payments at the time of the execution of this agreement shall be paid the supplemental payment for the maximum of 180 days.

B. OTHER PAID LEAVES

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An employee who is on an authorized paid leave as provided by this Section shall receive no loss of pay or benefits.

1. Family Illness

All employees shall receive up to three (3) additional days per fiscal year with pay in case of illness of a member of the employee's immediate family. "Immediate Family" shall be interpreted to mean spouse, children, siblings, stepsiblings, parents, step parents, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws and step in-laws, brothers and sisters of the employee, domestic partner, foster children, any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with a covered individual is the equivalent of a family relationship, or any other person living in the home with the employee (use of this leave shall be for instances where care or attention by the employee is necessary). In the event that emergency conditions arise, an extension of family leaves shall be determined upon the merits of the individual case by the Office of the Superintendent. After utilizing the available days of family illness leave, the employee may charge against their accumulated sick leave when additional time is needed to provide care for a member of the employee's immediate family. The District may require a physician's statement verifying the illness of the family member.

2. Absence Due to Quarantine or Isolation

An employee's absence from work because of quarantine or isolation to prevent the spread of a communicable disease by the appropriate public health official shall not be charged against the employee's sick leave and the employee shall suffer no loss in pay. Quarantine or isolation pay will not extend past the standard quarantine or isolation period established by the local public health authority, but in no event shall it exceed thirty (30) days.

To qualify for quarantine or isolation pay under this Section, an employee must be fully vaccinated (if a vaccine is available) as defined under guidelines set by the federal and state health authority, including any boosters.

3. Funeral Leave

- a. An employee shall be permitted an absence of up to one (1) day to attend the funeral of a relative or friend. When, in their opinion circumstances demand it, the Supervisor shall authorize two (2) days' leave to attend the funeral of a relative.
- b. An employee shall be permitted five (5) consecutive days off with pay due to the death of an immediate family member as defined above (Article 16, B Other Paid Leaves, Section 1 Family Illness) Following an absence under this section of three (3) or five (5) days and upon request, an employee shall be permitted two (2) additional days of leave at two-thirds (2/3) of his/her scheduled salary. In the event of death during the employee's vacation time, the employee shall be entitled to the funeral leave provided by this Section in lieu of vacation time.

4. Emergency/Personal Business Leave

Employees shall be entitled up to three (3) days' leave per work year without loss of pay under the following circumstances:

- a. Emergency Leave - In the case of unanticipated circumstances beyond the employee's control and for which prior planning cannot be made; or
- b. **Personal Business - For attending to matters which cannot be scheduled outside the employee's work hours and for which the personal attention of the employee is required.**

5. ~~Personal Business~~

~~For attending to matters which cannot be scheduled outside the employee's work hours and for which the personal attention of the employee is required.~~ In such cases, a request indicating the reason for the leave must be made to the responsible administrator at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance. Such leaves shall not be used for recreation, other employment, union or political activities, or to extend other leave categories as provided by this Agreement.

6. Mandatory Court Appearances

- a. An employee subpoenaed to appear as a court witness shall be excused from their work assignment without loss of pay, provided that the employee shall submit any witness fee received to the School District Business Office along with a copy of the subpoena. In cases where the employee is a plaintiff or defendant to the action, absence will be without pay or, at the employee's election, emergency leave as provided in **Paragraph 4** of this Section. An employee required to appear in court as a co-plaintiff or co-defendant with the District shall be released without loss of pay.
- b. An employee subpoenaed for jury duty shall be excused from their work assignment without loss of pay provided that the employee shall submit any jury fee received to the School District Business Office along with a copy of the subpoena. On days when the employee is excused from jury duty, they shall report to their work assignment provided four (4) hours or more of their workday remains at the time they are excused; and provided that length of time on jury duty prior to excuse and his/her workday with the District shall not exceed their normal workday.

C. UNPAID LEAVES

Employees on unpaid leave shall not be entitled to use any accrued paid leave, except as provided in Section C.2 ~~and~~, C.3 and **C.4** of this Article.

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1. Special Leaves of Absence

Employees who have been continuously employed for two (2) or more years may apply for a special leave of absence without pay. The Superintendent or designee shall exercise their discretion in the granting of such leaves. Employees on such leaves shall not be permitted to engage in remunerative service without the approval of the Superintendent.

2. Childcare Leave

- a. An employee covered by this Agreement shall be eligible for a childcare leave (maternity, paternity or adoption) for up to six (6) months. The District may, upon written request, extend such leave for additional periods of time. An employee on childcare leave covered by OFLA may use accrued leave in the following order: sick, personal and then vacation.
- b. The District shall retain full control and authority to establish policies and regulations in accordance with State statutes, regarding the administration of child care leaves. Such policies and regulations may include, but not be limited to: application procedures, requirements for physician statements, return procedures, etc. Such policies and regulations shall not be considered as part of this Agreement.

3. Federal Family Medical Leave Act and Oregon Family Leave Act

Family medical leave shall be granted according to the provisions of the Federal Family Medical Leave Act and the Oregon Family Leave Act (FMLA and OFLA). If there is a conflict in the two (2) statutes, the employee gets the greater benefit. The District may require employees to utilize all accrued paid leave if on an approved FMLA/OFLA leave of absence. Leaves for FMLA and/or OFLA shall be used in the following order: sick, personal and then vacation.

4. Paid Leave Oregon

~~Paid Leave Oregon is administered by a third party administrator. The District as an Employer shall comply with the provisions of Paid Leave Oregon.~~

Employees shall be allowed to supplement Paid Leave Oregon with their applicable accrued paid leaves pursuant to District procedure policy. On Approved Paid Leave Oregon, employees shall continue to maintain seniority.

4. Military Leave

The District shall be solely responsible for the establishment of a military leave policy required by ORS 408.210 through 408.290.

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D. RETURN FROM LEAVE

Employees shall be expected to return from leave immediately upon expiration of leave, unless there are circumstances beyond their control. Failure to return from leave or being absent from work without any grant of leave for three (3) or more consecutive days shall be considered job abandonment and the employee will be terminated.

Employees who are on an approved leave shall have the right to return to their position or one that is comparable in duties and responsibilities within twelve (12) calendar months. An employee who returns to duty following a leave shall be entitled to any step increases received by other employees within their classification provided s/he was continuously employed for at least one-half (1/2) of their designated work year immediately prior to beginning the leave.

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ARTICLE 17 – INSURANCE

- A. The District will offer medical, dental and vision benefits to benefit-eligible employees who have been employed at least sixty (60) days, as specified in this Article.

B. INSURANCE FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

~~For employees who are scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week and have been employed at least sixty (60) days, for the benefit plan year Oct. 1, 2023–Sept 30, 2024, the District will continue to provide the medical, dental, and vision benefits described during open enrollment. Employees will continue to pay the established employee's share during the 2023-2024 benefit plan year.~~

Effective October 1, 2024 **2026**, the District will contribute the full actual cost of employee medical, dental, and vision premiums for eligible employees who elect employee-only coverage. Eligible employees who elect any other coverage level will contribute three percent (3%) of the total monthly premium cost, and the District will contribute the remaining amount.

C. INSURANCE FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Effective October 1, 2024 **2026**, employees who are regularly scheduled to work between 20 and 29 hours per week ~~and have been employed at least sixty (60) days~~, may elect part time medical, vision and dental insurance at the employee-only coverage level. Eligible employees who elect employee-only coverage will contribute ten percent (10%) of the total monthly premium cost, and the District will contribute the remaining amount.

D. INSURANCE COMMITTEE

The Insurance committee shall be composed of three (3) bargaining unit members and one SEIU staff person and up to four (4) District employees. Bargaining unit members shall be released on paid time for a maximum of two (2) hours each to meet on insurance committee matters. Within two weeks of receiving the rates for the following benefit year, the District will provide SEIU with an opportunity to meet and discuss available plans, structure and premiums for the upcoming fiscal year. The District will select the insurance plan(s) and carrier(s) to offer, but will make reasonable efforts to maintain benefits that are substantially similar to those offered the previous year.

- E. The District will announce the employee contribution for each plan during open enrollment. The employee contribution will not change during the benefit year.

F. WORKERS' COMPENSATION

All employees of the District are eligible for State Workers' Compensation benefits. For

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absence due to a compensable injury as defined in ORS Chapter 656, an employee shall retain the compensation check which s/he receives for time lost. An employee may supplement his/her compensation check with accrued accumulated sick leave. Coordination of Workers' Compensation benefits and Sick Leave Benefits shall be in accordance with applicable state regulations. An employee who is injured on the job shall have the right for a period set forth by the Workers' Compensation statutes to return to a position similar to the one s/he occupied but subject to seniority provisions of Article 20 - Reduction Of Staff.

G. LIFE INSURANCE AND LONG-TERM DISABILITY BENEFIT

The District will pay the cost of life insurance and long-term disability benefits for all full-time employees eligible for health insurance benefits.

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ARTICLE 18 – SAFETY**A. SAFETY**

In the interest of safety and the well-being of students, employees and the public, the District and the Union agree to the objective of a safe and healthy workplace. The District shall maintain safe and healthy working conditions in accordance with all established Board policies, Federal and State regulations. The District and employees covered under this Agreement should work to avoid or minimize hazards. An employee's failure to comply with safety standards when flagrant, deliberate or repeated, may have disciplinary consequences. The District has an obligation to make the standards known to the employees through training programs and hands-on training.

B. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

In the interest of safety and the well-being of students, employees and the public, the District and the Union agree to the objective of a substance-free workplace. The District, at its discretion, may require that new employees have a physical examination including substance testing once a job offer has been made. Such examination of a current employee(s) may also be required with reasonable suspicion based on specific, articulable observations. The District will pay the cost of all District required physical examinations and substance testing.

C. The District will pay for the costs of record checks and fingerprinting of existing employees as required by State law.

D. CUSTODIANS

The parties acknowledge the requirements under the Custodians' Civil Service Law, ORS 242.310-640 & 242.990 ("CCSL").

E. In the event that an employee is injured in the course of their duties and unable to complete the remainder of their scheduled shift, employees would be able to access applicable leave balances.

E. PROPERTY LOSS

The District shall reimburse employees for loss of personal property, excluding the employee's automobile, which occurs while the employee is on duty under the following circumstances:

1. When the loss is a result of any unwarranted assault on the employee's person suffered while on duty.

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2. Property stolen by the use of forcible entry on a locked container on District Property.

Reimbursement shall be at replacement costs (not exceeding actual cost) less any insurance or Workers' Compensation reimbursement. Reimbursement shall not be made for losses less than five dollars (\$5.00) or that portion in excess of ~~four hundred dollars (\$400.00)~~ **five hundred (\$500)** and shall not be made when carelessness or negligence on the part of the employee was evident.

Employees shall cooperate and support the District in its investigation and resolution of any reported loss. The District will provide assistance in attempting to investigate and/or reclaim other stolen or damaged personal property including automobiles.

F. EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS

All employee complaints made against another employee must be submitted pursuant to the Workplace Harassment Policy other relevant District policy and this agreement. For harassment complaints, the District will meet with the complainant to evaluate whether a safety plan is appropriate. The District will not require the complainant to move work locations as part of any safety plan. Complainants shall be notified of the outcome at the conclusion of the investigation as required under the Workplace Harassment Complaint Procedure (which is referenced in the Workplace Harassment Policy).

G. TEMPERATURE OF THE WORKPLACE

For heat management, PPS will follow the Oregon OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Rule and the PPS Heat Illness Prevention Plan including the following:

1. Access to shade when the heat index is at/above 80 degrees Fahrenheit;
2. Ensuring that each employee takes ~~health~~**heat** illness prevention rest breaks, regardless of the length of the shift if the heat index is at or above 90 degrees; and
3. If a supervisor observes signs or an employee reports symptoms of heat illness, the employee must be relieved from duty and provided with a means to reduce body temperature.

This subsection G is intended to align with the Oregon OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Rule and the PPS Heat Illness Prevention Plan.

H. SAFETY AND HEALTH

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1. Site Safety Committees (Head Custodians)
 - a. Head Custodians shall be eligible to attend and participate in the regular site-based safety committee meetings established at their respective school assignments. These meetings shall be scheduled and hosted by the local school administration.
2. Departmental Safety Meetings (Evening Custodians and Nutrition Services employees)
 - a. Evening Custodians and Nutrition Services staff shall be eligible to attend and participate in regular department safety meetings hosted by management. These meetings shall be conducted in a virtual format and shall be held at least once per quarter.

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ARTICLE 20 – VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

- A. Full-time employees who are employed on a twelve (12) month basis shall receive vacation with pay as follows:

Years of Service	Monthly Accrual	Annual Accrual
1- years of	6.7 hours	10 days
5 service		
6 "	7.4 "	11 "
7 "	8.0 "	12 "
8 "	8.7 "	13 "
9 "	9.4 "	14 "
10 "	10.0 "	15 "
11 "	10.7 "	16 "
12 "	11.4 "	17 "
13 "	12.0 "	18 "
14 "	12.7 "	19 "
15 "	13.4 "	20 "
16 "	14.0 "	21 "
17 "	14.7 "	22 (max.)

Employees shall accumulate vacation credits at the appropriate above monthly accrual rate following completion of each month worked. For employees with dates of hire after the first working day of a month, accrual shall begin (and/or be increased to the next step) the following month. For the purpose of this Article "month worked" shall mean on-the-job time, vacation time and authorized paid leave. Employees may carry over from one (1) fiscal year to the next the equivalent of two (2) year's vacation accrual.

For both full-time and part-time employees, vacations must be scheduled through an employee's supervisor. A supervisor may require that vacations be scheduled at a time least disruptive to the department to which the employee is assigned.

An employee who occupies a position having a work year of less than twelve (12) months and who transfers to a twelve (12) month assignment may count the time employed in the previous assignment as qualifying for vacation allowance. The basis for this allowance shall be the number of days worked in the previous position divided by a 21.75-day calendar month. This will be converted to years of service and the employee shall commence to accrue vacation credits at the monthly rate shown above.

Part-time employees. Part-time employees earn vacation time if they are in assignments designated by the District to be a twelve (12) month assignment. The maximum accrual rate is 6.7 hours per month prorated according to the employee's

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normal work schedule. The proration is determined by comparing the part-time employee's normal work schedule to the normal full-time work schedule. Vacation is not earned in any year that the employee is absent from work due to unpaid leave or voluntary furlough or voluntary layoff (for example, during holiday vacation periods). Extra hours worked during periods schools are in recess shall not count towards vacation accrual. For employees in positions that are designated as twelve (12) month positions, accrual shall commence the beginning of the month, provided the employee was in the assignment for at least half of the preceding month. A part-time employee who transfers to an assignment of less than twelve (12) months or who terminates employment shall be given vacation time off work prior to the transfer or termination or be paid for any accrued vacation. The District has no obligation to continue any part-time twelve (12) month assignment and there is no implied right to any part-time employee to be placed in a twelve (12) month assignment.

B. HOLIDAYS

1. **Nutrition Services** employees shall receive the following paid holidays subject to the provisions below:

Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth**
Independence Day**

2. **Custodial Services employees shall receive the following paid holidays subject to the provisions below:**

Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day

~~Labor Day Veterans' Day Thanksgiving Day~~

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~~Christmas Day~~
~~New Year's Day~~
~~Martin Luther King, Jr. Day~~ President's Day Memorial Day
~~Juneteenth~~
~~Independence Day~~

Regularly employed hourly employees shall receive full pay for holidays.

- Employees shall receive holiday pay provided the observed holiday falls on a scheduled workday of an employee and that the employee worked or was on an authorized paid leave the nearest scheduled workday immediately before and following the observed holiday.

**** Employees who work summer programming.**

3. The District reserves the right to change the days designated as paid holidays provided that in so doing it does not reduce the number of paid holidays. Thirty (30) days prior to implementing such change, the District shall notify the Union of the reasons therefore and provide opportunity for consultation.
4. Employees who are members of a religious faith may use the leave provisions of Article 16B.4.B - Personal Business Leave for participation in religious observances when such participation during the workday is required by that faith.

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11:20 AM**ARTICLE 21 – COMPENSATION****A. PERSONAL VEHICLES**

Employees who are required to use their personal vehicles for travel on behalf of the District during on-duty time shall be reimbursed by the District. The District may require as a condition for reimbursement that the employee provide a certificate of insurance showing that the employee has basic liability coverage equal to or greater than minimum amounts required by District policy or regulation. Reimbursement shall be at the rate established by the District or Internal Revenue Service, whichever is higher.

B. TRI-MET

The District shall continue its pre-tax program for Tri-Met passes to the extent such current program is offered by Tri-Met.

C. BONUS PAY

The District may implement a bonus pay program for a group of employees (such as employees assigned to a particular school) to receive additional compensation above their normal wage.

D. WORK WEAR

Nutrition Services - The District agrees to furnish and maintain aprons for all nutrition services employees. If the District requires chef or lab coats, it shall provide them. The District will not implement any changes to the Nutrition Services uniforms without mutual consent of the Union.

E. SCHOOL OR SITE CLOSURE DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

1. Custodian – All custodians are expected to report for their regularly scheduled shift when the school or site is closed for inclement weather. All custodians who report to work when the school or site is closed for inclement weather will receive 1.5 times their base rate of pay for all hours worked. If a custodian believes attempting to travel to the school or site would create a substantial safety risk, the custodian must notify their immediate supervisor and will be permitted to use vacation, emergency/personal business leave, or leave without pay.
2. Nutrition Services – In the event the District closes school for inclement weather, Nutrition Services employees will not report to work and will be permitted to use available personal/emergency leave.

F. DISASTER TIME

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1. Disaster Time pay will be implemented when: A state of emergency is declared by the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the State of Oregon, or the federal government, in which the area covered by the emergency declaration includes the service area of Portland Public Schools; and PPS has declared an All PPS Closed day, which includes PEC/central operations.
2. All custodians are expected to report for their regularly scheduled shift when disaster time is implemented. If a custodian believes attempting to travel to the school or site would create a substantial safety risk, the custodian may notify ~~his or her~~ **their** immediate supervisor and will be permitted to use vacation, emergency/personal leave, or leave without pay.
3. Custodians will be paid their straight time hourly rate in addition to ~~his or her~~ **their** regularly monthly pay when disaster time is implemented unless the custodian does not report to work as permitted under Section ~~EG~~.2 of this Article.
4. **The parties agree to meet during the Labor Management Committee meetings prior to the expiration of the 2026-2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement to discuss and agree to qualifying definitions for disaster time that will be incorporated into the successor agreement.**

G. LONGEVITY PREMIUM

1. Employees who have completed 15 or more consecutive years of service with the District from the employee's start date will receive longevity premium pay in the amount of one percent (1%) of the employee's base rate of pay.

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ARTICLE 23 – TRANSFERS AND VACANCIES

~~Nutrition Services Employees Custodians See Applicable Provisions of CDSL~~

When a vacancy exists because of a transfer, promotion, demotion, resignation or termination, the District agrees to fill the position within sixty (60) working days. When filling vacancies, the District agrees that if all other factors are equal, seniority will be used to decide placement. The District will consider employee preference when assigning work locations.

A. JOB POSTINGS (Nutrition Services)

Vacant positions shall be posted for the purpose of providing opportunity to existing employees to make application for such positions. The vacant position excluding temporary positions, will be posted for at least five (5) working days prior to the closing date. The listing shall include a job summary, the location, actual hours (subject to change based upon operational needs) and the classification for the particular position. The job posting shall be sent to each worksite with a copy to the Union. Employees who are interested in a position shall make their desire known by applying for the position.

B. WORK LOCATION (Nutrition Services)

For Nutrition Services employees, the District will notify employees of their work location at least two (2) weeks prior to the first day students attend classes at the beginning of each school year.

C. TRANSFERS (Nutrition Services)

Employees may request a transfer to a specific location or geographic region. Such requests may be filed at any time. Employees may inquire of their department regarding the transfer procedure, posting process, the status of their transfer request, or the reason they have not been selected for a position and will receive a response within ten (10) working days. The District agrees the difficulty in backfilling a transferee will not be considered when filling positions.

In cases of District-initiated changes to an employee's regular work location, the District will consider employee preference to the extent practicable while ensuring that the operational needs of the District are met. The District will provide at least five (5) calendar days' advanced notice prior to changing an employee's regular work location except in cases of emergency appointment or building need. ~~Upon request~~, the District will provide the written reason(s) for any change to an employee's regular work location. Such requests must be made within five (5) calendar days of the change.

D. Transfers (Custodians)

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1. Employees may request a transfer to a specific site or geographic region. Such requests may be filled at any time. Employees may inquire of their Manager questions regarding the transfer procedure, the status of their transfer request or the reason they have not been selected for a position.
2. In cases of District-initiated changes to an employee's regular work location, the District will consider employee preference to the extent practicable while ensuring that the operational needs of the District are met. The District will provide at least five (5) calendar days' advanced notice prior to changing an employee's regular work location except in cases of emergency appointment or building need. The District will provide the written reason (s) for any change to an employee's regular work location within five (5) days of the change.

D. TWO WEEK TRIAL PERIOD (Nutrition Services)

There shall be a two (2) week trial period for an employee accepting a transfer or a promotion. During or at the end of the two (2) week period, the employee may elect to return to their ~~his/her~~ previous assignment or the administration may return the employee to their ~~his/her~~ previous assignment as long as the decision to do so is not arbitrary or capricious.

E. CUSTODIANS

Custodians' Civil Service Law, ORS 242.310-640 & 242.990 ("CCSL") will be followed for all other topics. ~~vacancies.~~

TA'ed 7/2/2026

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ARTICLE 24 – DURATION

- A. Except as may otherwise be provided for in this Article, this Agreement shall become effective upon ratification and shall continue in effect through 11:59 PM on June 30, ~~2026~~ **2029**.
- B. Should there be an intervening change in the law which would significantly reduce the District's revenue, and thus, its fiscal stability below the level being planned for at the time of the execution of this Agreement, the parties agree to reopen the negotiations on salaries.

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APPENDIX A – NUTRITION SERVICES**A. Nutrition Services Wages****Effective****1/01/2027~~2023~~** Wages include an 8.5 ~~2.00~~ % COLA increase

Position/Step	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lead	\$22.88	\$23.46	\$24.05	\$24.66	\$25.28	\$25.92	\$26.57	\$27.24	\$27.93	\$28.63
Assistant	\$18.72	\$19.19	\$19.67	\$20.17	\$20.68	\$21.20	\$21.73	\$22.28	\$22.84	\$23.42

Effective**7/1/2027~~24~~****10/01/2027** Wages include a ~~2.75~~ % COLA increase

Position/Step	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lead	\$23.80	\$24.40	\$25.01	\$25.64	\$26.29	\$26.95	\$27.63	\$28.33	\$29.04	\$29.77
Assistant	\$19.47	\$19.96	\$20.46	\$20.98	\$21.51	\$22.05	\$22.61	\$23.18	\$23.76	\$24.36

Effective**7/01/2028~~2025~~** Wages include a ~~3.003~~ % COLA increase

Position/Step	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lead	\$24.52	\$25.14	\$25.77	\$26.42	\$27.09	\$27.77	\$28.47	\$29.19	\$29.92	\$30.67
Assistant	\$20.06	\$20.57	\$21.09	\$21.62	\$22.17	\$22.73	\$23.30	\$23.89	\$24.49	\$25.11

Provided that this Agreement is ratified by July 24, 2026, the following terms apply for employee compensation:

1. General provisions:

- a. Employees will be paid according to the hourly rates set forth in the tables above.
- b. Where applicable, employees will receive premium pay as specified in Section D (Premium Pay) and as specified elsewhere in this Agreement.

2. Wages for the 26-27 School Year:

- a. Effective July 1, 2026, employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step in Table 1.
- b. Effective January 1, 2027, the wages set forth in Table 2 will be

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increased two percent (2.00%). Employees will *not* advance any steps until July 1, 2027.

3. Wages for the 27-28 School Year:

- c. Effective July 1, 2027, employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step in Table 2.
- d. Effective October 1, 2027, the wages set forth in Table 3 will be increased by two and three quarters percent (2.75%) and employees will be paid according to Table 3. Employees will not advance any steps until July 1, 2028.

4. Wages for the 28-29 School Year:

- e. Effective July 1, 2028, the wages set forth in Table 3 will be increased by three percent (3.00%) and employees will be paid according to Table 3; and
- f. Employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step in Table 3.

5. Wage Scale Placement for Current Employees.

6. Effective July 1, 2023, Nutrition Services employees will be placed on the wage scale based on years of service in their classification. For example, a Nutrition Services Lead who has completed three full years of employment with the District in their classification, and is currently in their fourth year of employment in the classification, will be placed on Step 4 of the wage scale for Nutrition Services Lead classification.

7. Newly hired employees will be placed on Step 1 for their classification.

8. Employees who are promoted from the Nutrition Services Assistant classification to the Nutrition Services Lead classification will be placed at the step that results in a minimum 2.5% increase in compensation.

9. Employees whose salaries are above the top step will be frozen at their wage rate for the life of the agreement.

B. WORK YEAR

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By May 30, the District shall attempt to notify employees, whose work year corresponds with the school year, of the intended employment status including, but not limited to, work hours and location with the District for the following school year. Failure by the District to provide such notice of changes in the staffing plans following issuance of notification will not interfere with the authority of the District to reassign or lay-off an employee.

The Board retains the right and authority to change the days on which school shall be held and to make any adjustments to the work year. In the event of adjustment to the work year, the District shall consult with the Union before implementing any change, and the salaries set forth in this Agreement shall be adjusted for the added or deleted days on the basis of the employee's daily rate under said salary schedules.

C. SUMMER PROGRAM WORK

Employees who work in the summer program in a lower classification than during the regular school year shall be paid the maximum rate of the lower classification including longevity and/or certification pay for which they are eligible. ~~Monitors shall be paid at the Roving Lead rate in the wage table.~~ By April 1, the administration will inform employees of the application procedures to be followed for any summer program vacancies. If the administration determines that the qualifications of two or more employees are equal, the most senior employee will be selected. By June 1, the administration shall distribute to all worksites and to the Union a listing of those employees selected to work or be on-call for the summer program. ~~Employees in the USDA summer program working the day prior to and immediately after Juneteenth and/or July 4 shall receive holiday pay for the holiday.~~

D. PREMIUM PAY

1. The standard day shift shall begin between 5:00 am and 12:00 noon. Employees working eight (8) hour shifts beginning at other times shall receive an additional seven percent (7%) of their base salary.
2. Persons holding School Nutrition Association certification of Level I or higher on July 1, 2017 shall receive additional compensation of fifty cents (\$.50) per hour through the duration of this agreement.
3. Employees who serve in a department committee leadership role will receive additional compensation of fifty cents (\$.50) per hour while performing the leadership role.
4. Roving Leads- The department will guarantee each roving lead a minimum of six (6) hours of work on a daily basis throughout the regular school year, with the exception of in-service and other odd scheduled days. NS Lead in a Roving position will receive a one dollar per hour (\$1.00) premium for all hours worked in

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the position.

E. TRAINING

Some or all of the fees for educational classes directly related to the improvement of job skills, as approved in advance by the Director, shall be reimbursed to the employee upon submission of evidence of satisfactory completion of said classes.

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APPENDIX B – CUSTODIANS

WILL BE CONFORMED TO THE COLA PROPOSAL FOR NUTRITION SERVICESWages include a **2.00** 6% COLA increase

Effective 1/01/2027 2023	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Position/Step										
Head Custodian D	27.05	27.97	28.91	29.90	30.91	31.96	33.06	34.18	35.33	36.54
Head Custodian C	24.57	25.40	26.26	27.15	28.08	29.04	30.02	31.04	32.10	33.18
Head Custodian B	22.32	23.08	23.87	24.67	25.51	26.38	27.28	28.20	29.17	30.15
Head Custodian A	21.32	22.04	22.79	23.57	24.37	25.20	26.06	26.94	27.86	28.81
High School Lead	21.32	22.04	22.79	23.57	24.37	25.20	26.06	26.94	27.86	28.81
Custodian	20.37	21.06	21.78	22.52	23.28	24.08	24.89	25.74	26.61	27.51

Wages include a **2.75** % 3% COLA increase

Effective 10/01/2027 2024	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Position/Step										
Head Custodian D	27.87	28.81	29.78	30.80	31.84	32.92	34.06	35.21	36.39	37.64
Head Custodian C	25.31	26.17	27.05	27.97	28.93	29.92	30.93	31.98	33.07	34.18
Head Custodian B	22.99	23.78	24.59	25.42	26.28	27.18	28.10	29.05	30.05	31.06
Head Custodian A	21.96	22.71	23.48	24.28	25.11	25.96	26.85	27.75	28.70	29.68
High School Lead	21.96	22.71	23.48	24.28	25.11	25.96	26.85	27.75	28.70	29.68
Custodian	20.99	21.70	22.44	23.20	23.98	24.81	25.64	26.52	27.41	28.34

Wages include a **3.00** % 3% COLA increase

Effective 7/01/2028 2025	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Position/Step										
Head Custodian D	28.71	29.68	30.68	31.73	32.80	33.91	35.09	36.27	37.49	38.77
Head Custodian C	26.07	26.96	27.87	28.81	29.80	30.82	31.86	32.94	34.07	35.21
Head Custodian B	23.68	24.50	25.33	26.19	27.07	28.00	28.95	29.93	30.96	32.00
Head Custodian A	22.62	23.40	24.19	25.01	25.87	26.74	27.66	28.59	29.57	30.58
High School Lead	22.62	23.40	24.19	25.01	25.87	26.74	27.66	28.59	29.57	30.58
Custodian	21.62	22.36	23.12	23.90	24.70	25.56	26.41	27.32	28.24	29.20

In implementing the provisions of the above salary schedules for custodians, the parties agree to the following:

1. Effective July 1, 2023, custodians will be paid according to the rate in the

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~~Custodians wage table in Appendix B. This wage scale reflects an increase effective July 1, 2023 of six percent (6%). Employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step on the Salary Schedule.~~

~~2. Effective July 1, 2024, custodians will be paid according to the rate in the Custodians wage table in Appendix B. This wage scale reflects a July 1, 2024, increase of three percent (3%). Employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step on the Salary Schedule.~~

~~3. Effective July 1, 2025, custodians will be paid according to the rate in the Custodians wage table in Appendix B. This wage scale reflects a July 1, 2025, increase of three percent (3%). Employees who have not reached the top step will advance one step on the Salary Schedule.~~

1. Employees whose salaries are above the top step will be frozen at their wage rate for the life of the agreement.

2. Any employee who is promoted will move to the next highest pay in the new range that results in a minimum of a 3.4% increase.

A. SHIFTS AND WORKWEEK

- ~~Shifts for head custodians shall be eight (8) hours including an on-duty lunch, and shall commence no later than 6:30 am, with the exception of Custodial training days. Shifts for other full-time custodians shall be eight (8) hours plus one-half (1/2) hour lunch. An additional one dollar (\$1.00) per hour will be paid for hours worked by custodians between midnight and 5:00 am.~~
- Each custodian shall be assigned to a shift with a regular starting and ending time. Except in cases of transfer, promotion or emergency, the beginning and ending time of a shift shall not be changed by the Administration without fourteen (14) calendar days' notice to the employee, except when mutually agreed upon.
- The usual workweek for custodians shall be Monday through Friday. An employee's scheduled workweek shall not be changed without two (2) weeks' advance notice and shall remain so changed for at least three (3) months, unless both the employee and the department agree.

B. SPECIAL SALARY PROVISIONS

- A custodian employee temporarily assigned to substitute or act in a higher classification shall receive seven dollars (\$7.00) per day plus one dollar (\$1.00) for each additional level. Example: A Custodian acting as a Custodian "B" will receive a total of eight dollars (\$8.00) additional compensation. Such additional

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compensation shall be payable as follows:

- 1 through 2 hours = no additional compensation
- 3 through 5 hours = one-half (1/2) additional compensation
- 6 through 8 hours = full additional compensation

A custodian substituting or acting in a higher classification for more than twenty (20) consecutive workdays shall receive the next highest pay in the new range for the position in which they are substituting or acting, or the daily rate specified in this section, whichever is higher. Such pay shall commence on the twenty-first (21st) workday.

2. Employees required to travel from one school or administrative building to another will receive an additional four dollars (\$4.00) per day for transportation and an additional three dollars (\$3.00) for each subsequent trip per day.
 3. Custodians assigned responsibility for lock up at a **"D Building"** high school shall receive an additional two dollars (\$2.00) per day.
 - ~~4. A custodian who is being promoted to the position of "D" Head Custodian shall be allowed one (1) week orientation in the new position prior to assuming the full responsibility provided that the resigning "D" Head Custodian has given the District at least five (5) weeks' written notice of his/her resignation. During the two week period, the custodian being promoted shall be paid his/her new regular salary as a "D" Head Custodian.~~
 5. A Head Custodian that is regularly assigned to the Mobile Head Custodian assignment will be paid the Head Custodian C rate at the step that is at least three and four tenths percent (3.4%) higher than the Head Custodian's current rate.
- C. Custodians required to attend in-service classes relating to their work assignment shall be compensated at time and one-half (1-1/2) of their regular rate when such participation occurs after eight (8) hours of work in one (1) day or forty (40) hours of work in a week.
- D. A ten (10) hour day, four (4) day workweek schedule may be implemented upon mutual agreement of the Union and the District.
- ~~E. "D" Head Custodians may select from their assigned crew the helpers to be assigned on the day shift.~~
- F. The District shall approve vacations as requested by the employee based upon operational needs. Such request shall not be arbitrarily denied and the reason for the denial shall be provided to the employee. Use of vacation leave is subject to the

PPS/SEIU Bargaining
 PPS Package **Final**
 July 1, 2026
 11:20 AM

supervisor's approval. An employee may request to use vacation leave at any time. However, where the use of vacation leave is planned and foreseeable, an employee should request leave at least two (2) weeks in advance. In case more requests are received than can be approved for a particular period, the employer shall approve requests in order of receipt, or by seniority where requests are received on the same date.

~~G. Employees may request a transfer to a specific site or geographic region. Such requests may be filled at any time. Employees may inquire of their department, questions regarding the transfer procedure, the status of their transfer request, or the reason they have not been selected for a position.~~

H. Buildings are generally classified according to the following criteria:

- A building = less than 45,000 sq. ft.
- B building = 45,000 - 74,999 sq. ft. ~~or 500-600 students~~
- C building = 75,000 – 200,000 sq. ft. ~~or more than 600 students~~
- D building = more than 200,000 sq. ft.

The District or the Union may request that a building/site be reclassified upward and the District and Union may, through mutual agreement, amend this section of the agreement. **To facilitate this process, the District shall provide the Union by September 1 each year a list of the square footage of each building including portables and other buildings.**

No employee will suffer a loss of pay due to the reclassification of the building to a lower classification. When a building is reclassified upward, a vacancy will be identified by the District and the Custodian Civil Service Law will be followed. The following listing of buildings by classification shall be reviewed and updated upon ratification of this Agreement and shall be effective for the duration of this Agreement:

PPS/SEIU Bargaining
 PPS Package **Final**
 July 1, 2026
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[Bargaining Note: the table below will be updated pursuant to the language in H above.]

A BUILDINGS	B BUILDINGS	C BUILDINGS	C BUILDING CONT.	D BUILDINGS
Applegate	Abernethy	Ainsworth	Sellwood	Benson High School
Chief Joseph	Astor	Alameda	Sunnyside	PEC
Clarendon	Atkinson	Arleta	Tubman	Cleveland High School
Columbia	Bridger	Beach	Vernon	Franklin High School
East Sylvan	Bridlemile	Beaumont	Vestal	Grant High School
Hollyrood	Capitol Hill	Boise-Eliot	West Sylvan	Jackson Middle School
Humboldt*	Clark	Buckman	Woodlawn	Jefferson High School
Maplewood	Forest Park	Chapman	Youngson	Lincoln High School
Meek	Glencoe	Chavez		McDaniel High School
Rieke	Hayhurst	Creston		Marshall High School
Sacajawea	Irvington	DaVinci		Roosevelt High School
Stephenson	James John	Duniway		Wells High School
Wilcox/Rice	Kenton	Faubion		
Terwilliger	Lee	Fernwood		
	Lewis	George		
	Marysville	Gray		
	MLC	Grout		
	Ockley Green	Harrison Park		
	Peninsula	Hosford		
	Rosa Parks	Kellogg		
	Rose City Park	Kelly		
	Sabin	King		
	Scott	Lane		
	Sitton	Laurelhurst		
	Skyline	Lent		
	Whitman	Llewellyn		
	Winterhaven	Markham		
	Woodmere	Mt. Tabor		
	Woodstock	Richmond		
		Rigler		
		Roseway Heights		
		<u>HAYU ALQI</u>		
		<u>UYXAT</u>		

* Denotes Leased Site



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RIGHT *for* **STUDENTS.**

August 4, 2026 Board Meeting



Learning Target and Success Criteria

Learning Target



Success Criteria

- **I am learning** about the lessons learned from the Equity Audit.
- **I am learning** about how the information in the report is informing our Rightsizing Process.

- **I can** describe key themes, outcomes, and lessons learned from the Equity Audit.
- **I can** describe how the recommendations are informing our current rightsizing process.

Equity Audit: Southeast Enrollment and Program

Balancing Recommendations



5 Domains of the Equity Audit

Equitable access to robust middle schools and all impacted SE schools



Linguistic equity in Dual Language Immersion programs and electives



Educator, staff and administrator experiences



Family and community voice, engagement, and equitable decision making



School-level factors that shaped how changes were experienced and absorbed



Data Sources

+1,200 survey respondents (905 + 327)

**+ 100 participants
(50 focus groups + 10 interviews)**

**+5 Years of enrollment, achievement,
attendance, discipline, DLI access, staff
retention (2020-2025)**

Domain 1:

Equitable access to robust middle schools and all impacted SE schools

Takeaway:

- Improved enrollment balance
- Comparable academic and discipline outcomes to peers

Nuance:

- Variation in learning environments remained
- Outcomes did not match how changes were experienced in middle school

How do we align resources to serve students well?

Domain 2:



Linguistic equity in Dual Language Immersion programs and electives

Takeaway:

- Strengthened DLI coherence in some schools

Nuance:

- Altered neighborhood access and racial composition of school communities

How do we describe and plan for tradeoffs?

Domain 3:



Educator, staff and administrator experiences

Takeaway:

- **First year, major staffing disruptions with sharpest impact on educators of color**
- **Felt as part of cumulative strain**

Nuance:

- **Strong school leadership and internal culture acts to buffer morale**
- **Not equipped structurally through transition**

How to we proactively plan for transitions?

Domain 4:

Family and community voice, engagement, and equitable decision making

Takeaway:

- **SEGC members described the promise of participation**
- **Equity goals were stated**

Nuance:

- **SEGC members felt limited influence on final decision**
- **Constrained scope limited equitable balancing**

How to improve transparency in scope, decisions and data while clarifying role of community input?

Domain 5:



School-level factors that shaped how changes were experienced and absorbed

Takeaway:

- Type and intensity of change mattered
- Changes were layered and cumulative

Nuance:

- Local context shaped how changes were experienced
- Changes were not isolated to enrollment

How do we account for local conditions, e.g. how much change the community has experienced?

Essential Questions

“

(PPS) should ask whether the proposed change will create stronger and more equitable learning environments...”

Dr. Green and Dr. Hanson p.127

Are receiving schools prepared?
Are historically underserved communities protected from disproportionate burden?

Are staff stable?
Are transportation and access barriers addressed?
Do families have meaningful influence?

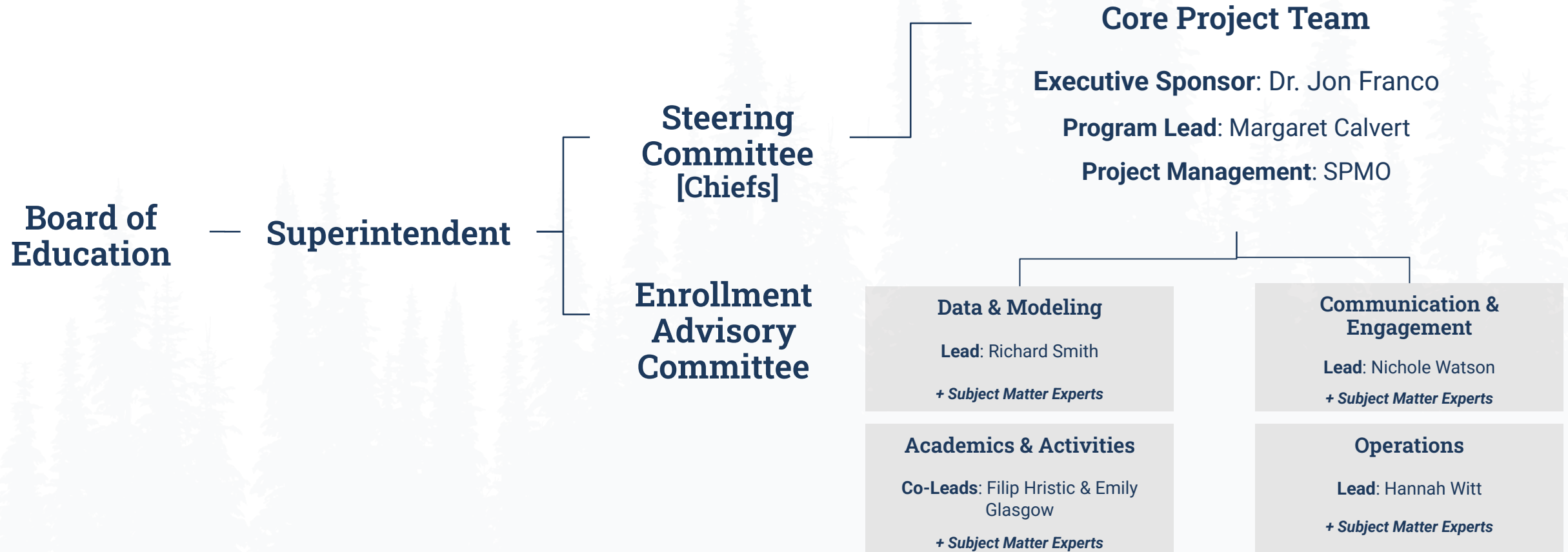
Does the district have the capacity and resources to keep its promises?

Recommendations

- Clear and Strong Equity Commitments
- Clearer Decision-making Criteria
- Transparent and Accessible Data
- Early and Meaningful Engagement
- Receiving School Readiness Plans
- Durable Transition Supports
- Track Cumulative Burden on Communities

Change Stress = Change Load ÷ Organizational Capacity	
CHANGE LOAD	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
Quantity Number of changes	Principal leadership Staff stability & turnover Role mix: SPED, counselors, EAs
Intensity Type: low to high identity disruption	Class size Staff morale
Simultaneity Compounding simultaneous changes	Overall school climate Shared identity & mission

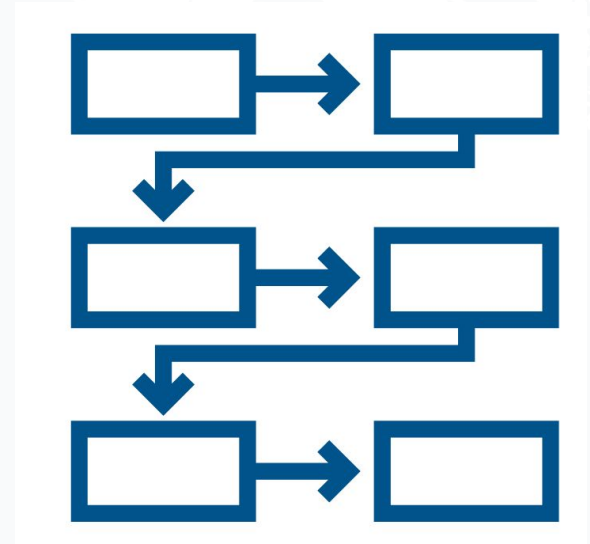
Project Governance



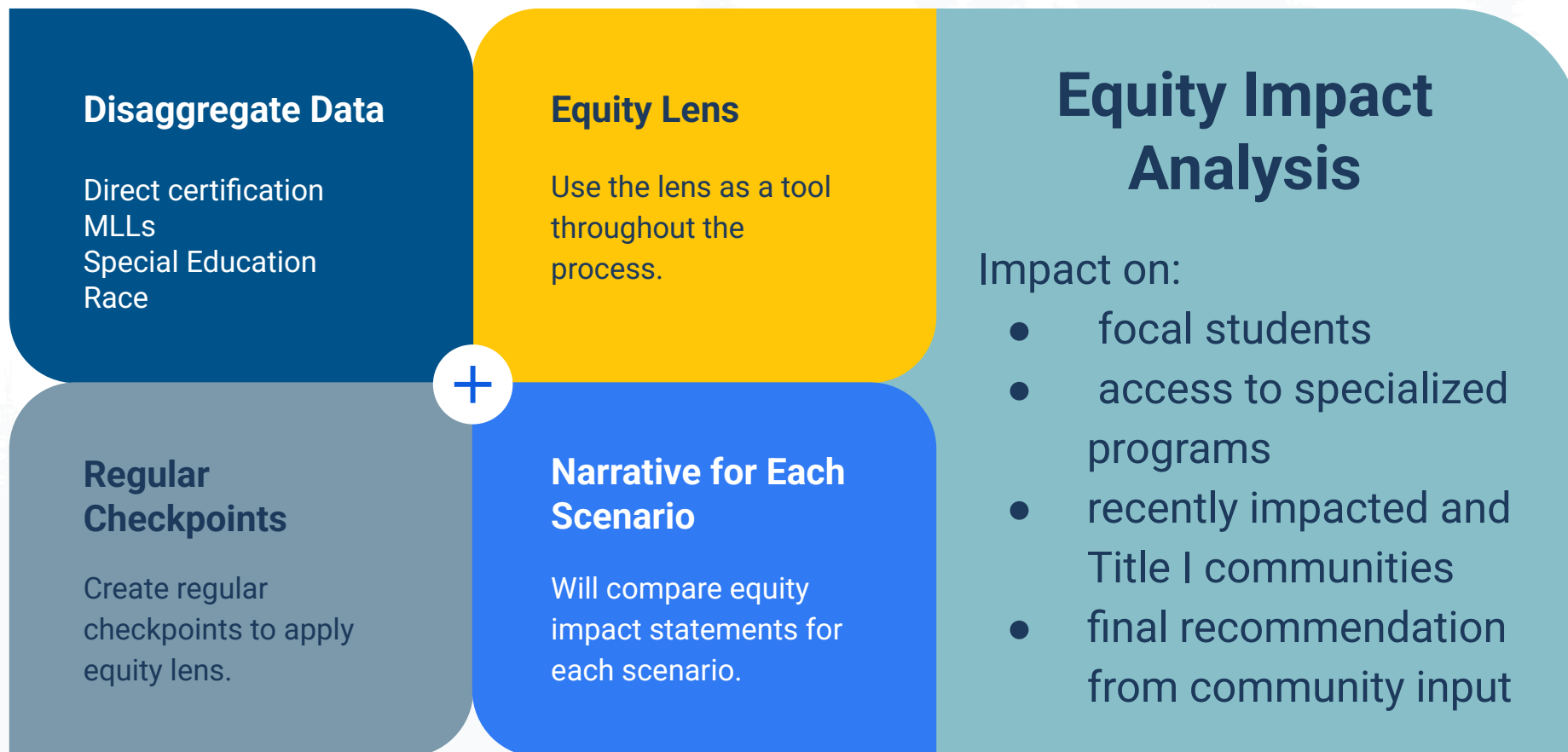
Resulting Actions

Developing:

- ❑ Well-resourced school indicators
- ❑ Data visuals and online tools
- ❑ Community engagement plans with feedback loops
- ❑ Scenarios to align with key performance indicators
- ❑ Receiving school readiness model
- ❑ Regular implementation check -ins

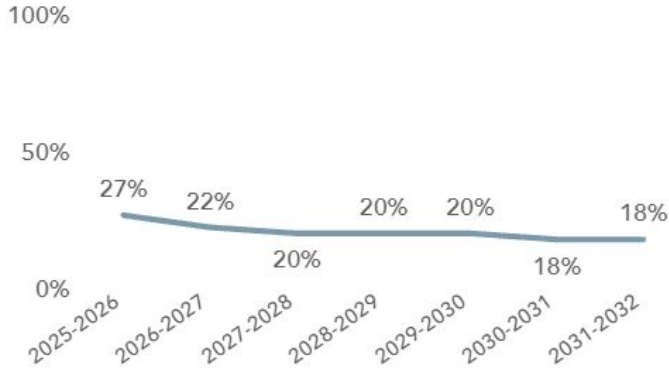


Equity Analysis and Lens

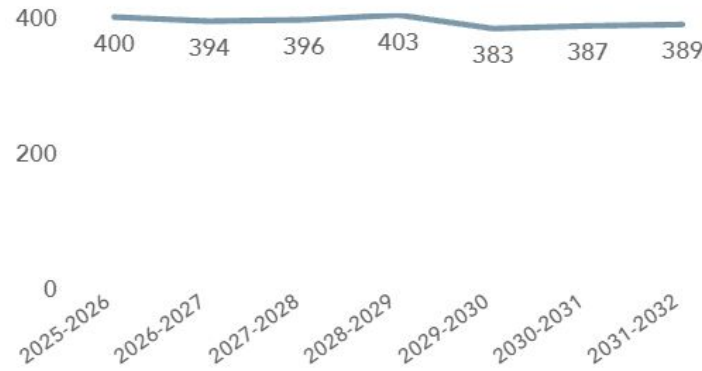


Current State - Enrollment Projections

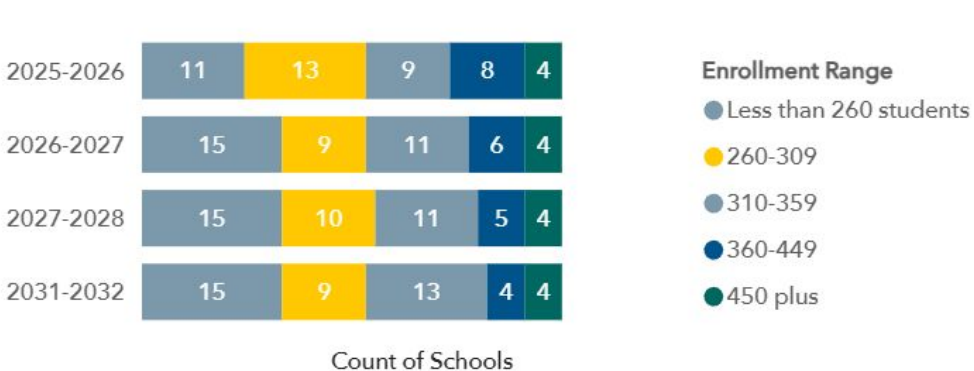
K-5 Schools with 360 or more students



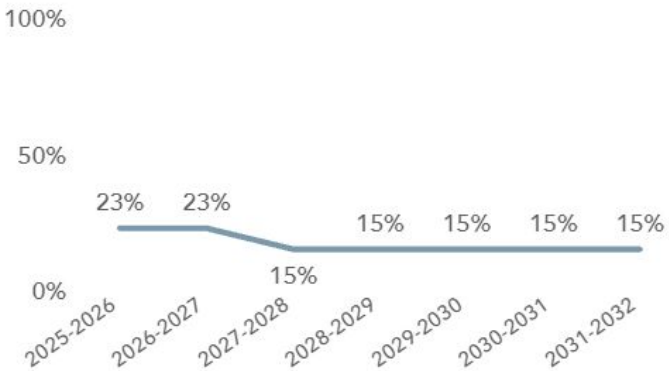
K-5 Projected Enrollment Range (Max - Min)



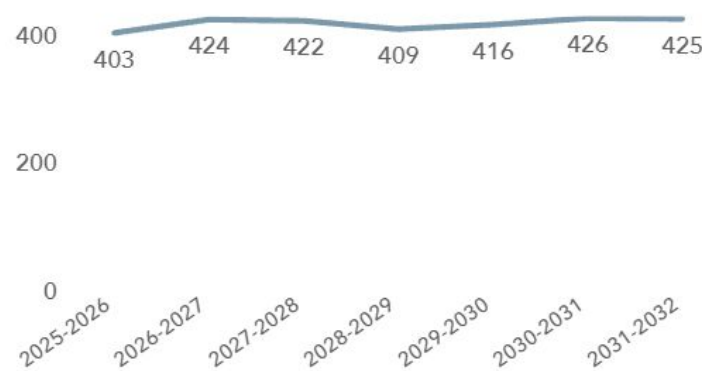
Enrollment Ranges by ES



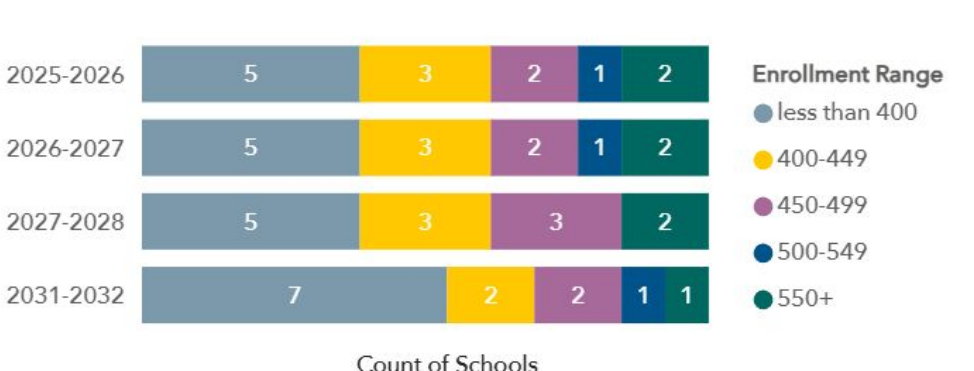
K-8 Schools with 500 or more students



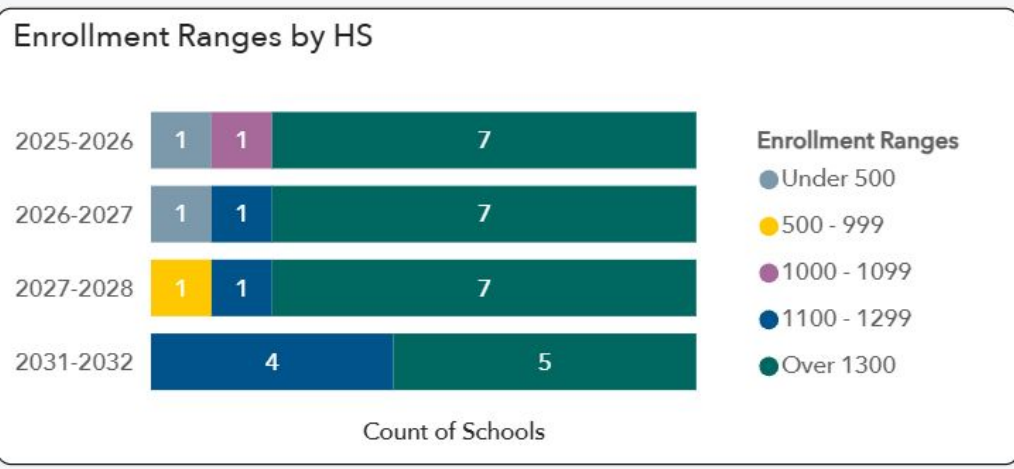
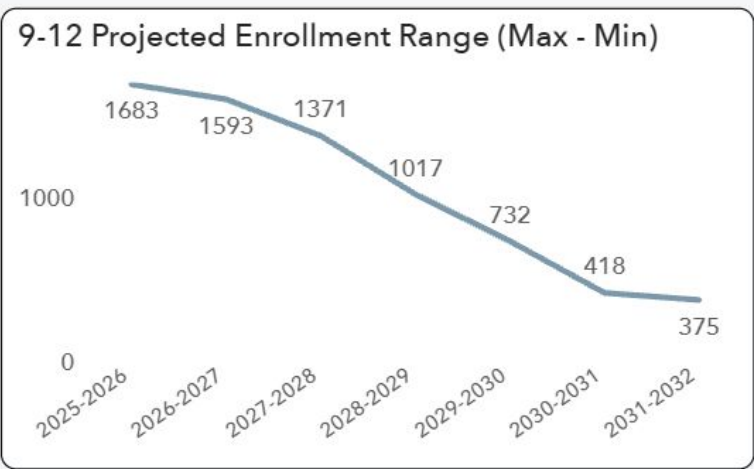
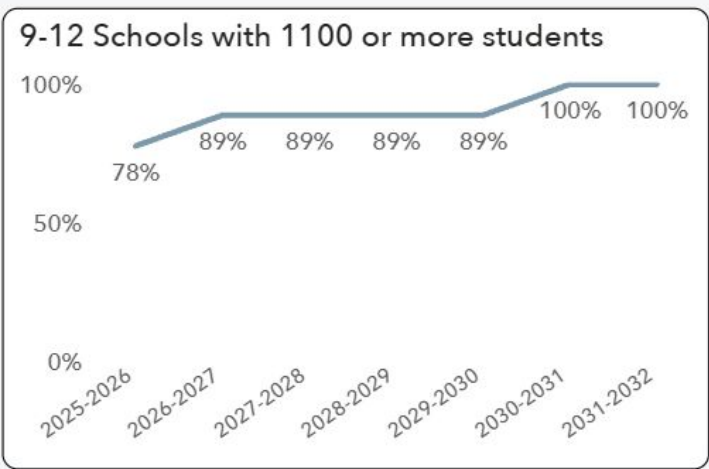
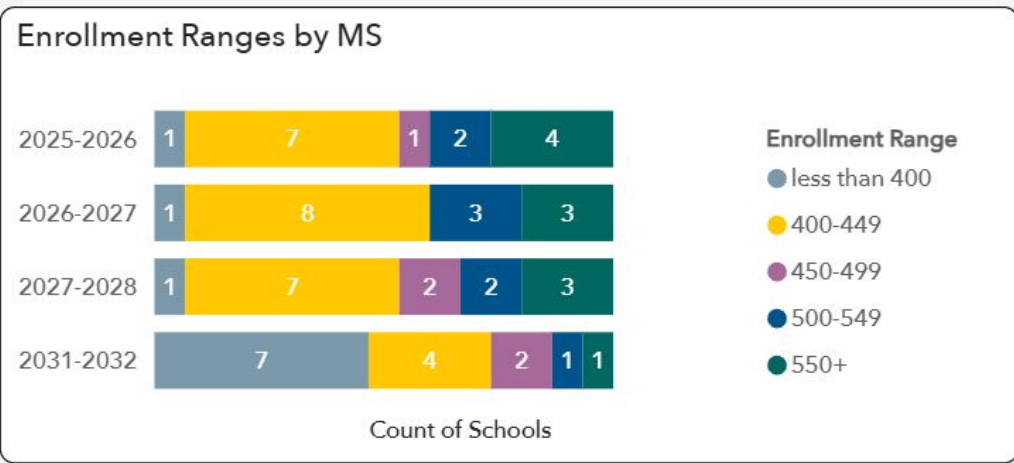
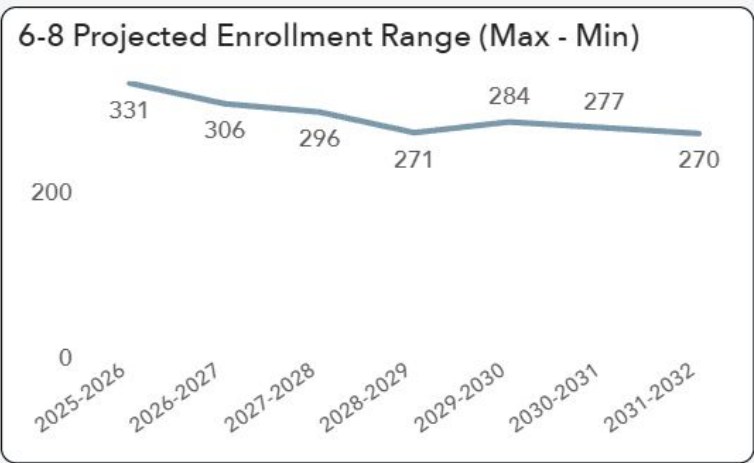
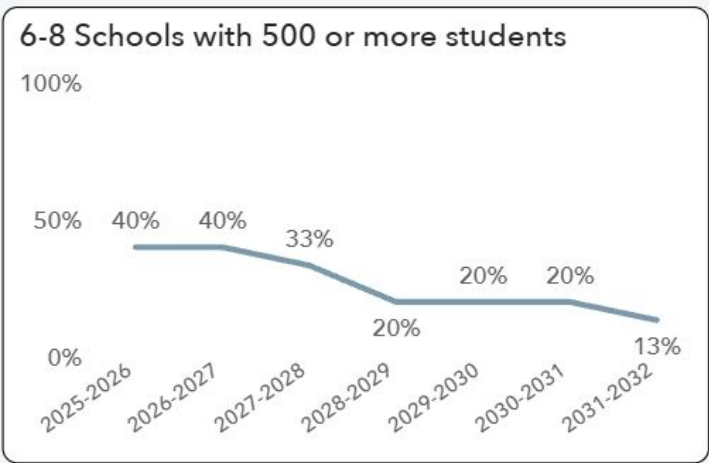
K-8 Projected Enrollment Range (Max - Min)



Enrollment Ranges by K8



Current State - Enrollment Projections





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THANK YOU!





To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Jon Franco, Senior Chief of Operations
RE: Rightsizing Update: Equity Audit Evaluation
Date: August 4, 2026

Our central office teams are using the lessons learned and the recommendations from the extensive and in depth report, "Equity Audit Evaluation of Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Southeast Enrollment and Program Balancing Initiative", prepared by Dr. Terrence L. Green and Dr. Havala Hanson, to guide our current rightsizing process. Each of the four teams, Academics, Activities and Athletics, Data and Modeling, Communication and Engagement, and Operations have reviewed key aspects of the report and incorporated it into their work. As mentioned in the executive summary (p.2), "SEGC cannot be reduced to a simple story of success or failure. It is more complex and produced gains, harms, tradeoffs, and unresolved tensions that varied by school, community, program, and student group." These tradeoffs and tensions will also be part of the current rightsizing process. The report calls for us to evaluate rightsizing decisions through an education equity, sufficiency and implementation-readiness lens. Ultimately posing the question: **Will the change create stronger and more equitable learning environments?**

Key Findings:

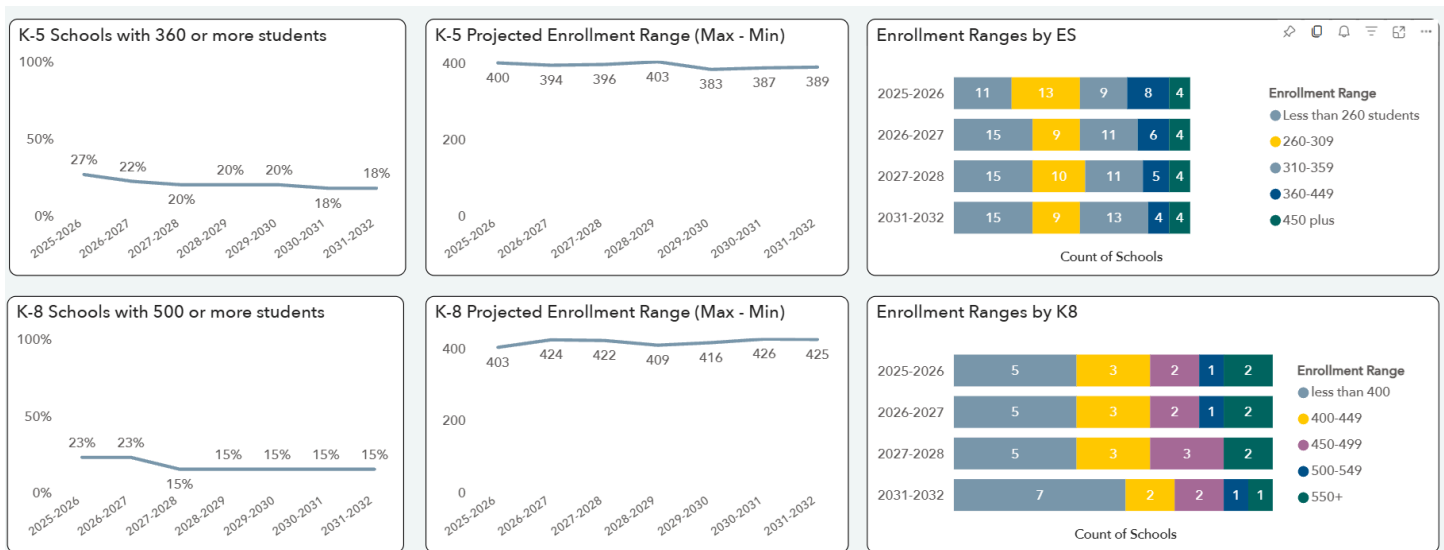
The changes from the enrollment and program balancing process were felt differently across the schools.

- Overall the changes resulted in improved enrollment balance across the schools against the backdrop of declining enrollment.
- While students impacted by the changes had similar academic and disciplinary outcomes to peers, this did not match how families experienced the changes, especially in middle school.
- The changes resulted in greater coherence for Dual Language Immersion programs while also impacting students' access to neighborhood schools and the racial composition of the schools.
- The first year of implementation saw major staffing disruptions especially for staff of color.
- These changes were not the only changes the school experienced, for example budget reductions or special education program delivery, which added to the strain on the buildings.
- While the strain was buffered by strong site leadership and school cultures, they needed more central office support through the transition. These are multi-year processes which require sustained focus.
- The gap between stated intentions and actions eroded trust with the impacted communities.

- The intensity and cumulative impact of changes matter and transition supports should be differentiated.

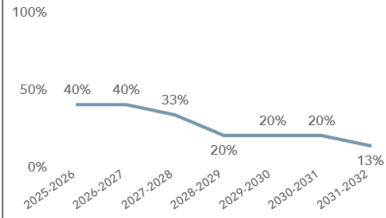
Enrollment Projections:

As we have shared, our enrollment decline will continue throughout the next decade, though the rate of decline will slow over time. The steep decline that we saw from the pandemic is working its way through the system and will reach the middle grades in the next five years. Maintaining more than 80 school sites amid declining enrollment has spread resources increasingly thin. Schools experience this through blended classrooms, an increase in itinerant staff, reduction in school-wide supports such as counselors or social workers, or courses being offered in alternate years. Below you will find the enrollment projections by grade-level if we make no changes.

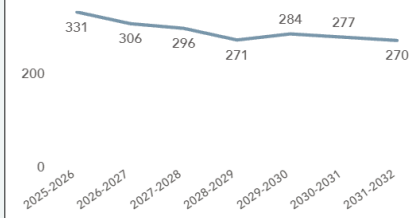


We used the threshold of 360 students for elementaries and 500 students for middle schools as guided by the prototype school description in the Quality Education Model. We applied the same number for K-8s and used the 1100 students threshold we developed during the sunseting of Jefferson dual assignment process. Elementary school populations will continue to shrink and the impact at middle grades will be pronounced with 69% of K8 and 47% of middle schools falling 100 students or more below the enrollment for stable programming by 2031-32.

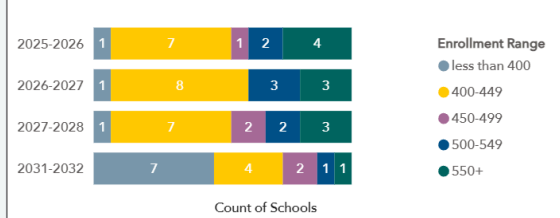
6-8 Schools with 500 or more students



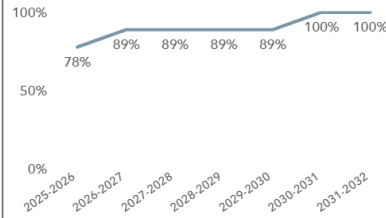
6-8 Projected Enrollment Range (Max - Min)



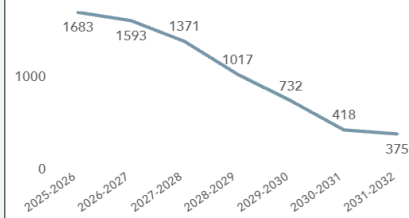
Enrollment Ranges by MS



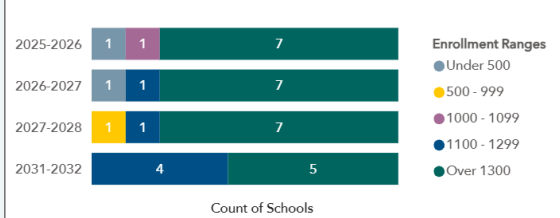
9-12 Schools with 1100 or more students



9-12 Projected Enrollment Range (Max - Min)



Enrollment Ranges by HS



Equity Audit Evaluation of Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Southeast Enrollment and Program Balancing Initiative

June 10, 2026

Prepared by Dr. Terrance L. Green¹ and Dr. Havalala Hanson



¹ Please send all inquiries to the lead author, Dr. Terrance L. Green at terrance@raciallyjustschools.com

Gratitude and Acknowledgements

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Superintendent Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Dr. Jon Franco (Senior Chief of Operations), Dr. Renard Adams (Chief Accountability and Equity Officer), Deborah Kafoury (Chief of Staff), the Portland Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education, and the broader PPS community for entrusting us with the important task of conducting the SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation. We are deeply grateful for your leadership, openness, and commitment to learning from the experiences of students, families, staff, and community members in service of creating a more racially equitable and socially just school district.

Additionally, we extend a very special thank you to Margaret Calvert (Assistant Superintendent of School Planning and Modernization) whose leadership, coordination, and support made this work possible. Margaret helped facilitate key connections, coordinate logistics, and support communication across the district which helped the evaluation team to engage with the people, processes, and information needed for the study. We are especially appreciative of the way she helped move this work forward with both professionalism and care.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the PPS principals, educators, and staff who participated in interviews, focus groups, surveys, and other data-gathering efforts. Your time, honesty, and insights strengthened the quality and depth of this evaluation. Finally, we offer special thanks to the families who shared their experiences, perspectives, hopes, and concerns with us. Your voices are central to this work, and we are deeply grateful for your participation.

Finally, while this study was led by Dr. Terrance L. Green, it was made possible through the work of an exceptional team of researchers who brought deep care, skill, and commitment to the project. Although members of our broader team are located across the country, we intentionally worked with primary data collectors who are based in the Portland metro area. This local presence was essential not only for supporting the local economy, but also for bringing place-based knowledge and deeper sensitivity to the communities, histories, and school contexts that shaped this evaluation. We are grateful to every member of the team whose expertise, insight, and care helped make this study possible.

If citing this report, please use the following citation: Green, T. L., & Hanson, H. (2026, June 10). Equity audit evaluation of Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Southeast Enrollment and Program Balancing [Unpublished report].

Detailed Executive Summary of Findings

Portland Public Schools, hereafter referred to as (PPS), implemented the Enrollment and Program Balancing initiative as part of a broader district effort to address enrollment imbalances, program access, and related equity concerns across Southeast Portland schools. As part of this effort, PPS partnered with and commissioned Dr. Terrance L. Green and his team to conduct an equity audit evaluation of the enrollment and program balancing initiative process and its implementation. The partnership officially began on January 20, 2026, and the final report was submitted on June 10, 2026.

Many PPS stakeholders and participants commonly referred to this effort as SEGC, which stands for Southeast Guiding Coalition. Since SEGC was frequently used by participants during interviews and conversations to describe the broader process, we use SEGC in many places throughout this report to reflect participants' language. Unless we are specifically referring to members of the Southeast Guiding Coalition itself, references to SEGC in this report should be understood as referring to the broader Enrollment and Program Balancing initiative and its related processes.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide PPS with empirical data to better understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced by students,² families, principals, educators, and staff, in schools that experienced boundary changes, program relocations, enrollment shifts, and other related transitions. The report also examines patterns in student outcomes in these impacted schools before and after SEGC implementation, while recognizing that these outcomes are shaped by multiple factors and should not be interpreted as solely caused by SEGC.

Findings from this evaluation are intended to identify areas of equity and inequity across the SEGC process, implementation, and outcomes, including how decisions were made, communicated, implemented, supported, and experienced over time. Through this report, we aim to provide useful, evidence-based, and humanizing data that can inform PPS's future decisions about enrollment balancing, boundary changes, program relocation, school consolidation and closures, and other districtwide changes in ways that are more equitable, transparent, and responsive to school communities.

Brief Data Sources for This Report (a detailed description of our data sources and methods in later in this report)

For this audit, we collected data from all 20 schools that were impacted by SEGC changes. As such, we collected data from a variety of sources to address each focus area. Our data collection sources for this report includes:

² While students' experiences are deeply important to understanding the full impact of SEGC, this evaluation did not include direct student interviews or focus groups for several reasons. This decision was shaped primarily by the compressed timeline for completing the report. The evaluation began several months later than originally anticipated, in part because the district was engaged in the Jefferson Rising conversations and related work, as well as ongoing budget concerns. Based on our prior experience, securing parent or guardian consent for student participation can require a longer timeline than was available for this phase of the evaluation. Similarly, this evaluation did not include new data collection from central office stakeholders. In consultation with the district, we understood that many of the central office leaders who led or were most directly involved in SEGC were no longer with PPS. Given the scope and timeline of this evaluation, we prioritized understanding how SEGC was experienced at the school level by educators, school leaders, families, and community members, as well as examining patterns in school-level outcomes before and after implementation.

Survey Responses

- 905 respondents to a family and caregiver survey
- 327 respondents to an administrator, teacher, and staff survey

*Administrative Data*³

- **Summary records of 51,983 students enrolled in PPS** elementary and middle schools from 2020–21 through 2024–25, and for 4,717 school-based personnel from 2020–21 through 2025–26.
- **School enrollment data:** Five years of school-level enrollment data from 2020–21 through 2024–25, including school enrollment dates and exit dates. Students who transferred into PPS after October 1 of each year were not included in the dataset. High schools were not included. For analyses, students were assigned to the school they attended for the most days during each school year.
- **Student demographic and enrollment records:** Student-level records, using masked student IDs, including grade level, gender, race and ethnicity, special education status, multilingual learner status, and home or primary language.
- **Student attendance data:** Student-level attendance records, including number of days present and absent.
- **Student discipline data:** Number and type of student-level exclusionary disciplinary incidents.
- **Student achievement data:** Student-level Oregon Statewide Assessment System (OSAS) math and English language arts (ELA) scaled scores, used to examine academic outcomes and patterns over time.
- **Dual language immersion (DLI) program access and enrollment data:** School- and student-level data on Dual Language Immersion programs, including which schools offered these programs and which students were enrolled in them.
- **Personnel data:** School staff-level data from 2020–21 through 2025–26, including position, school assignment, race and ethnicity, years of overall experience, years of experience in the district, exit dates, and exit reasons. The dataset included instructional and administrative staff (e.g., teachers, educational assistants, principals, assistant principals, librarians, instructional specialists, and office administrative assistants).
- **School-level free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL)** eligibility in 2022–23 from the National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

³ Administrative data refers to information routinely collected and maintained by a school district or public agency for operational, compliance, or reporting purposes, such as enrollment, attendance, discipline, staffing, program participation, and student outcome records.

- PPS Board Documents related to SEGC Changes and notes prior consulting firms that helped the district through the SEGC process.

Focus Groups and Interviews with approximately 100 people

- Approximately 50 focus groups with administrators (i.e., school principals and assistant principals), staff, families, and/or SEGC members
- 10 interviews with administrators, staff, families, and/or SEGC members

Detailed Executive Summary of Findings

Domain 1: Equitable Access to Robust Middle Schools *and all SEGC-impacted schools*⁴

Guiding Questions:

1. To what extent did SEGC boundary changes improve enrollment balance across schools, especially middle schools, by race, income, and language status?
2. To what extent were opportunity gaps in achievement, attendance, and discipline reduced among students affected by enrollment shifts, especially in middle schools?
3. How do students and families from historically underserved communities describe the quality of learning environments they experienced after SEGC-related shifts in middle schools?
4. How do administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments after SEGC-related shifts?⁵

Key Findings:

RQ1: To what extent did SEGC boundary changes improve enrollment balance across schools, especially middle schools, by race, income, and language status?

- **Enrollment across SEGC schools became more balanced, particularly at the middle school level.** Non-SEGC schools went the other direction. The difference between the highest-and lowest-enrolled SEGC middle schools narrowed from approximately 320 students in 2020–21 to about 220 in 2024–25, including Kellogg Middle School, which opened in 2021–22 and had the highest enrollment among middle schools in 2024–25. By contrast, the range of enrollment numbers at non-SEGC middle schools increased by about 45 students. SEGC elementary school enrollment

⁴ This portion of the research question was expanded after the original proposal. The phrase “and all SEGC-impacted schools” was added to strengthen the contextual scope of the analysis and to better account for the range of school communities affected by SEGC-related changes. The expanded framing allows the study to examine middle school access while also situating those findings within the broader experiences of all SEGC-impacted schools.

⁵ The question was revised to remove the specific reference to middle schools in order to better align with the broader scope of the preliminary findings. While some findings may draw from middle school experiences, the revised question allows the analysis to examine how administrators, teachers, and staff described learning environments across SEGC-related shifts more generally. FYI, the initial question in the proposal was: How do administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments they experienced after SEGC-related shifts in middle schools?

also became more uniform, with the difference between the highest-and lowest-enrolled schools narrowing by over 100 students.

- **Enrollment balancing should be interpreted in the context of broader enrollment decline.** It is important to note that declining enrollment in general contributed to the balancing. SEGC elementary school enrollment declined, on average, by 20% between 2020–21 and 2024–25, compared to 14% among elementary schools outside SEGC. Middle school enrollment declined by an average of about 9% in SEGC schools and about 5% outside SEGC schools over the same period.
- **Overall, SEGC enrollment projections overestimated enrollment at 12 of 20 schools.** On October 1, 2024, 12 schools were under their projected 2025 enrollment by at least 20 students. However, when assigning students to schools based on the school they enrolled in for the most days, only seven schools were under enrollment projections by 20 or more students. This is a conservative estimate since students who transferred into PPS after October 1 are not included in the data. Nevertheless, of the 7 schools that continued to be meaningfully under their enrollment targets, three experienced intensive changes, such as a grade level reconfiguration or program relocation. The other four had boundary or feeder-school changes that did not result in the anticipated enrollment gains. These projection gaps have important implications for school planning and stability. When enrollment is lower than projected, schools may face midstream adjustments to staffing, schedules, course offerings, intervention supports, and enrichment opportunities.
- **SEGC-impacted schools have fewer students than projected, but they are more racially diverse and more often need language and special education support.** SEGC schools are serving about 11% more students who identify as Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latino/a/x,⁶ Pacific Islander, or biracial/multiracial (i.e., BIPOC or students of color) students than anticipated, on average. They also serve higher portions of multilingual learners (+4%) and students with special needs (+5%) than projected on average. The percentage of students who are low-income was predicted to be about 29% for 2025, but the data for that year are not available. In 2024, according to the U.S. Department of Education, these schools averaged 56% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in 2022–23. This has implications for whether staffing and resource allocations are matched to actual needs.

RQ2: To what extent were opportunity gaps in achievement, attendance, and discipline reduced among students affected by enrollment shifts, especially in middle schools?

⁶ In this report, Latino/a/x is used as an inclusive pan-ethnic term to refer broadly to students, families, and communities with Latin American heritage or ancestry. The term acknowledges gendered and gender-inclusive forms of identity, including Latino, Latina, and Latinx. We recognize that people within this group may identify in many different ways and that the term does not capture the full diversity of national origin, race, language, culture, or lived experience represented across these communities. Put simply, we recognize that no single term fully captures the diversity of people, histories, racial identities, national origins, languages, and cultural experiences represented within this category.

- **Students attending SEGC schools had similar academic and behavioral outcomes in 2023–24 and 2024–25 to their peers who attended non-SEGC schools.** We paired students attending SEGC schools in 2022–23 with peers enrolled in other schools using inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW), and, as a sensitivity analysis, coarsened exact matching (CEM). We then compared how OSAS performance, attendance rates, and exclusionary discipline rates changed during and after the SEGC changes were implemented. Overall, the analysis shows that students enrolled in SEGC schools showed similar patterns across most academic and behavioral outcomes compared to their matched peers elsewhere in PPS.
- **Several student groups showed positive associations between SEGC changes and ELA performance relative to their matched peers in non-SEGC schools.** The largest was for Black students, who gained roughly +0.13 standard deviations (SD) in 2023–24, although this estimate was not statistically significant in 2024–25 and did not hold under the CEM sensitivity check. Elementary students gained about +0.05 SD in 2023–24 and +0.06 SD in 2024–25. Students in schools where more than 50% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in the baseline year gained +0.06 SD in 2023–24. Multilingual students showed consistent ELA gains by two different measures: students classified as multilingual learners gained +0.09 SD in 2024–25, and students whose home language is not English gained +0.07 SD in 2023–24 and +0.09 SD in 2024–25. Students enrolled in DLI in the baseline year gained +0.11 SD in ELA in 2024–25. In math, the largest positive estimate was again for multilingual learners, who gained about +0.09 SD in 2024–25, though this result did not reach statistical significance. These results represent small- to medium-effect sizes (Kraft, 2020).⁷ Sensitivity analyses using CEM produced directionally consistent estimates for several subgroups, with somewhat larger magnitudes for multilingual learners in both ELA and math.

For engagement outcomes, students whose home language is not English and Asian students each showed slightly higher attendance in 2024–25 (+1.5 and +1.7 percentage points, respectively). Exclusionary discipline was modestly lower in 2024–25 for a few groups, including students with high 2022–23 math OSAS scores and students in lower-poverty schools in the baseline year, on the order of 0.03 to 0.05 fewer incidents per pupil.

- **No significant academic differences are associated with SEGC changes among middle school students.** The matched study detects no significant association between SEGC status and OSAS scores, attendance rates, or exclusionary discipline rates for middle school students. This finding is notable because families with only middle schoolers report notably lower satisfaction with their students' learning environments than families with elementary students or a mix of elementary and middle school

⁷ Kraft, M. A. (2020). Interpreting effect sizes of education interventions. *Educational Researcher*, 49(4), 241–253.

students. The perception gap⁸ is real, but their students perform comparably to matched peers in non-SEGC schools.

RQ3: How do students and families from historically underserved communities describe the quality of learning environments they experienced after SEGC-related shifts in middle schools?

- **Within the middle school perception gap, the largest differences are in school environment and learning.** Families with only elementary students rate high-quality learning environments at 61% versus 45% for families with only middle school students or with both middle school and elementary students. Regarding absence of disrespect or bias, the split is 66% versus 48% (54% for families with both middle school and elementary school students). On belonging, 78% versus 64–66% for families with middle school students. Additionally, 73% of families with only elementary students agree that their student is learning a lot vs. 57–59% of families with only middle school students or a mix of middle and elementary students. These gaps suggest that middle school families perceive qualitative differences in their children's school and learning environments.

RQ4: How do administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments after SEGC-related shifts?

- **Staffing reductions and enlarged class demands made learning environments more challenging and harder to sustain.**
Across multiple schools, staff described large classes, fewer adults, more students with complex needs, and less ability to differentiate instruction. In several schools, participants linked reduced staffing and larger classes to weaker support for project-based learning and middle-school grades programming. Participants also said classroom quality “varies widely,” with some high-rigor rooms and others not. Educators described classes with students with many IEPs, behavior needs, and safety concerns, while participants at other schools explicitly tied class size to declining ability to offer a comprehensive middle school or relationship-rich elementary environment. In one school, staff described teachers with multiple preps and class loads in the high 30s or low 40s. In the survey, about half of staff agree that students experience high-quality learning environments (54%) and that collaboration supports teaching (56%). However, only 16% agree that class sizes are distributed manageably, and 64% say class sizes are too large.
- **Spanish DLI consolidation from SEGC changes was described as both more coherent and more costly.**
In one school, staff said the shift to a full-school Spanish DLI model felt “much more intentional” and more equitable than the prior split structure, while also describing loss of neighborhood access and walkability for students who were part of the neighborhood

⁸ Here, “perception gap” means there is a meaningful difference between how middle school families feel about or rate their students’ school experiences and what the measured student outcome data show.

program. In other schools, staff said bringing the DLI community into one middle school was “much more helpful” and better for the program but also noted that DLI students could lose elective access because they needed to continue Spanish coursework. Other participants described the loss of Spanish immersion as a loss of racial and cultural diversity and program breadth, while staff at another school described neighborhood students losing the daily presence and connection of the DLI community after the program moved out. So DLI consolidation strengthened coherence in some places while redistributing costs elsewhere.

- **Interventions and targeted support were repeatedly described as crucial, but fragile.**

Some participants described reading and math intervention classes as transformative, helping students feel “seen and heard and helped and met where they are,” but also warned that they were “scrambling to keep them” because the same cuts that made interventions more necessary also made them precarious. Others described title-funded intervention, counseling, and climate investments as essential but vulnerable to future cuts. Across several schools, participants described significant gaps between student need and adult support, especially for students with disabilities, chronic absenteeism, or high behavioral needs. Staff said students had more access to electives and specialists, but they were concerned that fewer intervention supports made it harder to meet the needs of a student body with increasingly different learning needs. Only 31% of staff survey respondents agreed that students have equitable access to high-quality programs.

Domain 2: Linguistic Equity for Historically Underserved Students in Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Programs and Electives

Guiding Research Questions:

1. To what extent did access to DLI, electives, or advanced programs expand for historically underserved students after program relocation per SEGC changes?
2. To what extent does the relocation of programs and boundary changes displace students from their newly assigned schools?
3. To what extent is student displacement happening in DLI programs as a result of SEGC program relocation? If so, for whom?

Key Findings:

To what extent did access to DLI, electives, or advanced programs expand for historically underserved students after program relocation per SEGC changes?

- **Total SEGC DLI enrollment reached 86% of projected targets by 2024–25.** Total DLI enrollment in the SEGC region declined by 9% between 2020–21 and 2024–25. It stands about 280 students short of the 1,959-student target the district set in 2021. The aggregate decline masks variation across programs. Enrollment in Spanish DLI, the largest program, held steady. Vietnamese DLI more than tripled from a small base (17 to 57 students). Mandarin and Russian lost about 20% enrollment and Japanese DLI enrollment declined by 5%. Districtwide, total DLI enrollment held steady because non-SEGC DLI programs gained more than 100 students during the same period.
- **Spanish DLI programs are growing toward or exceeding enrollment targets, reaching 104.5% of the 2025 projection in aggregate (811 vs 776).** Three of four Spanish DLI sites exceeded their targets, and one stood at 76% of the projection as of 2024–25. Latino/a/x students discontinue DLI at only 1-2% per year, lower than most other racial groups except multiracial students (who discontinue at less than 1%). White and Asian discontinuation rates are also low (each under 3% per year). Black students discontinue at 7–17% per year, substantially higher than any other group, though small sample sizes (58-93 students per year) introduce uncertainty in single-year estimates. From 2022–23 to 2024–25, the share of Latino/a/x students enrolled in SEGC DLI programs rose by 4 percentage points (31% to 35%), slightly outpacing the 3-point increase in non-SEGC DLI programs (41% to 44%). However, non-SEGC programs continued to enroll a higher share of Latino/a/x students throughout the period, by about 9 percentage points.
- **Heritage language match in DLI programs varies by program and by SEGC status.** In 2024–25, the percentage of students whose home language matched the DLI program's language ranged from under 10% (Japanese, both SEGC and non-SEGC)

and roughly 1% (non-SEGC Mandarin) at the low end to 58% (SEGC Vietnamese) at the high end, with Spanish (around 43-44%), SEGC Mandarin (37%), and SEGC Russian (56%) in between. Two of the SEGC programs most affected by relocation gained heritage speakers over the five-year period. Spanish DLI rose about 8 percentage points alongside modest enrollment growth, and SEGC Mandarin DLI rose about 8 percentage points even as the program lost roughly a fifth of its enrollment. Two programs moved in the opposite direction. SEGC Russian DLI lost about 6 points of heritage language speaker share as Russian and Ukrainian families left the program, and non-SEGC Vietnamese DLI lost nearly 12 points.

To what extent does the relocation of programs and boundary changes displace students from their newly assigned schools?

- **DLI-enrolled students whose program moved to another school largely stayed in PPS, whether or not they followed their DLI program to the new school.** The percentage of DLI-enrolled students leaving the district in SEGC schools is not notably different from that in DLI programs outside SEGC. On average, DLI students leave PPS at roughly half the rate of non-DLI students. At SEGC schools, the exit rate for DLI-enrolled students is about 6% compared to 11% for students not enrolled in DLI in 2023–24. The gap is similar (about 7% vs. 10%) at non-SEGC schools.

To what extent is student displacement happening in DLI programs as a result of SEGC program relocation? If so, for whom?

- **Students enrolled in DLI programs that moved generally followed their program to the school it relocated to when they stayed in PPS.** Among students left their programs upon relocation, they more often identified as white and more often speak a language other than English at home. For programs that stayed in place, on average across years, students who speak English at home again had higher retention rates than students speaking other languages at home.
- **Mandarin DLI enrollment for elementary students held steady when their program moved. Middle school enrollment declined with relocation but now serves a higher share of Chinese speakers.** One strand of elementary Mandarin DLI maintained its pre-SEGC enrollment level after relocating. The Mandarin middle school DLI program is enrolled about 80% of its peak pre-relocation size (97 vs. 121 students) in 2024–25 but is 43% below the SEGC plan's enrollment forecast of 168. The relocation reshaped the program's composition more than its size: heritage language speakers now make up 38% of enrollment, up from 12% before the move, an increase of 26 percentage points.
- **One school converted to whole-school DLI, displacing non-DLI neighborhood families along racial lines.** Almost 60% of students left the school after 2022–23, primarily to their newly assigned elementary and middle schools. Black students were almost entirely displaced. The school's share of Black students dropped from 10% to

2%. The Latino/a/x share rose dramatically, from 49% to 69%, reflecting the conversion to a whole-Spanish DLI school.

Domain 3: Leaders, Educator, and Staff Experiences

Guiding Research Questions:

1. To what extent did the SEGC process affect administrator, educator and staff morale and retention, especially among personnel of color?
2. To what extent did administrators, educators and staff feel equipped to support students and families during and after SEGC-related changes?
3. How do administrators, educators, and staff, particularly those of color, experience the SEGC changes in terms of emotional well-being and professional support?
4. How did administrators, educators, and staff describe the experiences of students and families from historically underserved communities after SEGC-related shifts?

Key Findings:

RQ1: To what extent did the SEGC process affect administrator, educator and staff morale and retention, especially among personnel of color?

- **Staff morale was most negatively affected where SEGC-related change overlapped with repeated staffing loss, turnover, or role instability.**

Across schools, staff described morale not as a single dip tied to SEGC changes alone, but as a sustained response to annual cuts, un-assignment of staff, role reassignment, or ongoing instability. For example, at one school, staff described the merged years post SEGC as so taxing that one participant said they “wanted to quit, like, every day.” At another school, school-based staff described morale as “poor” and one participant reported taking a five-week mental health leave. Participants also described annual reductions of “three to four FTE per year,” sometimes even seven or eight at a time, while some participants at several schools described living in a “doing more with less” environment that eroded job security and left burnout feeling “imminent.”

- **Strong internal culture and leadership buffered morale but did not eliminate strain.**

Several SEGC-impacted schools held two realities at once, that is, they were internally strong and externally strained. Participants at one school described the school as having a “bright future” with strong relationships and calm classrooms, even while staff talked about what they called “trauma bonding” around looming district cuts. Participants at another school described the school as both “a good place to be” and a place where “burnout felt ‘imminent for everybody.’” Participants at two schools described long-term leadership and strong internal culture as major stabilizers, while participants at one school described a shift from low staff confidence to a more “people-centered” climate, and participants at another school repeatedly contrasted positive day-to-day morale with deep anxiety about district-level cuts. In other words, morale was buffered where leadership and peer culture were strong, but that buffering often looked more like preventing collapse than producing ease.

- **Administrator and principal turnover preceded the major changes.** In 2021–22, 55% of principals at SEGC schools left, compared to 26% at non-SEGC schools. Districtwide, schools with the highest staff retention were more likely to have kept the same principal across all six years (7 of 19 districtwide) and the bottom quartile of retention almost always had principal turnover (15 of 19 schools districtwide). Ten SEGC schools appear in the bottom quartile of staff retention in PPS, and the district pattern holds among them: 8 of the 10 had principal turnover. Principal turnover is notably associated with lower staff retention, fewer long-tenured staff, and higher rates of new hires.
- **Evidence about personnel of color suggests distinct burdens and, in some places, distinct forms of affirmation. However, the cross-school data is not strong enough for broad generalization because of the small sample size of personnel of color.** One school provides the clearest evidence that SEGC and school context intersected with staff racial and linguistic identities. One bilingual educator described the current school as a place where they no longer had to “explain who I am” or overthink their language, while another recounted being told by a colleague, “don’t speak in Spanish in front of me,” while working at another PPS campus. A participant at another school explicitly described seeing “an exodus of administrators of color, of staff of color” because systems to support them were not in place, before and after SEGC changes. Participants also highlighted the emotional and symbolic harm of district layoffs that heavily impacted colleagues of color in the central office. These examples matter, but because our school-by-school data does not explicitly state that staff race was not consistently identified, the data support a suggestive but not comprehensive cross-school claim.
- **The SEGC implementation year produced a dramatic one-year staffing disruption.** After the 2022–23 school year, 32% of staff at SEGC schools left their school, compared to 19% at non-SEGC schools. By 2024–25, the gap had closed to 2 points (20% vs. 18%). The disruption was acute but temporary in the aggregate. Assistant principals were hardest hit as more than 50% (7 of 13) left their school vs. 26% in the rest of the district.
- **Staff of Color bore the sharpest impact.** In 2022–23, 39% of Staff of Color at SEGC schools left their schools, compared with 21% at non-SEGC schools, an 18-point gap. The gap for white staff was about 10 points (29% vs. 19%). Part of this is driven by DLI program relocation in which sending schools lost bilingual/multilingual and Staff of Color and receiving schools gained them. Nevertheless, Staff of Color at SEGC schools also left the district at elevated rates: 18% compared to 10% for Staff of Color elsewhere in the district. By 2024–25, Staff of Color turnover at SEGC schools had returned to roughly the non-SEGC rate (19% vs. 17%), but the implementation year produced a real loss of Staff of Color.
- **The three largest racial groups experienced SEGC changes differently.** Black staff at SEGC schools (n=12–16 per year) show persistently elevated turnover and the

highest involuntary termination rate, nearly 5 times the rate for white staff (though numbers are small). Latino/a/x staff experienced the sharpest 2022–23 school departure spike, driven by DLI program relocation (41% left their schools, vs. 25% at non-SEGC schools). Asian staff left at 36% (vs. 18% at non-SEGC) but mostly moved within PPS rather than leaving the district.

RQ2: To what extent did administrators, educators and staff feel equipped to support students and families during and after SEGC-related changes?

- Staff frequently reported that district communication and planning were insufficient for the scale of change they were expected to manage from SEGC.**
At one school, staff described supporting families while “flying blind” and said there was no deliberate, intentional merger planning. At another school, one participant answered the question about feeling equipped with “Not at all, I would say as close to zero,” after inheriting a severely unsafe elementary environment with little groundwork laid. Participants at another school recalled answering family questions with unreadable maps and incomplete information, while staff at a nearby school said much of the transition planning was ultimately left to individual schools. Participants also described feeling under-informed and left to absorb parent frustration after the central SEGC lead disappeared.
- Schools felt most equipped when local leadership, not district systems, built the support structures to navigate SEGC changes.**
At one SEGC-impacted school, staff generally felt able to support students and families because of the school’s strong trauma-informed routines, relational culture, and internal support teams, even while broader district conditions felt precarious. In other schools, staff described extensive school-led outreach, family game nights, social work, and translation work. Additionally, according to participants, they described essentially inventing the middle school transition themselves because there was no clear district “guidebook” on how to navigate SEGC changes. Participants noted that much of what they could offer families was empathy and school-level encouragement rather than a district-supported solution. Across these schools, the practical capacity to support families came more from school-level initiative than from a robust, coherent district transition infrastructure.
- Being “equipped” to navigate SEGC changes was especially fragile where support depended on unstable staffing or discretionary choices.**
Participants described choosing between climate supports and reading and math intervention because there were not enough adults to do both. This was underscored as a participant indicated that intervention classes were “what’s making the difference overall” but the school was “having to scramble to keep them.” Other participants described district “tier three” supports as help that was “not helpful,” because what the school needed was a more cohesive building, not just curricular add-ons. Post SEGC changes, other participants described trying to implement an inclusive neighborhood model without enough paraeducator and special education support, and in other

schools, participants repeatedly said they could not offer families much beyond transfers or encouragement because real options were limited.

- **Staff felt unequipped during the process and remain feeling unequipped today.** During implementation, only 6-10% of survey respondents reported adequate information, support, or input. Four years later, only 5% reported they have written guidance for responding to family questions about their school model, and only 4% know who to contact for SEGC-related information. Limited access to information and support among staff echoed across family survey respondents: only 22% agreed they understood the changes happening at their school during the SEGC process.

Nuance, Tensions, and Variations within the qualitative findings

- During our analysis, we identified important variations around the findings to the research question. Some schools suggested that strong school-level systems can create a sense of practical efficacy even when district support is weak (and these schools were impacted with few and lots of changes as a result of SEGC changes). By contrast, our analysis suggests that in other schools when the district's planning and follow-through are especially thin, schools can spend years in reactive support mode. Another tension is that staff often felt equipped in a moral sense in that they knew what students and families needed, but not in a structural sense because they lacked staffing, time, information, or district backing to deliver it.

RQ3: How do administrators, educators, and staff, particularly those of color, experience the SEGC changes in terms of emotional well-being and professional support?

- **Emotional well-being was strained by cumulative, not single-event (SEGC-changes), disruption.** Participants across schools described stress, grief, anger, dread, sleeplessness, mental-health leave, and emotional exhaustion as layered effects of SEGC changes along with repeated changes. Some participants said they “wanted to quit, like, every day,” while other participants recalled “a lot of tears during the [SEGC] transition.” Participants also described feeling on a “tightrope,” and other participants reported not sleeping and taking several weeks of mental-health leave, and other educators described that SEGC changes brought a constant crisis of “putting out fires.” Some participants framed their SEGC experience as a “multi-year erosion” rather than a one-time shock.
- **Professional support during SEGC was often strongest inside the school and weakest at the district level.** This was a recurring theme across several of our research questions. Some participants described their current principal as highly supportive and “people-centered,” and staff in another school said their principal’s long tenure and internal culture helped the school make it through enormous change. Again, participants repeatedly contrasted excellent internal support with low trust in district decisions, and while other participants said day-to-day morale stayed relatively high because of strong local culture even while district conditions drove anxiety. Staff also described stable internal leadership and cohesion as a major protective factor. The emerging pattern is that

school-based leaders buffered emotional harm, but that buffering often had to compensate for the absence of reliable district support.

- **Among survey respondents, 25% considered leaving PPS due to SEGC changes.** Personnel data validate this: 15% left the district in 2022–23, compared with 10% at other PPS schools. Trust collapsed. Only 3% of staff survey respondents mostly or completely trust the district to handle rightsizing fairly. More than 50% responded that they do not trust the district at all (mean 1.7/5).
- **SEGC-period well-being ratings are sharply negative.** On average, 8% of respondents agreed with items related to wellbeing during the SEGC process, including perceptions about worsening morale, not feeling emotionally supported at work, and unmanageable workloads. Administrators had neutral or negative perceptions of wellbeing during the SEGC process, often perceiving a need for more support and better communication. Staff have more positive perceptions of their wellbeing today, with BIPOC staff reporting somewhat more positive experiences than white staff both during SEGC changes and now, though the small sample (n=32) limits confidence.
- **The limited available evidence suggests that staff of color and bilingual staff sometimes experienced both sharper harm and sharper affirmation.** While the data are too limited to support broad claims across all SEGC-impacted schools, several accounts suggest that staff of color, bilingual staff, and staff working in DLI settings sometimes experienced questions of belonging, professional value, burnout, and support in distinct ways during SEGC-related change.

Race, language, and role shaped how some staff experienced SEGC-related change. While the evidence is limited and should not be overstated, participant accounts suggest that SEGC-related changes did not land evenly across all staff. Some staff described their experiences through the lens of racial identity, cultural identity, language status, and professional role.

School context mattered. Some staff described environments where racial, cultural, and multilingual identities were affirmed as assets, while others described contexts where those identities or roles felt undervalued. This suggests that leadership, school culture, and implementation support shaped whether staff experienced SEGC-related change as harmful, affirming, or both.

Some staff experienced sharper harm when their identities or roles were not fully valued or supported. Participants described how broader system conditions, including rapid change, limited support, and inequitable organizational cultures, could intensify feelings of burnout, marginalization, or professional devaluation for staff of color and linguistically positioned staff.

Nuance, Tensions, and Variations within the qualitative findings

- One school in particular complicates any simple “SEGC harmed staff well-being” story because it is simultaneously one of the sites of greatest grief and one of the clearest

sites of professional affirmation for bilingual/Latino/a/x staff. Another school that was less impacted also complicates the pattern because staff describe the school as calm and relationally strong even while naming broader uncertainty. So, across the data, the emotional story is not uniform despair. We'd argue that it could probably be more accurately described as cumulative strain that was mediated by several factors, such as school-community context, school leadership, and identity of the school.

RQ4: How did administrators, educators, and staff describe the experiences of students and families from historically underserved communities after SEGC-related shifts?

- **Staff across multiple schools perceived that low-income communities and communities of color bore disproportionate disruption as a result of SEGC-related changes.**

Staff at one school described the school as becoming “smaller and whiter,” and said lower-income students felt more isolated as the school lost racially and socioeconomically diverse boundary areas. A participant remarked that SEGC once again meant “mostly BIPOC students” being bused out of a multicultural working-class neighborhood into a more affluent one. Similarly, staff said affluent families had more power to avoid the changes and that what parents were often not saying aloud was that they did not want to send their children to school with “our students of color.” Staff similarly had a perception of a district pattern in which “communities of color... and lowest socio-economic” communities were most affected by the SEGC changes.

- **Some participants described gains in cultural affirmation or developmental fit for particular underserved communities.**

Participants in a few schools described their school as a “sanctuary” for Latino/a/x families and a more intentional, affirming full-school Spanish DLI model. Additionally, participants said families at another campus were “very excited and happy” to have elementary students back in a neighborhood K–5 instead of sharing space with middle schoolers, at one site. Other staff described DLI consolidation as strengthening opportunities for Latino/a/x students, and other participants described the new comprehensive middle school model as giving students a more developmentally appropriate and richer middle school experience. Some schools also became more coherent or affirming for specific student groups, especially students of color and students who are emerging bilingual students.

- **Transportation, language access, chronic absenteeism, and specialized support capacity were recurring mechanisms through which inequity was experienced.**

Participants at some schools described long bus rides, difficult access to pick up locations, and the burden of travel falling hardest on families with the least means (this also came up in some of our family and SEGC member conversations). Staff at one school emphasized high chronic absenteeism, newcomer needs, and the difficulty of educating students who simply could not get to school consistently. However, at one school, participants described the school as essential for immigrant, refugee, multilingual, and low-income families, even as program contraction and future uncertainty threatened those conditions. Some staff described lower-income students as

bearing disproportionate burdens of feeder isolation and less ability to navigate transfer loopholes. Other staff described intervention support as critical for historically underserved students but increasingly fragile under staffing loss.

Nuance, Tensions, and Variations within the qualitative findings

- A major tension in this finding is that the same school can appear both as a site of loss and a site of affirmation, culturally and linguistically. One school is the clearest example of this. On one hand, staff describe the loss of a diverse, walkable neighborhood K–8 and the concentration of burden on other communities, but they also describe the current DLI model as more affirming and intentional for Latino/a/x students and families.

Domain 4: Family and Community Voice, Engagement, and Equitable Decision-Making

Guiding Research Questions:

1. In what ways did SEGC members feel their input was heard, valued, and reflected in final decisions?
2. How can future district efforts, especially those related to enrollment and program changes, better build trust and support meaningful engagement with families and communities?

Key Findings

RQ1: In what ways did SEGC members feel their input was heard, valued, and reflected in final decisions?

- **Most SEGC members that we talked with felt they had very limited influence over final decisions.**
While SEGC members invested substantial time, expertise, and energy, most came away believing their input did not meaningfully shape district outcomes.
- **SEGC Members experienced a sharp disconnect between the promise of participation and the reality of advisory-only power.**
Many SEGC members entered the process expecting to help shape major decisions, but over time concluded that their recommendations were symbolic, constrained, or easily overridden.
- **Perceptions of predetermined outcomes deeply undermined trust in the process.**
SEGC Members repeatedly described key decisions as effectively pre-set (from their perceptions), especially around which schools could be included in the process, program relocations, school configurations, and the narrowing of what was “on the table,” which made the process feel less authentic and less equitable.
- **Control over data and scenario modeling shaped whether members felt valued.**
Delayed, uneven (meaning some people had access and others did not), or limited access to requested data made it difficult for members to test alternatives and contributed to the sense that district-preferred outcomes were being advanced regardless of coalition input.
- **Feeling heard among other SEGC members did not translate into feeling heard by district leadership.**
SEGC members often described the coalition itself as respectful, collaborative, and mutually supportive (meaning mostly the non-district members of the coalition), but sharply distinguished that internal experience from their sense that PPS district leadership and the board did not meaningfully act on SEGC’s collective input.

- **SEGC members reported low trust and limited confidence in the procedural fairness of the rightsizing process.** Among 22 SEGC members who responded to the family survey, only 23% agree that decision rules were clear and applied consistently, 23% agree criteria stayed stable, and 23% agree PPS considered family input. All three items have a median of 2.0 (disagree). The typical member endorsed fewer than one of these three procedural integrity statements. Only 5% of SEGC members trust the district on rightsizing (mean 1.8, median 1.5), the lowest trust rating among all groups in either the staff or family survey, including groups defined by race/ethnicity, gender, school, and other characteristics (e.g., staff role in school, staff years of experience, programs students are enrolled in).
- **SEGC members who participated in the process are among the harshest critics of its equity outcomes.** On the survey item “benefits and burdens were distributed equitably,” SEGC members report a median of 1.0 (strongly disagree), meaning more than half selected the lowest possible rating. The people who participated directly in designing the distribution of changes believe it was inequitable. This finding converges with the quantitative evidence: the schools selected for SEGC changes served student populations with 2022–23 free and reduced-price lunch rates averaging 54%, compared to 25% at Southeast (SE) Portland schools excluded from the process.
- **Despite deep dissatisfaction with the process, SEGC members report comparable student experiences to other families.** SEGC members were positive about many aspects of their students’ learning experiences (they responded positively to 70% of questions in this domain, on average). This matches the overall family survey results (67%). It suggests their dissatisfaction is not driven by enduring personal harm but instead reflects informed judgment about a process they observed from the inside and concluded failed on its own terms.

Key Findings:

RQ2: How can future district efforts, especially those related to enrollment and program changes, better build trust and support meaningful engagement with families and communities?

- **Future district rebalancing (e.g., school closures and/or consolidations) efforts need clearer goals, firmer scope, and more honest discussion of tradeoffs from the start.**
Participants felt trust was damaged when the purpose of the process was unclear, the scope narrowed midstream, and major constraints were introduced without transparent rationale.
- **Rebuilding trust depends on direct, concrete, and internally consistent communication.**

SEGC members who participated argued that district communication was often too abstract, overly wordy, and at times inconsistent with the data SEGC members had been using, which undermined credibility.

- **Community Engagement must be accessible, early, and genuinely influential, not reactive to pre-developed plans.**

Participants emphasized that families and committee members need understandable data, earlier listening opportunities, multilingual and lower-barrier engagement formats, and real evidence that their input shaped proposals.

- **The district must apply its racial equity and social justice lens through actual decisions, not just symbolic language.**

Participating SEGC members felt trust eroded when equity rhetoric was repeated but the process excluded certain schools that were more affluent and whiter, protected some communities, and placed greater burdens on already under-resourced schools and families.

- **Rebuilding trust requires follow-through, accountability, and visible support for affected schools and communities.**

SEGC members who participated in our data collection stressed that the district should only make promises it can keep, publicly track commitments, support schools before, during, and after major changes, and begin future efforts by acknowledging past harms and creating clear guardrails for a different process.

- **The district should begin future school change and enrollment balancing efforts by publicly acknowledging past harms, broken trust, and specific process failures, especially with SEGC changes.**

Participants' recommendations suggest that rebuilding trust will require more than improved communication or better community engagement processes. Future rebalancing and rightsizing efforts should begin with clear acknowledgment of prior harms, including ignored dissent of some SEGC members, broken promises, unbalanced outcomes, and perceived inequities in who was included and protected because of race and class and who was burdened. Participants' comments point to the need for something more substantive than symbolic regret such as public acknowledgment paired with visible guardrails, accountability, and changed behavior.

Domain 5: Factors that Shaped School Experiences with SEGC Changes

Guiding Research Questions:

1. How did SEGC-related changes play out across the schools, and what factors shaped how schools experienced, absorbed, and responded to those changes?

Key Findings:

How did SEGC-related changes play out across the schools, and what factors shaped how schools experienced, absorbed, and responded to those changes?

- SEGC was experienced as cumulative and layered rather than as a single transition.**
 Across schools, participants described SEGC as one strand in a larger web of stacked change, including school mergers, program relocations, feeder loss, boundary shifts, grade reconfiguration, construction, pandemic disruption, labor actions, budget cuts, and leadership turnover at both the central office and school-level. One participant describes this most clearly as a “multi-year erosion,” while others call the process a “dense web of transitions.” For one school, SEGC arrived after their fire recovery, K–8 to K–5 change, and SES program shifts, and another describes being asked to absorb major reconfiguration without enough planning, communication, staffing, or emotional repair.
- Change was easier to absorb where leadership and internal culture were stable.**
 Participants from several schools all describe strong internal leadership or school culture as a protective factor that helps to mitigate the impacts of SEGC changes. A school’s more recent story also suggests improvement where relationships with leadership became more coherent and supportive. It is important to note that these schools were not “unaffected.” Rather, their leaders and adult cultures absorbed strain more effectively. Schools with stable and supportive principals and stronger staff culture buffered SEGC strain more effectively, while unstable schools were more destabilized.
- Program relocation and identity change generated more relational disruption than boundary change alone, but even single boundary changes could produce deep forms of loss.**
 Two schools offered the strongest cases of school identity disruption. In one school, participants described a merger that “tore apart” a close community, the other described grief, neighborhood loss, and a remade school identity. Another school’s consolidation similarly produced both stronger coherence and new tradeoffs. But other schools showed that boundary and feeder pattern related changes alone could still trigger deep loss by shrinking enrollment, reducing racial and socioeconomic diversity, or

undermining the possibility of a “robust” comprehensive school. So SEGC change type mattered (e.g., reconfiguration, program relocation, boundary change etc.), but school context shaped intensity.

- **Schools repeatedly portrayed district support as late, partial, or mismatched to the SEGC realities they were facing.**

Whether the issue was missing planning documents, late data, weak transition infrastructure, promises not honored (e.g., more FTEs, additional rebalancing, etc.), or supports that arrived after the moment had passed, staff often described the district as giving them too little, too late, or the wrong kind of help. The result was that schools improvised, schools held family distress, and SEGC’s burden was effectively downloaded onto people inside buildings.

Nuance, Tensions, and Variations within the qualitative findings

- A major tension is that SEGC changes, according to participants, could produce both gains and harms in the same site. For example, one school gained facilities, electives, and a more developmentally appropriate middle school structure even while becoming less racially and socioeconomically diverse. Another school became more culturally affirming for many Latino/a/x families even while losing neighborhood access, diversity, and parts of its earlier identity. Yet, another school shows how a school with limited direct SEGC change could still live under its shadow through downstream instability and future consolidation fears. So “how SEGC played out” cannot be reduced to one story, it might be best understood as challenging change filtered through local, school capacity, history, and politics.

Section 1:

SEGC Context, Audit Purpose, and Detailed Methods

SEGC Context

PPS' Effort to Balance Enrollment in Southeast Schools⁹

Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Enrollment and Program Balancing initiative was a Board-authorized effort created to address how the district's physical footprint, school configurations, boundaries, and program locations shaped students' access to high-quality learning environments. The work was framed as part of PPS's reImagined¹⁰ strategic vision that was adopted in June 2019, and then formally launched through Board Resolution 6059 in February 2020. That resolution recognized that PPS faced facility use and system design challenges that affected student success. The Enrollment and Program Balancing effort was intended to produce short-and long-term recommendations, informed by community input, with a clear emphasis on improving access and opportunity for historically underserved students.

For Southeast schools, PPS implemented this work in phases. Phase 1 focused on improving access to comprehensive middle schools by establishing the attendance area and programs for Kellogg Middle School, which was intended to be a community-guided process that informed the recommendation that was ultimately adopted by the Board in January 2021. Phase 2 was then initiated through Board Resolution 6315 in May 2021, which directed the district to bring forward recommendations on three concrete outcomes. The outcomes included (a) setting attendance area and special program assignments for Harrison Park Middle School, (b) developing a plan to relocate the kindergarten through fifth grade students and programs currently served at Harrison Park, and (c) increasing enrollment at Lane Middle School.

To support Phase 2 in Southeast, PPS convened the Southeast Guiding Coalition (SEGC) as a volunteer advisory coalition responsible for reviewing options, considering community feedback, and advising district leadership rather than making final decisions. Throughout this process, the coalition reviewed multiple proposals and weighed tradeoffs connected to boundary changes, feeder pattern adjustments, and program relocations intended to stabilize enrollment, strengthen access to robust middle school programming, and improve program coherence. While the coalition did not reach full consensus, it forwarded the plan that received the most votes to district leadership in spring 2022, and PPS moved toward adoption and implementation planning for changes beginning in the 2023–24 school year, with boundary changes phased in for new students and major program relocations implemented more comprehensively at once, alongside identified transition supports.

Purpose of the Equity Audit Evaluation

In 2026, PPS commissioned Dr. Terrance L. Green (a tenured professor and national expert on school closures and equity audits) and his team to conduct this equity audit evaluation to better

⁹ Throughout this report, we refer to this effort in southeast PPS as SEGC because that is how it was communicated in district documents and conversations.

¹⁰ PPS reImagined was the long-term strategic vision for PPS, aimed at transforming the district into a premier system by 2030.

understand the implementation and outcomes of SEGC-related changes across impacted schools. The purpose of this evaluation is to examine whether SEGC advanced its stated goals, such as improving enrollment balance or expanding access to robust school programming, but also to understand how the process and its implementation were experienced by those most directly affected. This includes students, families, educators, school leaders, staff, and community members in schools that experienced boundary changes, program relocations, enrollment shifts, feeder pattern changes, and other SEGC-related transitions.

In this report, we examine both experiences *and* outcomes in SEGC-impacted schools. We consider how decisions were communicated, how school stakeholders and families experienced opportunities for voice and engagement, how schools were supported during implementation, and how SEGC-related changes were experienced across different school contexts. The report also examines patterns in student, school, and community outcomes before and after SEGC implementation. However, school outcomes are shaped by many factors such as broader enrollment trends, housing patterns, state education funding conditions, leadership and teacher turnover, staffing constraints, and family mobility, to name a few. As such, this evaluation does not attribute all observed changes solely to SEGC. Rather, it examines patterns associated with SEGC implementation and uses those patterns, alongside qualitative data, to identify lessons for future district decision-making.

At its core, this evaluation is guided by an equity-centered question of not simply whether PPS made changes to boundaries, programs, and enrollment patterns, but whether those changes were communicated, implemented, and supported in ways that were experienced as equitable, socially just, transparent, and humanizing. Equity, especially racial equity, in districtwide change requires more than technical decision-making. It requires attention to who benefits, who bears the burden of change, whose voices shape the process, what supports are provided during implementation, and whether impacted schools are strengthened rather than destabilized over time.^{11 12}

To this end, the findings from this evaluation are intended to help PPS learn from SEGC as it considers future decisions related to enrollment balancing, school consolidation, boundary changes, program relocation, school size, and access to robust educational experiences and learning environments. Thus, this report is designed to provide evidence-based guidance for district leaders, Board members, school communities, and other stakeholders as PPS works to make future districtwide changes more equitable, humanizing, transparent, well-supported, and responsive to the lived experiences of students, families, educators, and communities, especially those who have been historically marginalized in schools systems because of their race, ethnicity, native language, documentation status and any other marker of difference.

¹¹ Hahnel, C., & Marchitello, M. (2023, September). Centering equity in the school-closure process in California [Report]. Policy Analysis for California Education.

¹² Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024, June). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. Research for Action.

Our Approach to Equity Audit Evaluations

This SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation is grounded in Dr. Terrance L. Green’s more than decade-long body of research on community-based equity audits. Dr. Green introduced community-based equity audits as a practical approach for educational leaders to examine inequities across schools and communities while working toward more equitable outcomes.¹³

Building on existing equity audit research, our approach is designed to further racial and educational justice. As such, we understand equity audits not simply as technical reviews of data, policy, or practice, but as opportunities to examine how systems are experienced by the students, families, educators, staff, and communities most affected by district decisions. For this reason, our approach is customized to each district we partner with, grounded in research, comprehensive, collaborative, and transparent.

Additionally, our approach is also strengths-based, rooted in culturally responsive evaluation, informed by Paulo Freire’s notion of dialogue,¹⁴ and attentive to race, racism, and their intersections with social class, language, gender, gender identity, perceived ability, sexual orientation, religion, and other markers of difference that have been used to marginalize children, youth, families, and communities in schools. We also anchor our work in culturally responsive evaluation¹⁵ and emphasize the importance of culture, context, and stakeholder experience in evaluation design and practice, while intersectionality¹⁶ reminds us to attend to how multiple systems of power shape people’s lived experiences and identities.

In conducting equity audits, our goal is not to “catch” districts doing something wrong or to assign blame. Instead, we aim to serve as an external, critical, and collaborative partner. Our role is to provide empirical data, elevate the experiences of those most directly affected, identify systemic patterns of equity and inequity, and offer actionable recommendations that can help districts better serve children, youth, families, educators, staff, and communities. This stance is consistent with professional evaluation principles that emphasize systematic inquiry, competence, integrity, respect for people, and attention to the common good and equity.

As a result, meaningful collaboration with district leaders, school leaders, educators, staff, families, caregivers, and community members is central to the process. Their participation is

¹³ Green, T. L. (2017). Community-based equity audits: A practical approach for educational leaders to support equitable community-school improvements. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(1), 3–39.

¹⁴ Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.; M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum. Original work published 1970.

¹⁵ Hood, S., Hopson, R. K., & Kirkhart, K. E. (2015). Culturally responsive evaluation: Theory, practice, and future implications. In K. E. Newcomer, H. P. Hatry, & J. S. Wholey (Eds.), *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (4th ed., pp. 281–317). Jossey-Bass.

¹⁶ Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.

essential for producing findings and recommendations that are credible, contextually grounded, and useful for district learning and improvement.

In the context of this SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation, we sought to maintain fidelity to these principles while working within the project's timeline, data access, and implementation realities. Again, the resulting report is intended to support PPS in learning from SEGC and strengthening future districtwide decisions related to enrollment balancing, program access, boundary changes, school transitions, and equitable educational opportunity.

Research Methods for this Equity Audit Evaluation¹⁷

Data Sources

For this audit, we collected and analyzed data from all 20 schools impacted by SEGC changes. The evaluation drew on a range of quantitative and qualitative data sources, including survey responses, student administrative data, personnel records, interviews, and focus groups. The combination of these data sources allowed the evaluation team to address each of the audit's major focus areas/domains and to triangulate patterns across different forms of evidence.

Survey Responses

- 905 respondents to a family and caregiver survey
- 327 respondents to an administrator, teacher, and staff survey

These survey data helped illuminate how families and school-based staff experienced communication, implementation, learning environments, school climate, trust, support, and the broader SEGC process.

Administrative Data

The evaluation also drew on administrative records for students enrolled in PPS elementary and middle schools from 2020–21 through 2024–25, as well as records for 4,717 school-based personnel from 2020–21 through 2025–26. These administrative data included:

- **Summary records of 51,983 students enrolled in PPS** elementary and middle schools from 2020–21 through 2024–25, and for 4,717 school-based personnel from 2020–21 through 2025–26.
- **School enrollment data:** Five years of school-level enrollment data from 2020–21 through 2024–25, including school enrollment dates and exit dates. Students who transferred into PPS after October 1 of each year were not included in the dataset. High schools were not included. For analyses, students were assigned to the school they attended for the most days during each school year. Assigning students to the school they attended for the most days during the time they were enrolled in PPS within a given year presents a more realistic picture of what schools experience day-to-day than a single October 1 count. Thus, enrollment numbers are not consistent with other reports that rely on the October 1 count but are representative of where students receive the majority of their instruction.

¹⁷ For a more detailed explanation of our methods, please contact the lead author, Dr. Terrance Green.

- **Student demographic and enrollment records:** Student-level records, using masked student IDs, including grade level, gender, race and ethnicity, special education status, multilingual learner status, and home or primary language.
- **Student attendance data:** Student-level attendance records, including number of days present and absent.
- **Student discipline data:** Number and type of student-level exclusionary disciplinary incidents, including out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and expulsions. The average per-pupil number of exclusionary discipline incidents is calculated for each school within school year
- **Student achievement data:** Student-level OSAS math and ELA scaled scores, used to examine academic outcomes and patterns over time. Scores are standardized within grade level and school year to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Therefore, each student's score is relative to the district average for a given grade level and school year.
- **Dual language immersion (DLI) program access and enrollment data:** School- and student-level data on Dual Language Immersion programs, including which schools offered these programs and which students were enrolled in them.
- **Personnel data:** School staff-level data, including position, school assignment, race and ethnicity, years of overall experience, years of experience in the district, exit dates, and exit reasons. The dataset included instructional and administrative staff (e.g., teachers, educational assistants, principals, assistant principals, librarians, instructional specialists, and office administrative assistants).

In addition, we gathered school-level free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility in 2022–23 from the National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data. This was used as a baseline measure of low-income (e.g., economic disadvantage) before the majority of SEGC changes were implemented in 2023–24. Data for subsequent school years are unreliable and not used.

Focus Groups and Interviews with approximately 100 people

Our evaluation team also conducted qualitative data collection with approximately 100 participants. This included approximately 50 focus groups with educators, staff, families, and/or SEGC members, as well as 10 interviews with administrators, staff, families, and/or SEGC members. These conversations provided insight into how SEGC-related changes were experienced before, during, and after implementation. They also helped the evaluation team

understand the human, relational, organizational, and equity dimensions of the SEGC process. Here is a recap of the qualitative data collection:

- Approximately 50 focus groups with educators, staff, families, and/or SEGC members
- 10 interviews with administrators (e.g., principals)

District-Informed Intensity Scoring and Sampling Process

To support a transparent and credible qualitative sampling process, PPS staff with direct institutional knowledge of the SEGC work completed an intensity scoring exercise for all SEGC-impacted schools.¹⁸ Several PPS district leaders and staff categorized schools into high-, medium-, and low-intensity based on their overall level of SEGC-related change and implementation demands. Our evaluation team¹⁹ then held two working meetings with PPS on January 9, 2026, and January 13, 2026, to review the scoring, discuss the rationale for ratings, surface questions and differences in interpretation, and confirm final school categories.

These calibration conversations strengthened the clarity and consistency of the intensity categories and helped to support that the sampling frame reflected both district data and lived implementation knowledge. This process was important because SEGC did not affect all schools in the same way. Some schools experienced multiple overlapping changes, including program relocation, boundary shifts, grade reconfiguration, feeder pattern changes, and/or changes in school identity. Other schools experienced more limited changes, such as boundary adjustments or downstream enrollment effects.

The final qualitative sample prioritized high-intensity schools while also including a smaller number of medium- and low-intensity schools. This allowed the evaluation team to examine schools that were identified for having experienced the greatest implementation demands while also making meaningful comparisons across different levels of SEGC impact. From this process, our team identified schools to visit for qualitative data collection.

Qualitative Sampling and Case Selection

The qualitative portion of the evaluation drew on in-depth case data from 9 of the 20 schools impacted by SEGC changes, representing 45% of SEGC-impacted schools.²⁰ Our evaluation team used purposeful sampling to identify information-rich cases that could provide deep insight into how SEGC-related changes were experienced, interpreted, and implemented in particular school communities. Purposeful sampling is especially appropriate for qualitative inquiry

¹⁸ We created this index specifically for PPS to help identify the degree to which schools were impacted by SEGC changes.

¹⁹ Specifically, Dr. Green and Dr. Hanson met with the PPS district leadership regarding this. We met with them regarding this before we started collecting data at schools because this process heavily informed the schools we visited.

²⁰ Our original goal was to visit 10/20 impacted schools but were unable to visit or collect data from the final school because of scheduling conflicts. However, based on our data collection and analysis, we believe that we had enough information power from the nine schools that we visited and collected data from.

because it allows researchers to select cases that are especially relevant to the research questions rather than seeking statistical representativeness alone.²¹

The purpose of the school-level case data was not to claim that the perspectives from these 9 schools represent every experience across all 20 SEGC-impacted schools (or even every perspective within each school that we visited). Rather, the purpose was to develop a deeper understanding of how SEGC-related shifts unfolded in particular school contexts and to identify patterns, tensions, and variations across cases. The strength of the qualitative sample lies in the relevance of the cases to the research questions, the depth and specificity of the data, and the extent to which the data support meaningful interpretation. This is sometimes referred to as information power in qualitative research.²²

Since qualitative findings are not intended to generalize in the same way as survey or administrative data, the report attends to transferability.²³ In other words, in another report, we present the school-level findings with enough contextual detail for readers to understand the conditions, meanings, and circumstances surrounding the findings and to consider how those findings may apply to other SEGC-impacted schools or future district decision-making processes.²⁴

Quantitative Analytic Approach

The quantitative analyses examined changes in enrollment, student outcomes, DLI participation, displacement, and staff retention before and after SEGC implementation. For enrollment analyses, the evaluation team examined school-level enrollment patterns from 2020–21 through 2024–25, including whether enrollment became more balanced across SEGC schools and how actual enrollment compared with district projections.

For student outcome analyses, the evaluation team examined OSAS ELA and math scores, attendance rates, and exclusionary discipline rates. These analyses compared students in SEGC schools with similar students in non-SEGC schools using matching approaches, including inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) and coarsened exact matching (CEM) as a sensitivity analysis.²⁵ These methods allowed the evaluation team to compare patterns in student outcomes after the SEGC transitions in 2023–24 and beyond in comparison to students in

²¹ Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544.

²² Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753–1760.

²³ Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE.

²⁴ Stalmeijer, R. E., Brown, M. E. L., & O'Brien, B. C. (2024). How to discuss transferability of qualitative research in health professions education. *The Clinical Teacher*, 21(6), e13762.

²⁵ Iacus, S. M., King, G., & Porro, G. (2012). Causal inference without balance checking: Coarsened exact matching. *Political Analysis*, 20(1), 1–24.

schools that were not included in the SEGC process while accounting for observable differences between students and schools.

Baseline (2022–23) measures included math and ELA OSAS scores, attendance rates, exclusionary discipline rates, race and ethnicity, gender, multilingual learner status, eligibility for special education services, whether students spoke English as a home language, and the percentage of students in their school who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The processes resulted in no significant differences across these observable characteristics. Joint F-tests showed F-statistics of 0.379 ($p = 0.538$) for the IPTW matching method and 0.800 ($p = 0.371$) for CEM. This means that no significant differences were detected across all characteristics combined and that differences in outcomes between students in SEGC schools and other PPS students cannot be explained only by differences in where they started out and their demographic backgrounds. After matching, the IPTW sample size included 14,736 students for 2023–24 outcomes and 10,901 students for 2024–25 outcomes. The CEM sample included 10,822 students for 2023–24 outcomes and 7,885 students for 2024–25 outcomes. Group-level effects were estimated using marginal effects.

For DLI and program access analyses, the evaluation team examined enrollment patterns by program, race and ethnicity, home language, school location, and student movement. These analyses helped assess whether DLI access expanded, whether students followed relocated programs, whether students left programs or PPS, and whether displacement patterns differed by race, language background, or program type.

For personnel analyses, the evaluation team examined school-based staff records to identify patterns in retention, school departure, district exit, role changes, and turnover before, during, and after SEGC implementation. These analyses paid particular attention to differences by role and race or ethnicity where data were available, including patterns for staff of color and staff in directly impacted schools.

The quantitative analyses should be interpreted as evidence of patterns and associations rather than simple proof that SEGC caused every observed change. SEGC occurred alongside other major conditions, including COVID-19, enrollment decline, district budget pressures, staffing shifts, labor unrest, leadership transitions, and broader demographic and housing changes. For this reason, quantitative findings are interpreted alongside qualitative evidence to better understand how SEGC interacted with other forces shaping school experiences.

Survey Analysis

Survey data were analyzed descriptively to identify patterns in how families, caregivers, administrators, teachers, and staff experienced SEGC-related changes. These surveys asked questions that covered the domains and central research questions for this evaluation. The family

and caregiver survey helped illuminate perceptions of communication, learning environments, school climate, belonging, access, and trust. The administrator, teacher, and staff survey helped illuminate perceptions of morale, workload, class size, district support, implementation conditions, and confidence in future district decision-making.

Survey findings were used to complement, rather than replace, administrative and qualitative data. For our team, we viewed the multiple data sources working together as follows. Administrative data helped identify measurable changes in enrollment, outcomes, program access, and staffing. Qualitative data helped explain how those changes were experienced. Survey data helped identify broader perception patterns across larger groups of respondents.

Addition of Domain 5: Factors That Shaped School Experiences with SEGC Changes

During our data collection and analysis, our evaluation team added a fifth analytic domain, which was *Factors That Shaped School Experiences with SEGC Changes*. This domain was added because the findings suggested that SEGC-related changes did not unfold in the same way across all schools in the sample. While the broader analysis identified common patterns across the study, the school-level data showed that schools experienced, absorbed, and responded to SEGC differently (based on a number of factors that emerged, which we discuss later in the report).

We added this fifth domain because it moves the analysis beyond describing what changed to examining the conditions that shaped how those changes were felt, experienced, and implemented within school communities. These conditions included leadership capacity, professional relationships, staffing stability, school climate, prior school history, communication, alignment between district decisions and school-level needs, and the availability of implementation support. Again, we discuss this in detail later in the report.

This domain is especially important because research on educational change and policy implementation suggests that schools and districts interpret and enact reforms through existing organizational conditions.²⁶ Educational change is not linear. As a result, it is shaped by a number of factors, such as district-school coordination, local fit, flexibility, preparation for implementation, and capacity-building or capacity for change.²⁷ For this reason, Domain 5 helps the report address a critical implementation question. This was something that PPS voiced wanting to know more about: *how much change can a school or system absorb before its capacity to support students, sustain staff, and maintain coherent learning environments becomes strained?*

²⁶ Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 387–431.

²⁷ Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence

The evaluation was designed to integrate quantitative, qualitative, and survey data so that the report could answer both outcome-oriented and experience-oriented questions. For example, enrollment data can show whether SEGC schools became more balanced numerically, while qualitative data can show whether school communities experienced those changes as stable, equitable, adequately supported, or in other ways. Similarly, student outcome data can show whether achievement, attendance, or discipline patterns changed, while family and staff data can show whether students experienced belonging, safety, cultural affirmation, and access to strong learning environments.

This integration was especially important because SEGC was not a single intervention with a single effect. It was a set of related changes that unfolded differently across schools. For that reason, the report uses multiple forms of evidence to examine both system-level patterns and school-level variation.

Limitations and Interpretive Cautions

Like every research audit, this evaluation has limitations. As such, we suggest that several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the qualitative findings reflect the perspectives of participants who took part in interviews and focus groups. These perspectives provide important insight into how SEGC-related shifts were experienced within particular school communities. However, they should not be interpreted as representing every perspective within a given school. Schools are complex communities, and individuals within the same school may have experienced these shifts in different ways.

Second, the qualitative school sample was purposefully selected to generate deep insight from information-rich cases rather than to produce a statistically representative sample of all SEGC-impacted schools. The sample included 9 of the 20 impacted schools and was designed to support transferability, not population-level generalization.

Third, the report attends to nuance, tension, and variation because SEGC-related changes were complex and uneven. That said, the findings should not be read with broad strokes. Thus, the findings should not be read as suggesting that SEGC was experienced in the same way by every school, family, staff member, or student group. Instead, the report identifies recurring patterns while also preserving important differences, contradictions, and context-specific experiences.

Fourth, as previously mentioned, SEGC occurred during a period of broader instability and change. COVID-19, a global racial uprising, enrollment decline, budget reductions, staffing changes, district leadership transitions, construction projects, housing pressures, and broader demographic changes all shaped school experiences. For this reason, we, in this report, avoid

attributing every post-SEGC change solely to SEGC. Instead, this report examines how SEGC-related changes interacted with other conditions.

Fifth, the available data did not allow every minoritized²⁸ group or experience to be examined with equal precision. For example, some qualitative conversations did not consistently identify staff race or ethnicity, which limited the ability to make strong systemwide claims about the experiences of personnel of color based solely on qualitative data. Similarly, some quantitative analyses of people of color should be interpreted cautiously when sample sizes are small.

There were also limitations to the administrative data. Administrative data was not comprehensive of all PPS students and staff. First, personnel data were limited to instructional and front-office staff. It did not include employees in roles such as nutrition and custodial services. Second, student enrollment records exclude students who enrolled in PPS after October 1st of each school year. It records students who leave the district during the year and mid-year movement across schools. However, total school enrollment is likely to be slightly underestimated. Third, the data do not include high school students. This means that we do not observe high school outcomes for students in grade 8, such as whether they remained in a DLI program in high school and whether they transferred out of the district (unless their families reported a transfer before the end of the previous school year).

Finally, this report should be read as an equity-centered evaluation intended to support learning, accountability, and improvement. Again, its purpose is not to assign blame to individual people or schools, but to help PPS understand what SEGC changed, how those changes were experienced, where equity goals were advanced or constrained, and what future districtwide change efforts should do differently.

²⁸ We often use “minoritized” rather than minority or subgroup (although that may appear in some quantitative analysis) to emphasize that marginalization is produced through social, institutional, political, and historical processes, not simply by numerical size. In this report, the term refers primarily to students, families, and staff historically marginalized in educational systems, including students and families of color, multilingual learners, students from low-income backgrounds, students receiving special education services, and communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, language, culture, disability, or other intersecting identities. See Wingrove-Haugland and McLeod (2022) for details.

Section 2: Findings Across SEGC-Impacted Schools

Integrated Findings Across SEGC-Impacted Schools

This section presents the integrated findings from the Equity Audit Evaluation across the 20 PPS schools impacted by SEGC-related changes. Rather than organizing the findings as a separate summary of each data source, this section brings together quantitative analyses, survey results, interviews and focus group data, and school-level case data to answer the audit’s guiding research questions. Importantly, we conducted an extensive analysis of nine of the twenty impacted SEGC schools, which is part of a separate school-by-school analysis report (which is approximately 115 pages).

The goal, in this section, is to tell a coherent story about what changed, how those changes were experienced, and what patterns emerged across students, families, staff, programs, and school communities. Since SEGC impacted schools in different ways, the findings also describe variation across school contexts, including differences in enrollment shifts, program relocation, grade reconfiguration, leadership stability, staffing capacity, school culture, and cumulative implementation demands.

Importantly, as stated earlier in this report, we added Domain 5, which was not part of the original proposal. We refer to this domain as *Factors that Shaped School Experiences with SEGC Changes*. Our team added this domain for two reasons. First, we added it because the preliminary findings suggest that SEGC-related changes did not unfold in the same way across all schools in our sample. Second, we added it because the district was curious about this area of inquiry. As such, Domain 5 helps to explain why schools may have experienced, absorbed, and responded to SEGC changes differently. In other words, Domain 5 unearths the conditions that shaped how those changes were felt, experienced, and implemented within school communities.

Additionally, research on educational change and implementation suggests that schools and districts interpret and enact changes through existing organizational conditions, including leadership capacity, professional relationships, staffing stability, school climate, and alignment between district decisions and school-level needs.^{29 30 31} More recent research also emphasizes that educational change is not linear and is shaped by coordination, local fit, flexibility, preparation for implementation, and capacity-building.^{32 33} For this reason, Domain 5 helps extend the analysis beyond what shifted to examine the organizational and contextual factors that

²⁹ Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

³⁰ Honig, M. I., & Hatch, T. C. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple, external demands. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 16–30.

³¹ Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 387–431.

³² Aldridge, J. M., & McLure, F. I. (2024). Preparing schools for educational change: Barriers and supports—A systematic literature review. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 23(3), 486–511.

³³ McLure, F. I., & Aldridge, J. M. (2022). A systematic literature review of barriers and supports: Initiating educational change at the system level. *School Leadership & Management*, 42(4), 402–431.

shaped how schools experienced SEGC-related changes. Finally, this domain also helps us get closer to a critical implementation question that PPS is currently holding, which is *how much change can a school or system absorb before its capacity to support students, sustain staff, and maintain coherent learning environments becomes strained?*

In what follows, we synthesized findings across each domain into five integrated finding areas. Each area includes an overall finding, the guiding questions for the domain, key quantitative and qualitative evidence/findings, important nuance, and implications for future PPS decisions.

Domain 1: Equitable Access to Robust Middle Schools and all SEGC-impacted schools

Overall Finding:

After SEGC-related changes, enrollment across impacted schools became more balanced, particularly at the middle school level. However, this greater balance occurred alongside continued enrollment decline across SEGC schools. Many SEGC schools also enrolled fewer students than projected while serving higher-than-anticipated numbers of students of color, multilingual learners, and students receiving special education services. In the matched comparison analyses, student outcomes in SEGC schools were broadly comparable to those of similar peers in non-SEGC schools. At the same time, middle school families reported less positive learning-environment experiences than elementary families.

Guiding Questions:

1. To what extent did SEGC boundary changes improve enrollment balance across schools, especially middle schools, by race, income, and language status?
2. To what extent were opportunity gaps in achievement, attendance, and discipline reduced among students affected by enrollment shifts, especially in middle schools?
3. How do students and families from historically underserved communities describe the quality of learning environments they experienced after SEGC-related shifts in middle schools?
4. How do administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments after SEGC-related shifts?³⁴

³⁴ The question was revised to remove the specific reference to middle schools in order to better align with the broader scope of the preliminary findings. While some findings may draw from middle school experiences, the revised question allows the analysis to examine how administrators, teachers, and staff described learning environments across SEGC-related shifts more generally. The initial question in the proposal was: How do administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments they experienced after SEGC-related shifts in middle schools?

Enrollment Balance Improved, but Within a Context of Declining Enrollment and Enrollment Projection Gaps

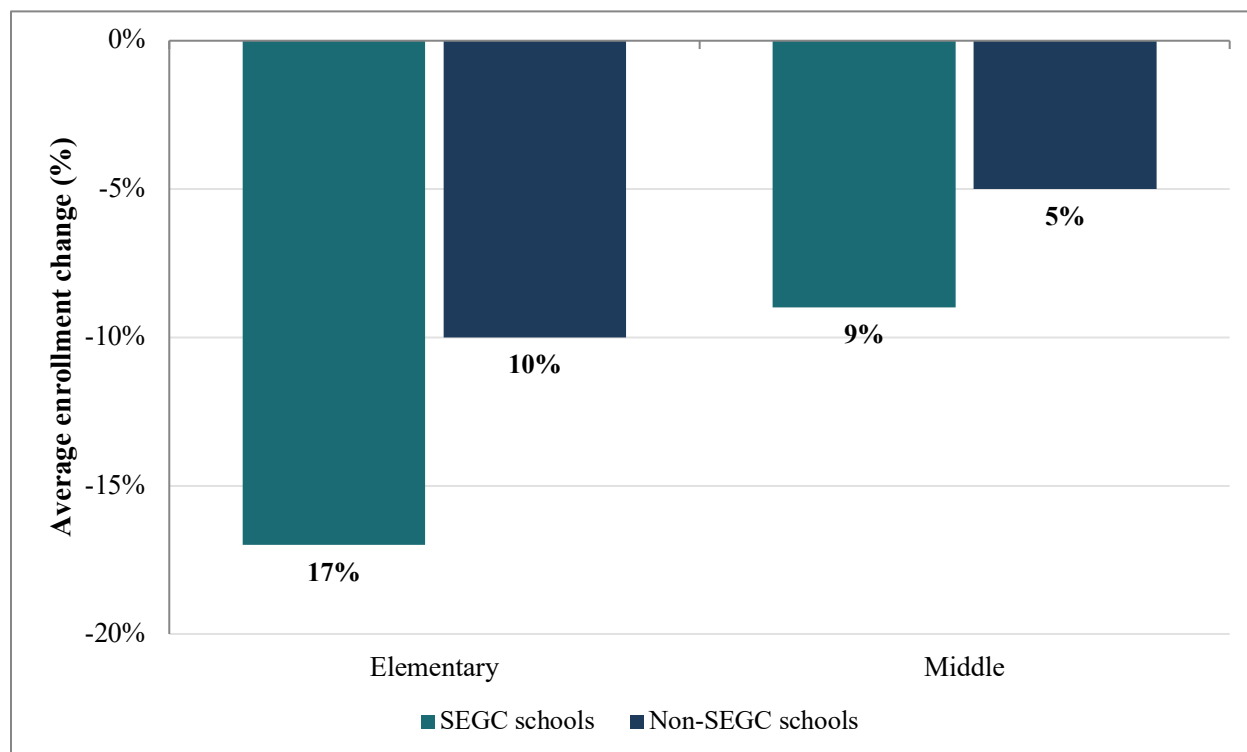
Enrollment across SEGC schools became more balanced, especially at the middle school level. The difference between the highest- and lowest-enrolled SEGC middle schools narrowed from approximately 320 students in 2020–21 to about 220 students in 2024–25, as Kellogg Middle School opened and Harrison Park converted from a K–8 to a middle school. SEGC elementary school enrollment also became more uniform, with the difference between the highest and lowest enrolled elementary schools narrowing by more than 100 students.

However, these fluctuations should be interpreted within the broader context of enrollment decline. SEGC elementary school enrollment declined, on average, by 17% between the 2020–21 and 2024–25 school years, compared with a 10% decline among non-SEGC schools. Middle school enrollment declined by an average of 9% in SEGC schools and 5% outside SEGC schools over the same period.

This means that some of the apparent balancing occurred within a shrinking enrollment context rather than through growth or stabilization across all schools. It is important to note that enrollment projections were overestimated by 20 or more students at seven of 20 SEGC schools (35%) and underestimated by at least 20 students at four schools.³⁵ These projection gaps have important implications for school planning, resources, and stability. When enrollment is meaningfully lower or higher than projected, schools may face midstream adjustments to staffing, schedules, course offerings, intervention supports, and enrichment opportunities.

³⁵ Students are assigned to the school they attended for the most days in the school year. If measuring enrollment by October 1 counts, 12 schools enrolled at least 20 students under the predicted count and three schools enrolled at least 20 students more than predicted.

Figure 2.1 Average Enrollment Decline in SEGC and Non-SEGC Schools, by School Level, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Another finding is that SEGC-impacted schools served fewer students than projected but served higher-than-anticipated numbers of students of color. On average, SEGC schools served about 11% more students who identify as Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, or biracial/multiracial than projected. They also served higher percentages of multilingual learners and students receiving special education services than projected. This finding raises an important equity implication. When schools enroll fewer students than projected but serve higher shares of students with additional support needs, staffing and resource decisions must account for actual student needs and not just enrollment numbers alone.

Student Academic and Discipline Outcomes in SEGC-Impacted Schools Were Broadly Comparable to Matched Peers, with Some Positive Associations for Specific Student Groups

Using a matched comparison approach,³⁶ we compared students in SEGC schools with similar students in non-SEGC schools rather than comparing the two groups as a whole. Overall, students attending SEGC schools had similar academic and behavioral outcomes in 2023–24 and 2024–25 compared with matched peers in non-SEGC schools. Moreover, the evidence does not

³⁶ A matched comparison means that students in SEGC schools were compared with similar students in non-SEGC schools based on observable characteristics, rather than being compared with all students outside SEGC. This approach helps create a more appropriate comparison group, though it does not prove that SEGC caused the observed outcomes.

suggest broad measurable academic or behavioral harm associated with SEGC-impacted schools. However, several student groups in SEGC-impacted schools showed small- to medium-sized positive associations with changes in ELA performance (between +0.05 and +0.13 SD), including Black students, elementary students, students in schools where more than 50% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, multilingual learners, students enrolled in DLI, and students whose home language is not English.

In math, the clearest positive association was for multilingual learners in SEGC-impacted schools. Students whose home language is not English and Asian students also showed higher attendance in 2024–25. These findings are encouraging, but they should be interpreted as small to medium-sized associations rather than evidence that SEGC produced large systemwide gains. Among middle school students specifically, there were no significant or noteworthy associations between SEGC status and OSAS scores, attendance rates, or exclusionary discipline rates. This finding is important because SEGC’s rationale included improving access to robust middle school experiences. The evidence suggests that middle school students in SEGC schools performed comparably to matched peers in non-SEGC schools, but not that middle school outcomes were substantially transformed.

Families With Middle School Students Reported Less Positive Learning Environment Experiences Than Elementary-Only Families

Family and caregiver survey responses suggest that SEGC-impacted middle school families perceived learning environments less positively than elementary families. Families with only elementary students rated their children’s learning environments more positively than families with middle school students. Specifically, 61% of elementary-only families rated learning environments as high quality, compared with 45% of families with only middle school students or with both middle and elementary students. Similar gaps appeared in families’ ratings of whether students experienced disrespect or bias, felt a sense of belonging, and were learning a lot.

Figure 2.2 Families with Middle School Students Rated Learning Environments Less Positively Than Elementary-Only Families

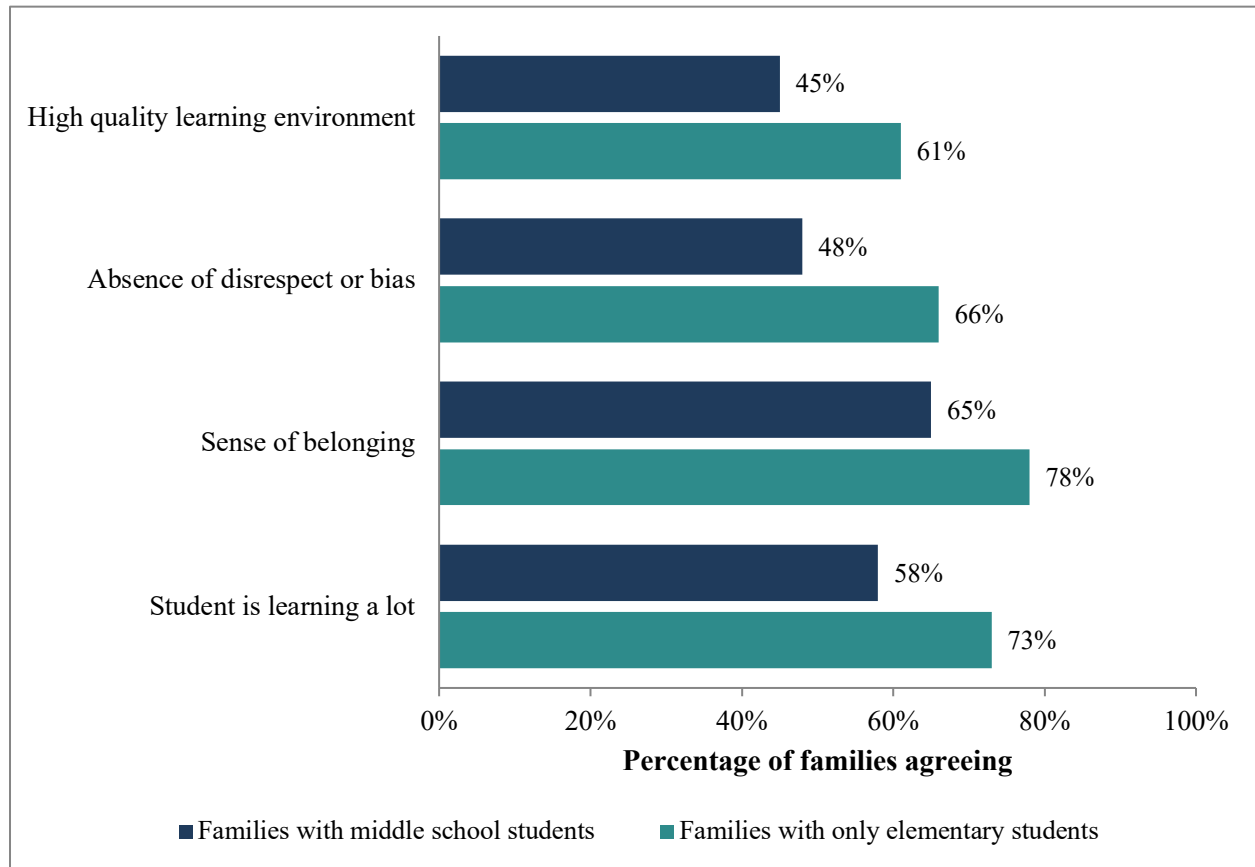
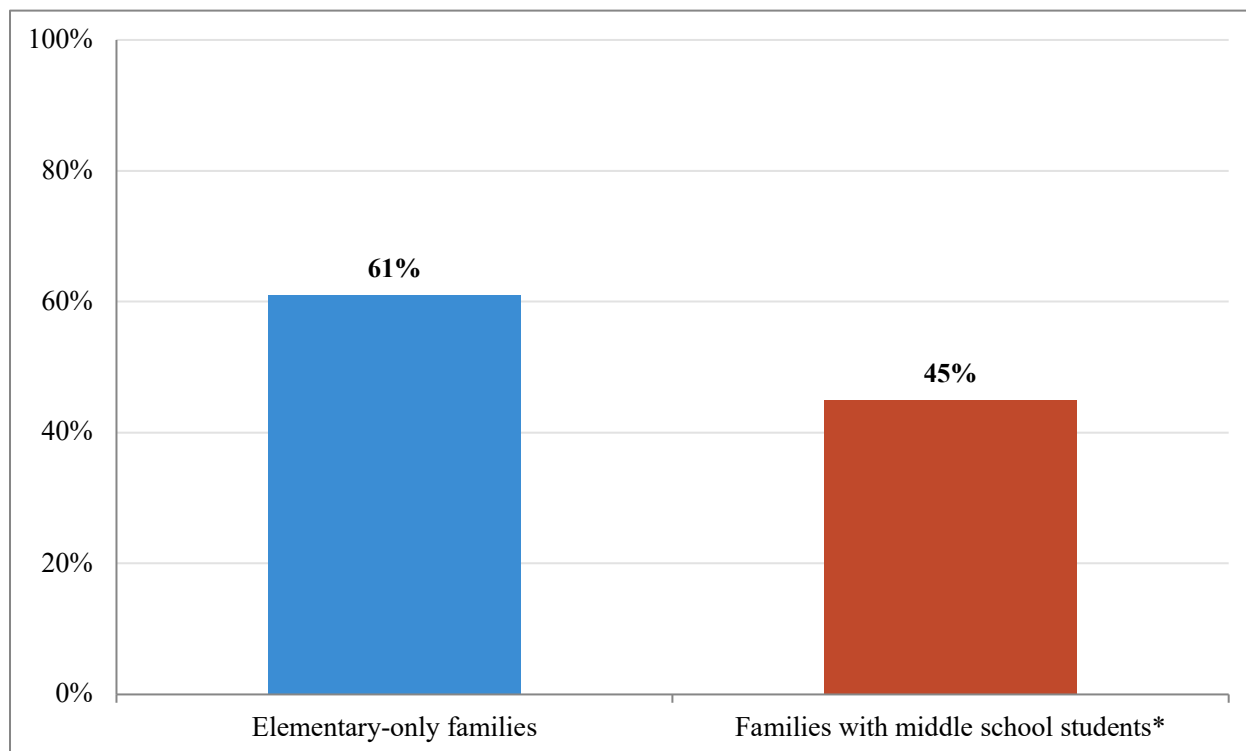


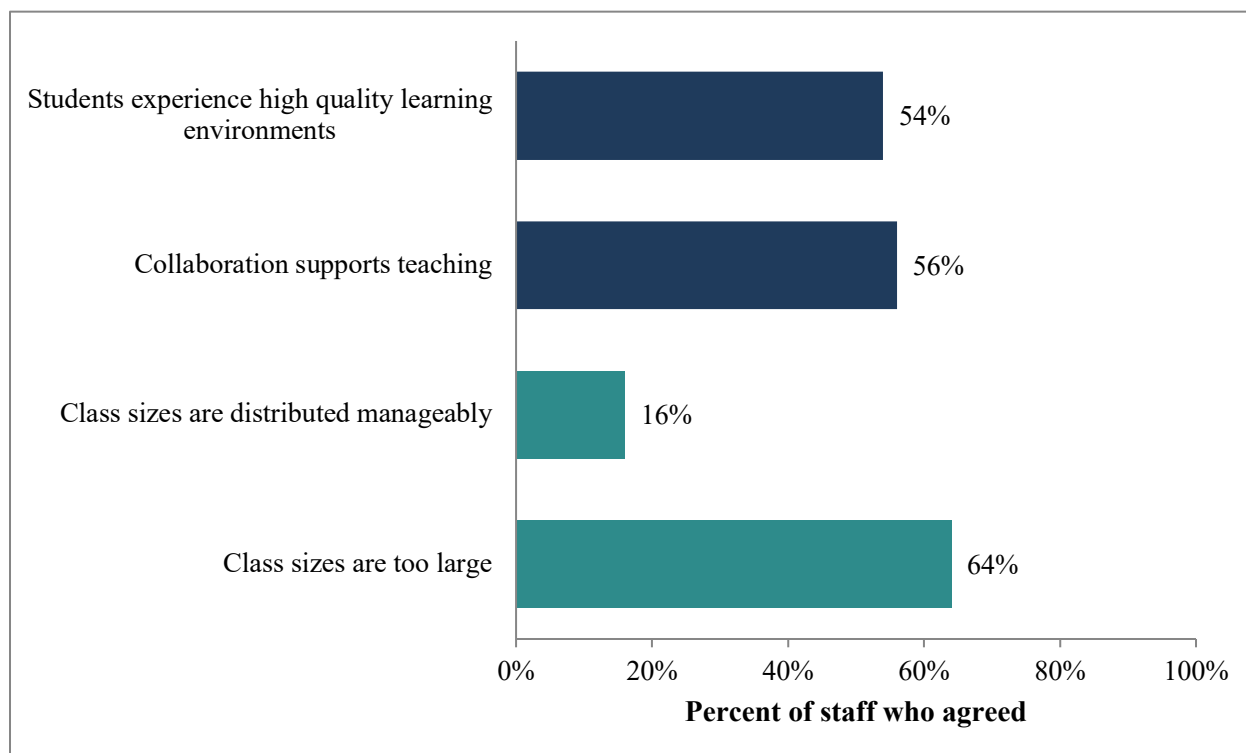
Figure 2.3 Share of SEGC-impacted families rating their children’s learning environments as high quality, by student grade level.



This perception gap matters because it highlights a difference between measured outcomes and lived experience. The quantitative data show comparable academic and behavioral outcomes for middle school students in SEGC-impacted schools, but families reported meaningful differences in how they experienced their students’ learning environments. This suggests that PPS should not rely only on test scores, attendance, or discipline data when assessing the quality of middle school experiences. Perceptions and experiences of school climate, belonging, bias, program access, electives, intervention, and family trust also matter.

Staff Described Learning Environments as Caring but Structurally Strained

Across schools, administrators, teachers, and staff often described learning environments as relationally committed but structurally compromised. Staff described larger classes, fewer adults, more students with complex needs, and less ability to differentiate instruction. In some schools, participants linked reduced staffing and larger classes to weaker support for project-based learning or middle grades programming. In other schools, participants described varied instructional conditions. Some classrooms maintained high levels of rigor, while others struggled to sustain strong instruction because of safety concerns, behavioral needs, high numbers of students with IEPs, and staffing shortages.

Figure 2.4 Staff Survey Perceptions of Learning Environment and Class Sizes

Survey data reinforced these concerns. About half of staff respondents agreed that students experience high-quality learning environments and that collaboration supports teaching. However, only 16% agreed that class sizes are distributed manageably, while 64% said class sizes are too large. Staff also repeatedly described interventions and targeted support as essential but fragile. Participants described reading and math intervention classes as transformative for students, while also warning that schools were “scrambling to keep them” under continued staffing reductions.

DLI consolidation was also described as both more coherent and more costly. Some staff described Spanish DLI consolidation as more intentional and equitable than prior split structures. Others described the loss of neighborhood access, reduced walkability, fewer elective opportunities for DLI students, loss of racial and cultural diversity, and/or weakened connection between neighborhood students and DLI communities. This finding illustrates a recurring pattern across SEGC, which is that a change could improve coherence in one respect while redistributing costs elsewhere.

Domain 2: Linguistic Equity for Historically Underserved Students in Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Programs and Electives

Overall Finding:

Following SEGC-related program relocations, participants described some DLI programs as more coherent and easier to navigate, especially Spanish DLI. However, the data also show that these changes resulted in differentiated challenges and impacts across language programs and involved tradeoffs related to race, neighborhood access, transportation, and students' ability to take electives. While most DLI students remained in PPS after programs moved, relocation still shaped patterns of program participation, including who stayed, who followed the program, who left, and who absorbed more of the disruption.

Guiding Research Questions:

1. To what extent did access to DLI, electives, or advanced programs expand for historically underserved students after program relocation per SEGC changes?
2. To what extent does the relocation of programs and boundary changes displace students from their newly assigned schools?
3. To what extent is student displacement happening in DLI programs as a result of SEGC program relocation? If so, for whom?

DLI Access Improved in Some Areas but Fell Short of Overall Enrollment Targets

Total DLI enrollment in SEGC-impacted schools reached 86% of projected targets by 2024–25 and remained approximately 280 students short of the 1,959-student target established in the 2021 SEGC plan (Table 1.1). Total SEGC DLI enrollment declined by 9% between 2020–21 and 2024–25, even as districtwide DLI enrollment held steady because non-SEGC DLI programs gained more than 100 students during the same period.

However, the aggregate trend masks substantial variation by language program type. Spanish DLI, the largest program, reached 104.5% of its 2025 projection in aggregate. Vietnamese DLI, though much smaller than the Spanish program, more than tripled in enrollment. By contrast, Mandarin and Russian DLI programs lost about 20% of enrollment and Japanese declined by about 5%. These findings suggest that SEGC-related DLI changes did not produce a uniform pattern across language programs. Some programs showed enrollment growth or moved closer to projected enrollment targets, while others experienced enrollment contraction. In some cases, participants also described program relocation as creating greater coherence, but that coherence was not evenly experienced across all DLI programs.

Table 1.1. Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program Projected and Actual Enrollment in SEGC Schools

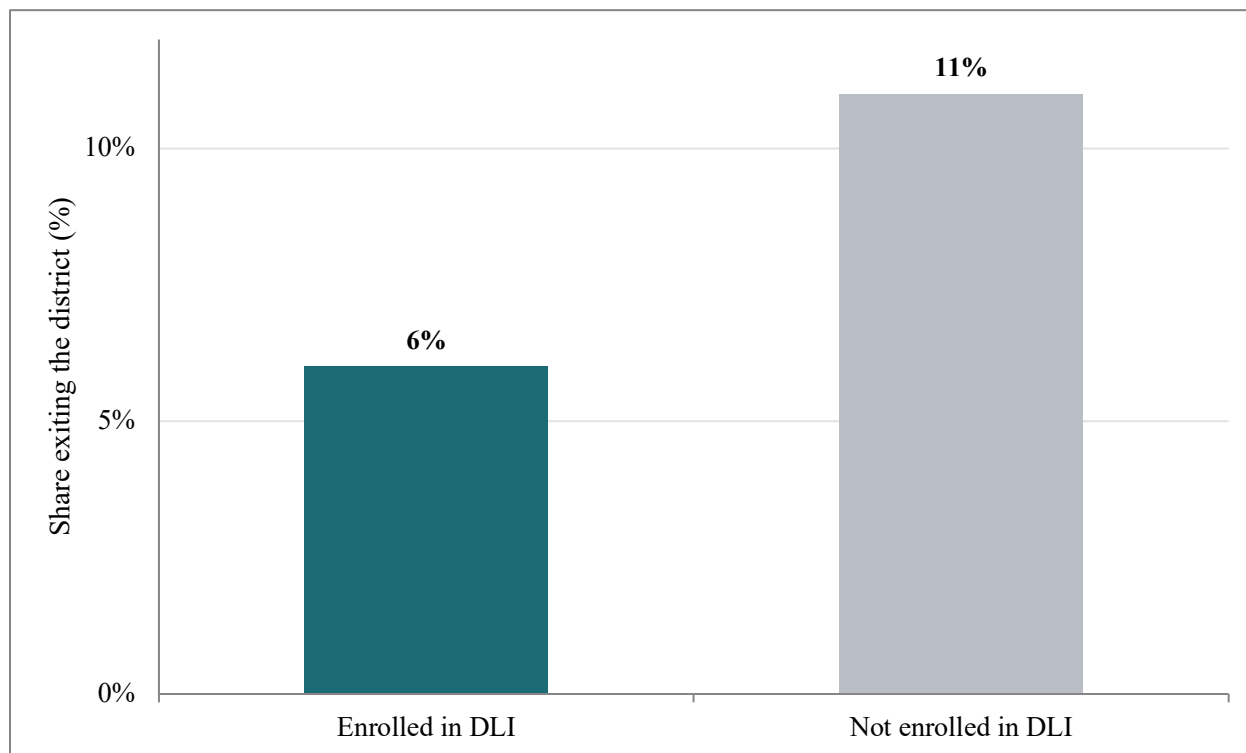
DLI Program	Enrollment 2020–21	Enrollment 2024–25	2025–26 projection	Percent of projection	Percent change 2020–21 to 2024–25
Spanish	845	811	776	104.5%	-4.0%
Mandarin	493	386	560	68.9%	-21.7%
Russian	227	181	269	67.3%	-20.3%
Japanese	253	241	273	88.3%	-4.7%
Vietnamese	17	57	81	70.4%	235.3%
All Programs	1,835	1,676	1,959	85.6%	-8.7%

Latino/a/x participation in SEGC DLI programs increased from 30% to 35%, rising at about the same pace as non-SEGC DLI programs. However, non-SEGC DLI programs continued to enroll a higher share of Latino/a/x students throughout the period. Heritage language match also varied widely by program, with some SEGC programs increasing the share of students whose home language matched the program language (Mandarin +8 percentage points, Spanish + 8 percentage points), and others remaining about the same (Vietnamese, Japanese) and Russian moving in the opposite direction (–6 percentage points).

DLI Students Largely Stayed in PPS, but Relocation Still Shaped Program-Level Sorting

One of the clearest quantitative findings is that DLI-enrolled students whose programs moved largely stayed in PPS, whether or not they followed their DLI program to the new school. The percentage of DLI-enrolled students leaving the district in SEGC schools was not notably different from DLI students outside SEGC-impacted schools. On average, DLI students left PPS at roughly half the rate of non-DLI students. At SEGC-impacted schools, the exit rate for DLI students was about 6%, compared with 11% for non-DLI students in 2023–24.

Figure 2.5 (DLI) Students Left PPS at About Half the Rate of their Peers
Annual exit rate from the district at SEGC-impacted schools, 2023–24



This suggests that DLI participation may have functioned as a retention factor for many students and families. However, retention should not be confused with an absence of displacement. When DLI programs moved, students who remained in PPS generally followed their program to the new school. Yet among students who left relocated DLI programs, families who left were disproportionately English-speaking. This pattern suggests that families' decisions to stay, follow, or leave were shaped by language background, racial identity, transportation, family resources, program attachment, and access to alternative schooling options.

Taken together, these findings suggest that SEGC-related DLI program relocations did not appear to result in widespread district exit among DLI students. Most DLI-enrolled students whose programs moved locations stayed in PPS, and DLI students left the district at lower rates than non-DLI students in both SEGC and non-SEGC schools. This suggests that DLI participation may be associated with stronger retention in PPS, even when programs are relocated. Thus, DLI might be a protective factor for both students and staff.

At the same time, the findings show that relocation still matters for who stays, who follows the program, and who leaves the program. Again, when DLI programs moved, students who remained in PPS generally followed their program to the new school. However, among students who left DLI programs after relocation, leavers more often spoke a language other than English at home. This pattern suggests that program relocation may be experienced differently across

student groups and that families' decisions to stay, follow, or leave may be shaped by language background, racial identity, access, family resources and preference, transportation, or perceived program fit.

This finding is consistent with national research on dual language and school choice which indicates that DLI programs can operate as specialized choice programs, where participation is shaped by race, class, language background, transportation, information, and family capacity. Prior research has found that DLI programs may attract white, English-dominant, and more affluent families, and can sometimes shift program priorities away from the language-minoritized communities that these programs were originally designed to serve (Valdez et al., 2016;³⁷ Chaparro, 2021;³⁸ Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017).³⁹ In this context, the overrepresentation of speakers of languages other than English among DLI leavers may reflect a form of program self-sorting in which families with greater flexibility may be more able or willing to commit when a program relocates, while families with stronger linguistic, cultural, or programmatic ties may be more likely to leave.

Moreover, the Mandarin DLI findings illustrate how relocation can reshape program composition even when enrollment remains relatively stable. One elementary Mandarin DLI strand maintained its pre-SEGC enrollment level after relocating, while middle school Mandarin DLI enrollment declined and remained below the SEGC forecast. At the same time, the share of heritage language speakers increased substantially, indicating that relocation may have changed not only the size but also the composition of the program.

Whole-School DLI Conversion Advanced One Equity Goal While Creating Another Equity Burden

The conversion of one school to whole-school Spanish DLI produced one of the strongest examples of simultaneous benefit and burden. On one hand, participants described the full-school Spanish DLI model as more intentional, coherent, and culturally affirming for Latino/a/x students and families. On the other hand, nearly 60% of students left the school after 2022–23, primarily to newly assigned elementary and middle schools. Black students were almost entirely displaced from the school, with the Black student enrollment dropping from 10% to 2%, while the Latino/a/x share increased from 49% to 69%.

This finding illustrates why programmatic equity, and racial equity must be examined together. A program change can strengthen access and affirmation for one historically underserved community while creating displacement, reduced neighborhood access, or loss of belonging for

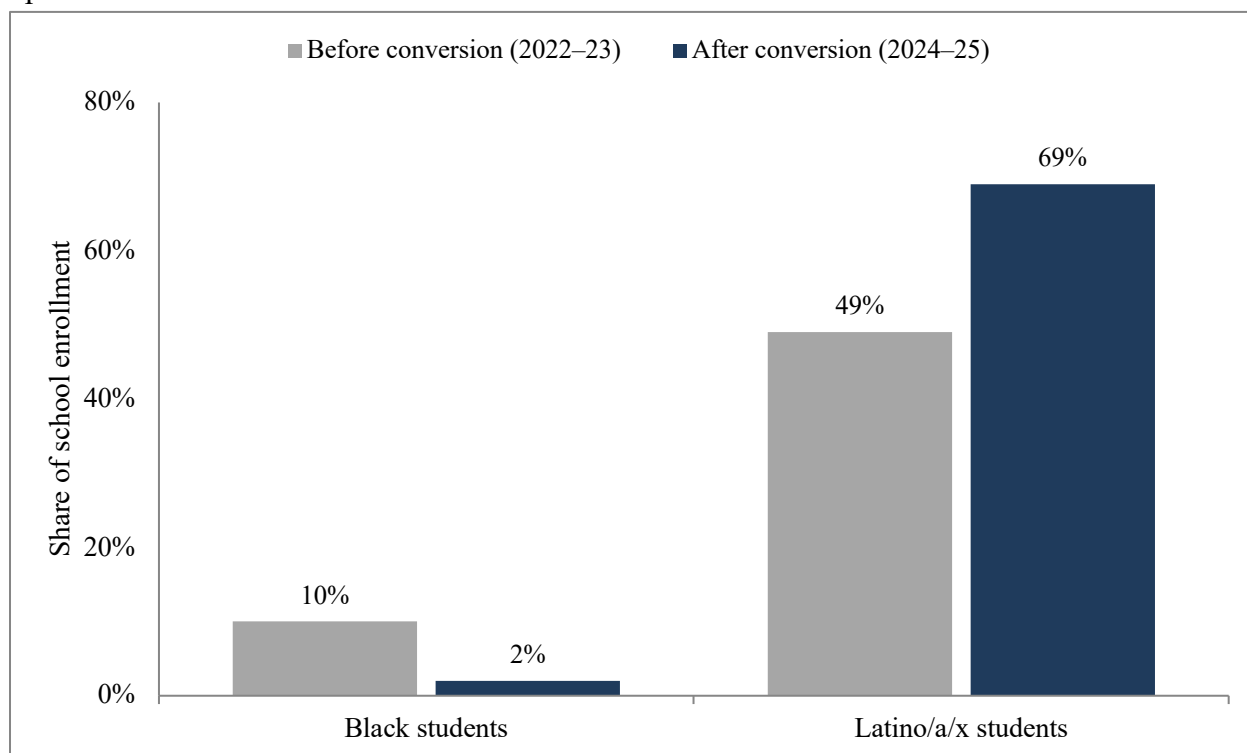
³⁷ Valdez, V. E., Freire, J. A., & Delavan, M. G. (2016). The gentrification of dual language education. *The Urban Review*, 48, 601–627.

³⁸ Chaparro, S. E. (2021). Creating fertile grounds for two-way immersion: Gentrification, immigration, & neoliberal school reforms. *Language Policy*, 20, 435–461.

³⁹ Cervantes-Soon, C. G., Dorner, L., Palmer, D., Heiman, D., Schwerdtfeger, R., & Choi, J. (2017). Combating inequalities in two-way language immersion programs: Toward critical consciousness in bilingual education spaces. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 403–427.

another. In this case, SEGC changes appear to have strengthened the coherence of a Spanish DLI model while also redistributing costs to non-DLI neighborhood families and Black students.

Figure 2.6 Changes in Student Racial Demographics After Conversion to a Whole-School Spanish DLI Model



Overall, these findings are especially important for current and future rightsizing conversations because they distinguish between districtwide exit, program-level sorting, and uneven family capacity to absorb change. Some families may have a greater ability to navigate choice systems, absorb transportation burdens, advocate for preferred options, or leave programs when changes do not meet their needs, which may or may not increase with the closing or consolidating of schools or programs. Other families may have fewer viable alternatives and may bear more disruption.

Domain 3: School Leaders, Educator, and Staff Experiences

Overall Finding:

During the SEGC implementation year, school-based staff were asked to manage substantial transition responsibilities. The data show short-term staffing disruption during that period, with staff of color experiencing the most pronounced measurable impact. Across schools, staff described a gap between their commitment to supporting students and families and the resources available to do so. Many understood what students and families needed, but did not consistently have the time, staffing, information, district guidance, or transition infrastructure necessary to provide that support.

Guiding Research Questions:

1. To what extent did the SEGC process affect administrator, educator and staff morale and retention, especially among personnel of color?
2. To what extent did administrators, educators and staff feel equipped to support students and families during and after SEGC-related changes?
3. How do administrators, educators, and staff, particularly those of color, experience the SEGC changes in terms of emotional well-being and professional support?
4. How did administrators, educators, and staff describe the experiences of students and families from historically underserved communities after SEGC-related shifts?

Staff Morale Was Most Strained Where SEGC Overlapped with Staffing Loss, Turnover, and Role Instability

Across schools, participants often described morale not as a single dip tied only to SEGC changes, but as a sustained response to annual cuts, un-assignment of staff, role reassignment, and ongoing instability. Some participants described wanting to quit, taking mental-health leave, or working in a “doing more with less” environment that eroded job security and made burnout feel imminent.

At some schools, strong internal culture and perceptions of leadership effectiveness and tenure buffered these effects but did not eliminate strain. Participants at some schools described them as calm, relationally strong, and internally coherent, even while staff worried about future cuts. In those schools, leadership and peer culture were essential, but they did not remove the stress created by what participants’ described as district instability, budget uncertainty, or the demands of implementing SEGC-changes.

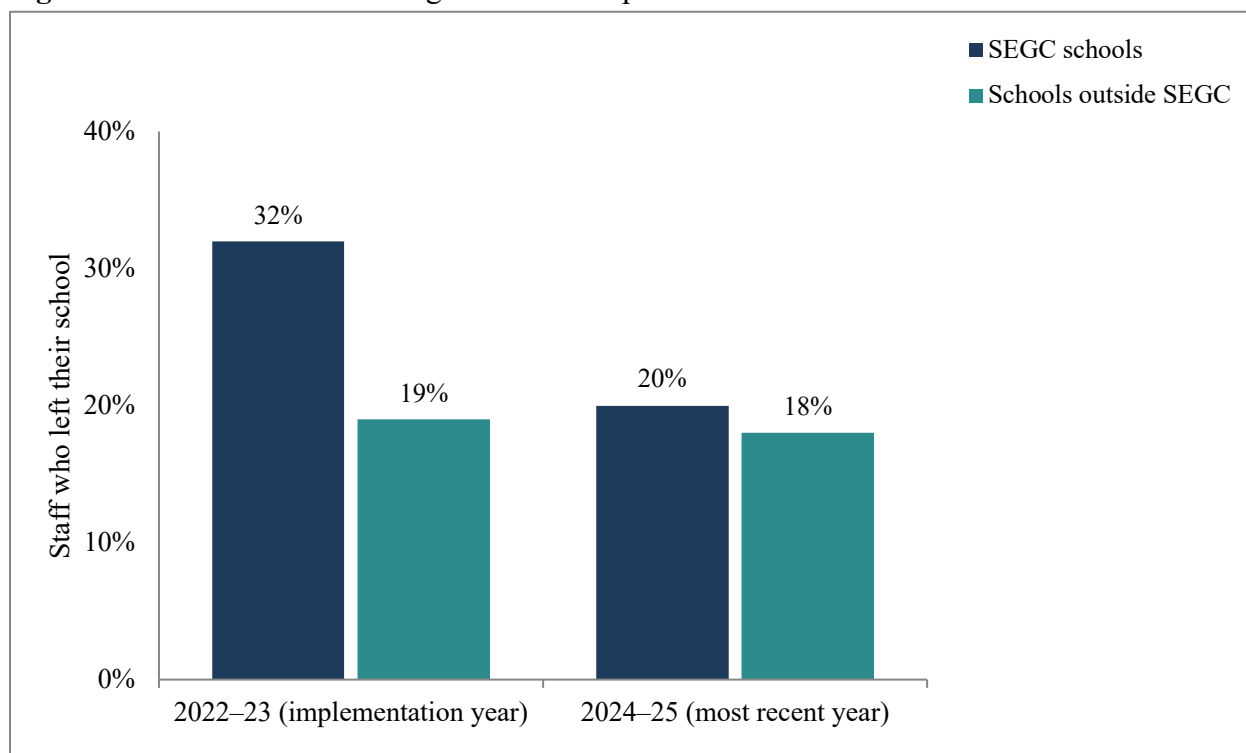
Principal and administrator turnover also mattered. In 2021–22, 55% of principals at SEGC-impacted schools left their schools, compared with 26% at non-SEGC schools. Districtwide, schools with the highest staff retention were more likely to have had stable principal leadership,

while schools in the bottom quartile of staff retention almost always experienced principal turnover. This suggests that leadership stability was a key condition shaping staff retention and school capacity during SEGC implementation.

The Implementation Year Produced an Acute and Racially Uneven Staffing Disruption

After the 2022–23 school year, 32% of staff at SEGC schools left their school, compared with only 19% at non-SEGC schools. By 2024–25, the gap had narrowed to two percentage points, suggesting that the disruption was acute but temporary in the aggregate. Assistant principals were especially affected, with more than 50% (7 of 13) leaving their school in SEGC-impacted schools compared with 26% in the rest of the district.

Figure 2.7 Staff Turnover During the SEGC Implementation Year and Most Recent School Year



Staff of Color bore the sharpest measurable impact. In 2022–23, 39% of Staff of Color at SEGC schools left their schools, compared with 21% at non-SEGC schools. Staff of Color at SEGC schools also left the district at elevated rates, 18% compared with 10% for Staff of Color elsewhere in the district. By 2024–25, turnover rates for Staff of Color at SEGC schools returned to roughly non-SEGC levels, but the implementation year produced a real loss of Staff of Color.

The three largest racial groups experienced SEGC changes differently. Black staff at SEGC schools showed persistently elevated turnover and the highest involuntary termination rate. Latino/a/x staff experienced the sharpest 2022–23 school departure spike, partly driven by DLI

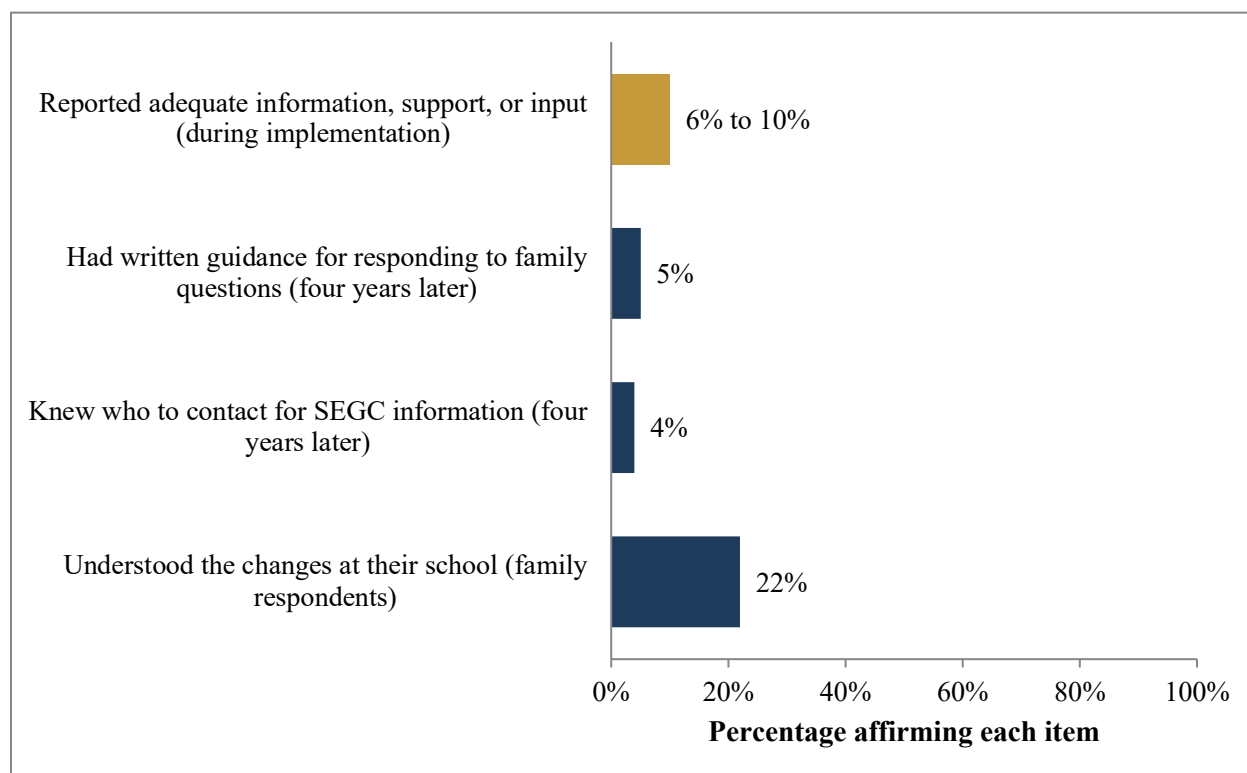
relocation. Asian staff also left SEGC schools at higher rates than Asian staff in non-SEGC schools, though most moved within PPS rather than leaving the district.

Staff Felt Unequipped During Implementation and Many Still Feel Unequipped Today

Staff frequently reported that district communication and planning were insufficient for the scale of change they were expected to manage. Participants described supporting families while “flying blind,” answering family questions with unreadable maps or incomplete information, and inheriting unsafe or unsettled conditions without adequate groundwork. In several schools, participants said transition planning was ultimately left to individual schools rather than guided by a coherent district transition infrastructure.

Survey findings reinforce this pattern. During implementation, only 6% to 10% of survey respondents reported adequate information, support, or input. Four years later, only 5% reported that they had written guidance for responding to family questions about their school model, and only 4% knew who to contact for SEGC-related information. Among family survey respondents, only 22% agreed that they understood the changes happening at their school during the SEGC process.

Figure 2.8 Survey Respondents Reporting Adequate Information, Support, and Understanding During the SEGC Process (X-Axis is Percentage of respondents)



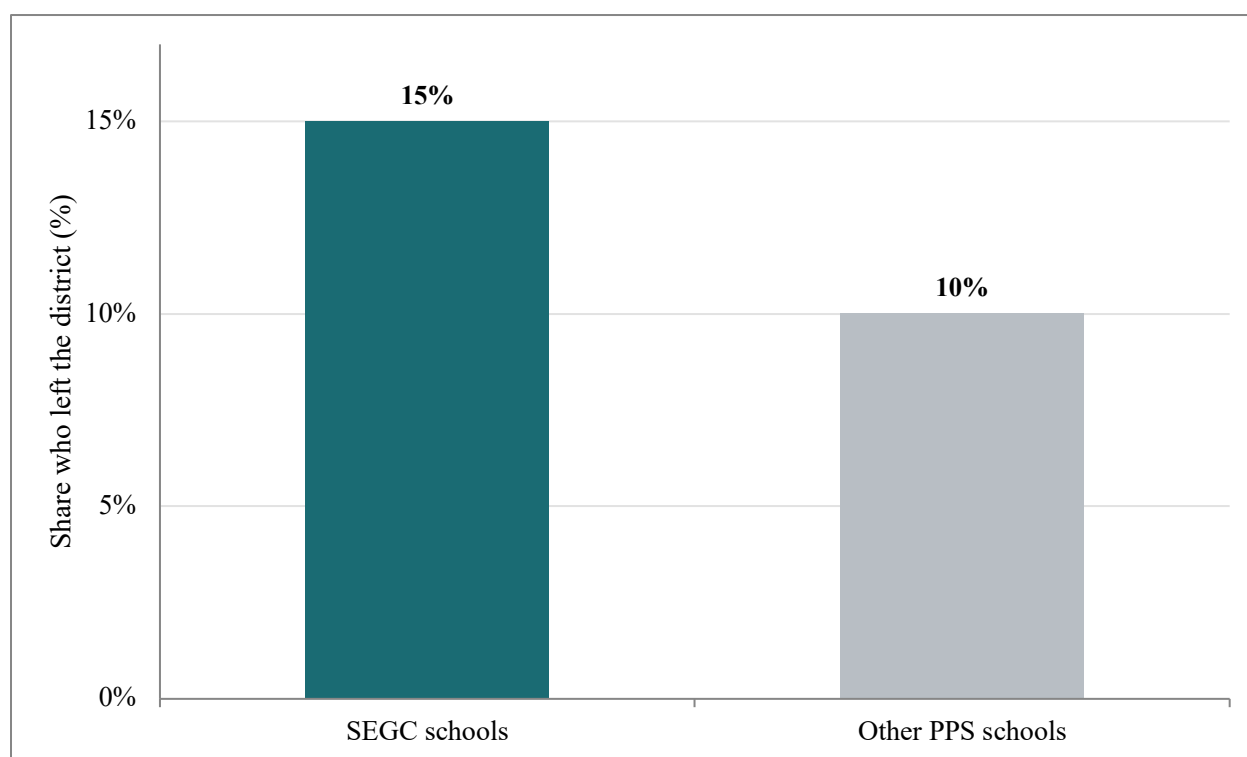
Schools felt most equipped when local leadership built the support structures to navigate SEGC changes. Participants described school-led outreach, family game nights, social work, translation work, trauma-informed routines, and internal support teams. These school-based efforts mattered, but they also reveal a central implementation gap in which much of the practical capacity to support families came from school-level initiative rather than district-level infrastructure.

Emotional Well-Being Was Shaped by Cumulative Strain

Participants described emotional well-being as strained by cumulative disruption rather than by SEGC changes alone. Across schools, participants described stress, grief, anger, dread, sleeplessness, mental-health leave, and emotional exhaustion. Some described SEGC as part of a multi-year erosion, a constant crisis of putting out fires, or a tightrope of trying to sustain students and staff through repeated change.

Figure 2.9 Staff Attrition at SEGC Schools vs Non-SEGC Schools

Share of staff who left the district after 2022–23



Our qualitative findings suggest that professional support was often strongest inside schools and weakest at the district level. Staff described supportive principals, stable internal leadership, and strong peer cultures as protective factors. However, they also repeatedly contrasted these internal supports with low trust in district decisions, insufficient communication, and a lack of reliable district support. Among survey respondents, 25% considered leaving PPS due to SEGC changes.

Personnel data validate this concern. 15% of staff at SEGC schools left the district in the 2022–23 school year, compared with 10% at other PPS schools.

Trust in future rightsizing was especially low. Only 3% of staff survey respondents mostly or completely trusted the district to handle rightsizing fairly, and more than half reported no trust at all. This finding suggests that future districtwide change efforts will begin from a context of damaged trust unless PPS actively acknowledges prior harms, clarifies decision rules, and demonstrates changed behavior.

Staff Perceived That Historically Underserved Communities Bore Disproportionate Disruption

Across multiple schools, staff perceived that low-income communities and communities of color bore disproportionate disruption. Participants described some schools becoming smaller, whiter, or less socioeconomically diverse; students being bused out of multicultural working-class neighborhoods; and affluent families having more power to avoid changes. Staff also described transportation, language access, chronic absenteeism, and specialized support capacity as mechanisms through which inequity was experienced.

At the same time, some participants described gains in cultural affirmation or developmental fit for particular underserved communities. Some schools were described as more affirming for Latino/a/x families, more developmentally appropriate after returning to a K–5 model, or richer as comprehensive middle school environments. This means the staff findings do not support a simple harm-only story. They suggest challenging, uneven and simultaneous effects. In that, some students and families gained access to more coherent or affirming environments, while others experienced loss, disruption, or reduced access.

***Domain 4: Family and Community Voice, Engagement, and Equitable Decision-Making**

Overall Finding:

Participants described SEGC as a process that created opportunities for participation, but not always meaningful influence. SEGC members often described feelings heard by one another within the coalition, while also reporting that they did not see their input meaningfully reflected in district decisions or final outcomes. Across these accounts, several concerns emerged repeatedly, including low trust, perceptions that some outcomes had already been determined, limited access to data, and concerns that the burdens of change were not distributed equitably.

*This finding is discussed more fully in Section 3 of the report.

Guiding Research Questions:

1. In what ways did SEGC members feel their input was heard, valued, and reflected in final decisions?
2. How can future district efforts, especially those related to enrollment and program changes, better build trust and support meaningful engagement with families and communities?

SEGC Members Experienced a Gap Between Participation and Influence

Most SEGC members who participated in the evaluation felt they had very limited influence over final decisions. Many invested substantial time, expertise, and energy into the process, but came away believing their input did not meaningfully shape district outcomes. Participants described a sharp disconnect between the promise of participation and the reality of advisory-only power. This distinction matters. SEGC members often described the coalition itself as respectful, collaborative, and mutually supportive. However, they distinguished that experience from their sense that PPS district leadership and the board did not meaningfully act on SEGC's collective input. In other words, members could feel heard by one another while still feeling unheard by the decision-makers who controlled final outcomes.

Perceptions of Predetermined Outcomes Undermined Trust

SEGC members repeatedly described key decisions as effectively pre-set from their perspective, especially around which schools could be included in the process, which program relocations were considered, which school configurations were possible, and what was "on the table."⁴⁰ From their perspective, these constraints made the process feel less authentic, less transparent, and less equitable.

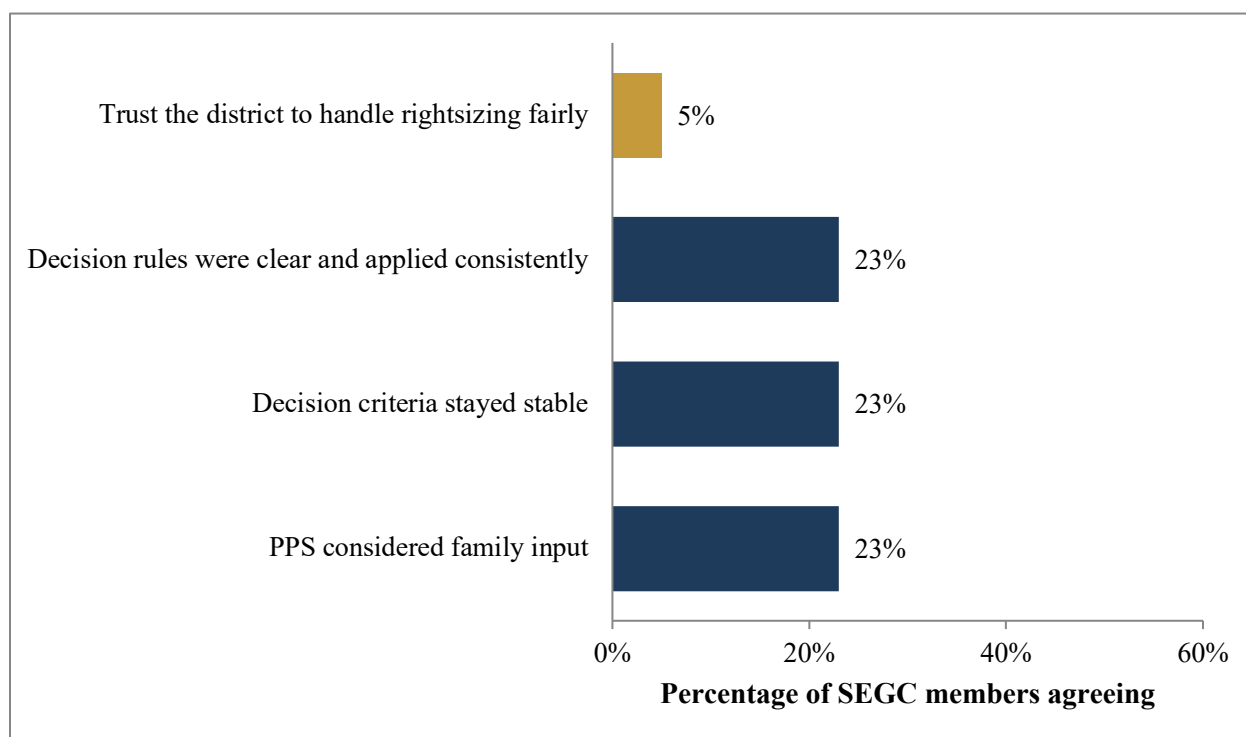
⁴⁰ We did not find administrative or outcome data that could independently confirm this pattern. However, we name it here because it emerged as meaningful in participants lived experiences and shaped how they understood the consequences of SEGC-related changes.

Control over data and scenario modeling also shaped whether members felt valued. Participants described delayed, inequitable, or limited access to requested data, which made it difficult to test alternatives and contributed to the sense that district-preferred outcomes were being advanced regardless of coalition input. For many members, data access was not a technical issue alone, it was connected to power, trust, and whether the process allowed meaningful participation.

Survey Findings Confirm Low Trust and Procedural Equity Concerns

Among 22 SEGC members who responded to the family survey, only 23% agreed that decision rules were clear and applied consistently, 23% agreed that criteria stayed stable, and 23% agreed that PPS considered family input. The typical member endorsed fewer than one of these three procedural integrity statements. Only 5% of SEGC members trusted the district on rightsizing, which is one of the lowest trust ratings among all groups in either the staff or family survey.

Figure 2.10 SEGC Coalition Members' Perspectives on the SEGC Process and Future Rightsizing



SEGC members were also among the harshest critics of the equity outcomes of the process. On the survey item asking whether benefits and burdens were distributed equitably, SEGC members reported a median of 1.0, meaning more than half selected the lowest possible rating. This finding is notable because these were people who participated directly in the process and were positioned to observe how decisions were made and how burdens were distributed.

At the same time, SEGC members reported student experiences that were comparable to other families. This suggests their dissatisfaction was not simply driven by personal dissatisfaction with their own students' schools. Rather, it reflected their judgment about a process they observed from the inside and concluded failed on its own terms.

Future Engagement Must Be Earlier, Clearer, and More Influential

Participants emphasized that future district rebalancing, closure, consolidation, boundary, or program-change efforts need clearer goals, firmer scope, and more honest discussion of tradeoffs from the start. Trust was damaged when the purpose of the process was unclear, the scope narrowed midstream, or constraints appeared without transparent rationale.

Participants also stressed that rebuilding trust depends on direct, concrete, and internally consistent communication. They described prior communication as too abstract, overly wordy, or inconsistent with the data SEGC members had been using. Future engagement should provide easy-to-understand data, earlier listening opportunities, multilingual and lower-barrier engagement formats, and visible evidence that community input shaped proposals.

Finally, participants argued that the district must apply its racial equity and social justice lens through actual decisions, not only through symbolic language. Trust eroded when participants perceived that more affluent and whiter communities were protected from participating in SEGC while more under-resourced schools and families were not. Participants also called for the district to begin any future efforts by publicly acknowledging past harms, broken trust, and specific process failures, paired with visible guardrails and accountability.

Domain 5: Factors that Shaped School Experiences with SEGC Changes

Overall Finding:

SEGC-impacted schools did not unfold as a single, uniform experience across schools. The data suggest that schools experienced and responded to SEGC-related changes differently in relation to several contextual conditions, including the type, number, and intensity of change, leadership stability, staffing capacity, school culture, prior history, program identity, district support, and accumulated strain. This finding helps explain variation in how school communities made sense of, absorbed, and experienced the same district initiative.

Guiding Research Question:

1. How did SEGC-related changes play out across the schools, and what factors shaped how schools experienced, absorbed, and responded to those changes?

SEGC Was Experienced as Cumulative and Layered, not as a Single Transition

Across the qualitative data, participants described SEGC-related changes as cumulative and layered rather than as one isolated transition. Schools were not only responding to boundary changes or program relocations, but they were also navigating school mergers, feeder pattern changes, grade reconfiguration, construction, pandemic recovery, labor actions, budget reductions, staffing instability, and leadership turnover at both the central office and school levels. Participants described this as a dense web of transitions and, in some cases, as a multi-year erosion.

This finding is important because districts often evaluate changes one at a time, while schools experience them cumulatively. A single boundary change may seem manageable on paper, but it can feel very different when layered on top of prior program loss, staffing reductions, leadership turnover, construction disruption, declining enrollment, or weakened family trust.

As mentioned previously, research on educational change and policy implementation helps explain this pattern. Schools do not simply receive and implement district decisions in a uniform way, they interpret and enact reforms through existing organizational conditions, including leadership capacity, professional relationships, staffing stability, school climate, and alignment between district decisions and school-level needs.⁴¹ More recent research similarly emphasizes that educational change is shaped by preparation, local fit, coordination, flexibility, and capacity-building.⁴²

⁴¹ Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

⁴² Aldridge, J. M., & McLure, F. I. (2024). Preparing schools for educational change: Barriers and supports: A systematic literature review. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 23(3), 486-511.

Change Stress Emerged When Change Load Exceeded Organizational Capacity

To make sense of these patterns, we have developed an organizational strain framework. The framework can be summarized simply: change stress increases when the amount, intensity, or pace of change exceeds a school's capacity to absorb, implement, and recover from that change. Put differently, organizational strain emerges in the gap between what a school is asked to carry and what it has available to carry it.

Figure 2.11 School-Level Change Stress Emerging Framework

Change Stress = Change Load ÷ Organizational Capacity	
CHANGE LOAD	ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
Quantity Number of changes Intensity Type: low to high identity disruption Simultaneity Compounding simultaneous changes	Principal leadership Staff stability & turnover Role mix: SPED, counselors, EAs Class size Staff morale Overall school climate Shared identity & mission

When Change Load > Organizational Capacity = Stress

FRAGILE	STRESSED	STRAINED	ADAPTIVE	STABLE
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This diagram illustrates how school-level change strain and stress can emerge when the amount, intensity, or pace of change exceeds a school's organizational capacity. The continuum is intended as an implementation-readiness tool, not a rating of school quality.

This is a type of conceptual model with a continuum, not a mathematical score. It is intended to help PPS identify implementation risk and necessary support before future changes are finalized. In this report, strain does not mean a school has failed. Many schools remained caring, functional, and deeply committed to students while also showing signs of strain. Strain refers to the condition that emerges when schools keep functioning while the demands placed on them exceed the time, staffing, leadership stability, role depth, trust, and support available to absorb, implement, and recover from change.

Type of Change Mattered as Much as the Number of Changes

The findings suggest that the type of change mattered as much as the number of changes. Program relocation, school mergers, whole-school conversion, and identity changes often

generated deeper relational disruption than boundary change alone because they affected how schools understood who they were, whom they served, which programs defined them, and how families experienced belonging. Participants described grief, neighborhood loss, disrupted relationships, and remade school identities in schools where SEGC-related changes altered school identity or program identity.

At the same time, even boundary and feeder pattern changes could produce deep forms of loss when they reduced enrollment, weakened feeder stability, reduced racial or socioeconomic diversity of students, or made it harder to sustain a comprehensive school model. This means that future PPS planning should examine both the formal type of change and the local school context in which that change will land.

Stable Leadership and Strong Internal Culture Helped Schools Absorb Change

As mentioned previously, participants across several schools described supportive principals, strong staff relationships, coherent routines, and shared school identity as protective factors. These schools were not unaffected by SEGC-related changes. Rather, their leaders and adult cultures helped them maintain school climate, support families, and keep daily routines functioning.

However, the findings also caution against over-relying on school-level resilience. Strong leadership and staff culture often buffered harm that district systems did not adequately prevent. Where district support was late, partial, unclear, or mismatched to school realities, schools improvised. They held family distress, solved communication problems, interpreted unclear information, and built local supports. This suggests that school-level resilience helped schools survive change, but it should not substitute for stronger district planning, staffing, communication, and transition infrastructure.

District Support Was Often Experienced as Late, Partial, or Mismatched

Across schools, participants repeatedly described district support as too little, too late, or not well aligned with the realities schools were facing. Examples included missing planning documents, late or confusing data, limited transition infrastructure, unclear guidance, expectations that were not met, support that arrived after the moment had passed, and assistance that did not address the core organizational challenges schools were experiencing.

These accounts connect directly to the broader implementation question that Domain 5 was added to address: how much change can a school or system absorb before its capacity to support students, sustain staff, and maintain coherent learning environments becomes strained? The SEGC findings suggest that capacity to absorb change depends on more than the formal policy decision. They further suggest that it depends on timing, prior school history, leadership stability, staffing depth, class size, staff morale, school climate, shared identity, student need, the quality

of district support, and whether families and staff experience the process as fair and well-resourced.

To be clear, the continuum below should not be read as a school ranking, performance rating, or judgment of school quality. It is more of an implementation-readiness tool. Its purpose is to help PPS identify how much change a school may be able to absorb, where additional support may be needed, and where proposed changes may require deeper planning before implementation.

Table 2. The Continuum Should Be Used as an Implementation-Readiness Tool, not a School Rating

Continuum position	Meaning	Evidence pattern in SEGC
Stable	The school has enough leadership stability, staff capacity, trust, routines, and shared identity to absorb change without major disruption.	Few schools in the qualitative sample fit this category cleanly because even lower-impact schools still faced budget, enrollment, and potential consolidation pressures.
Adaptive	The school experiences strain but has enough internal capacity, leadership, culture, and routines to adjust while maintaining coherence.	Some schools showed stronger internal culture, program coherence, or stable leadership that helped them navigate change.
Strained	The school is functioning but change demands are pressing against available capacity.	Schools often described enrollment loss, staff reductions, feeder disruption, program changes, or reduced ability to sustain comprehensive support.
Stressed	The school remains committed to students but is overextended and showing significant strain.	Schools described high change load, staffing instability, large classes, unclear guidance, emotional strain, and stretched support systems.
Fragile	Change load may be exceeding the school's capacity to absorb,	Some schools approached fragile indicators, but the current data do not support labeling any school as fully

	implement, and recover without substantial support.	fragile without additional outcome and implementation data.
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Implications for Future PPS Reconfiguration Decisions

Future PPS reconfiguration decisions should include an implementation burden assessment before final decisions are made. This assessment could ask what each school has already absorbed, what type of change is being proposed, how much relational or identity disruption the change may create, what staff and leadership capacity currently exists, what student needs must be supported, and what transition infrastructure the district will provide.

The strongest cross-school finding is not that SEGC affected every school in the same way. It did not. Some schools experienced SEGC-related changes as a pathway to stronger coherence,⁴³ better facilities, more developmentally appropriate grade configurations, or more culturally affirming programs. Other schools experienced the changes as loss, instability, staffing strain, inequity, weakened trust, and diminished neighborhood connection. In several schools, both were true at once.

Overall, SEGC is best understood as challenging district change filtered through local school capacity, history, identity, leadership, staffing, and community politics. Future PPS decisions should therefore avoid assuming that a district-level policy will land evenly across schools. The same decision can create different experiences depending on the conditions into which it is introduced.

⁴³ Forman, M. L., Stosich, E. L., & Bocala, C. (2021). The internal coherence framework: Creating the conditions for continuous improvement in schools. Harvard Education Press.

Section 2A: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

The findings above point to several lessons for PPS as it considers future enrollment balancing, rightsizing, boundary, program relocation, or school reconfiguration decisions. These lessons are not intended to relitigate SEGC, but to help the district learn from how SEGC-related changes were planned, implemented, experienced, and absorbed across schools. We share a few lessons learned and, in doing so, offer some recommendations for PPS.

SEGC changes did improve enrollment balancing at the middle school level. However, overall, SEGC schools continued to experience declining enrollment.

These changes did not *reverse* enrollment declines but more so *redistributed* it. SEGC changes made some middle schools more balanced in their enrollment, but it arguably did so by moving students around within a context of continued overall decline in SE Portland and across the district. In that sense, SEGC functioned more as a redistribution strategy than as an enrollment recovery strategy.

PPS should be cautious and honest about making promises and providing support it might not actually deliver, and it must publicly track follow-through.

Broken promises or even the perceptions of them were among the most trust-damaging elements in the preliminary findings. Participants repeatedly described promised staffing, small class sizes, transition support, and follow-up structures that were later reduced, delayed, or denied. This turned SEGC implementation strain into a trust problem. A major lesson is that PPS should not make promises during contentious transitions unless they are budgeted, operationalized, feasible and protected. In addition, several SEGC schools were below the anticipated enrollment projections for 2025–26.

SEGC type changes require staff support and culture-building in impacted schools, not just student and program reassignment.

Where schools were merged, reconfigured, or asked to absorb new communities, our findings suggest that the hardest work was often cultural, relational, and instructional. Staff had to navigate different norms, expectations, reputations, and community assumptions. Without explicit support, these tensions could linger for years. In some places, they did. Thus, for future closures and/or consolidations, PPS might consider providing supports for staff such as co-planning time for new staff to get to know each other, work discuss student supports, shared norm-setting convenings, conflict mediation, community-building activities and routines, orientation for incoming families and students, deliberate identity work for newly configured schools.

Anchored directly in the data from this analysis, participants identified nine different categorical types of supports they need or what benefited from during SEGC changes. However, we realize

that given the budget challenges that PPS is experiencing that they will not be able to provide all of these. Nonetheless, participants discussed having the following supports:

Communication and Transparency: Participants said they needed clearer, earlier, and more consistent communication throughout the transition process. This included timely explanations of decisions, honest descriptions of trade-offs, and direct acknowledgment of potential negative impacts rather than only emphasizing the benefits. For example, people wanted principals and staff to receive information early enough to plan, and they wanted families and community members to have real two-way channels to ask questions, give feedback, and understand how their input would be used.

Staffing and Workload: Many participants emphasized the need for additional staffing support during transitions (as perceived to be promised), rather than reductions in staff. This included more teachers, paraprofessionals, specialists, counselors, social workers, behavior support staff, restorative justice staff, special education staff, and multilingual learner staff. For example, participants described the need for stable staff assignments to reduce churn and turnover, protected mental health and behavior roles, and additional adults in buildings to help schools manage the increased workload that comes with mergers, boundary changes, and program shifts.

Class Size and Time: Participants also identified smaller class sizes and more time as critical supports. They wanted class sizes to be capped or reduced, especially in schools serving students with greater needs. They also called for additional planning and collaboration time, including release time, stipends, substitutes, or temporary staffing. For example, staff needed time to redesign schedules, align instruction, prepare for new grade configurations, and work through the practical demands of transition without adding more unpaid labor.

Mental Health, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and Trauma-Informed Support: Participants said schools needed concrete mental health, social-emotional, and trauma-informed supports, not just promises that such supports would be available. This included counselors, social workers, SEL programs, trauma-informed training for staff, and intentional community-building spaces. For example, participants named the need for healing circles, school events, rituals, and other practices that would help students, families, and staff process loss, uncertainty, and change.

Equity, Language, and Program Supports: Participants emphasized that equity-focused supports were essential, particularly for students and families most likely to be affected by school changes. This included protecting and properly resourcing DLI programs, providing translation and interpretation for meetings and written materials, and offering family navigators or liaisons to help families understand their options. For example, participants wanted schools receiving more students or students with greater needs to receive additional resources, not simply be expected to absorb those changes with the same staffing and budget.

Support for SEGC Members and the Process: SEGC members said they needed stronger support to participate meaningfully in the process. This included clear orientation and training on their role, scope, and equity lens. As well, they needed access to complete and understandable data and transparent facilitation and decision-making processes. For example, members wanted clear information about enrollment, building capacity, demographics, and program impacts, as well as honesty about which decisions they could actually influence, and which decisions may have already been made.

Leadership and Culture: Participants wanted visible and responsive district leadership throughout the transition process. This meant leaders showing up in schools, listening to concerns, helping solve problems, and supporting school culture and safety, not only managing logistics. For example, principals wanted earlier involvement and real decision-making power, while staff wanted district leaders to help with behavior systems, culture-building, and the relational work needed to bring school communities together.

Collaboration and Relationship and Culture-Building Time: Participants said merged or reconfigured school communities needed dedicated time to build relationships and align around shared expectations. This included time for staff to co-create school vision, develop common routines, align instructional practices, and build trust across teams. For example, participants wanted structured processes for staff from different schools to come together before the transition, rather than being expected to form a shared culture after the school year had already begun.

Operational and Logistical Supports: Participants also named practical logistical supports needed to make transitions work. These included long-term transportation solutions for new boundaries and program locations, updated curriculum and materials for new grade configurations and languages, and central transition-planning tools such as templates, checklists, and communication plans. For example, schools needed clear systems to manage transportation changes, staffing shifts, family communication, and instructional adjustments in a coordinated way.

To make sense of the support needs identified by participants, we created Figure 2.12 to map those needs onto an organizational change stress concept that we created in Domain 5. The figure shows that the supports participants requested were not only about easing the immediate “change load” of SEGC, such as clearer communication, transition planning, and logistical support. Many of the requested supports were also about rebuilding the organizational capacity that schools needed to absorb change well, including staffing stability, leadership support, manageable class sizes, student mental health supports, stronger school climate, collaboration, and shared identity. In this way, the chart illustrates a central lesson from the findings: when districtwide changes

increase the amount, intensity, and simultaneity of change, PPS must also invest in the organizational capacity of schools so that change does not become strain.

Figure 2.12 Participant Recommendations Mapped to the Change Stress Framework

$$\text{Change Stress} = \text{Change Load} \div \text{Organizational Capacity}$$

EASE THE CHANGE LOAD	REBUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	
Communication and Transparency Eases intensity and needs to be clear, early, honest framing of decisions and trade-offs	Staffing and Workload Staff stability and role mix (different, needed positions)	Class Size and Time Smaller class size and planning time
Support for SEGC Members and the Process Strengthens the decision process: orientation, real data, honest scope of influence	Mental Health, SEL, and Trauma-Informed Support Counselors, social workers, etc.	Equity, Language, and Program Supports Resources to support students equitably
Operational and Logistical Supports Eases simultaneity when coordinated with transportation, materials, and planning tools	Leadership and Culture Effective and consistent principal leadership, which influences school climate	Collaboration and Culture Building Time Building of shared identity and morale
Six of the nine themes target organizational capacity . Participants asked most for the capacity that strained schools most lacked.		

Note. Each theme reflects participant recommendations. Themes on the left ease the change load and the process that introduces it. Themes on the right rebuild the organizational capacity dimensions named in the change stress framework.

The type of change matters (intensity) as much as, and sometimes more than, the number of changes (quantity).

One of the clearest findings was that not all changes were experienced equally. Program relocation, feeder loss, whole-school conversion (e.g., into a whole school DLI), and grade reconfiguration often produced deeper disruption than a boundary shift alone, especially when they altered school identity, belonging, or access to key programs. At the same time, the number of changes still mattered because schools facing multiple and simultaneous changes often described cumulative disruption and difficulty regaining a sense of equilibrium. The lesson is that PPS might consider the nature, intensity, and interaction of those changes in schools. In addition, our findings suggest that the same type of change can have different meanings depending on school level. For example, elementary participants often described feeder or boundary changes in terms of continuity and family relationships. Middle school participants more often described them in terms of enrollment viability, class offerings, elective access,

staffing, and whether a school could remain robust. PPS should consider avoiding “one-size-fits-all transition planning” and instead tailor support by school level. For example, elementary schools may need stronger family orientation, pathway support, and continuity-building and middle schools may need protection for electives, counseling, staffing, and program breadth.

Schools are not starting from the same place (organizational capacity for change), so the district should not assume they can absorb the same amount or type of change.

Our preliminary findings repeatedly suggest that schools entered SEGC with different levels of stability, staffing, leadership continuity, enrollment strength, school culture, program coherence, and community trust. Some schools were already fragile or carrying accumulated strain. Other schools had stronger internal systems and could buffer disruption more effectively. A major lesson, then, is that PPS should not apply the same change logic uniformly across schools. Before any future closure or reassignment process, the district might assess each school’s readiness and capacity to absorb change.

Trust-(re)building is shaped by (perceptions of the) process, not just the outcome(s)

Across our findings, a repeated lesson that emerged was that people judged PPS not only by what decision was made, but by whether the process felt transparent, honest, responsive, and equitable, especially since all schools in SE were not part of SEGC. Additionally, long meetings, inaccessible materials, shifting rationales, late data, and decisions that appeared predetermined all undermined trust. In some cases, participants felt that community voice was invited mainly to legitimate decisions that had already narrowed.

Leaving some Southeast schools out of the rebalancing process undermined trust and made it harder to achieve more fully balanced and equitable rebalancing

This preliminary finding suggests that because declining enrollment was a SE-wide challenge (even districtwide), future rebalancing, consolidation, or closure efforts should also be districtwide in scope, rather than concentrating the hardest decisions in only some parts of SE. Across the findings, participants repeatedly described the exclusion of more inner SE schools, often described as whiter, more affluent, and more politically protected, as a major reason they lost trust in the process and doubted the district’s application of its racial equity and social justice lens.

Recommendations

We have organized our recommendations around pre, during, post, and ongoing rightsizing district supports.

Pre-Rightsizing Decision(s)

Be explicit about tradeoffs and equity tensions

PPS should name tradeoffs directly and transparently, acknowledging that the same decision can produce meaningful gains while also creating real burdens. For instance, a consolidation may strengthen programming and staffing while increasing transportation demands for families. A DLI relocation may improve program coherence and staffing stability but reduce neighborhood access or shift who can participate. A boundary adjustment may balance enrollment in one building but reduce racial or socioeconomic diversity or destabilize enrollment patterns in another. A closure may reduce facility costs yet disrupt trusted relationships and student belonging. Our findings repeatedly show that the same change(s) can generate benefits *and* harms within the same school community, which is why explicitly naming tradeoffs is essential for equity-centered decision making.

Create a simple equity impact summary for every school closure or consolidation scenario

Our findings suggests that SEGC-impacted schools ended up serving higher shares of students of color and multilingual learners (i.e., emergent bilingual students), and students receiving special education services than projected, and participants strongly questioned whether the benefits and burdens that SEGC changed brought about were distributed equitably.

Specifically, for each proposed closure, consolidation, program move, or boundary change option, PPS should provide a clear impact summary that shows the number and percentage of students affected, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, multilingual learner status, special education status, and poverty indicators such as FRPL, where available. PPS should also identify which students are participating in key programs, so the district can transparently show how proposed changes may shift access to specialized offerings and supports across student groups. This can honestly be a dashboard. Additionally, as the district develops criteria for well-resourced schools, those criteria should be used as a filter through which all scenarios might be assessed.

Build scenarios with principals before the public rollout

Building scenarios with principals before a public rollout might strengthen both the quality and legitimacy of district decision-making. During our qualitative data collection, principals often suggested that they understand building-level consequences and community dynamics in ways that broad, centralized processes can miss. At the same time, PPS should acknowledge openly that principals may have competing interests, including understandable protectiveness over their

school's enrollment, staffing, reputation, and the possibility of closure or consolidation. That territoriality does not undermine the entire process, but it does create a predictable incentive structure and an emotional reality when people are responsible for a community they love. Perhaps, the district can address this by setting clear norms and guardrails up front and ground scenario work in shared equity goals and transparent criteria, and pair principal input with trusted community partners and equity accountability checks so that scenario-building does not become something that is viewed as “behind-the-scenes” by community and district stakeholders.

Define “well-resourced schools” through a concrete, funded, and feasible staffing model

PPS should clearly define what it means by a “well-resourced school” before using that phrase to justify boundary changes, consolidation, closure, or other rightsizing decisions. While the definition can be aspirational,⁴⁴ it should also specify the staffing, services, programs, and learning conditions that students and families should be able to expect at each grade level. At minimum, this should include expectations for classroom staffing, specialists, intervention supports, counseling and mental health supports, special education services, multilingual learner supports, enrichment and electives, planning time, leadership capacity, and family/community engagement supports (we discuss this in greater detail in section 6).

The well-resourced schools definition should also be tied to a realistic staffing and resource model that PPS can fund and sustain for multiple school years (e.g., five-year window). Given the district's declining enrollment, PPS should be cautious defining “well-resourced schools” in ways that depend on one-time adjustments, temporary funds, or enrollment assumptions that may not hold over time. Instead, the district should identify what it can realistically deliver, what enrollment levels are needed to sustain those resources, and what additional supports will be provided if schools fall below those levels because of continued enrollment decline.

If a proposed closure, consolidation, or boundary change is intended to create well-resourced schools, PPS should be able to demonstrate not only that enrollment numbers improve on paper, but that students will experience more stable staffing, stronger supports, broader programming, and more equitable access to high-quality learning environments over time, and specifically which groups of students might experience this.

Use projection ranges instead of single enrollment estimates

Our preliminary findings indicate that in SEGC-impacted schools' enrollment projections were overestimated at several SEGC schools. Several schools were more than 50 students below projections, and several other schools were more than 20 students above projections. That

⁴⁴ This recommendation should not preclude PPS from developing both aspirational models and feasible implementation models for well-resourced schools. Aspirational models can clarify the district's long-term vision for what all students deserve, while feasible models should specify what PPS can realistically fund and sustain within current and projected fiscal and enrollment conditions. Where gaps exist between the two, PPS should name those gaps transparently, identify what would be required to close them, and explain how the district will make progress over time.

matters because schools' staff, schedule, and plan programs around projected numbers. Therefore, PPS should show scenarios such as expected enrollment, lower-than-expected enrollment, higher-than-expected enrollment, higher student-need enrollment, and identify what happens under each scenario. Put simply, given ongoing state underfunding and broader macro-level factors outside the district's control, such as declining birth rates, rising housing costs, and shifting family migration patterns, the district should use enrollment projection ranges rather than a single projected number for each school. A range-based approach would better reflect uncertainty, avoid creating a false sense of precision, and support more responsible planning under changing demographic and fiscal conditions.

Conduct a cumulative equity burden analysis

The preliminary findings from our report are very clear that schools did not experience SEGC as a single event. They experienced it as layered disruption (including, for example, school mergers, program relocations, feeder loss, boundary shifts, grade reconfiguration, construction, pandemic disruption, labor actions, budget cuts, and leadership turnover). Therefore, before deciding which school communities absorb more change and which school communities have experienced the most burdens of change, PPS should identify which schools have already experienced disruptions such as prior boundary changes, program relocations, grade reconfigurations, leadership turnover, staff reductions, feeder pattern loss, high staff turnover, etc. This could also be a map or dashboard.

Pre and Post Rightsizing Decision(s)

Develop a robust, funded transition plan prior to any Board vote that spells out what implementation and multi-year supports will look like in practice

Our preliminary findings suggest that PPS could create a transition plan that includes time and space for new leadership, staff to build community and instructional and planning routines. In addition, the plan might include student transition activities, family orientation and navigation support, multilingual communications, transportation planning, continuity of special education services, support for multilingual learners, staffing and scheduling plans, culture, belonging, and community-building strategies. Again, our preliminary findings suggest that many schools felt left to invent transition supports on their own, and this support is designed to make sure that does not happen again.

Ongoing per Rightsizing Decision(s)

Support learning environments with staffing reviews and rapid adjustments

PPS should conduct a recurring enrollment, staffing, and class size review cycle at key intervals after implementation of rightsizing, including before school starts, after the first 30 school days, after the first quarter, and at midyear. Each review should assess staff and school needs as well

as compare actual enrollment and student need to projections and to clearly defined thresholds, and it should trigger real time adjustments when conditions exceed planned capacity. If class sizes, special education caseloads, multilingual learner needs, intervention access, or behavior and climate needs exceed planned thresholds, additional staffing, coaching, student supports, or schedule changes should be provided in whatever capacities PPS can. This is important because it can help the district create a critical internal feedback loop that supports staff and learning environments in the period when they are most fragile.

Visit schools, implement monitoring and feedback loops to build trust and public accountability

This recommendation comes directly from our preliminary finding that trust was weakened not only by the decisions themselves, but by how communities experienced the process over time. Across our data collection, participants described broken promises, weak follow-through, inconsistent communication, and limited visibility into whether concerns raised by schools and communities were ever acted upon. The evidence suggests that these weak feedback loops made the process feel less fair, less transparent, and less responsive, which in turn intensified mistrust and made implementation harder. In this sense, we view monitoring and feedback loops as a core trust-building strategy. This could be progress and feedback loops on measures that are important to schools, the district, and families.

Section 3:

Findings of Community Engagement, Voice, and
Decision-Making: The Perspectives of SEGC Members
and Families and Caregivers of Students in SEGC
Impacted Schools

Perspectives of Families and Caregivers of Students in SEGC Impacted Schools

Family Perspectives Across SEGC-Impacted School Communities

This section draws on cross-school focus groups with families to better understand how they experienced SEGC-related changes. Our data includes 11 family focus group conversations, including approximately 35 parent and caregiver participants whose children were currently or formerly enrolled in schools affected by SEGC or related Southeast school changes.

The conversations included families whose native languages are English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish-language or bilingual Spanish-English. Families represented a wide range of school experiences, including children who remained in their schools, children who moved schools as SEGC changes were implemented, children who participated in Spanish or Mandarin Dual Language Immersion pathways, children receiving special education services, and children whose elementary, middle, or high school pathways crossed multiple schools before, during, and after SEGC-related shifts.

The schools represented through caregivers' direct student experiences or school pathways included Lent, Bridger/Creative Science, Kellogg, Harrison Park, Woodstock, Creston, Hosford, Franklin, Cleveland, Glencoe, Lewis, Arleta, Sellwood, Roseway Heights, Winterhaven, Vestal, and one unspecified PPS K–8 to K–5 transition. Families also discussed Atkinson, Marysville, Grout, Whitman, Lane, Mount Tabor, McDaniel (high school), and other schools as consequential to SEGC-related boundaries, feeder patterns, program pathways, transportation, special education placement, or future enrollment decisions. Because several caregivers described children's movement across multiple schools, these school connections should be understood as overlapping rather than mutually exclusive.

Overall, families described SEGC not only as a boundary or program process, but as a set of changes that affected daily routines, transportation, class size, peer relationships, school identity, after-school access, sports participation, special education access, DLI pathways, and long-term feeder patterns. Families also described some real gains, especially where schools built stronger DLI communities or more welcoming middle school environments. However, those gains often existed alongside frustration with the process, unresolved pathway issues, transportation burdens, class size instability, and perceived inequities in whose communities were asked to absorb the most change.

Families Described Learning Environments as More Crowded, Less Stable, and Less Supported

Across school communities, families described learning environments as affected by class size increases, staffing instability, reduced services, and inconsistent access to supports. In some schools, families described a pattern of small classes one year and much larger classes the next,

or stable staffing one year and significant reductions the next. Families connected these fluctuations to enrollment shifts, budget pressures, and boundary decisions that they believed left some schools under-enrolled and vulnerable to cuts.

Several families described reduced access to trusted adults, specialists, counselors, library services, intervention support, after-school offerings, or special education-related supports. These reductions were especially concerning when students had IEPs, sensory needs, language needs, or other support needs that required predictable adult relationships and smaller learning environments. In these accounts, learning environment quality was not defined only by curriculum. It was also defined by whether students could access consistent adults, reasonable class sizes, supports, electives, and stable routines.

Families also described a self-reinforcing cycle in some schools: boundaries or enrollment shifts reduced enrollment, reduced enrollment led to staffing cuts, staffing cuts made the school appear less attractive or less stable, and that instability risked further enrollment loss. This concern was especially pronounced in family accounts related to Creston and other smaller neighborhood schools, where families worried that enrollment loss, staffing reductions, and declining program access could make future closure or consolidation seem inevitable. Parents stated:

“There was a reduction in available services at the school...and an increase in class sizes.”

“There might be a single third grade at Creston next year...my kid’s kindergarten was 15 kids, first grade was like 16 kids...and then moving to a 35 kid third grade class feels unnecessary.”

Families Described DLI as Both a Source of Belonging and a Fragile Commitment

Families across Spanish and Mandarin DLI pathways described dual language immersion as a major source of belonging, cultural affirmation, academic value, and long-term commitment. Several families described DLI as the reason they chose a school, stayed through disruption, accepted longer commutes, or remained committed to PPS. Families connected DLI not only to language learning, but also to multicultural communities, cross-cultural relationships, and the kind of city they hoped their children would help build.

Several families described Lent’s whole-school Spanish DLI model as a meaningful gain, especially because Spanish was more visible and central throughout the school, multicultural programming was stronger, bilingual support staff were present, and families could see a clearer schoolwide identity around Spanish language and culture. At the same time, those families described the process of getting to that model as confusing, inequitable, and under-supported. Families raised concerns about long bus rides, late transportation decisions, crowded classrooms, unclear registration, leadership instability, insufficient transition staffing, and promises that were not fully honored.

Mandarin DLI families raised related but distinct concerns. They described Woodstock as a school where the Mandarin program and neighborhood program had coexisted in a culturally meaningful way. Families described the shift to Harrison Park as creating a long commute, fragmenting relationships, and leading some Mandarin-speaking families to leave the program. Some families felt PPS described the move as serving Chinese-speaking families without sufficiently understanding distinctions among Chinese language communities or listening to the families most affected.

Across DLI communities, families described a gap between the commitment PPS asks families to make and the commitment families felt PPS made in return. Families are often told that DLI is a long-term K–12 commitment. Yet some experienced SEGC as a disruption of that very commitment. Parents said:

“It just feels like you asked us to commit to something that you’re not committed to.”

“The whole school DLI is great...but the process...was a little convoluted.”

“Whole school DLI is great. It needs to be funded, and it needs to be prioritized.”

Families Described Transportation, Geography, and After-School Access as Core Equity Issues

Families described students spending significant time on buses or in cars, children getting up much earlier than siblings, long commutes replacing walkable neighborhood routines, and students being assigned to schools farther from home even when another school was much closer. Families also described safety concerns connected to major roads, long walking distances to bus stops, traffic conditions near schools, and students traveling home in the dark during winter months.

Transportation also affected access to the full school experience. Families described after-care, sports, and electives as harder to access when students attended schools far from home or when middle school sports were tied to high school clusters rather than the middle school students actually attended. Several families described the current sports and feeder arrangements as especially difficult for Creston, Hosford, Franklin, Cleveland, Woodstock, Harrison Park, and other pathway-affected students. In these accounts, SEGC-related changes did not only determine where students went during the school day. They shaped whether students could participate in after-school activities, maintain friendships, and fully belong to the school community. Participants commented:

“My children get on the bus at 7:06 a.m....they are on the bus for a very, very long time.”

“The split feeder pattern at the middle school has made middle school sports almost impossible for many kids to participate in.”

“Kids are missing out on sports because this boundary issue was never resolved.”

Families Described Loss of Cohort, Friendship, and Community Continuity as a Major Harm

Families repeatedly emphasized that school transitions affected children’s friendships, peer groups, parent networks, and sense of community. Several caregivers described children leaving elementary school cohorts, entering middle school with only one or a few familiar peers, or having to choose between friends assigned to different high schools. Families often described these impacts as emotionally significant, particularly for middle school students, for whom peer belonging was viewed as central to well-being.

Families described some students having to rebuild friendships after years of community formation, while others were separated again at the high school level because earlier feeder questions were not resolved. Families also described parent community disruption, including the loss of walkable relationships, weaker parent networks, and difficulty accessing directories or communication tools needed to rebuild community. Parents stated:

“The hardest part for our family was losing our community. My son basically lost all of his friendships. We lost our parent group.”

“We just want our kids to stay with their friends. And I think that’s pretty reasonable to ask.”

“It felt like we almost moved to a new place.”

Families Perceived Inequitable Burdens Across Schools and Communities

Across language groups and school communities, families perceived that SEGC-related disruption was not distributed equitably. Families repeatedly described Title I schools, schools in the outer Southeast, DLI families, immigrant families, families with fewer resources, and students receiving special education services as carrying greater burdens. By contrast, they perceived some more affluent or politically powerful communities as being more protected from major changes.

Families described this not only as an outcome issue, but as a process issue. Several participants believed that families with more time, legal resources, English fluency, political connections, or ability to attend multiple meetings had more influence over final decisions. Families also noted that the communities most affected by change are often the least able to attend evening meetings,

track multiple scenarios, interpret technical documents, or advocate repeatedly across a long process. Participants described their perceptions:

“The people who can afford the time and the resources to be there are the ones who are heard.”

“An interpreter is just checking an equity and inclusion box if you don’t do anything with what you’re hearing.”

“If you’re going to do equity, you got to do it all.”

Families Said Trust Depends on Clear Communication, Real Co-Design, Follow-Through, and Repair

Families described communication as confusing, circular, delayed, and often mediated through PTA networks or parent-to-parent communication rather than clear district systems. Some families said they had difficulty tracking which scenario was current, what had been decided, what remained open, and what the implications would be for transportation, staffing, high school pathways, or after-school access. Others said they did not hear about important issues until decisions had already been made.

Families also described mistrust when district promises or expectations did not materialize. This included concerns about transition staffing, transportation, community-building support, after-care, unresolved feeder patterns, and promised follow-up phases. Several families emphasized that the process does not end when the Board votes or when students are reassigned. The district must continue supporting the transition for multiple years and must track whether the intended benefits actually occur.

According to participants, PPS should not only communicate better but should create ongoing mechanisms for course correction. Families want clear criteria, transparent data, targeted outreach to affected communities, multilingual engagement, youth and family voice, and evidence that input changes decisions. They also want district leaders to account for cumulative disruption, asking not only whether a proposed change makes sense on paper, but how much change a given school community has already absorbed. Parents said:

“It felt like they weren’t listening.”

“We only found out late about possible changes. We want more time and real options, not just being told what’s already decided.”

“They need to know that the process isn’t over once they make the change.”

“The process isn’t over once they make the change... they can’t walk away and not support the transition for the subsequent years.”

Summary of Cross-School Family Findings

Taken together, the family data show that SEGC-related changes were experienced not only through where students were assigned, but through whether they could remain with peers, access after-school activities, receive services, participate in sports, maintain language pathways, and trust that the district would finish the work it started. Families described some real gains, especially at Lent and Harrison Park, where several caregivers praised school staff, school community, DLI programming, and middle school opportunities. However, these gains existed alongside frustration with the process, unresolved pathway issues, transportation burdens, class size instability, and perceived inequities in whose communities were asked to absorb the most change.

Overall, the cross-school family findings are less about a narrow story about boundaries and programs and more of a broader story about the lived infrastructure of school change: transportation, staffing, class size, cohort continuity, language pathways, after-school access, special education support, family communication, and trust. Families’ central message was that future district changes must be evaluated not only by whether enrollment looks more balanced on paper, but by whether students and families experience the change as stable, supported, fair, and humanizing.

School-Specific Family Perspectives

The school-specific family perspectives below summarize the schools and student pathways that were discussed most directly across the family focus groups and interviews. These summaries are not intended to provide a comprehensive family analysis of every SEGC-impacted school. Rather, they highlight the schools that were named by participating parents and caregivers, represented through their children’s current or former enrollment, or discussed because they were directly connected to families’ SEGC-related experiences, including school moves, DLI pathways, transportation, feeder patterns, special education placement, or access to programs and supports. Since family participation was not evenly distributed across all schools, the depth of discussion varies by school. For this reason, these school-specific summaries should be read as illustrative family perspectives from the 11 family focus groups, not as representative findings for every family or every school community. Finally, our findings here do not include all 20 SEGC-impacted schools but, again, only the schools that were discussed during our data collection.⁴⁵

Arleta

Families described Arleta as a school that had lost significant resources and staff after SEGC-related changes. They pointed to reductions in counselor time, support roles, and building-level leadership capacity as examples of how the school’s support had been weakened. Families also described a loss of racial diversity and community strength, connecting enrollment drops and resource cuts to disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized communities.

Arleta was also discussed through the lens of possible future closure. Families expressed fear that the school was being allowed to wither, which reinforced perceptions of inequity. In these accounts, Arleta was not described as simply experiencing normal enrollment change. Rather, families saw the school as part of a broader pattern in which schools serving more historically underserved communities lose resources, become less stable, and then are treated as candidates for additional disruption.

Atkinson

Families discussed Atkinson as a consequential school in the SEGC process, particularly in relation to Spanish DLI, neighborhood boundaries, and perceptions that some school communities had more influence over final decisions than others. Some families described Atkinson as a school that retained a Spanish DLI strand while other schools were moved toward whole-school DLI models or experienced more substantial program and boundary changes. Families perceived this as inconsistent with the district’s stated rationale that immersion strands should be consolidated or that similar program rules should apply across schools.

⁴⁵ In this section, we discuss some schools that were not part of our school-by-school analysis in forthcoming sections. As well, here we discuss some schools that were not part of our in-person data collection.

Families also discussed Atkinson as an example of how more privileged or politically organized school communities may have had greater influence in the process. Some participants perceived that Atkinson families were able to resist changes more effectively than communities with fewer resources, less time, or less access to district decision-making. These comments should be framed as family perceptions, but they are important because they shaped how families interpreted whether SEGC was implemented equitably.

Atkinson also came up in family accounts when caregivers discussed how special education placement decisions shaped where their children could attend school. One caregiver described living near Atkinson but having a child placed elsewhere because the appropriate classroom was full or unavailable, which raised broader concerns about how neighborhood assignment, special education services, building accessibility, and program availability intersected for families at the school.

Lent

Families connected to Lent described one of the most nuanced sets of experiences in the family data. On one hand, several caregivers described Lent's whole-school Spanish DLI model as a meaningful gain. Families spoke positively about hearing more Spanish throughout the school, stronger multicultural programming, bilingual support staff, culturally affirming events, and a growing sense that Lent had become a more coherent Spanish immersion school community. Some families described their children as happy, well-supported, and thriving at Lent, and several praised the school's current direction, staff, and community-building efforts.

At the same time, families described the process of getting to that model as confusing, inequitable, and under-supported. Families who moved from Bridger to Lent described losing walkable access to school, longer commutes, early bus times, transportation uncertainty, and a loss of neighborhood connection. Some caregivers described students riding buses for long periods or families spending substantial time driving children to and from school. Families also described concerns about larger class sizes after the move, including classrooms that became difficult to physically navigate and students with IEPs or sensory needs receiving less individualized attention in larger settings.

Families raised concerns about promised supports that did not fully materialize. Several caregivers described additional transition staffing or funding as something that had been promised or expected but then reduced, delayed, or pulled back because of budget constraints. Families also described early implementation challenges, including unclear registration, late confirmation of enrollment, lack of a permanent teacher at the start of kindergarten, leadership instability, and limited district promotion of Lent as a Spanish DLI option. In these accounts, Lent was both a place where families saw authentic programmatic and cultural strengths and a

place where families felt PPS did not provide the level of transition support needed to make the change as successful and equitable as it could have been. Parents stated:

“Whole school DLI is great. It needs to be funded, and it needs to be prioritized.”

Marysville

Marysville was discussed by families as a school affected by SEGC-related displacement and receiving-school dynamics, particularly in relation to Lent neighborhood students who did not enroll in Lent’s Spanish DLI program. Some families described neighborhood students who were reassigned away from Lent and into Marysville or other schools, emphasizing that those students and families experienced major disruption even if they were not always the most visible voices in the process.

Families also raised concerns about whether Marysville families and Lent neighborhood families were adequately heard before decisions were finalized. Several participants described a perception that Spanish-speaking families, emergent bilingual families, and families from lower-income communities were not fully informed or centered in decision-making. During one family focus group, Marysville was named in connection with students and families who had to cross major roads or adjust routines after being reassigned.

Marysville also surfaced through secondhand family accounts about receiving students from Lent and concerns that some existing families interpreted the arrival of new students through deficit-based or stigmatizing narratives. While these are not direct testimony from Marysville’s students or staff, they point to a broader implementation lesson. The lesson is that schools need intentional support for community-building, anti-bias and antiracism work, and shared identity formation when new student groups arrive.

Lewis

Families described Lewis as a strong academic and community environment that supports students well, yet they felt it was undervalued and under-resourced by the district. Parents praised the school’s academic quality and sense of community but argued that district decisions that impacted the school through SEGC changes did not adequately recognize or protect what was working.

Post-SEGC changes, families also raised concerns about large class sizes and the loss of staff and services, including supports for students receiving special education services. They pointed to inequities in class size caps between focus schools and neighborhood schools, arguing that Lewis and similar schools should not be punished or neglected because they are doing well. In their view, Lewis reflected a larger concern that high-performing neighborhood schools serving

racially, socially, and culturally diverse communities can still be weakened by boundary changes, staffing reductions, and inequitable resource allocation. One parent noted:

“Lewis is a great school with strong academics and community, but the district’s decisions don’t reflect that. It feels like they don’t value what’s working.”

Woodstock

Families connected to Woodstock described the school as a place where the Mandarin DLI program and neighborhood program had historically coexisted in a meaningful way. Some caregivers described Woodstock as a school community where families valued both language learning and broader intercultural connection. For these families, the school was not only a program site, but a community where DLI and neighborhood students interacted and where families had built long-standing relationships.

Families described the shift caused by SEGC changes of the Mandarin DLI middle school pathway away from Hosford and toward Harrison Park as highly disruptive. Some caregivers described Mandarin-speaking families leaving the program after the change, either because they did not feel heard or because the new pathway did not match what they had committed to when they entered the program. Families also described large class sizes and reduced sections in the elementary Mandarin program after enrollment declined, with one account describing a shift from two smaller sections to one much larger class and fewer dedicated language and English teaching supports.

Families raised concerns that PPS framed the move as beneficial for Chinese-speaking families without fully understanding distinctions among Chinese language communities or listening carefully to affected families. In these accounts, Woodstock became a key example of how a district may intend to strengthen DLI access, but still produce harm if it misreads community geography, language identity, school culture, and families’ reasons for choosing a pathway.

Harrison Park

Families discussed Harrison Park in several different ways. For some families, Harrison Park became a receiving middle school for Mandarin DLI students or students reassigned through boundary and feeder changes. Some caregivers described the transition to Harrison Park as difficult because it involved a longer commute, fewer familiar peers, and challenges building parent networks. Families described students entering middle school with only a small group from their prior school or without a strong connection to the new school community.

At the same time, several families spoke positively about Harrison Park as a school. Caregivers praised the school’s teachers, staff, remodeled facility, welcoming student-led transition activities, and the middle school opportunities students eventually experienced. Some families

said their children came to like Harrison Park more than expected and found strong support there. These positive accounts are important because they show that families could simultaneously critique the district process and appreciate the school that received their children.

Still, families identified unresolved implementation challenges. These included long bus rides, late or inefficient transportation routes, difficulty accessing parent directories or family contact information, limited support for rebuilding community, and sports or activity barriers tied to high school feeder clusters. Families also described Harrison Park as managing multiple high school feeder patterns, which made communication, athletics, and future transitions more complex for small cohorts.

Kellogg

Families discussed Kellogg primarily through Spanish DLI, middle school pathway, and feeder pattern experiences. Some parents described Kellogg as the middle school serving students from Lent or other Spanish DLI pathways, and some families raised concerns about the school's earlier climate and behavioral history. At the same time, families also noted that the school climate had improved over time and that leadership and staff were working to build a stronger sense of community.

Kellogg also appeared in relation to neighborhood assignment and proximity. Some families living near Kellogg described frustration that their assigned neighborhood middle school was farther away, which required their students to pass a closer school to attend another one. These comments point to a broader family concern about the relationship between program pathways, neighborhood boundaries, school proximity, and daily family logistics.

Families also raised concerns about access to full DLI programming at the middle school level. Some caregivers expressed that the DLI pathway needs to be treated as a full K–12 program, with stronger articulation from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. In these accounts, Kellogg was not only a school destination, but part of a larger program pipeline that families believed PPS needed to support more coherently.

Creston

Families described Creston as a small neighborhood school that, through SEGC changes, had been affected by unresolved feeder patterns, enrollment imbalance, and staffing reductions. Some caregivers described Creston as a strong and beloved school that nevertheless felt like it was being weakened over time by boundary decisions and declining enrollment brought about by SEGC changes.

Families raised concerns that Creston students were moved from a K–8 structure into new middle school pathways, but that the district did not fully complete the follow-up work needed to

resolve high school pathways, athletics participation, or cohort continuity. Some caregivers described Creston students moving together to Hosford for middle school but then facing splits between Franklin and Cleveland for high school. Families experienced this as disruptive because students built friendships in middle school and then faced separation again when moving to high school.

Families also connected Creston's enrollment decline to staffing cuts. They described the loss of beloved educators, reductions in services, and the possibility of much larger class sizes in future years. Some caregivers worried that enrollment decline, and staffing cuts could become a self-fulfilling cycle, making the school appear less stable and then increasing the risk of future closure or consolidation.

"There might be a single third grade at Creston next year... my kid's kindergarten was 15 kids, first grade was like 16 kids... and then moving to a 35 kid third grade class feels unnecessary."

"Invest in Creston Elementary rather than defunding it."

Together, these comments show that families were not only concerned about Creston's current staffing levels, but also about the long-term consequences of repeated reductions. In their view, protecting Creston requires interrupting the cycle in which declining enrollment leads to fewer resources, fewer resources weaken the school's appeal, and weakened appeal further threatens enrollment.

Hosford

Families discussed Hosford mainly through the lens of Creston students' middle school and high school pathway. Some caregivers described Hosford itself as prepared to receive students and generally positive as a middle school experience. They emphasized that the school staff did what they could within the structure they were given.

The concerns about Hosford centered less on the school's internal quality and more on the policy environment around it. Families described confusion and frustration that Creston students attending Hosford were still assigned to Franklin for high school, while many of their Hosford peers were assigned to Cleveland. This created uncertainty and emotional stress for students who had built friendships in middle school but faced future separation at the high school transition.

Families also described middle school sports and athletics access as a major issue. Because some sports were organized around high school clusters rather than the middle school students attended, caregivers said students could not easily participate with their Hosford peers. Families described this as especially harmful for students whose social belonging depended on participating with friends. As one parent noted:

“We just want our kids to stay with their friends. And I think that’s pretty reasonable to ask.”

This quote underscores that families viewed athletics not simply as an extracurricular issue, but as part of students’ belonging, continuity, and emotional adjustment during already difficult school transitions.

Bridger Creative Science School

Families connected to Bridger Creative Science described multiple layers of change. Some Spanish DLI families described moving from Bridger to Lent and experiencing a significant loss of proximity, walkability, and community continuity. Some described children who had attended Bridger, then Lent, and later Kellogg, creating a sequence of transitions during and after COVID-19. Families emphasized that students had already experienced pandemic disruption, and SEGC added another layer of instability.

Families also described Bridger and Creative Science as sites where school identity and program purpose shifted. Some caregivers described concerns that Creative Science’s constructivist or K–8 culture was changed or diluted as buildings and programs were reconfigured. In earlier family accounts, some caregivers described their middle school students feeling less centered or less valued after the school’s structure changed, especially when schoolwide support and activities seemed oriented more toward younger students.

Families also discussed the use of portables and mixed messages about whether buildings could support K–8 models. Some noted that portables were described as temporary or as part of the rationale for changing configurations yet later continued to be used. In these accounts, Bridger Creative Science became an example of how families experienced district communication as inconsistent or difficult to trust.

Clark Building

The Clark building appeared in family accounts primarily through its connection to Creative Science and Harrison Park-related reconfiguration. Families described changes to a constructivist K–8 program and expressed concern that a previously restorative, creative, and developmentally supportive middle grades culture had been weakened or displaced. Some caregivers described middle school students as feeling marginalized, especially when the school culture or programming became more oriented toward K–5 students.

Families also described climate concerns, including a perception that the environment became more punitive or compliance oriented. These concerns were especially salient for neurodivergent students and students who benefited from restorative or relationship-based approaches. The Clark building accounts therefore highlight that school reconfiguration is not only about where

students attend school. It can also change the culture, identity, and developmental fit of the learning environment. One parent stated:

“The middle schoolers feel like they’re in a prison now, everything is about control, and the restorative, creative culture we had is gone.”

Again, accounts like this underscore why future reconfiguration efforts should attend not only to enrollment assignments and building use, but also to the school culture, disciplinary approach, and developmental conditions students experience after a change.

Glencoe

The Glencoe focus group was mainly represented through families whose children moved from Glencoe to Harrison Park for middle school, even though Mount Tabor was the closer neighborhood middle school. The families described the hardest part of the transition as the loss of community, friendships, and parent networks. Some students entered Harrison Park with very few familiar peers, which made the transition feel almost like moving to a new place.

At the same time, the family described Harrison Park itself as a positive surprise, noting that teachers and staff were supportive and that the student eventually liked the school and program. This account reinforces one of the most important nuances in the family data, which is that a receiving school can be strong and caring, while the transition into that school can still be experienced as disruptive and emotionally difficult.

Glencoe families also discussed concerns about transportation and access. The family described long bus times, walking to bus stops, and missed transition opportunities, including not receiving the same type of tour or elective sign-up experience that students attending the closer middle school received.

“The hardest part for our family was losing our community. My son basically lost all of his friendships. We lost our parent group.”

“It felt like we almost moved to a new place.”

Importantly, these comments suggest that the transition was not experienced only as a change in school assignment, but as a rupture in the social networks, routines, and sense of belonging that had anchored the family’s school experience.

Mount Tabor

Mount Tabor was discussed by families mostly as a school that some students lived near but did not attend because of boundary or program assignments. For some families, Mount Tabor

represented a closer school that would have reduced commute time or allowed students to remain more connected to their immediate neighborhood. These accounts raised questions about proximity, transportation, and whether boundary decisions aligned with daily family life.

Mount Tabor also appeared in broader family perceptions of how SEGC affected different middle schools differently. Some families saw Mount Tabor, Harrison Park, Kellogg, Hosford, and other middle schools as interconnected through feeder patterns, program movement, and enrollment balancing decisions. The family accounts suggest that future planning should examine middle schools not only one at a time, but as part of a linked regional ecosystem where changes in one pathway have consequences for several others.

Vestal

Vestal was discussed by families in relation to special education placement, building access, program co-location, and school stability. One caregiver described a child attending Vestal even though another school was closer, because of special education placement and classroom availability. Families also discussed building accessibility, including the absence of a working elevator and how that shaped where students receiving certain services could be placed.

Families also described Vestal as a school that became more stable after another program moved out of the building, allowing the neighborhood school to use more of its full space. In these accounts, Vestal was experienced as a strong and stable school community, with limited staff turnover except where budget cuts affected positions. The Vestal example shows how co-location, building access, special education placement, and program decisions can affect both daily school functioning and families' sense of belonging.

Roseway Heights

Roseway Heights appeared in family accounts connected to student transition, support networks, and emotional strain. Families who moved to Southeast Portland or whose children changed schools described how SEGC-related changes and school transitions could disrupt peer relationships and support systems. These accounts suggest that even when a school is not the central focus of a boundary or program decision, students may still experience the effects of districtwide restructuring through changes in their peer group, commute, or school community.

Roseway Heights also appeared as part of a broader pattern in which families described students adjusting to new settings without enough scaffolding. The core concern was not only school assignment, but whether students had the relational and emotional support needed to rebuild belonging after a transition.

Lane

Lane appeared in family accounts mainly as a middle school connected to boundary shifts, Woodstock pathways, and family decisions about whether to stay, move, or seek alternatives. Some families described Lane as part of the broader restructuring that altered where students would go after elementary school. Others discussed concerns about split feeder patterns and how middle school assignments affected peer continuity and family planning.

Lane also appeared as a receiving or alternative site in conversations about middle school pathways and DLI or neighborhood program changes. The key implication is that middle school assignment decisions can shape not only enrollment numbers, but also families' sense of stability, school quality, transportation feasibility, and long-term trust in district planning.

Summary of School-Specific Family Perspectives

Across these school-specific accounts, families described SEGC-related changes as varied, layered, and highly consequential for daily life. Some schools and programs were experienced as real gains, particularly where families saw stronger DLI identity, welcoming staff, improved middle school opportunities, or more cohesive school cultures. At the same time, families repeatedly described unresolved harms, including transportation burdens, loss of peer cohorts, class size instability, staffing reductions, unclear communication, special education access barriers, and a sense that some school communities were protected while others were expected to absorb repeated disruption.

Altogether, and again, the school-specific family perspectives show that future enrollment and program decisions should not be evaluated only by whether the district creates more balanced numbers on paper. Families want PPS to examine how changes actually land in specific school communities and student pathways. That means attending to transportation, class size, staffing, DLI continuity, special education placement, after-school access, sports participation, peer continuity, language access, and the amount of prior disruption each school community has already experienced. Future district processes will need to pair technical enrollment planning with school-specific implementation supports and visible accountability for whether students and families experience the changes as stable, fair, and humane.

Family and Community Voice, Engagement, and Decision-Making of SEGC Members

Building trust with families and community members during SEGC was a complex and consequential task. SEGC members were asked to participate in a process connected to balancing enrollment in the southeast part of the district.

Family and community voices are not peripheral to equitable district decision-making. They are foundational to whether district decisions are experienced as legitimate, responsive, and worthy of trust. Family engagement research frames families as full partners in their children's education, not simply recipients of information or audiences for decisions that have already been made (Ishimaru, 2019; Mapp & Bergman, 2019).^{46 47} This is especially important for families and communities that have been historically excluded from district decisions, including those families who have experienced limited access to timely information, language access barriers, racial marginalization, economic exclusion, or prior harm in school systems.

As such, equitable engagement requires more than outreach, public comment, or compliance with required processes (Ishimaru, 2019). It requires relationship-building, transparent communication, attention to power imbalances, and meaningful opportunities for families and trusted community advocates to shape the decisions that affect their children, schools, and neighborhoods (Ishimaru, 2019; Ed Trust, 2024).⁴⁸

In this section, we draw on data gathered through SEGC member interviews, focus groups, surveys, meeting materials, and related documents (e.g., board documents, notes from prior consulting firms, etc.) to better understand how members experienced voice, engagement, and decision-making throughout the process.

In this chapter, we specifically address the following questions:

- 1) In what ways did SEGC members feel their input was heard, valued, and reflected in final decisions, if any?
- 2) How can future district efforts, especially those related to enrollment and program changes, better build trust and support meaningful engagement with families and communities?

⁴⁶ Ishimaru, A. M. (2019). *Just Schools: Building Equitable Collaborations with Families and Communities*. Teachers College Press.

⁴⁷ Mapp, K. L., & Bergman, E. (2019). *Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family School Partnerships*, Version 2.

⁴⁸ The Education Trust. (2024). *Family Engagement: State Policy Recommendations*.

The aim of this section is to illuminate SEGC members' perceptions of engagement and influence, while also identifying lessons for future PPS decision making. This is especially important for future district efforts related to enrollment shifts, program changes, school configuration, and other decisions that directly affect families and communities. The findings in this section are intended to help PPS better understand how future processes can build trust, communicate more clearly, engage families earlier, honor community knowledge, and create stronger evidence that public participation has meaningfully shaped district decisions.

We conducted two focus groups and one interview with members of the SEGC, which included eight participants. In addition, we draw on survey responses from 22 SEGC members. These participants represented a mix of neighborhood and option schools serving grades K–8. Collectively, they spoke from the perspectives of elementary communities, including Atkinson, Creston, and a K–5 neighborhood school in outer Southeast, middle schools, including Harrison Park, Hosford, Kellogg, and Lane, and a K–8 focus and option program, Creative Science School at Bridger (see Table 4.1). The findings in this section are based mainly on these qualitative conversations, along with survey responses from SEGC members.

Table 3.1. SEGC Study Focus Group Participants by School Represented

ID	School Represented	School Level	School Type
P-01	Atkinson Elementary	Elementary	Neighborhood
P-02	Harrison Park Middle School	Middle School	Neighborhood
P-03	Creston Elementary	Elementary	Neighborhood
P-04	Hosford Middle School	Middle School	Neighborhood
P-05	Creative Science School at Bridger	K–8	Focus Option
P-06	Arleta Elementary	Elementary	Neighborhood
P-07	Kellogg Middle School	Middle School	Neighborhood
P-08	Lane Middle School	Middle School	Neighborhood

SEGC members largely felt that their input was *not* meaningfully heard, valued, or reflected in final district decisions.

Given this overall finding, it is important to note that a small number of participants felt the process clearly benefited their *own* school, but even they emphasized that many other members and communities came away frustrated and disappointed. As such, across the interview, SEGC members described a strong sense that their input was not meaningfully heard, valued, or reflected in final district decisions. One member summarized this bluntly:

“I think we didn’t feel heard, I think at all.”

Participants repeatedly characterized the experience as one where substantial time and effort did not translate into real influence. One member, who has volunteered in many capacities in district and community settings, called this *“by far the worst experience”* they had taken part in and said their work *“feels like wasted time,”* because they did not feel they made a difference or that their participation affected outcomes.

In our conversations with SEGC members, participants described a sharp distinction between how much influence they believed they had at the outset of the process and how little influence they felt they ultimately exercised over final decisions. Most joined SEGC believing they were being asked to help shape major enrollment and program choices for SE PPS schools, with some expecting a meaningful role in decision-making and others expecting at least strong advisory influence. However, it is important to note that some members admitted that it was made clear that their role was advisory from the beginning. However, over time, many participants came to believe that key decisions were predetermined, that their votes and scenario preferences were largely symbolic, and that their labor served to legitimize plans developed elsewhere.

SEGC members who responded to the survey reflected on their experiences when asked what PPS should do to communicate more clearly and more meaningfully with families if the district goes through major changes again:

“Do not ask parents to volunteer countless hours of time and pay multiple millions of dollars to consultants if the district has already predetermined the outcomes.”

“Be honest. If you already know you’re going to do something, just say it. Don’t lead people on and waste everyone’s time with workgroups and processes when in the end you’re just going to force what you wanted to do in the first place. It just destroys your credibility and erodes trust even further.”

Several participants described how they initially understood themselves as representatives of specific schools and the broader southeast community, accountable first to their local

communities and then to the district as a whole. They recalled being told they would help rebalance enrollment and advance equity as Kellogg opened, and they expected that their recommendations would carry real weight. One member summarized the shift in understanding this way:

“We really started voting, we started giving a lot of recommendations. And then it did seem like we were actually directing the staff... And in the end, for both Part One and Part Two, it became very clear that our recommendations were just that... they would then decide what they needed to take to the board... It felt like they were asking us to agree to something that we were wholeheartedly not in agreement with.”

Members repeatedly described a pattern in which they would vote on top balancing and program relocation scenarios, only to see district staff put forward something different as the apparent outcome of SEGC deliberations. This contributed strongly to a sense that their influence over decisions was minimal. As another member put it:

“We would vote for the top three scenarios, and then someone would pick the one that they liked... our votes did not count for anything. I wish they just picked a scenario at the beginning and saved everybody two years worth of volunteer time.”

Additional participants echoed this perception but added more detail about how the formal location of SEGC in the governance structure shifted over time. Early in the process, members believed they were advising the board directly then later they were told they were advising a specific central-office leader instead. One member reported, according to their perception, that this change was framed as a way to navigate public-meeting law, but it also deepened the sense that their role was advisory at best, without clear lines of accountability. Another member expressed frustration that the district continued to label the current configuration “the SEGC setup,” despite the fact that SEGC’s recommendations had not been followed:

“We were a guiding coalition... I did not believe that we had decision-making power, but it felt like our recommendation was going to carry more weight than it ultimately did. The fact that the district continues to refer to this current setup as the SEGC setup actually angers me... They did not do what we recommended.”

The perception that key outcomes were predetermined was especially strong around three areas:

- the relocation and configuration of certain focus and immersion programs,
- the decision to maintain two comprehensive middle schools at Kellogg and Harrison Park
- the narrowing of scope to exclude inner SE and high schools

Participants described specific program siting decisions as “absolutes” that limited any real flexibility. One member argued that two early program decisions largely “dominoed” everything else:

“The two big factors that felt like dominoed the rest of the decision making was [a focus option] at one school and Spanish Immersion at another. That left little to no room for decision-making. Anytime we suggested alternatives... we were told, ‘No, it’ll be fine.’”

Other SEGC members described a similar sense of pre-set boundaries. Participants recalled that Phase 1 began with the expectation that “everything was on the table.” By Phase 2, however, they felt the process had narrowed considerably after inner Southeast schools and high schools were placed off-limits through a Board decision that participants understood to be influenced by district staff recommendations. This narrowing of scope was experienced as a major reduction in SEGC’s influence and as a direct contradiction of the district’s stated equity lens. One participant stated:

“As soon as the inner southeast schools were off the table, I was like, well, this is not an equitable process. Every meeting paid homage to the racial equity and social justice lens, but once those schools were off, it just felt like this bizarre ritual.”

A survey respondent had similar perceptions:

“Don’t ask for parent feedback if you’re not taking it seriously. Do not leave out the high-income white schools from the process while focusing on “equity” it was a total gaslighting experience.”

Control over data and modeling also shaped perceptions of influence. Members consistently emphasized that while they received large volumes of data, they lacked timely, responsive, and equitable access to the specific analyses needed to test ideas and influence proposals. Participants described what several referred to as a “wall” between SEGC and the contracted analytics team. Participants stated that district-preferred ideas were modeled quickly, whereas member-requested variations took weeks or never materialized. For example, members recalled requesting scenarios to run and either never seeing the results or receiving them minutes before a vote. One member concluded:

“We would ask for different data scenarios, and we wouldn’t get the data until 20 minutes before the meeting that we were supposed to vote on it... It felt like a shell game... It felt like the dialog we were having in the meetings was completely pointless, because they had a plan, and they were going to figure out how to make it work, and we were just there to check the boxes.”

Some participants described a critical turning point when more than half the coalition abstained from the final vote, refusing to endorse a single option they considered deeply flawed. Only then did the district agree to convene a special session with the contracted analytics team to model an alternative scenario to members had been requesting. Even in that moment, the alternative was presented rapidly and with little time to refine it. For some, this experience confirmed that routine participation and respectful questioning did not confer real influence. They felt like only near-breakdown resistance forced limited responsiveness. As one member put it:

“We literally had more than half of the coalition say we’re not going to vote. We abstained from the final vote. That’s when that special meeting came to be... I wish we would have done a lot more of that earlier.”

Importantly, perceptions of influence were not entirely uniform. One participant, representing a middle school whose enrollment, according to their perception, was significantly strengthened by boundary changes, felt that the district’s goals for that part of the system were clear and that SEGC’s work helped achieve them. The participant reported that her school moved from chronically low enrollment toward a stable, sustainable size, and they credited both district demographers and SEGC discussions with making this possible. At the same time, the person acknowledged that her experience was unusual:

“I’m one of the few people that benefited almost entirely from it. My school is what got all the benefits of all the agony that everybody else went through... [School name] is around 450 now and pretty stable. We really did get what we hoped for. I know I’m a real minority voice, because I’m one of the few people who pretty much got just what they hoped for.”

That same participant also emphasized that disappointment and anger were “inevitable” for other members, given that the process necessarily involved painful tradeoffs and could not possibly give every community what it most wanted. This participant’s account underscores that perceptions of influence were shaped not only by process design and transparency, but also by whether one’s own community experienced clear benefits or clear harms.

Across all of our conversations with SEGC members, participants agreed that they felt heard and respected by one another inside SEGC. They described strong relationships, mutual listening, and emotional support among participants. However, they distinguished sharply between this internal experience and their sense of how PPS leadership and the board engaged with SEGC input. For many, the overall conclusion was that the coalition provided labor, legitimacy, and local expertise, but very limited real influence over final district decisions.

Analytic Note on Lived Experience, Observation, and Participant Perception

In our analysis, we distinguished between participants' direct lived experiences and observations, such as what they saw, did, heard, experienced, or recalled from the SEGC process, and their broader perceptions or interpretations of what those experiences meant. This distinction matters because perceptions are often grounded in lived experience, but they may also reflect participants' efforts to make sense of patterns, motives, decisions, and power dynamics that extend beyond any single moment or meeting.

The claims in this section that describe specific emotions, moments, actions, or process details are grounded in the direct accounts shared by SEGC members that we were able to speak to during the focus groups and interview. These include members describing not feeling heard, feeling that their time had been wasted, recounting voting experiences, receiving data shortly before decisions were made, abstaining from the final vote, believing that some schools were positioned for closure, or naming ways their own school communities were affected by enrollment changes. These accounts draw on participants' own words and detailed recollections of meetings, votes, letters of dissent, data requests, communication challenges, and school community impacts.

At the same time, some findings in this section reflect participants' broader interpretations of the SEGC process, not only discrete events that can be confirmed through administrative records or formal documentation. For example, when members described their influence as limited, characterized certain outcomes as feeling predetermined, named barriers between SEGC members and district decision makers, or described responsiveness as occurring only after significant resistance, we understand these accounts as meaningful evidence of how participants experienced and made sense of the process. These characterizations synthesize patterns across data collection sessions and should not be read as claims that every SEGC member had the same experience. Rather, they illuminate how participants interpreted district motives, Board dynamics, decision-making patterns, and the overall credibility of the process.

Actionable Recommendations Based on SEGC Members' Experiences to (Re)Build Trust and Support Meaningful Engagement with Families and Communities?

Drawing on the experiences of SEGC members, participants' experiences (both directly and indirectly) offered a set of concrete recommendations for how future district efforts, especially enrollment and program changes, might build trust and support meaningful, equitable engagement.

Clearly define the purpose, scope, and tradeoffs before launching future district change processes and groups

First, participants stressed the importance of clear, stable goals and scope, and of honoring those commitments throughout the process. Members believed one of the fundamental problems early on in SEGC was that the overarching goal was never fully clarified or was set incorrectly. Some participants argued that, given widespread under-enrollment, consolidation should have been an explicit target, but instead the work devolved into, what one participant described as “mitigating the impact of an already flawed plan.” As one survey respondent framed it:

“In the previous SEGC process, when district level administrators were asked if they had a goal, mission, or desired outcome for the SEGC process the initial response was that they wanted to hear from families. Although that sounds good in public venues, it also displays a lack of direction, leadership, and compass (moral and logistical).”

Participants noted that when high schools and inner SE schools were removed from consideration, it directly contradicted the stated aim of addressing district-wide equity. For future efforts, they argued that the district should explicitly define its goals (for example, consolidation versus boundary change or boundary fine-tuning), commit to considering all schools, and avoid closing off parts of the city midstream in the process. When constraints or changes are unavoidable, the district should provide a transparent rationale rather than simply announcing a narrowed scope.

Relatedly, members urged the district to be transparent with communities about the real trade-offs and be honest about pros and cons of future decisions. Participants described their own attempts, within SEGC, to generate alternative scenarios that each prioritized different values (such as balanced enrollment, proximity, or stability, etc.) and to compare outcomes. One member argued that the district should adopt a similar approach with the broader public:

“Trust people to understand tradeoffs. When you provide options, give a real accounting of the pros and cons. Show one scenario that prioritizes balanced enrollment, another that prioritizes

proximity, and so on. Then people can see the tradeoffs and understand why a certain path was chosen, even if it's not their ideal."

"Find ways to meaningfully include family input and then name how that input is included in decisions."

Participants felt that this kind of candid comparison would help families see that there is no "perfect" option, and that the chosen path reflects a reasoned judgment rather than hidden agendas.

Use clear, direct communication and consistent data to strengthen public trust

A second major recommendation concerned communication style and consistency. Participants described district communications as overly long, abstract, and lacking in concrete information. They criticized what one participant called "gobbledygook" which includes dense messages that used many words but offered little clarity. This problem, they noted, was already repeating itself in communications about new right-sizing work. One member summarized:

"The statements say so many words and say so little. Families are supposed to sit down and read a wall of words with almost no actual information. Say what you mean, be honest with people. They can handle it. They just want information. Give them the truth."

Participants also highlighted the damage done when district representatives presented enrollment and capacity figures in public that did not match the numbers SEGC members had been working with. This inconsistency, participants said, undermined credibility for both school representatives and the district. The recommendation here is that the district must make sure its data is internally aligned before it is shared in public and must correct any discrepancies openly and quickly.

Design engagement so committees and families can access, understand, and influence the process from the beginning

Third, SEGC members who participated in this research emphasized that engagement for committees and families must be accessible, equitable, and genuinely influential. They pointed out that while the district did eventually provide direct access to data consultants and sophisticated tools, this happened far too late in the process and only under heavy pressure. For future processes, they recommended making such tools and expertise available from the beginning, alongside support that helps non-technical participants understand and apply the information. This implies offering training, clear explanations, and interactive opportunities to see how proposed changes would affect different schools and communities, rather than simply delivering static spreadsheets or dense reports.

Participants also called for reducing the barriers that kept many families from engaging meaningfully. They noted that the volume and complexity of materials required substantial free time, literacy, and technology access, which effectively excluded many caregivers who worked multiple jobs, had younger children, or lacked relevant professional experience. Important to note, a large portion of the SEGC work took place during COVID-19, which required many meetings to be held online. However, participants suggested providing shorter, multilingual explainers, visual maps, and summaries, as well as offering stipends (might not be possible with the district's current fiscal conditions) or supports such as childcare, and using varied engagement formats, including small-group sessions and more informal settings. The goal, they argued, is to design processes that do not only elevate the voices of people with the most time and confidence. One survey respondent suggested:

“Necesitan tener representantes presente en la escuela, tener juntas en Español, mandar folletos a casa con mucho tiempo en anticipación de cambios.” (They need to have representatives present in schools, to have meetings in Spanish, to send pamphlets home with plenty of time before anticipated changes.)

Similarly, another recurring recommendation was to hold more, and earlier, listening sessions that focus on open-ended input rather than reaction to pre-baked plans. Members recalled that prior community sessions often came after the district had already developed a preferred scenario, so families were essentially being asked, “Do you have thoughts about this plan?” rather than, “What are your priorities before we draft anything?” One participant reflected:

“It felt like community sessions only happened once there was already something being worked with. It wasn't, ‘Come and give us your feedback’ at the start. It was, ‘Here's the plan. What do you think of it?’”

To build trust, they argued, the district should engage communities early in defining problems and values and then return with drafts that explicitly show how initial feedback has been incorporated, or, where it has not, why that is the case.

Apply the racial equity and social justice lens through concrete decisions, not symbolic language

A fourth set of recommendations revolved around applying the equity lens substantively, not symbolically. Many participants were clear that the district's equity language alone did not build trust. In fact, repeating an equity statement at every meeting while excluding inner southeast schools and focusing changes on outer southeast made the lens feel hollow. One member captured this dynamic:

“They kept reading the racial equity and social justice lens at the beginning of each meeting, but once those inner southeast schools were off the table, it just felt like a ritual. We kept saying the words, even though what we were doing was just shuffling the most under-resourced students and schools.”

Other participants said that they warned about equity language being used selectively to protect specific programs or communities, rather than to center the needs of students who have been historically marginalized. They recommended that future efforts tie the equity lens concretely to which schools and student groups are included in the conversation, and that the district publish clear equity impact analyses for each scenario. They also urged the district to prioritize direct voices from affected communities over interpretations by more advantaged advocates “speaking for” them.

Honor promised supports and create public accountability for follow-through

Fifth, participants underscored the need for PPS to follow through on promises and maintain continuity of responsibility. They pointed to specific commitments that, in their perception, were not honored, most notably additional staffing for schools negatively impacted by SEGC changes. One participant described working at a school that had been promised a set amount of extra staffing as part of the SEGC plan, only to find that leaders had to apply annually for a portion of those positions and were repeatedly denied:

“They promised additional staffing to impacted schools and then backtracked. Our principal had to apply to be allowed to request what we were supposedly guaranteed. Year after year she was denied most of it. If you promise that support as part of a plan, schools should just get it.”

Participants also linked unfulfilled promises to leadership transitions. They noted that a key central office leader was retiring at the end of the process, and they felt that promises made under that leader were not carried forward with the same level of ownership. This left them with the impression that certain assurances had been used to secure their cooperation on the final plan, without strong mechanisms to ensure delivery afterward. Overall, participants’ recommendation is that the district should only promise supports that are budgeted and structurally embedded, and should create institutional accountability, through board resolutions, policy, and public tracking, so commitments can survive changes in personnel.

Make courageous, student-centered decisions that prioritize equity over political comfort

Sixth, several participants spoke about the importance of PPS making courageous, student-centered decisions, even when it angers more privileged, white, affluent, and vocal groups. Participants observed that previous boards and administrators seemed especially reluctant to make decisions that would upset affluent communities, and that this avoidance contributed to the

district revisiting the same issues years later. One member suggested that the district must accept that some families will be unhappy and that this is not, in itself, a sign of failure:

“Maybe they could let people be mad at them. I’ve never seen an entity so afraid of people being mad at them. Some people are going to be mad. The question is whether you’re doing the right thing for students.”

Another participant added that failing to make hard choices during the SEGC process had real consequences for both equity and stability across many southeast schools. This recommendation suggests that building trust is not only about designing a more robust engagement process and communication, but also about the district demonstrating that, when it must choose between competing interests, it consistently centers students and long-term equity rather than short-term political comfort. As one survey respondent stated:

“Deberían tomar en cuenta, que para los estudiantes es difícil el cambio de escuelas frecuenté y también para los padres. Es difícil retomar confianza en el personal, los maestros y compañeros.” (They should take into consideration that changing schools frequently is difficult for students and also for parents. It is difficult to regain trust in staff, teachers, and classmates.)

Support affected schools before, during, and after major enrollment or program changes

Seventh, another recommendation that comes from our conversation with SEGC members is that major enrollment or program change (including school closures and consolidations) should be paired with a robust implementation and support plan for affected schools. Participants highlighted ongoing harms from unbalanced enrollment, staffing instability, transportation problems, and the erosion of school identities and programs. Future efforts should include concrete commitments to support transitions before, during, and after the changes. For example, this might include preserving key program elements where possible, making sure that merged or relocated schools have real access to libraries and electives, and designing transportation that supports participation in the full school day and after-school activities. The district should also plan for emotional and community support (this might include counseling, community-building events, and targeted family engagement) for students and families whose schools close or are substantially reconfigured. Eve Ewing, a leading scholar on school closures, refers to this as *institutional mourning* to describe the grief, loss, and emotional aftermath communities experience when a shared institution, such as a neighborhood school, is closed (Ewing, 2018).

Begin future processes by acknowledging past harms and establishing clear community guardrails

Finally, given the history of repeated disruptive processes and the trust that has already been lost, future efforts should begin with acknowledgement and visible guardrails. Participants described decades of shifting configurations and boundary changes in the southeast area of the district and

said this most recent process deeply damaged whatever trust remained. Before moving forward with school closures or consolidations, the district should publicly acknowledge specific past harms and missteps (such as, according to some participants, ignored dissent in SEGC, unbalanced outcomes, and perceived inequities in which communities were included), and articulate how new processes will be different. Co-designing guardrails with community members (for example, independent facilitation, data transparency measures etc.) can create visible structures that people can monitor and hold the district accountable to, rather than being asked simply to trust that the process will be better.

In sum, these recommendations do not guarantee trust or satisfaction, but they respond directly to the failures and harms that SEGC participants described. Implemented together, they would represent a concrete shift toward more honest, supported, and collaborative engagement with families and communities, with the hope of mending areas of broken trust.

Section 4:

Broader Research Context: Enrollment Balancing, School Closures, Consolidations, Rightsizing and Equity

Broader Research Context: Enrollment Balancing, School Closures, Consolidations, Rightsizing and Equity

SEGC was not designed or implemented as a school closure initiative. However, it belongs in conversation with the school closure, consolidation, rightsizing, and district reconfiguration literature because it involves many of the same core mechanisms through which closure and consolidation processes affect students, families, staff, and communities. SEGC changed attendance boundaries, relocated programs, altered feeder patterns, shifted grade configurations, and redistributed students, staff, programs, and resources across southeast schools. These kinds of decisions can produce many of the same equity concerns documented in the school closure literature, including displacement, loss of school community, disproportionate burdens across racial and socioeconomic groups, changes in access to programs and supports, transportation challenges, and questions about whether receiving schools are prepared and resourced to serve students well. For that reason, in this section, we draw on broader national research on school closures, consolidations, rightsizing, boundary changes, program relocation, and school reconfiguration to help clarify the equity questions PPS should consider when making future districtwide changes.

As such, the purpose of this section is twofold.

First, we review research beyond Portland in which districts are responding to declining enrollment, budget pressure, underutilized buildings, aging facilities, and varied access to equitable educational opportunities.

Second, this research will provide an interpretive lens that this report will return to when analyzing the SEGC findings. In later sections, we will situate the PPS findings in conversation with this research to examine where SEGC reflects broader national patterns, where PPS's experience differs, and what lessons could inform future enrollment balancing, rightsizing, boundary, program relocation, or school reconfiguration decisions.

Finally, in this section, we use the research literature to address several key questions that can help PPS situate what is happening in the district within a national context and make equitable future decisions about rightsizing, enrollment balancing, boundary changes, program relocation, and school reconfiguration. Specifically, we ask:

1. Why do districts typically close, consolidate, or reconfigure schools?
2. Do school closures or major reconfigurations improve student outcomes?
3. Do districts typically save money when they close or consolidate schools?
4. Who typically bears the burden of school closures and related reconfiguration decisions?
5. What conditions are essential for making school closure, consolidation, rightsizing, boundary-change, or program-relocation processes as equitable as possible?

6. What does this body of research imply for PPS as we interpret the SEGC findings and consider future districtwide changes?

Within each part of this section, we summarize what the research says and then briefly consider what that evidence means for PPS.

Why Districts Typically Close, Consolidate, or Reconfigure Schools

Across districts in the United States, especially urban districts, school closures and related rightsizing decisions are typically justified through several overlapping rationales, including (a) declining enrollment, (b) budget deficits, (c) underused facilities, (d) aging or deteriorating building conditions, (e) low academic performance, (f) school choice pressures and charter school growth, and (g) efforts to create stronger or more comprehensive learning environments.⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ ⁵¹ These rationales often appear together, but not always. For example, a district may be losing students and revenue while also operating more buildings than it can afford, maintaining aging facilities, and trying to provide a broader (and even more robust) set of academic, enrichment, intervention, and specialized programs.

However, the empirical literature suggests that these decisions are rarely about enrollment alone. For example, in districts like Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, Detroit, and other districts, closures and reconfiguration efforts have been tied to a combination of underutilization, fiscal stress, academic accountability, facilities conditions, and broader governance reforms.⁵² ⁵³ ⁵⁴ Each rationale carries different implications. Closing or reconfiguring a school because it is under-enrolled is not the same as doing so because the building is unsafe, academically low-performing, or because the district is trying to expand access to stronger or more resourced programs. When these rationales are collapsed into a single “rightsizing” frame, communities may experience the process as unclear, overly technical, or predetermined.

For PPS, this means conversations about school size, utilization, and consolidation should clearly distinguish among the different reasons a school may be considered for reconfiguration (e.g., from a K–8 to K–5), consolidation and/or closure. In other words, PPS should avoid treating enrollment or utilization as a single diagnosis. Those numbers may point to a concern, but they do not explain what is causing the concern (or even what historically created the concern) or what kind of response would best serve students and families. For example, a school may be

⁴⁹ Syeed, E. (2019). “It just doesn’t add up”: Disrupting official arguments for urban school closures with counter-frames. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27, 110-110.

⁵⁰ Lipman, P. (2013). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.

⁵¹ Bierbaum, A. (2018). School closures and the contested unmaking of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*

Journal of Planning Education and Research

⁵² de la Torre, M., & Gwynne, J. (2009). When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research.

⁵³ Brummet, Q. (2014). The effect of school closings on student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 119, 108–124.

⁵⁴ Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students’ academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education Review*, 69, 25–60.

under-enrolled but beloved and relationship-rich. Another school building may be efficiently utilized but still lack sufficient interventions, counseling, enrichment, special education, or multilingual learner support. Then, another school may have declining enrollment because of broader housing, demographic, transportation, programmatic, or neighborhood conditions beyond the school's control. Treating these conditions as equivalent can lead to decisions that appear technically rational but remain educationally or racially inequitable.

In sum, the research suggests that future PPS decisions should begin with a clear diagnosis of the problem, not simply a utilization number, and should evaluate whether the proposed response actually improves students' access to stable, well-resourced, and equitable learning environments.

Do School Closures or Major Reconfigurations Improve Student Outcomes?

The empirical research on school closures and consolidations is mixed, but it consistently shows that improved student outcomes are not automatic. This happens in part because student outcomes depend heavily on the quality of the receiving school, the strength of the transition process, the continuity of student relationships, the level of disruption students experience, and the capacity of the receiving school to serve both incoming and currently enrolled students (this last point is really important and something that came up in our SEGC findings).^{55 56 57 58}

Across studies of school closures in urban districts in the nation, a consistent pattern emerges, which is that students who are displaced because of closures are more likely to benefit when they attend schools that are substantially stronger than the schools they leave. However, when students instead move to schools that are similar in performance, under-resourced, or organizationally strained, the hoped-for academic benefits often do not materialize.^{59 60 61 62} This is one of the most important lessons for PPS. A closure, consolidation, boundary change, or program relocation should not be judged only by whether students are reassigned somewhere else that improves building capacity and utilization. It should be judged by whether students are reassigned to schools with demonstrably stronger learning conditions, resources, and the capacity to serve them well.

⁵⁵ de la Torre, M., & Gwynne, J. (2009). When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research.

⁵⁶ Brummet, Q. (2014). The effect of school closings on student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 119, 108–124.

⁵⁷ Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education Review*, 69, 25–60.

⁵⁸ Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

⁵⁹ de la Torre, M., & Gwynne, J. (2009). When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research.

⁶⁰ Brummet, Q. (2014). The effect of school closings on student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 119, 108–124.

⁶¹ Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education Review*, 69, 25–60.

⁶² Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) school closure history is especially instructive. Earlier research on CPS closures found that many displaced students moved from one low-performing school to another (while improving utilization rates in buildings), limiting the possibility that closure would improve achievement.⁶³ The later University of Chicago Consortium study of the 2013 CPS closures adds an even deeper caution. That study found that students from closed schools experienced negative academic effects in the year closures were announced, with reading and math scores lower than expected. Reading effects rebounded after one year, but math (negative) effects persisted for multiple years. Students in welcoming schools also experienced lower reading scores in the first year after the merger (which is known in the literature as spillover effects, which we discuss below), though those effects later rebounded for students in receiving schools. The same study found that staff and students often described the process as emotionally difficult, socially disruptive, and insufficiently planned.⁶⁴

This body of evidence suggests that closures and major reconfigurations can often create multiple layers of disruption. They may disrupt academic progress, attendance routines, peer networks, relationships with trusted adults, school identity, family-school connections, and receiving-school stability. Even when some outcomes rebound, the rebound does not erase the disruption itself. For students and staff, the transition period can still carry deep educational and emotional costs.^{65 66}

At the same time, there is research that shows that school closure can produce academic benefits under specific conditions. Evidence from New York City, for example, suggests that when low-performing high schools were phased out as part of a broader strategy that included creating or expanding access to stronger school options, students who otherwise would have attended those closed schools experienced improved outcomes.^{67 68} It is important to note that this does not mean that closure itself was the sole driver of improvement. Rather, it suggests that closure is more likely to produce benefits when it is part of a broader strategy to expand access to stronger schools, not when it simply redistributes students across an already strained system.

The implication for PPS is that any future rightsizing, boundary, consolidation, or program relocation proposal should identify the educational benefit students are expected to receive, not only the enrollment or facilities problem the district is trying to solve. PPS should be able to

⁶³ Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

⁶⁴ Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

⁶⁵ de la Torre, M., & Gwynne, J. (2009). When schools close: Effects on displaced students in Chicago Public Schools. Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

⁶⁶ Engberg, J., Gill, B., Zamarro, G., & Zimmer, R. (2012). Closing schools in a shrinking district: Do student outcomes depend on which schools are closed? *Journal of Urban Economics*, 71(2), 189–203.

⁶⁷ Kemple, J. J. (2015). High school closures in New York City: Impacts on students' academic outcomes, attendance, and mobility. Research Alliance for New York City Schools.

⁶⁸ Bifulco, R., & Schwegman, D. J. (2020). Who benefits from accountability-driven school closure? Evidence from New York City. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 39(1), 96–130.

show that receiving schools are stronger, better-resourced, culturally affirming, and ready to serve additional students. Without that evidence, school reconfiguration risks becoming a technical solution that produces limited educational improvement and significant human and relational cost.

Do Districts Typically Save Money When They Close or Consolidate Schools?

School closures are often presented as a fiscal strategy, especially when districts face declining enrollment and budget deficits, which are very significant realities. However, the limited literature in this area suggests that districts typically do not save as much money as they may expect, at least not in the short term. Savings are possible, but they are often smaller, slower, more dependent on labor reductions, and more complicated than closure narratives suggest.^{69 70}

This is often the reality because the majority of school operating spending is tied to personnel, not buildings. Nationally, salaries and benefits account for approximately 80% of current public school expenditures (and in some districts is higher), which means that consolidation does not automatically generate large savings unless it also changes staffing, programming, transportation, or facility costs.⁷¹ In other words, closing a building may reduce some costs related to utilities, maintenance, administration, and operations, but the largest savings usually come from staffing changes. Edunomics Lab, which is a Georgetown University research center that explores and models complex education finance decisions to inform policy and practice, summarizes this fiscal reality with a useful rule of thumb. They suggest that when a district has under-enrolled schools, closing 1 of every 15 schools may save about 4% of a district's budget, mostly through labor costs. More specifically, these savings may come through layoffs, attrition, vacancy reductions, reassignment, or reduced future hiring. Facilities savings may occur, but they are usually much smaller because personnel represent the overwhelming share of district spending. For this reason, districts should be transparent about whether projected savings depend on reducing staff positions and whether any savings will be reinvested into instruction and student-facing supports. Additionally, facilities savings may occur, but they are usually much smaller because, again, personnel is often the largest portion of district spending.⁷²

This means that closure savings depend on whether the district can actually reduce ongoing costs. If students move to receiving schools that require additional teachers, counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, transportation, renovations, safety supports, or transition staff, the savings may be reduced or delayed. If closed buildings still require maintenance, security, insurance, or eventual reuse planning, the savings may be smaller than anticipated. If families

⁶⁹ Pew Charitable Trusts. (2011). Closing public schools in Philadelphia: Lessons from six urban districts. Pew Charitable Trusts.

⁷⁰ Roza, M., & Dhammani, A. (2024, March 3). Closing schools: How much money does it save, and is it worth it? Edunomics Lab.

⁷¹ National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Public school expenditures. In *The Condition of Education 2024*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

⁷² Roza, M., & Dhammani, A. (2024, March 3). Closing schools: How much money does it save, and is it worth it? Edunomics Lab.

leave the district because of the closure or reconfiguration, the district may also lose enrollment-driven revenue.⁷³

For PPS, the most responsible approach is not to assume that closures, consolidations, or reconfigurations will automatically solve fiscal problems (see later sections about what closure and consolidations can actually address). Therefore, any future proposal should include a transparent estimate of realistic net savings in relation to the feasibility of what they can offer in well-resourced schools. That estimate should distinguish among several areas such as projected staffing savings, facilities savings, transportation costs, transition costs, receiving-school investment costs, vacant-building costs, and the timeline over which savings are expected to materialize.

The equity question is also not only whether money is saved, which is important. Again, it is whether any savings are redirected toward instruction and student-facing supports rather than simply absorbed into general operations, maintenance, or deficit reduction. If a consolidation reduces the number of buildings but does not improve staffing, intervention, counseling, special education services, multilingual learner supports, electives, enrichment, or school climate, then the district may achieve technical efficiency without creating a more equitable educational experience.^{74 75}

For this reason, PPS should clearly name how much it realistically expects to save from any future closure, consolidation, or major reconfiguration, how that estimate was calculated, what costs were included or excluded, and how savings would be reinvested. A fiscally honest process should be able to answer not only, “What will be saved, if anything?” but also, “What will students receive that they do not currently receive?”

Who Typically Bears the Burden of School Closures and Related Reconfiguration Decisions?

One of the most consistent findings in the school closure literature is that closure burdens are not evenly distributed by race, social class, and geography. School closures have disproportionately affected Black students, low-income students, and communities already shaped by public disinvestment, housing instability, racial segregation, and school instability.^{76 77 78} This pattern is important because districts often use criteria that appear neutral on the surface (while important), such as utilization rates, test scores, building condition, or enrollment trends. Yet those indicators

⁷³ Pew Charitable Trusts. (2011). Closing public schools in Philadelphia: Lessons from six urban districts. Pew Charitable Trusts.

⁷⁴ Hahnel, C. (2023). Centering equity in the school-closure process in California. Policy Analysis for California Education.

⁷⁵ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. Research for Action.

⁷⁶ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. Research for Action.

⁷⁷ Ewing, E. L., & Green, T. L. (2022). Beyond the headlines: Trends and future directions in the school closure literature. *Educational Researcher*, 51(1), 58–65.

⁷⁸ Hahnel, C., & Pearman, F. A., II. (2023). Declining enrollment, school closures, and equity considerations. Policy Analysis for California Education.

are themselves shaped by historical and contemporary inequities in housing, racialized neighborhood investment, school funding, school choice, and political power.

Recent national evidence shows that majority-Black schools are far more likely to close than non-majority-Black schools, even after accounting for factors commonly used to justify closure, including achievement, enrollment, and socioeconomic conditions in surrounding communities.⁷⁹ This finding is not simply about contemporary district decision-making. It connects to a longer historical arc in which Black schools were closed during and after school desegregation efforts (e.g., *Brown v. Board I* (1954) and *Brown v. Board II* (1955)), often displacing Black educators, weakening Black institutional life, and redistributing educational control away from Black communities.^{80 81} In this sense, school closure is not only a local facilities decision, it is connected to a broader history of racialized educational displacement.

The literature also shows that closures can shape neighborhoods, not only schools. Research on school closures and gentrification finds that closures can weaken the neighborhood-school connection in ways that increase the likelihood of gentrification in highly segregated Black neighborhoods, while producing no comparable effect in White or Latino/a/x neighborhoods.^{82 83} This suggests that closure can become part of a broader spatial reorganization of cities even if it is not intentionally designed to do so.^{84 85} When a public school closes, the consequences may extend beyond students who are reassigned. The closure can affect neighborhood identity, housing dynamics, public investment, and community stability.

Qualitative research helps explain why affected communities often experience closure as a profound loss. Eve Ewing describes school closure as producing “institutional mourning,” a form of collective grief tied to the loss of a public institution that holds memory, identity, safety, and belonging.⁸⁶ Green’s work (the lead author’s prior school closure work) similarly shows that communities may experience closure as the removal of the “heart” of the community, particularly when schools function as neighborhood anchors and symbols of public commitment.⁸⁷ Green, Sánchez, and Castro’s geospatial work on Detroit further shows that

⁷⁹ Greene-Bell, D. M., & Pearman, F. A., II. (2024). Racialized closures and the shuttering of Black schools: Evidence from national data. *Harvard Educational Review*, 94(2), 187–210.

⁸⁰ Greene-Bell, D. M., & Pearman, F. A., II. (2024). Racialized closures and the shuttering of Black schools: Evidence from national data. *Harvard Educational Review*, 94(2), 187–210.

⁸¹ Tillman, L. C. (2004). (Un) intended consequences? The impact of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision on the employment status of Black educators. *Education and urban society*, 36(3), 280–303.

⁸² Pearman, F. A., II, & Greene, D. M. (2022). School closures and the gentrification of the Black metropolis. *Sociology of Education*, 95(3), 233–253.

⁸³ Green, T. L., Latham-Sikes, C., Horne, J., Castro, A., & Germain, E. (2022). Making waves: Districts as policy mediators in the flow of school gentrification. *Educational Policy*, 36(4), 849–878.

⁸⁴ Lipman, P. (2013). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Routledge.

⁸⁵ Pedroni, T. C. (2011). Urban shrinkage as a performance of whiteness: Neoliberal urban restructuring, education, and racial containment in the post-industrial, global niche city. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 203–215.

⁸⁶ Ewing, E. L. (2018). *Ghosts in the schoolyard: Racism and school closings on Chicago’s South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

⁸⁷ Green, T. L. (2017). “We felt they took the heart out of the community”: Examining a community-based response to urban school closure. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 25(21), 1–30.

closures and charter openings can be spatially patterned within racialized and marketized education landscapes, which underscores the importance of examining closure geographically and historically rather than only treating each school as an isolated building.⁸⁸

This matters for PPS because future rightsizing conversations may be framed around enrollment, utilization, or cost, but communities will experience them through histories of trust, belonging, neighborhood change, racial equity, and prior district decisions. The district should therefore ask not only which schools are under-enrolled, but also which communities have already borne previous burdens of displacement, boundary change, program relocation, underinvestment, housing instability, transportation barriers, and school instability.

What Is Essential for Making the Process as Equitable as Possible?

The research suggests that humanizing and equitable closure, consolidation, rightsizing, boundary-change, or program-relocation processes require much more than public meetings. They require clear criteria, upfront analysis of race, geography, and class, honest tradeoff analysis, meaningful community influence, receiving-school readiness, funded transition plans, and long-term monitoring.^{89 90}

In this section, we summarize what the literature suggests is essential.

First, equity-centered processes should begin with clear public-facing criteria before any school list is developed. These criteria should include more than utilization and enrollment. They should include components such as student need, facility condition, program access, transportation burden, receiving-school quality, special education capacity, multilingual learner supports, staff stability, neighborhood impact, racial equity, and the history of prior disruption, to name a few.⁹¹

⁹² If a district begins with a list of schools before communities understand the criteria, the process is more likely to be experienced as predetermined (which was something that emerged during our SEGC analysis, more on that later in the report).

Second, as much as possible, students should be moved only to schools that are demonstrably stronger, better resourced, and prepared to receive them (unless they move to an equally resourced school). Across the empirical literature, receiving-school quality is one of the strongest conditions shaping whether closure produces benefits or harms. A new assignment is not enough. The receiving school must have the staffing, space, leadership stability, intervention systems, student support services, school climate, and family engagement capacity to serve additional

⁸⁸ Green, T. L., Sánchez, J. D., & Castro, A. J. (2019). Closed schools, open markets: A hot spot spatial analysis of school closures and charter openings in Detroit. *AERA Open*, 5(2), 1–14.

⁸⁹ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. *Research for Action*.

⁹⁰ Ewing, E. L., & Green, T. L. (2022). Beyond the headlines: Trends and future directions in the school closure literature. *Educational Researcher*, 51(1), 58–65.

⁹¹ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. *Research for Action*.

⁹² Hahnel, C. (2023). Centering equity in the school-closure process in California. *Policy Analysis for California Education*.

students well.^{93 94} However, because school quality⁹⁵ and resources are often unevenly distributed across neighborhoods, especially along racial and socioeconomic lines, assigning students to stronger or better-resourced schools may require long travel distances that create new burdens for students and families.

Third, receiving-school capacity must be assessed and funded before implementation. Closure and consolidation decisions affect not only displaced students, but also students already enrolled in receiving schools. Research shows that receiving schools can experience strain or negative spillover effects when they absorb displaced students without sufficient preparation.⁹⁶ Therefore, districts should treat receiving-school readiness as an equity requirement, not an implementation detail.

Fourth, districts should create multi-year transition plans rather than one-time implementation plans of support. Transition support should begin before a final decision and continue after students and staff move. This includes academic support, social-emotional support, student orientation, staff integration, family navigation, transportation assistance, multilingual communication, school culture-building, and explicit attention to grief, loss, and institutional mourning. A closure or major reconfiguration can be technically planned and still emotionally and organizationally underprepared.^{97 98}

Fifth, staff stability should be treated as central to student stability. Closures, consolidations, and program relocations affect teachers, administrators, office staff, counselors, paraprofessionals, specialists, and other adults who hold relationships with students and families. Staff displacement can weaken institutional memory and disrupt trusted relationships, particularly for students and families who rely on school-based adults to navigate change. Equity-centered processes should include staff placement plans, staff retention strategies, support for receiving-school teams, and specific attention to retaining staff of color, multilingual staff, and staff with deep community ties.^{99 100}

Sixth, transportation and access burdens must be analyzed as equity issues. Longer travel times, unsafe routes, limited bus service, disability-related transportation needs, and reduced access to

⁹³ Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education Review*, 69, 25–60.

⁹⁴ Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

⁹⁵ School quality as determined by traditional markers such as test scores, students' grades, attendance, etc.

⁹⁶ Brummet, Q. (2014). The effect of school closings on student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 119, 108–124.

⁹⁷ Ewing, E. L. (2018). *Ghosts in the schoolyard: Racism and school closings on Chicago's South Side*. University of Chicago Press.

⁹⁸ Green, T. L. (2017). "We felt they took the heart out of the community": Examining a community-based response to urban school closure. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 25(21), 1–30.

⁹⁹ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders. *Research for Action*.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, M. F., de la Torre, M., Cowhy, J. R., Moore, P., Sartain, L., & Knight, D. (2018). School closings in Chicago: Staff and student experiences and academic outcomes. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

after-school activities can affect attendance, family engagement, belonging, and participation in enrichment. In Philadelphia, displaced students experienced increased absences after closure, making transportation and school access central to the equity analysis.^{101 102}

Seventh, community engagement must occur early enough to shape, or at least, inform, options, not merely react to final proposals. Research on mass school closure shows that affected communities may mobilize powerfully to defend their schools, but low responsiveness from decision-makers can undermine trust and democratic participation.¹⁰³ Engagement is not meaningful simply because people are invited to speak. It becomes meaningful when communities know what is open for influence, what constraints are fixed, what data is being used, how input will be weighed, and how final decisions changed because of public participation.

Eighth, districts should examine neighborhood impacts. Schools are not only instructional sites. They are public institutions embedded in neighborhood histories, racialized geographies, and community networks. Closure and reconfiguration decisions should therefore include a facilities reuse strategy, community benefit analysis, and safeguards against accelerating neighborhood disinvestment, displacement, or loss of public infrastructure.^{104 105 106}

Ninth, districts should monitor outcomes for several years after implementation. Closure, consolidation, boundary, and program relocation decisions should not end with a board vote or the first day of school in a new configuration. Districts should publicly track achievement, attendance, discipline, mobility, special education supports, multilingual learner services, transportation burden, staff retention, family experience, school climate, and whether promised resources actually materialized. Without longitudinal monitoring, districts may not know whether a major change reduced inequity, redistributed inequity, or created new harms.

Taken together, the literature suggests that the most equitable rightsizing process is one that does not begin with a closure list. It begins with an educational equity and adequacy question: what conditions are necessary for students to thrive, what resources are required to create those conditions, which schools currently lack those conditions, and what set of changes would

¹⁰¹ Steinberg, M. P., & MacDonald, J. M. (2019). The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia. *Economics of Education Review*, 69, 25–60.

¹⁰² Hahnel, C. (2023). Centering equity in the school-closure process in California. *Policy Analysis for California Education*.

¹⁰³ Nuamah, S. A. (2022). *Closed for democracy: How mass school closure undermines the citizenship of Black Americans*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁴ Greene-Bell, D. M., & Pearman, F. A., II. (2024). Racialized closures and the shuttering of Black schools: Evidence from national data. *Harvard Educational Review*, 94(2), 187–210.

¹⁰⁵ Pearman, F. A., II, & Greene, D. M. (2022). School closures and the gentrification of the Black metropolis. *Sociology of Education*, 95(3), 233–253.

¹⁰⁶ Green, T. L., Sánchez, J. D., & Castro, A. J. (2019). Closed schools, open markets: A hot spot spatial analysis of school closures and charter openings in Detroit. *AERA Open*, 5(2), 1–14.

improve those conditions while minimizing harm? For PPS, the district should take heed and strong considerations in implementing the nine suggestions listed above.

Conclusion

In sum, the broader research provides a clear caution. Future rightsizing, closure, consolidation, boundary, or program relocation decisions should not be driven by utilization rates or enrollment numbers alone. Enrollment matters, especially in an enrollment-driven finance system, but enrollment is not the same as educational quality or equity (even though there is a relationship between the two). Again, a school can be under-enrolled and still be deeply important to students, families, staff, and surrounding neighborhoods. A school can be efficiently utilized and still lack adequate staffing, intervention, enrichment, counseling, special education services, multilingual learner supports, or school climate capacity.

A central question for PPS should therefore be whether any proposed change will create more equitable, stable, well-resourced, accessible, culturally affirming, and academically strong learning environments for students. Before any final decision, PPS should be able to show why the change is necessary, what alternatives were considered, how racial equity was weighed, whether affected students will move to stronger and better-resourced schools, whether receiving schools are ready, what transition supports will be funded, how transportation and access burdens will be reduced, how staff stability will be protected, how community input changed the proposal, how much the district realistically expects to save, and how outcomes will be monitored over time.

Put simply, the lesson from the research is not that districts should avoid all difficult decisions. The lesson is that closures, consolidations, boundary changes, and program relocations are more defensible when they are part of a credible plan to improve educational opportunity, not merely redistribute students or reduce the number of buildings.

Section 5:

Situating SEGC Findings Within the Broader Research on
Enrollment Balancing, School Closures, Consolidations,
Rightsizing and Equity

What SEGC Findings Confirms, Complicates, and Adds to the Research

At PPS’s request, this section places the SEGC findings in conversation with the broader research literature reviewed earlier in this report on school closures, rightsizing, boundary changes, program relocation, and district reconfiguration. This is a common practice in peer-reviewed empirical research. Typically, after presenting findings, researchers often return to the prior literature to explain what the study confirms, what it complicates, and what it adds to the field’s understanding of a problem. That is our aim for this section.

Specifically, in this section, we revisit the research discussed earlier in the report and ask:

1. What does SEGC findings confirm from the broader literature?
2. What do SEGC findings complicate from the broader research?
3. What does SEGC findings add to our understanding of equity-centered district change within the context of boundary changes, enrollment balancing and school closures and consolidations?

Across the literature, as noted earlier, school closures and related forms of district reconfiguration are rarely only technical decisions. Districts often frame these decisions through rationales such as enrollment decline, fiscal pressure, building utilization, academic performance, and program efficiency, but their consequences are educational, relational, racialized, spatial, and organizational.¹⁰⁷ The SEGC findings strongly affirm this broader point. Even without closing schools, PPS’s boundary changes, program relocations, grade reconfigurations, feeder shifts, and enrollment balancing efforts raised many of the same equity questions that appear in the school closure and rightsizing literature such as:

- who benefits, who bears the burden
- whether receiving schools are ready
- whether students gain access to stronger learning environments,
- whether staff stability is protected
- whether families experience the process as equitable
- whether district promises are matched by implementation capacity

What SEGC Findings Confirms

SEGC findings confirm that technical enrollment balance does not automatically produce schools having what they need to serve students and families well.

One of the clearest lessons SEGC findings confirm is that technical improvement does not automatically translate into equitable educational improvement. The school closure and

¹⁰⁷ Eddins et al., 2024; Ewing & Green, 2022; Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011

rightsizing literature repeatedly shows that closing, consolidating, or reassigning students does not improve outcomes unless students move into schools that are substantially stronger, better resourced, and prepared to receive them (Brummet, 2014; de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Gordon et al., 2018; Steinberg & MacDonald, 2019). Similarly, the SEGC findings show that enrollment became more balanced, especially at the middle school level, but that balance was complicated by broader enrollment decline, inaccurate projections, higher-than-anticipated student need, staffing strain, and uneven perceptions of learning environments.

More specifically, this finding matters because it challenges the assumption that enrollment balance, by itself, is a sufficient equity outcome. In PPS, enrollment distribution became more even across SEGC schools, but many schools were also smaller than projected and served higher shares of students of color, multilingual learners, and students receiving special education services than anticipated. The central equity question, then, is not simply whether schools became more balanced numerically. The deeper question is whether schools had the staffing, intervention systems, enrichment opportunities, special education services, multilingual supports, and adult capacity needed to serve their actual students well.

SEGC findings, therefore, confirm a core lesson from the broader literature, which is that districts should not confuse technical rationality with educational sufficiency (i.e., schools having what they need to serve students and families well). A technically balanced system can still be under-resourced. In other words, a school can be more efficiently configured and still lack the conditions students and staff need to thrive. For PPS, future rightsizing or enrollment balancing efforts should treat enrollment balance as one indicator within a broader educational equity and adequacy framework, not as proof that equity has been achieved.

SEGC Findings Confirm That Receiving-school Readiness and Implementation Capacity Matter.

The broader literature consistently shows that student outcomes depend heavily on the capacity and quality of receiving schools. In other districts, the benefits or harms of school closure were shaped less by closure itself and more by where students went, what conditions awaited them, and whether receiving schools could absorb additional students without destabilizing their own learning environments (Bifulco & Schwegman, 2020; Brummet, 2014; de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Gordon et al., 2018; Kemple, 2015; Steinberg & MacDonald, 2019).

SEGC findings thus confirm this lesson, but in the context of boundary changes, program relocation, feeder shifts, and grade reconfiguration rather than formal school closure. In our study of SEGC, staff repeatedly described having to manage complex changes with insufficient guidance, late or incomplete information, and limited district transition infrastructure. Some schools relied heavily on local leadership, school culture, internal support teams, translation work, and staff improvisation to support students and families.

This pattern broadens the concept of receiving-school readiness. In SEGC, readiness was not only about whether schools had physical space for students. It was about whether schools had the staffing, leadership stability, family communication systems, intervention capacity, special education supports, multilingual supports, and cultural as well as emotional infrastructure to absorb change. SEGC confirms that district reconfiguration is also an implementation challenge, not only a planning challenge. A district can design a technically coherent boundary or program plan, but if school communities are left to absorb the emotional, logistical, and instructional burden without sufficient support, the change can feel destabilizing even when some other goals are met.

SEGC Confirms That Reconfiguration Burdens Are Not Evenly Distributed.

The school closure literature consistently shows that closure burdens are racially and economically uneven. Majority-Black schools have been disproportionately likely to close, and closures have often affected communities already shaped by disinvestment, housing instability, school instability, and racial segregation (Eddins et al., 2024; Ewing & Green, 2022; Greene-Bell & Pearman, 2024; Hahnel & Pearman, 2023). Ewing's concept of institutional mourning and Green's work on community responses to closure also show that schools function as neighborhood anchors, not merely service-delivery sites (Ewing, 2018; Green, 2017).

SEGC findings confirm this broader lesson, even though SEGC did not close schools. Staff and SEGC members perceived that low-income communities and communities of color bore disproportionate disruption. SEGC members who participated in the process reported extremely low confidence in procedural fairness and believed that the benefits and burdens of the changes were not distributed equitably. This concern is further strengthened by our finding that SEGC schools served substantially higher shares of students from low-income backgrounds than SE Portland schools that were not included in the process.

SEGC therefore shows that the equity questions raised by school closure research also apply to boundary changes, program relocation, and school reconfiguration. A district does not have to close a school for communities to experience inequitable burden, loss of access, racialized displacement, weakened trust, or the perception that some communities were protected while others absorbed change. This is one of the most important interpretive lessons for PPS, which is that racial equity analysis should not begin only when closure is on the table. It should guide every major decision that redistributes students, programs, staff, and resources.

SEGC Confirms That Staff Stability Is Central to Student Stability.

The broader literature increasingly emphasizes that closures and major reconfigurations affect staff as well as students and families. Staff displacement, morale decline, professional uncertainty, and the loss of trusted adults can weaken the relational infrastructure that students

and families depend on (Eddins et al., 2024; Gordon et al., 2018). SEGC strongly confirms this point.

The SEGC implementation year produced a significant staffing disruption. According to our quantitative analysis, staff of color experienced especially sharp effects, including higher rates of school departure and district exit compared with staff of color in non-SEGC schools. Latino/a/x staff departure patterns were shaped in part by DLI program relocation, while Black staff experienced persistently elevated turnover and higher involuntary termination rates. Our findings also show that staff morale was most negatively affected where SEGC-related change overlapped with repeated staffing loss, role instability, annual cuts, and leadership turnover.

This finding matters because future rightsizing conversations often focus heavily on students and buildings, while treating staff movement as a secondary operational issue. The SEGC findings suggest that this would be a mistake. Staff are part of the student support infrastructure. They carry relationships, language access, family trust, institutional memory, cultural knowledge, and daily implementation capacity. If reconfiguration disrupts staff of color, bilingual staff, trusted support staff, or stable school leadership, the district may weaken the very conditions needed for students to experience the new configuration as supportive.

SEGC Confirms That Participation Without Power Can Deepen Distrust.

The school closure and rightsizing literature consistently shows that community and family engagement can become a site of distrust when communities believe decisions are predetermined or when participation does not meaningfully shape outcomes (Eddins et al., 2024; Nuamah, 2022; Syeed, 2019). SEGC strongly confirms this lesson. SEGC members often described the coalition itself as collaborative and respectful but distinguished that internal experience from their sense that PPS leadership and the board did not meaningfully act on SEGC input. They also reported limited confidence in decision rules, low trust in rightsizing, and strong disagreement that benefits and burdens were distributed equitably.

This finding is especially important because SEGC was designed as an engagement-centered process. The findings suggest that participation alone is not the same as shared power. Community members may feel heard by one another while still feeling unheard by decision-makers. They may invest time, expertise, and emotional labor into a process and still conclude that the final decisions were constrained, symbolic, or predetermined.

For PPS, the implication is direct, which is that future engagement processes should define what is open for influence, what is not, what constraints are real, how data will be used, how alternatives will be modeled, and how community input will shape final decisions. Otherwise, community engagement can produce the appearance of inclusion while deepening mistrust.

What SEGC Complicates

SEGC Complicates the Research Because It Did Not Produce Broad Measurable Academic Harm.

One important way SEGC findings complicate the school closure literature is that it did not produce the kind of broad academic disruption often documented in large-scale school closure contexts. Research on Chicago's 2013 closures found negative academic effects for students from closed schools, including reading and math effects that emerged around the closure announcement and persisted longer in math (Gordon et al., 2018). By contrast, the SEGC matched analyses found that students attending SEGC schools had broadly similar academic and behavioral outcomes to matched peers in non-SEGC schools, with some positive associations for Black students, elementary students, multilingual learners, DLI students, and students in schools with higher free or reduced-price lunch eligibility.

This complicates the broader literature in useful ways. To be clear, it does not mean SEGC was experienced as easy, equitable, or well-supported. Rather, it means the measured academic and behavioral outcomes did not show broad harm relative to matched peers. The SEGC findings, therefore, reveal a gap between measured outcomes and lived experience. Middle school families reported fewer positive perceptions of learning environments than elementary families, and staff described many learning environments as caring but structurally strained. Thus, SEGC complicates some closure findings in its quantitative outcome pattern, but it confirms the broader literature's point that academic outcomes alone do not capture the full cost of major reconfiguration.

SEGC Complicates the Research Because DLI Relocation Did Not Produce Widespread District Exit but Still Produced Program-level Sorting.

Another way SEGC complicates the literature is that SEGC-related DLI relocation did not appear to produce widespread district exit among DLI students. DLI students whose programs moved largely stayed in PPS, and DLI students left PPS at lower rates than non-DLI students. This pattern suggests that DLI participation may have functioned as a retention factor for some students and families, even during program relocation.

However, this should not be read as evidence that relocation was harmless. The findings show that relocation still mattered for who followed the program, who left the program, who absorbed transportation burdens, and how program composition changed. Students who left relocated DLI programs more often spoke a language other than English at home, suggesting that families with different levels of program attachment, transportation flexibility, and schooling alternatives responded differently to relocation.

This finding complicates the broader literature because it shows that district exit is not the only way to understand displacement. In many closure contexts, researchers ask whether students leave the district or transfer to lower or higher-performing schools. SEGC shows that program relocation can produce a more subtle form of sorting, which is not necessarily district exit, but program-level sorting shaped by race, language, family capacity, program attachment, and transportation.

SEGC Complicates Simple Success or Harm Narratives.

SEGC also complicates any simple narrative that district reconfiguration either worked or failed. The findings show that the same change could produce gains and harms in the same school site. Some schools experienced stronger program coherence, more developmentally appropriate configurations, or greater cultural affirmation for particular student groups. At the same time, those same changes sometimes reduced neighborhood access, disrupted school identity, weakened diversity, created transportation burdens, or damaged trust.

This complication is important for PPS because rightsizing conversations are likely to generate polarized narratives, which is very common in districts across the nation. Some stakeholders may point to efficiencies, new programs, or enrollment balance as evidence of success. Others may point to displacement, weakened trust, or staffing disruption as evidence of harm. The SEGC findings suggest that both can be true. The more important analytic task is to identify the distribution of benefits and burdens across students, families, staff, programs, and neighborhoods.

What SEGC Adds to the Research

SEGC Adds Evidence That Racialized Displacement Can Occur Through Program Relocation and Reconfiguration, Not Only Through School Closure.

One of the most important contributions of the SEGC findings is that they show racialized displacement can occur through program relocation and school reconfiguration, not only through formal school closure. The conversion of one school to whole-school Spanish DLI coincided with substantial student movement, including the near disappearance of Black students from the school and a large increase in Latino/a/x enrollment. At the same time, some participants described the full-school Spanish DLI model as more intentional, coherent, and culturally affirming for Latino/a/x families.

This is not a simple harm story or a simple benefit story. It is an equity tradeoff. The same change that strengthened linguistic and cultural affirmation for one racially minoritized and historically underserved community also displaced another racially minoritized and historically underserved group and reduced neighborhood access for non-DLI families. This adds to the

closure and rightsizing literature by showing that programmatic equity and racial equity must be analyzed together. Put simply, a change can advance one equity goal while undermining another.

For PPS, this is a critical finding. Future program relocation decisions should not assume that expanding or consolidating a specialized program automatically advances equity. The district should ask questions like:

- Which students gain access?
- Which students lose access?
- Which students must travel farther?
- Which students lose neighborhood continuity?
- Which families have the resources to follow the program?
- Which groups become more concentrated, more isolated, or less visible in the new configuration?

SEGC Adds Evidence That Schools Can Experience Cultural Affirmation and Institutional Loss at the Same Time.

The SEGC findings also add to the literature by showing that the same school can be experienced simultaneously as a site of loss and a site of affirmation. Closure literature often emphasizes institutional mourning, neighborhood loss, and community displacement (Ewing, 2018; Green, 2017). SEGC findings affirm these concepts but adds complexity in that some schools experienced loss of neighborhood identity, walkability, diversity, or prior community structure while also becoming more coherent, affirming, or developmentally appropriate for specific student groups.

This is especially visible in the DLI findings. Some participants described stronger program coherence, cultural affirmation, and linguistic identity after consolidation. Others described loss of neighborhood access, reduced diversity, diminished elective access, or weakened school-community ties. These findings suggest that major district reconfiguration should not be evaluated as simply harmful or beneficial. The analytic task is to identify the distribution of gains and losses across groups.

This adds to the literature by emphasizing simultaneous equity effects. Future PPS decisions should therefore avoid one-dimensional equity claims. A decision may be good for multilingual program coherence and harmful for neighborhood access. It may create a stronger middle school model and reduce racial or socioeconomic diversity. It may improve facility access and still damage trust. A more mature equity analysis must hold these tensions together rather than choosing one story.

SEGC Adds Evidence That Cumulative Change Load May Matter as Much as the Formal Policy Change.

The broader implementation literature argues that schools interpret and enact reforms through existing organizational conditions, including leadership capacity, staff culture, staffing stability, school climate, and district-school alignment (Aldridge & McLure, 2024; Bryk et al., 2010; Honig & Hatch, 2004; McLure & Aldridge, 2022; Spillane et al., 2002). SEGC findings add to this literature by showing that the effects of district reconfiguration depend not only on the formal change itself, but also on the cumulative change load schools are already carrying.

Across schools, participants described SEGC as layered on top of other disruptions such as pandemic recovery, construction, budget cuts, labor actions, leadership turnover, school mergers, grade reconfiguration, feeder changes, and prior program shifts. Participants described this not as a single transition, but as a dense web of transitions or multi-year erosion. This finding is important because districts often evaluate each change separately, while school communities experience changes cumulatively.

For PPS, the implication is that future rightsizing or reconfiguration processes should include an implementation burden assessment (as mentioned previously). Before asking a school to absorb another major change, the district should examine what that school has already experienced, including leadership turnover, staff loss, enrollment decline, prior boundary changes, construction disruption, program relocation, student need, family trust, and internal capacity. A change that appears reasonable in isolation may become destabilizing when layered onto accumulated strain.

SEGC Adds Evidence That Local Leadership and School Culture Can Buffer Harm but Cannot Substitute for District Support.

SEGC also adds to the broader literature by showing how school-level leadership and internal culture mediate the impact of district reconfiguration. In several schools, stable leadership, strong staff culture, relational trust, and trauma-informed routines helped staff and families navigate change. These schools were not unaffected but rather they had stronger internal capacity to absorb strain.

At the same time, we caution against romanticizing local resilience. Strong school cultures often buffered harm that district systems did not adequately prevent. Staff repeatedly described district support as late, partial, unclear, or mismatched to school realities. In this sense, school-level leadership functioned as a compensatory mechanism. It helped schools survive the change, but it did not erase the need for stronger district planning, communication, staffing, or transition infrastructure.

This adds to the literature by clarifying that “school capacity” should not become an excuse to shift implementation burden downward. Future PPS processes should identify where local leadership is strong but also ask what the central office must provide so schools are not required to carry district change through local improvisation alone.

SEGC Findings Add Evidence That Procedural Equity May Matter Even When Student Experiences Remain Relatively Positive.

A striking SEGC finding is that SEGC members reported deep dissatisfaction with the process and equity outcomes, while also reporting student experiences that were comparable to other families. This adds to the literature by showing that dissatisfaction with reconfiguration does not always reflect narrow self-interest or direct personal harm. In PPS, some of the people closest to the process judged it harshly precisely because they had inside knowledge of how decisions were made, what data were available, how alternatives were constrained, and how burdens were distributed.

This finding matters for future engagement. Districts sometimes interpret community criticism as resistance to change or dissatisfaction with individual assignments. The SEGC findings suggest a different possibility in which participants may support the need for change while objecting to how the process defines problems, controls data, narrows options, distributes burdens, or fails to act on equity commitments. This aligns with research showing that low responsiveness in closure processes can undermine democratic trust and civic participation (Nuamah, 2022).

For PPS, procedural fairness should be treated as an equity outcome in its own right. A process can produce some student-level stability and still damage trust if participants experience it as opaque, constrained, or inequitable. Future processes should therefore assess not only whether students are doing well after implementation, but also whether communities believe the district acted transparently, consistently, accountably, and equitably.

Overall Interpretation

Together, the SEGC findings confirm, complicate, and add to the broader research on school closures, rightsizing, boundary changes, and district reconfiguration. SEGC findings confirm the literature’s central caution that technical solutions do not automatically produce educational equity. It also confirms the importance of receiving-school readiness, staff stability, meaningful community engagement, racial equity analysis, transportation burden, and implementation support.

At the same time, SEGC complicates the literature because it did not produce broad measurable academic harm, because DLI relocation did not produce widespread district exit, and because several changes produced gains and harms simultaneously. These complications are important because they prevent the report from reducing SEGC to a simple success or failure story.

Finally, SEGC adds to the research because it shows that many equity concerns associated with school closure can emerge even when no school is formally closed. Boundary changes, program relocation, grade-span reconfiguration, feeder shifts, and enrollment balancing can still produce displacement, loss, staff disruption, unequal burden, weakened trust, and institutional mourning. They can also produce gains, including stronger program coherence, more developmentally appropriate configurations, and more culturally affirming environments for some students. The core equity task is to examine the distribution of those gains and burdens.

Again, one of the most important lessons for PPS is that future rightsizing, boundary, consolidation, or program relocation decisions should be evaluated through an educational equity, sufficiency and implementation-readiness lens. The district should not ask only whether a building is underutilized or whether enrollment is balanced. It should ask whether the proposed change will create stronger and more equitable learning environments, whether receiving schools are prepared, whether historically underserved communities are protected from disproportionate burden, whether staff stability is preserved, whether transportation and access barriers are addressed, whether families have meaningful influence, and whether the district has the capacity and resources to keep its promises.

A Brief Note on Focus Options and Equity

Focus options were not a primary focus of this evaluation. However, they emerged during data collection as an important issue that PPS will likely need to address in current rightsizing conversations and decisions. We briefly discuss focus options here because they are connected to several broader questions at the center of rightsizing such as:

- how students and programs are distributed across the district
- how enrollment patterns affect school stability
- how family choice shapes access to opportunity, and whether future decisions will advance or undermine the district's commitment to well-resourced, racially equitable and socially just schools

In this sense, focus options are not treated as a separate topic, but as part of the larger equity context in which PPS must make decisions about boundaries, consolidations, program locations, and school consolidations and/or closures. Below, we briefly discuss our understanding of the history of focus options in PPS, how they intersect with race, equity, enrollment, and access to opportunity, and offer considerations for how the district might attend to these issues in future rightsizing decisions.

As such, PPS's rightsizing work must be understood against the district's longer history of student assignment, desegregation, transfer, and focus option policies dating back to the 1970s.

Historical accounts of PPS’s desegregation efforts show that the district relied heavily on voluntary transfer and one-way busing approaches that placed the burden of integration primarily on Black students and other students of color, rather than requiring shared responsibility across the district.¹⁰⁸ By the early 1970s, PPS’s Schools for the Seventies plan sent Black students to schools across the district while allowing white students to voluntarily attend majority Black schools, which was a design shaped in part by fears that mandatory reassignment of white students would produce backlash and accelerate white and middle-class flight from the district.¹⁰⁹ In this way, PPS’s enrollment policies often attempted to manage racial equity concerns while also protecting the preferences of often white, middle-class, and more privileged families.

This history did not end with busing. As PPS moved through later desegregation, transfer, magnet, and focus option policies, in-district choice became a central mechanism through which families could navigate the district. These policies created meaningful opportunities for some students, but they also allowed families with greater information, mobility, and social capital to access preferred schools and programs while neighborhood schools serving historically underserved communities were often left more vulnerable to enrollment loss, instability, and reduced program offerings.¹¹⁰ PPS’s own enrollment and transfer policy now states that the district seeks to provide “equal access to educational options” and promote “equity and diversity” in student transfers and admissions, which underscores that choice systems must be actively governed to prevent unequal access and unequal consequences (Portland Public Schools, 2015).

That history matters for current and future rightsizing decisions. If PPS is not careful, school closures, consolidations, boundary changes, and program relocations could reproduce the same pattern under a new name, which is protecting the preferences of families most likely to mobilize, opt out, or leave, while asking Black, Latino/a/x, Indigenous, immigrant, low-income, and other historically underserved communities to carry the heaviest burden of system change.

Equity-centered rightsizing cannot be held captive by the anticipated departure, resistance, or “exit” of privileged families. To be clear, this does not mean dismissing their concerns or excluding them from the process. It means refusing to let their preferences function as an informal veto over decisions intended to create a more coherent, stable, well-resourced, and racially equitable and socially just school system.

Therefore, the central question for PPS should not be, “What plan will least disrupt the families most likely to leave?” (not that anyone is asking that in PPS but that is a question that has emerged nationally). The central question should be, “What plan best advances equitable access

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977; Serbulo, 2019

¹⁰⁹ (Serbulo, 2019).

¹¹⁰ (Serbulo, 2019; Portland Public Schools, 2016).

to high-quality, well-resourced schools for the students and communities PPS has historically underserved?” Given the district’s history, future rightsizing must be guided by transparent equity criteria, not by the fear of losing the families with the most social, political, and economic power.

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Section 6:

Enrollment and the Conditions for “Well-Resourced”¹¹¹ Schools

¹¹¹ The phrase “well-resourced schools” is placed in quotation marks to signal that it is not a fixed, neutral, or self-evident category. What counts as “well-resourced” depends on student need, school level, staffing models, program expectations, community context, funding conditions, and the district’s equity commitments. For that reason, the term requires definition and critical interrogation rather than being treated as a common-sense label. In this report, “well-resourced schools” refers to schools that have the enrollment, staffing, supports, program breadth, class size conditions, and relational infrastructure necessary to provide students with a complete, stable, and equitable educational experience.

Enrollment and the Conditions for “Well-Resourced Schools”

We included this section in response to questions raised by PPS central office leaders about enrollment, school size, and the conditions necessary to create “well-resourced schools.”

This section is not intended to function as a formal school finance study. Such a study would require a more extensive fiscal analysis, including detailed examination of staffing formulas, school-level budgets, facilities costs, transportation costs, projected enrollment, and the specific resource model PPS intends to use to define a well-resourced school (which was not the purpose of this evaluation).

While this report does not offer a formal school finance analysis, it draws on relevant research, available district and state documents, and our equity-centered interpretation of the SEGC findings to identify key considerations PPS should weigh when connecting enrollment, staffing, resources, and school quality.

Additionally, it is important that this section should not be read as determining which schools PPS should close, consolidate, reconfigure, or maintain based on the enrollment numbers and school sizes discussed below. If PPS and the Board consider closures or consolidations, those decisions must be made through a local process that includes extensive community engagement, Board deliberation, school-level analysis, and other factors.

The purpose of this section is to support PPS in making locally grounded and equity-centered decisions about enrollment, school size, and resource allocation. It clarifies the enrollment, staffing, funding, and program conditions PPS should consider before any future closure or consolidation decision is made.

The central argument of this section is straightforward, which is enrollment matters because Oregon’s school finance system is largely enrollment driven. Through the State School Fund, Oregon distributes operating revenue using an equalization formula based heavily on weighted average daily membership, or ADMw. As a result, enrollment changes directly shape the resources available to PPS to staff schools, sustain programs, and provide students with a complete educational experience. Given this reality, this section addresses five guiding questions:

1. Why should PPS derive its own enrollment standards rather than importing school-size numbers from other districts?
2. How might PPS determine enrollment ranges for well-resourced schools in a way that begins with equity, staffing supports, and equitable student experience rather than building utilization alone?

3. What does the research on school size suggest, especially for students who have been historically underserved and what are the implications for PPS?
4. What enrollment ranges might make well-resourced elementary, middle, and K–8 schools financially possible in Portland under Oregon’s current funding conditions?
5. What can school consolidations and closures realistically accomplish?

Before you proceed, it is important to note that some parts of this report, including this section, may feel somewhat repetitive by design. Given the length of the report, readers may enter at different points rather than reading it straight through from beginning to end. For that reason, we occasionally restate key context, findings, and framing so that each major section can be understood on its own.

Question 1: Why should PPS derive its own enrollment standards rather than importing school-size numbers from other districts?

This section begins by clarifying why enrollment standards for “well-resourced schools” should be locally derived rather than borrowed from other districts or only reduced to building utilization rates. As such, we want to caution PPS from simply borrowing an enrollment number or school size from another district for the purposes of achieving well-resourced schools. We make this caution for several reasons.

First, this matters because enrollment thresholds are shaped by local funding formulas, labor costs, staffing models, facilities conditions, student need, and enrollment trajectories. Therefore, a number that appears reasonable in, for example, Seattle, Denver, San Francisco, or San Antonio may not be fiscally or educationally practical in Portland. While peer districts can help PPS understand how other systems have approached enrollment decline, school consolidation, and “well-resourced school” planning, their numbers should inform PPS’s approach rather than determine Portland’s threshold.

This is especially important in Oregon because, as stated earlier, the State School Fund distributes revenue to districts through a weighted enrollment formula. Oregon uses ADMw, or weighted average daily membership, to account for additional costs associated with serving particular student populations and district conditions. In this context, enrollment is not only a demographic measure. It is also a revenue base that determines what schools can staff and sustain.¹¹²

Oregon distributes the majority of school operating revenue on a per student basis. For PPS, sustained enrollment decline is not simply a facilities problem caused by empty seats. It is a

¹¹² [Oregon Department of Education. \(n.d.\). State School Fund. Oregon Department of Education. Oregon’s State School Fund is distributed through an equalization formula, and weighted average daily membership is used in the funding formula to account for student and district characteristics.](#)

resource problem that reduces the revenue available to staff schools, sustain programs, and support students. This is why utilization rates, while useful, provide only a partial picture. Utilization typically measures the relationship between current enrollment and building capacity, often based on square footage. This number can tell PPS how full or empty a building is. However, it does not, on its own, show whether students have access to a complete educational program or to the academic, social-emotional, enrichment, and staffing supports necessary for a well-resourced school.

It is therefore plausible that a school can have a relatively high utilization rate and still lack a rich, rigorous, and culturally responsive and equitable learning environment, core educational supports and program components that students need, including adequate counseling, library services, arts, music, physical education, intervention support, and stable grade-level teams.

Conversely, a school with low utilization may have strong adult-student relationships, deep community trust, strong family connection, and a school culture that is especially important for students experiencing inequity, displacement, or marginalization. It is important to note that utilization rates tell districts something about facilities. They do not fully tell districts enough about educational equity and adequacy.

For this reason, PPS should distinguish among three kinds of enrollment numbers that are often collapsed into one debate: (1) peer district thresholds, (2) adequacy prototypes, and (3) locally derived planning ranges.

As such, we draw on the Oregon’s Quality Education Model (QEM) and the Odden-Picus Evidence-Based Model as examples of adequacy prototypes because they use model school sizes and staffing assumptions to estimate the resources needed for educational adequacy. Specifically, the QEM uses prototypical school sizes to estimate the resources needed to meet Oregon’s education goals. The Odden-Picus Evidence-Based Model similarly uses school prototypes to estimate staffing and program resources associated with educational adequacy.¹¹³ By educational adequacy, we draw on the work of Picus and Odden, to mean “providing a level of resources to schools that will enable them to make substantial improvements in student performance over the next 4 to 6 years, as progress toward ensuring that all, or almost all, students meet their state’s performance standards in the longer term.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ [Oregon Quality Education Commission. \(2024\). Quality Education Model report. Oregon Department of Education.](#) The QEM uses prototypical schools, including a 360-student elementary school and a 500-student middle school, to estimate the resources needed to meet Oregon’s education goals. Picus Odden & Associates. (n.d.). The evidence-based model. The Evidence-Based Model uses prototypical schools and evidence-based staffing assumptions to estimate adequate school resources.

¹¹⁴ Picus Odden & Associates. (n.d.). The Evidence-Based Model. Picus Odden & Associates.

However, adequacy models should not be confused with practical planning floors under current funding conditions and realities. Oregon has not consistently funded schools at the level its own adequacy model identifies as necessary.¹¹⁵

Given this reality, peer district numbers for enrollment standards and school size require caution. For example, Denver identified low-enrollment thresholds by examining when schools require subsidy to maintain minimally required programming.¹¹⁶ Seattle’s well-resourced schools work connected enrollment, building capacity, and program access in its consolidation planning. These examples are useful because they show that other districts have had to connect enrollment, staffing, facilities, and educational program design. However, their specific thresholds are not transferable to PPS because, again, Oregon’s funding system, labor costs, and local enrollment conditions differ from those districts.

Therefore, we suggest that the most defensible and useful approach is for PPS to derive its own planning ranges from Oregon’s actual funding system, PPS’s staffing costs, PPS’s school-level allocation model, the ADMw profile of each school, and projected enrollment decline.

Question 2: How might PPS determine enrollment ranges for well-resourced schools in a way that begins with equity, staffing supports, and equitable student experiences rather than building utilization alone?

Again, we want to make clear that determining the appropriate enrollment range for a well-resourced school is a decision PPS should generate through a transparent local planning process and not impose through a single numerical threshold. School size should be treated as an equity question instead of only as a technical one. In other words, the central question is not only, “How many students should a school have?” but rather, “What teaching conditions, staffing resources, student supports, and equitable learning opportunities should every PPS student be able to count on in every school?”

Given this, we suggest that PPS take three steps to identify enrollment ranges for elementary, K–8, middle schools.

¹¹⁵ [Legislative Fiscal Office. \(2025\).](#) 2025-27 budget review: State School Fund and Common School Fund. Oregon Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that the 2023-25 State School Fund appropriation of \$10.2 billion was approximately \$1.5 billion, or 11.5%, below what the QEM generated as the amount required to meet the educational goals assumed in the model. Oregon Department of Education. (n.d.). Quality Education Commission reports

¹¹⁶ Denver Public Schools. (2022). Declining enrollment: Considerations for moving forward. Denver Public Schools Board of Education. Denver identified schools under 215 students as receiving a small-school subsidy to maintain minimally required programming, and later school closure criteria included schools under 215 students as well as schools under 275 students with projected decline. Seattle Public Schools. (2021). Facilities master plan update. Seattle Public Schools. Seattle Public Schools. (2024). Well-resourced schools update.

Step One: Define What Constitutes a Well-Resourced School and Its Staffing Model

The starting point for determining school size should be a values and equity decision that is tested against fiscal reality. Given PPS’s structural deficit and sustained enrollment decline, the district cannot define well-resourced schools without asking both what students deserve and what the system can reliably and feasibly sustain.

Thus, this step is especially important because a well-resourced school cannot be defined only by building utilization, enrollment efficiency, or the number of students assigned to a campus. It must be defined by the actual teaching conditions, student supports, staff roles, and learning opportunities that make a school educationally equitable and robust. This is also where PPS’s racial equity and social justice commitments must become truly operational. Therefore, a well-resourced school should be designed to help pay down what Gloria Ladson Billings calls the “education debt,” meaning the accumulated historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral debts owed to students and communities who have been systematically underserved by public institutions.¹¹⁷

Moreover, based on Oregon’s Quality Education Model (QEM), the Odden and Picus Evidence Based Model, and professional association standards reviewed for this report (e.g., school counselors, etc.), the staffing support model for a PPS elementary school might include, at minimum, classroom teachers at class sizes that meet or approach Oregon’s QEM targets, a full time school counselor, a certified school librarian with dedicated technical support, a full time nurse, specialist teachers in art, music, and physical education, instructional coaching, and access to social workers and school psychologists.^{118 119 120 121 122}

For elementary schools, this means PPS should clarify whether every school is expected to provide class sizes that meet or approach QEM’s elementary class size target of approximately 20 students per class (which actually may be more students per class in reality, see below for details), or whether PPS will adopt a phased local standard such as smaller class sizes in

¹¹⁷ Ladson Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3 to 12.

¹¹⁸ [Oregon Department of Education. \(2025\).](#) Oregon class size report for the 2024 to 2025 school year. The report notes that the 2022 QEM adjusted class size targets to 20 students per class for elementary schools and 20.8 students per class for middle and high schools, and that the 2024 QEM maintained those targets.

¹¹⁹ [Picus Odden and Associates. \(2025\).](#) An update of the Evidence Based Model developed for Wyoming and comparison to the 2025 to 2026 Wyoming funding model. The report describes the EB Model as a school finance adequacy model that includes core teachers, specialist teachers, instructional coaches, tutors, counselors, nurses, librarians, and other school-based resources.

¹²⁰ [American School Counselor Association. \(n.d.\).](#) School counselor roles and ratios. ASCA recommends a student to school counselor ratio of 250 to 1.

¹²¹ [American Association of School Librarians. \(2019\).](#) Appropriate staffing for school libraries. AASL states that every learner should have access to an updated school library with a full time certified school librarian and dedicated technical or clerical support.

¹²² [National Association of School Nurses. \(2020\).](#) School nursing role in student health and academic outcomes: Position statement. NASN states that access to a registered professional nurse all day, every day can improve student health, safety, and educational achievement.

kindergarten through grade 3 and somewhat larger class sizes in grades 4 and 5.¹²³ This decision matters because class size is not only a staffing variable. It is also an equity variable, particularly in schools serving students who have experienced accumulated educational debt.

PPS should also define whether every elementary school should have a full-time counselor rather than a counselor shared across multiple buildings. The American School Counselor Association recommends a student-to-counselor ratio of 250 to 1, which means that a well-resourced school model should treat counseling access as a core student support rather than an optional add-on.¹²⁴

Similarly, PPS should define whether every school should have a certified school librarian present throughout the school day, supported by technical or clerical staff. The American Association of School Librarians identifies full-time certified school librarians, supported by dedicated technical and clerical staff, as central to an effective school library program.

Additionally, the same logic applies to health, social-emotional, and mental health supports. The National Association of School Nurses has argued that students benefit from access to a registered school nurse all day, every day, and that nurse staffing should reflect student need rather than rely only on simple ratios.

Similarly, the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of one school psychologist for every 500 students, while the School Social Work Association of America recommends one school social worker for every 250 students.^{125 126} These ratios should not be treated as automatic formulas for PPS, but they help clarify the level of support that professional associations consider necessary for responsive and equitable student care.

It is important to note that some of these positions may not be generated automatically through Oregon's current funding formulas. Therefore, defining them as part of the staffing support model also requires PPS to name which positions are district investment commitments. For example, if PPS's financial analysis shows that the state funding model does not generate a full-time nurse until a much larger enrollment level, then PPS should be explicit that nurse staffing is not merely a formula-funded position. It is a district investment decision.

For middle schools, it is essential that the staffing support model include all of the above, but it must also reflect the developmental and programmatic needs of early adolescents. This includes departmentalized subject area teachers, a meaningful elective structure, intervention and

¹²³ Oregon Department of Education. (2025). Oregon class size report for the 2024 to 2025 school year. The report notes that the 2022 QEM adjusted class size targets to 20 students per class for elementary schools and 20.8 students per class for middle and high schools, and that the 2024 QEM maintained those targets.

¹²⁴ American School Counselor Association. (n.d.). School counselor roles and ratios. ASCA recommends a student to school counselor ratio of 250 to 1.

¹²⁵ [National Association of School Psychologists. \(2020\). Professional standards.](#)

¹²⁶ [School Social Work Association of America. \(n.d.\). National census of school social workers.](#)

enrichment opportunities, expanded counseling capacity, special education and multilingual learner supports, and a teaming or advisory structure that allows adults to know students well and belong to an inclusive and equitable community. A well-resourced middle school cannot be defined only by having enough students to fill a building. It must have enough students and staff to provide a coherent, equitable, socially and emotionally robust, and intellectually stimulating middle-grade experience. These are all equity commitments.

Without a clearly defined and publicly committed staffing and support model, the phrase “well-resourced school” risks becoming too vague to guide difficult decisions. It must function not only as an aspiration, but also as an operational and, most important, feasible, standard for how PPS allocates staff, programs, supports, and resources across schools.

Step Two: Translate the Staffing Support Model into Classrooms or Sections per Grade

After PPS defines what constitutes a well-resourced school and the staffing support model of a well-resourced school, the district should translate that vision into the number of classrooms or sections needed at each grade level. This is a critical step because the practical unit of school design is not the total enrollment number by itself. It is also the grade level cohort.

For elementary schools, PPS should consider how many classrooms per grade are needed to provide manageable class sizes, stable staffing, collaboration among teachers, student support, and flexibility when enrollment fluctuates. For example, an elementary school with too few students per grade may not be able to sustain multiple classrooms at each grade level without either increasing costs or combining classrooms in ways that can reduce instructional coherence.

Conversely, a school with enough students to sustain multiple classrooms per grade can more easily support teacher collaboration, student grouping, intervention, and schedule flexibility. For middle schools, the question might shift from classrooms per grade to sections per grade because of the departmentalization in middle schools. Thus, PPS should consider how many sections are needed in each grade to support a full academic schedule, electives, intervention, enrichment, counseling, special education services, multilingual learner supports, and teacher teaming. The Evidence-Based Model emphasizes that adequate school staffing includes not only core teachers, but also specialist teachers, instructional coaches, counselors, nurses, librarians, tutors, and other student support roles.¹²⁷ This means that middle school enrollment ranges should be tied to the schedule and staffing model required to offer a full middle-grade program.

Given the work of SEGC, PPS might be looking to phase out K–8 schools. However, we address them here since the district still has K–8 schools. For K–8 schools, PPS should consider both dimensions at once. In other words, K–8 schools must sustain elementary classrooms and middle

¹²⁷ Picus Odden and Associates. (2025). An update of the Evidence Based Model developed for Wyoming and comparison to the 2025 to 2026 Wyoming funding model.

grade programming in the same building. This means PPS should not assume that a K–8 school can be evaluated using only the elementary school logic or only the middle school logic. A K–8 school may have enough students overall but still have small grade level cohorts in grades 6 through 8 that limit electives, intervention groups, advisory structures, and staffing flexibility.

Only after PPS identifies the desired number of classrooms or sections per grade should it translate that design into a total school enrollment range. This sequence matters. If PPS begins with a total school size number, the district may miss whether that number actually produces the grade-level staffing supports and program conditions students need. But if PPS begins with the desired learning environment (which includes the needed staffing model) and then identifies the number of classrooms or sections required to sustain it, the resulting enrollment range will be tied to educational adequacy and equity rather than only to efficiency or facility use.

Step Three: Test the Number Against Oregon Funding Reality and PPS Enrollment Attrition

Everything that we said in steps one and two must be understood within the context of step three. As such, PPS should then test the resulting enrollment range (gathered from above) against Oregon’s funding reality and PPS’s own enrollment history. This is the feasibility test, which will more than likely be an iterative process. Oregon’s QEM provides an important adequacy benchmark because it was developed as a research and data-driven tool to estimate the level of state school funding required to meet Oregon’s educational goals.¹²⁸ The QEM uses prototype schools, including an elementary prototype and a middle school prototype, to estimate statewide school costs and identify the resources needed to support effective schools.¹²⁹

However, PPS should not treat the QEM number as a complete local planning model for several important reasons. First, the QEM was first published in 1999 and has been updated over time, but its prototype approach remains a statewide model rather than a Portland-specific school design process.

In addition, the 2024 QEM report states that if the fully implemented QEM is not funded, Oregon districts will not have sufficient funds to implement the best practices needed to meet Oregon’s education goals.¹³⁰ For the 2025 to 2027 biennium, the QEM estimated that full implementation would require \$13.526 billion, which was about \$2.252 billion above the projected current service level.¹³¹

This funding reality matters for PPS. If QEM represents an adequate benchmark and Oregon has not fully funded that benchmark, then PPS should treat QEM as a starting floor, not as the final

¹²⁸ Oregon Department of Education. (2025). Oregon class size report for the 2024 to 2025 school year.

¹²⁹ [Oregon Department of Education. \(2025\). Oregon’s Quality Education Model.](#)

¹³⁰ Oregon Department of Education. (2025). Oregon class size report for the 2024 to 2025 school year.

¹³¹ [Quality Education Commission. \(2024\). Quality Education Model executive summary.](#)

definition of a well-resourced school, which we cannot be overstated. The district should also avoid setting enrollment targets so close to the QEM prototype that predictable enrollment decline immediately pushes schools below the level needed to sustain staffing, programming, and student support.

For that reason, PPS should add a local enrollment decline buffer based on its own historical enrollment patterns (see below for more details). This is critical because PPS's own enrollment history is the best available predictor of what PPS might expect in the district. Again, the district should not rely primarily on what happened in other districts to estimate future attrition in PPS schools. Again, while those cases may offer useful lessons about process, implementation, community engagement, and equity risks, they should not drive the numerical enrollment assumptions for Portland. PPS's own year-to-year enrollment data should be used to estimate how much enrollment cushion schools need so they do not fall below the staffing and program levels needed to remain well-resourced over time.

With that said, the following section (below in question 4) offers preliminary planning numbers that illustrate what this logic could look like if PPS begins with QEM as an adequacy floor, adds a PPS-specific attrition buffer, and considers the number of classrooms or sections needed per grade level to sustain a high-quality and equitable school experience. Importantly, these numbers should not be understood as automatic closure thresholds. Rather, they should be understood as planning floors that help PPS assess whether schools are likely to remain large enough over time to sustain the staffing, programming, relationships, and student supports associated with well-resourced schools.

Question 3: What does the research on school size suggest, especially for students who have been historically underserved and what are the implications for PPS?

The research on school size does not support a simple conclusion that smaller schools are always better or that larger schools are always more efficient. Instead, the literature points to a set of tradeoffs (regarding school size) that PPS must hold together. The research suggests that smaller schools often provide stronger relationships, greater student visibility, easier family connection, and more intimate school climates.¹³² ¹³³ Larger schools often provide more staffing flexibility, more program breadth, stronger grade-level or subject-area teams, and greater capacity to offer specialists, electives, and intervention support.¹³⁴ However, it is important to note that neither size produces educational quality by itself. Size matters because of what it enables or constrains.

¹³² Luyten, H., Hendriks, M., & Scheerens, J. (2014). School size effects revisited: A qualitative and quantitative review of the research evidence in primary and secondary education. Springer.

¹³³ Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2009). A review of empirical evidence about school size effects: A policy perspective. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 464–490.

¹³⁴ Andrews, M., Duncombe, W., & Yinger, J. (2002). Revisiting economies of size in American education: Are we any closer to a consensus? *Economics of Education Review*, 21(3), 245–262.

Several studies suggest that smaller schools can be especially beneficial for students from low-income backgrounds and other historically underserved groups. Leithwood and Jantzi's foundational review of 57 empirical studies concluded that the weight of evidence favors smaller schools, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.¹³⁵ Other research similarly found that school size can intensify or reduce the relationship between poverty and achievement, suggesting that larger school settings may amplify inequity when they weaken relationships, visibility, and responsiveness. Lee and Loeb's study of Chicago elementary schools found that schools enrolling fewer than 400 students were associated with stronger teacher collective responsibility and stronger student achievement than larger schools.¹³⁶

At the same time, the research cautions against treating smallness itself as the intervention. More recent reviews have found that school size effects on academic achievement are mixed, modest, and highly dependent on context. For example, Luyten, Hendriks, and Scheerens' synthesis found that the clearest advantages of smaller schools often appear in non-cognitive outcomes, including belonging, safety, student participation, school climate, and relationships.¹³⁷ Egalite and Kisida's longitudinal study of more than one million students (across 4 states) found that achievement tended to decline as school size increased, particularly in higher grades, but also emphasized that the effects varied by context and were not mechanically determined by enrollment alone.¹³⁸

The key lesson for PPS is that school size operates through mechanisms. Smaller schools may make it easier for adults to know students well, notice when students are struggling, communicate with families, and build shared responsibility among staff. These conditions are especially important for students who have experienced marginalization in schools, displacement, poverty, racialized exclusion, and/or inconsistent access to institutional support. However, larger schools may make it easier to provide and staff a broader educational program. Larger schools can often support more stable grade-level teams, full-time specialists, stronger intervention systems, elective offerings, arts, music, physical education, counseling, and other academic, social-emotional, enrichment, and staffing supports that students also need.

For PPS, the research suggests that the sole goal should not be to maximize or minimize school size. The goal should be to identify an enrollment range where schools are large enough to sustain a complete and equitable educational program yet connected enough to preserve the

¹³⁵ Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2009). A review of empirical evidence about school size effects: A policy perspective. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 464–490.

¹³⁶ Lee, V. E., & Loeb, S. (2000). School size in Chicago elementary schools: Effects on teachers' attitudes and students' achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(1), 3–31.

¹³⁷ Luyten, H., Hendriks, M., & Scheerens, J. (2014). School size effects revisited: A qualitative and quantitative review of the research evidence in primary and secondary education. Springer.

¹³⁸ Egalite, A. J., & Kisida, B. (2016). School size and student achievement: A longitudinal analysis. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 27(3), 406–417.

relational conditions that matter most for students and adults. This means PPS should avoid two oversimplifications.

First, we suggest that PPS distinguish between educational value and fiscal/programmatic viability. A small school may be relationship-rich and important to its community while still requiring a transparent analysis of what it would cost to provide students with a full program.

Second and conversely, a larger school may be more fiscally viable while still failing to provide the relationships, supports, and staffing conditions students need. The more defensible approach is therefore to ask what level of enrollment, staffing, program design, and investment is necessary for students to experience a complete, stable, equitable, and relationship-rich school.

Overall, the research suggests that PPS should treat school size as a design question, which is, again, a question related to what enrollment level allows a school to provide the equitable learning environments, relationships students need, support, and the full educational program they deserve? Thus, enrollment levels should be evaluated in relation to the educational program students experience, the staffing model a school can sustain, the relational conditions students need, and the equity commitments PPS has made to communities that have historically received less.

Question 4: What enrollment estimate ranges (not exact number) might make equitable and well-resourced elementary, middle, and K–8 schools financially possible in Portland under Oregon’s current funding conditions?

As stated previously in this section, PPS should consider Oregon’s QEM as an adequacy benchmark, but not as a final enrollment target. The QEM is useful because it identifies a prototypical elementary school of 360 students and a prototypical middle school of 500 students, with average class sizes of approximately 20 students in elementary schools and 20.8 students in middle schools.¹³⁹ However, again, the QEM’s prototype school structure was developed as a statewide funding model using composite schools, not as a precise enrollment standard for every PPS school. Again, the Oregon Department of Education notes that the Quality Education Commission was appointed in 1999 to validate and refine the Oregon QEM and that the model helps lawmakers estimate the cost of providing the education programs necessary for Oregon students to meet state goals. For this reason, PPS should treat QEM as a minimum adequacy floor rather than a complete contemporary model of what every well-resourced school requires.

This caution is especially important because, as stated above, Oregon has not funded schools at the level required to fully implement the QEM. As noted above, the 2024 QEM report estimates that full implementation for the 2025 to 2027 biennium would require \$13.526 billion, which is

¹³⁹ Oregon Department of Education. (2025). Oregon class size report for the 2024 to 2025 school year.

\$2.252 billion more than the projected investment needed to maintain the current service level. Research indicates that the historical appropriations below current service level has led to cuts in the level and quality of educational services schools are able to deliver. In practical terms, this means PPS should not interpret the QEM prototype numbers as sufficient by themselves. They should be used as adequacy benchmarks that must be adjusted for local enrollment decline, state funding constraints, and the staffing conditions PPS ultimately defines as necessary for well-resourced schools.

Therefore, the suggested ranges that we put forth below should also be understood in context. At the time of this writing (early June 2026), PPS has not yet publicly defined the full staffing support model, program expectations, student support model, or classroom and section structure that will constitute a well-resourced school in Portland. Thus, the numbers below should be understood as preliminary planning estimates. They are intended to show what enrollment ranges become reasonable when PPS begins with QEM, accounts for Oregon's funding conditions, and adds a local attrition buffer based on PPS's own enrollment history. They should be refined once PPS defines what every well-resourced elementary, K–8, and middle school should actually provide.

Since PPS has experienced sustained enrollment decline (and is expected to do so at least until the 2033–34 school year), the district should add a local attrition buffer to the QEM numbers. Based on districtwide enrollment data, the typical net declining school (between 2020–21 and 2024–25) lost about 16 students per year, while individual year to year dips were often larger. For elementary schools specifically, the median annualized loss among net declining schools was approximately 16.5 students per year, or about 82.5 students over five years. We suggest rounding up for planning purposes, this then supports an elementary attrition buffer of approximately 85 students (on the more conservative end). For middle schools, the median annualized loss among net declining schools was approximately 15.25 students per year, or about 76 students over five years. Again, we suggest rounding up for planning purposes, this thus supports a middle school attrition buffer of approximately 75 to 80 students (on the more conservative end). Since middle schools are more sensitive to enrollment loss in scheduling, electives, teaming, and student supports, PPS may want to stress test the middle school number closer to 100 students over five years.

Using this logic that we stated above, PPS might consider 450 students as a practical elementary planning floor. An elementary school serves six grade levels, kindergarten through grade 5. At the QEM elementary prototype of 360 students, that equals approximately 60 students per grade, or three classrooms per grade at about 20 students per class. If PPS begins instead with 450 students, the school would have approximately 75 students per grade. That could support three classrooms per grade at about 25 students per class, or provide enough enrollment cushion so that, after expected decline, the school remains closer to the QEM prototype of three classrooms

per grade at approximately 20 students per class. In other words, 450 is not the ideal school size target but rather a PPS planning floor that adds a five-year attrition buffer to the QEM adequacy benchmark.

Even with this buffer (or whatever buffer the district decides), PPS should plan for how schools will be resourced if enrollment continues to decline. Over time, a school that begins with three classrooms per grade could fall to two classrooms per grade, which may increase class sizes, reduce staffing flexibility, and make it harder to sustain the full range of supports associated with a well-resourced elementary school.

Similarly, for middle schools, PPS should consider 600 students as a practical planning floor. In a grades 6–8 middle school configuration, enrollment is spread across three grade levels. At the QEM middle school prototype of 500 students, that equals approximately 167 students per grade. At QEM class size assumptions, this supports roughly eight core sections per grade. A 600-student middle school would begin with approximately 200 students per grade, which could support about eight sections per grade at 25 students per section, or more sections if PPS aims to move closer to QEM class size assumptions. This creates a five-year buffer against expected enrollment loss while preserving the staffing and scheduling scale needed for a fuller middle grade program, including electives, intervention, enrichment, counseling, special education services, multilingual learner supports, and team-based structures for early adolescents.

For K–8 schools, because QEM does not provide a separate K–8 prototype, PPS should consider a local planning estimate of approximately 650 students. A K–8 school serves nine grade levels, kindergarten through grade 8th. At 650 students, the school would average approximately 72 students per grade, enough to sustain roughly three classrooms or sections per grade at about 24 students per class or section. If the school declined to approximately 600 students over time, it would still average about 67 students per grade, or roughly three classrooms or sections per grade at about 22 students per class or section. However, PPS should be clear that a 650 student K–8 school is not equivalent to a 600-student dedicated middle school. A dedicated 600 student middle school has about 200 students per grade in grades 6 through 8, while a 650 student K to 8 has only about 72 students per grade across all nine grade levels. This means K–8 schools may be able to sustain three sections per grade, but they may still have less flexibility for electives, intervention groups, advisory structures, and specialized middle grade programming.

Again, we importantly state that these numbers should be considered in light of the research that we discussed on school size in the prior section (research question 3).

Moreover, we cannot state enough that these numbers should not be used as automatic closure thresholds. They should be used as planning ranges to assess whether schools are likely to remain large enough over the next five or so years to sustain the staffing, programming, class

size, and student support conditions associated with however PPS describes well-resourced schools. Schools below these ranges **may still be necessary**, valued, and educationally strong, but they may require additional district investment, a specialized program model, or an explicit equity rationale. Schools above these ranges may be more financially efficient, but PPS should still examine whether they remain relationship rich, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to student and family needs.

Figure 6.1 Deriving Planning Floors for Well Resourced Schools

Each planning floor begins with the Oregon Quality Education Model adequacy benchmark, EB Model prototypes, and adds a five-year attrition buffer.



School type	QEM prototype	Five-year buffer	Planning floor range estimate	What the floor is built to sustain
Elementary	360	+ about 85	Approximately 450+	6 grades, about 75 per grade. Three classrooms per grade at about 25, with cushion to stay near the QEM target of three classrooms at about 20 after expected decline.
Middle	500	+ about 100	Approximately 600+	3 grades, about 200 per grade. About eight sections per grade at 25, preserving electives, intervention, counseling, special education, multilingual supports, and team structures.
K–8	<i>no QEM prototype</i>	<i>local estimate</i>	Approximately 650+	9 grades, about 72 per grade. About three sections per grade at about 24, but less flexibility than a dedicated middle school for electives and middle grade programming.

Note. QEM is the Oregon Quality Education Model adequacy benchmark (elementary prototype 360, middle prototype 500) and EB Models prototype schools. Buffers reflect the five-year median enrollment loss among net declining PPS schools, about 85 for elementary and 75 to 100 for middle. The elementary floor rounds 360 plus 85 up to 450. QEM provides no K–8 prototype, so 650 is a local planning estimate. Figures are preliminary planning estimates, to be refined once PPS defines its well-resourced school model.

Question 5: What can school consolidations and closures realistically accomplish?

In theory, school consolidations and closures can increase the probability that enrollment conditions under which “well-resourced schools” become financially and feasibly possible. The logic is that PPS may be able to use existing resources more efficiently by reducing some duplication across under-enrolled buildings, concentrate staff and programs in fewer school sites, and spread some fixed administrative, operational, and facility costs across a larger number of students.¹⁴⁰ However, this is a theory of resource efficiency, not a guarantee of equitable educational improvement.

Importantly, school consolidations and closures cannot solve the larger macro conditions that are producing, and even intensifying, enrollment and fiscal pressure in the district. PPS’s enrollment challenges are largely shaped by forces that extend beyond the district’s direct control, including declining birth rates, lower kindergarten and early-grade capture rates, family migration patterns, housing costs, housing production patterns, and the share of age-eligible families who choose PPS rather than other public, charter, private, or homeschool options.¹⁴¹ Portland’s broader housing context also matters. The city’s housing reports continue to identify affordability as a major challenge for Portland residents with rents and home prices outpacing incomes and creating conditions that affect whether families with children can remain in the city.¹⁴² These are not problems a school district can solve through fiscal cuts, consolidations, or closures.

Additionally, school consolidations and closures cannot resolve the broader state funding conditions in which PPS operates. Oregon’s QEM identifies the resources needed to support a quality education and is explicit that districts need sufficient funding to implement the best practices associated with the state’s education goals. Even if PPS uses its existing resources more efficiently, consolidations and closures do not automatically make the state funding system more adequate, reduce housing costs, increase birth rates, reverse family displacement, or eliminate competition through school choice mechanisms. These forces arrive at the district’s front door and shape the realities of school enrollment, staffing, and budgeting, but again, they cannot be solved by closing buildings.

This distinction matters because research suggests (which we reviewed earlier in this study) that districts often overestimate the savings produced by school closures and underestimate the costs that remain after students leave a building, which plays into a district’s ability to deliver on its promises of well-resourced schools. The reality is that relatively little research has accurately evaluated long-term district savings from closures and that savings are often substantial only

¹⁴⁰ Andrews, M., Duncombe, W., & Yinger, J. (2002). Revisiting economies of size in American education: Are we any closer to a consensus? *Economics of Education Review*, 21(3), 245–262.

¹⁴¹ [Portland State University Population Research Center. \(2025\)](#). Portland Public Schools enrollment forecasts, 2025–26 to 2034-35.

¹⁴² [Portland Housing Bureau. \(2025\)](#). 2024 State of Housing in Portland report.

when closures are paired with personnel reductions.¹⁴³ The same review notes that districts often underestimate additional costs, including transportation for displaced students, preparing receiving schools to accommodate students from closed buildings, transition costs, and the ongoing costs of vacant buildings. The National Education Policy Center similarly notes that closures often fail to produce the expected fiscal benefits because personnel costs make up the majority of district expenses, buildings can be difficult to sell, and closed schools may continue to require maintenance.¹⁴⁴

The building-disposition problem is especially important. Closing a school does not immediately eliminate the cost of owning the school building. Districts may continue to pay for maintenance, security, insurance, utilities, surveillance, repairs, vandalism response, environmental review, demolition, broker fees, legal work, and staff time associated with managing, marketing, leasing, or selling the property.¹⁴⁵ The Pew Charitable Trusts' study of shuttered public school buildings in Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Missouri, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Tulsa, and Washington, D.C. found that districts must often pay for maintenance, security, and insurance while they search for new occupants, which helps to explain why the net operating savings from closing a building are often less than expected.

Given this, PPS should not assume that closed school buildings can be sold quickly or for the revenue originally projected. The research does not provide a single reliable national average for how long it takes districts to sell closed schools, because the timeline depends on a number of variables such as the local real estate market, building condition, zoning, neighborhood context, deed restrictions, political priorities, and whether the district wants to sell, lease, repurpose, or hold the property. However, the available evidence suggests that disposition of school buildings can often take years, and in some cases have taken a decade or more. Therefore, PPS should treat building sale revenue as uncertain, delayed, and context-dependent, not as an immediate or guaranteed offset to closure costs. In addition, another lesson for PPS is that a closure plan should include a building disposition plan, a maintenance and security cost estimate, a community reuse process, and a realistic timeline for sale, lease, reuse, or even demolition before closure decisions are finalized.

To this end, for consolidations and closures to benefit students, PPS should be able to answer about their expectations (not exact answers) about the following questions before any final decision:

- What specific resources will students gain in the receiving school?

¹⁴³ Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., & Burgess, K. (2024). Revisiting research on school closings: Key learnings for district and community leaders.

¹⁴⁴ National Education Policy Center. (2025). Answering the important questions about closing schools.

¹⁴⁵ [The Pew Charitable Trusts. \(2013\). Shuttered public schools: The struggle to bring old buildings new life.](#)

- Will class sizes get larger, smaller, or remain the same?
- Will students gain access to additional specialists, electives, intervention staff, counselors, library services, arts, music, physical education, or enrichment opportunities?
- What transition support will be provided to students, families, and staff?
- What transportation costs, travel-time burdens, and safety considerations will be created by the change of potential consolidations or closures?
- What investments will receiving/welcoming schools need before students arrive?
- How will PPS protect student belonging, cultural identity, and school-community relationships, especially for racially minoritized students?
- What will PPS do if projected savings do not translate into school-level improvements?
- What ongoing costs might remain for closed buildings, including maintenance, security, insurance, utilities, surveillance, repairs, broker fees, legal work, demolition, or environmental remediation?
- What is the realistic timeline for selling, leasing, repurposing, or otherwise disposing of closed buildings?
- How will PPS communicate which problems consolidations and closures can reasonably address and which broader structural conditions remain unresolved?
- How will PPS monitor whether students who are displaced actually experience better educational conditions in well-resourced schools?

A school consolidation or closure process that does not answer these questions risks spending significant political capital and causing real community harm in exchange for a budget adjustment rather than an equitable educational improvement. It also risks placing too much explanatory weight on school-level decisions while leaving the larger drivers of enrollment decline and fiscal stress underexamined. The enrollment question and the resources question are inseparable. PPS should treat them that way. Enrollment can help create the conditions for “well-resourced schools,” and consolidations and closures may help PPS use existing resources more efficiently. But resource efficiency should not be treated as the end goal. The central question is whether students, families, and educators experience the result as more stable, more supported, and more equitable.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

This evaluation shows that SEGC was not experienced as a single, uniform district initiative. It was experienced differently across schools depending on the type and intensity of change, each school's prior history, leadership stability, staffing capacity, program identity, family trust, and the level of district support available before, during, and after implementation. Across the findings, one overarching lesson is clear: technical changes to boundaries, programs, feeder patterns, and enrollment distribution do not automatically produce equitable or well-resourced schools. Equity depends on how decisions are made, how burdens and benefits are distributed (and dare we say eliminated), how schools are supported to absorb change, and whether students, families, and staff experience the process as transparent, responsive, and fair.

The SEGC findings point to both caution and possibility. In some places, SEGC-related changes were associated with greater enrollment balance, stronger program coherence, more culturally affirming environments, or more developmentally appropriate school configurations. In other places, school communities experienced loss, staffing instability, reduced trust, transportation burdens, weakened neighborhood connection, and implementation strain. In several schools, both realities were true at once.

Future districtwide change efforts should therefore begin with clearer goals, transparent decision rules, meaningful community engagement and influence, strong implementation planning, receiving-school readiness, and explicit attention to racial equity. PPS should also assess the amount of change each school has already absorbed before asking it to absorb more. If the district uses the lessons from SEGC to strengthen planning, communication, staffing, transition support, and accountability, future enrollment balancing and rightsizing efforts can move beyond technical reconfiguration toward a more coherent and equitable vision of well-resourced schools for all students.

Our team is deeply grateful for the opportunity to conduct this evaluation and to learn from the many PPS students, families, educators, staff, school leaders, district leaders, and community members who contributed their time, insight, and lived experience to this work. We recognize that SEGC touched deeply held questions about school identity, racial equity, neighborhood belonging, language access, staff stability, and public trust. We do not take lightly the responsibility of documenting those experiences with care, honesty, and dignity.

As PPS moves forward, our hope is that this report serves not only as a record of what happened, but as a resource for what can be learned. The work ahead will require courage, transparency, humility, and sustained commitment. It will also require the district to hold complexity well: to acknowledge harm where harm occurred, to preserve what communities value, to build on what worked, and to make future decisions in ways that are more inclusive, better supported, and more clearly connected to the educational experiences students deserve. The ultimate measure of future districtwide change should not be whether plans look coherent on paper, but whether

students, families, and staff experience schools as places of racial equity, social justice, belonging, stability, opportunity, and care.

Dr. Green's Overall Takeaways on the Use and Interpretation of This Report

As the lead researcher for this SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation, I want to be clear about how this report should and should not be used. This report should not be read as a justification for school closures, consolidation, or any predetermined future rightsizing decision in Portland Public Schools. Decisions about school closure, consolidation, boundary changes, program relocation, or school reconfiguration are local decisions that should be made with the people most directly affected by the consequences, including students, families, educators, school staff, school leaders, and communities. This report is intended to help PPS understand what can be learned from SEGC, not to authorize or validate any specific future action.

I also recognize that in climates where school closures, consolidations, or rightsizing decisions are being considered, reports like this can be interpreted in many different ways. Some readers may look for findings that support a position they already hold, whether in favor of or against future school changes. I ask readers not to read into this report any interpretation beyond what is actually written. We wrote what we mean in the report. Where the evidence supports a claim, we tried our best to name that claim. Where the evidence is limited, mixed, or based on participant perceptions, we state that as clearly as possible. If clarification is needed about any finding, interpretation, limitation, or recommendation, I encourage readers to contact me directly before attributing meanings to the report that are not stated in the text.

Again, for this report, the purpose is to help PPS understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced by students, families, staff, school leaders, and SEGC members, and what those experiences suggest for future districtwide decision-making.

In short, this report should be used as a learning document. It offers evidence about what SEGC participants, school communities, and families experienced. It identifies patterns of trust, disruption, support, and inequity, and it raises questions PPS should address before undertaking future districtwide changes. If PPS moves forward with future rightsizing or reconfiguration efforts, the findings in this report suggest that the district must do so with greater clarity, stronger implementation support, deeper community partnership, and visible accountability to the students, families, and educators most affected.

Finally, the future of PPS should not be guided by enrollment numbers, facility utilization, budget pressure, or program efficiency alone. Those considerations matter, but they should be held accountable to the district's stated commitments to racial equity and social justice. If racial equity and social justice are truly the ideals PPS espouses, then they must function as the heartbeat, guiding force, and arbiter of district decision-making. They should shape how

problems are defined, whose experiences are centered, how tradeoffs are evaluated, how burdens are distributed, and whether proposed solutions actually and equitably improve the daily educational lives of students, families, and educators. Again, the central question for PPS is not only whether future decisions are technically defensible, but whether they are experienced as just, transparent, humanizing, and worthy of public trust.

Research Team Bios

Terrance L. Green, Ph.D. (he/him) (Principal Investigator, Lead Researcher)

Dr. Terrance L. Green is a tenured Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at The University of Texas at Austin. He is a nationally recognized expert on urban school closures, equity audits, and racial justice in schools. His scholarship on school closures has appeared in leading peer-reviewed journals and has been featured in widely read public outlets beyond academia. Dr. Green is the creator of the Rightsizing Equity Audit and has extensive experience building district and school-leader capacity to conduct rigorous, equity-centered audits. Over the course of his faculty career, he has taught more than 100 district and school leaders how to conduct school and community equity audits. In addition, he has conducted equity audits and supported decision-making processes for districts across the country. He also previously served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Green earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is a former high school science teacher.

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Havala Hanson, Ph.D. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Havala Hanson has over 15 years of experience as an education researcher, helping school leaders understand how programs and policies impact opportunities, experiences, and outcomes. She specializes in combining qualitative insights and quantitative analysis to understand not just if an initiative works, but why and for whom. Dr. Hanson has led evaluations and community-engaged research in districts facing complex change, and is deeply committed to elevating educator, staff, and family voices. She started her career as a teacher in Milwaukee, WI, and has lived and worked in Portland since 2012. These experiences and her training in culturally responsive and inclusive evaluation shape her approach to designing evaluations that respect local realities and support district planning with transparency, empathy, and equity. She holds a Ph.D. in Statistics, Policy, and Education from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a master's degree in Urban Education Policy from Brown University, and a bachelor's degree in English and Spanish Education from the University of Wisconsin Whitewater.

Lydia Hamilton, PMP (she/her) (Project Manager)

Lydia Hamilton is a corporate-trained operations leader and entrepreneurial consultant whose work centers on enterprise execution, organizational performance, and strategic implementation. She draws on more than 20 years of experience managing complex, high-value initiatives to bring structure, clarity, and accountability to mission-driven and growth-oriented organizations. Over the course of her career, Lydia has managed portfolios with budgets of up to \$30 million

and directed cross-functional teams of more than 65 professionals. Her work is grounded in Waterfall methodology and informed by Six Sigma principles, ensuring disciplined delivery across all phases of the project lifecycle. Lydia's professional background includes leadership roles with organizations such as General Electric, Wikipedia, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and Northwestern Mutual, where she developed a foundation in operational rigor across corporate, media, financial services, and global nonprofit environments. She is the Founder and Principal of Lyd on tha Go, LLC, where she partners with executive leaders to translate strategy into measurable results. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Loyola University Chicago and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).

Katelin Trautmann, Ph.D. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Katelin Trautmann is a former classroom teacher and instructional coach whose work focuses on the intersection of educational policy, equity, and institutional change. She draws on this experience to inform her approach to research and engagement, grounding her work in the practical realities of teaching, leadership, and implementation. She is currently a postdoctoral scholar at Penn State University, where she works with the Research Translation Platform supporting research processes related to policy translation and institutional change. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas at Austin, and her research broadly examines equity-oriented initiatives and the sociopolitical dynamics that shape their implementation.

Shannon Davidson, Ph.D. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Shannon Davidson is a mixed-methods researcher based in Portland, Oregon who has collaborated extensively with school districts, state education agencies, and community-based organizations. Since earning her Ph.D. from Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, Dr. Davidson has led applied research and evaluation projects with partners in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Regional partners include Astoria School District, Wenatchee School District, the Oregon Department of Education, the Association of Alaska School Boards, Alaska's Educational Resource Center (SERRC), and Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Dr. Davidson is dedicated to supporting data- and story-informed decision-making that fosters positive, lasting outcomes for youth, families, and communities. As the author of "Trauma- and Resilience-informed Practices for Postsecondary Education. Davidson has presented widely on trauma, resilience, inclusion, and belonging at postsecondary institutions, school counselor associations, and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Kimberly Clarida, Ph.D. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Kimberly Clarida is a mixed-methods and policy researcher whose work examines K–12 leadership, education policy, and organizational practices. Informed by her experience working in schools and collaboration with districts, nonprofits, and policymakers, her research explores

how policies and organizational processes shape access to school leadership opportunities and high-quality education for historically marginalized students and educators. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Michigan State University and earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Texas at Austin.

Heather N. Bennett, PhD., JD. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Heather N. Bennett is an educational equity strategist, attorney, and leadership scholar with more than 15 years of experience advancing transformative equity initiatives across K–12, higher education, and international education systems. She currently serves as the Southeastern Pennsylvania Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium and as a Senior Policy Consultant and Publishing Editor for the National Institute for Customizing Education (NICE), where she facilitates equity certification programs for K–12 school districts nationwide. Dr. Bennett is also an adjunct professor at Penn State University, teaching Education Law and Leadership. Dr. Bennett previously served as the inaugural Director of Equity Services at the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), where she supported public school boards and districts in developing equity-centered governance tools, policy frameworks, and strategic programming. Internationally, she served as a Trustee of the International School of Bangkok and as Senior DEIA Director for the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Bennett began her career as a Teach for America corps member, teaching high school social studies in Fulton County, Georgia.

Ozen Guven, Ph.D. (she/her) (Quantitative Researcher)

Dr. Ozen Guven is a senior researcher with over a decade of experience leading implementation research and evaluations of K–12 curricula, professional development, and instructional services across U.S. and global contexts. Her work focuses on advancing equity and improving outcomes for historically underserved populations, with particular focus on literacy development, multilingual learners, refugees, and newcomer immigrants. She has extensive experience partnering with school districts, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to produce evidence that informs practice, program improvement, and decision-making. Dr. Guven brings deep expertise in qualitative and mixed-methods research, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, ethnographic observations, and document analysis. She has served as Principal Investigator or qualitative lead on multiple mixed-methods studies integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. Her research portfolio includes leadership on several studies focused on refugees, newcomer immigrants, and multilingual learners across U.S. and international contexts. This work has examined access to education, language of instruction policies, instructional quality, and student and educator experiences in diverse settings. Dr. Guven earned a Ph.D. in International Education from New York University and a B.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language from Bogazici University in Turkey. She is certified in Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation. She has worked with research institutions,

nonprofits, and government agencies including American Institutes for Research, Education Northwest, USAID, FCDO, Save the Children, and Education Above All.

Equity Audit Evaluation of Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Southeast Enrollment and Program Balancing Initiative School-by-School Analysis

June 29, 2026

Prepared by Dr. Terrance L. Green¹ and Dr. Havala Hanson



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Gratitude and Acknowledgements

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Superintendent Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Dr. Jon Franco (Senior Chief of Operations), Dr. Renard Adams (Chief Accountability and Equity Officer), Deborah Kafoury (Chief of Staff), the Portland Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education, and the broader PPS community for entrusting us with the important task of conducting the SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation. We are deeply grateful for your leadership, openness, and commitment to learning from the experiences of students, families, staff, and community members in service of creating a more racially equitable and socially just school district.

Additionally, we extend a very special thank you to Margaret Calvert (Assistant Superintendent of School Planning and Modernization) whose leadership, coordination, and support made this work possible. Margaret helped facilitate key connections, coordinate logistics, and support communication across the district which helped the evaluation team to engage with the people, processes, and information needed for the study. We are especially appreciative of the way she helped move this work forward with both professionalism and care.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the PPS principals, educators, and staff who participated in interviews, focus groups, surveys, and other data-gathering efforts. Your time, honesty, and insights strengthened the quality and depth of this evaluation. Finally, we offer special thanks to the families who shared their experiences, perspectives, hopes, and concerns with us. Your voices are central to this work, and we are deeply grateful for your participation.

Finally, while this study was led by Dr. Terrance L. Green, it was made possible through the work of an exceptional team of researchers who brought deep care, skill, and commitment to the project. Although members of our broader team are located across the country, we intentionally worked with primary data collectors who are based in the Portland metro area. This local presence was essential not only for supporting the local economy, but also for bringing place-based knowledge and deeper sensitivity to the communities, histories, and school contexts that shaped this evaluation. We are grateful to every member of the team whose expertise, insight, and care helped make this study possible.

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Detailed Executive Summary of Findings

Portland Public Schools, hereafter referred to as (PPS), implemented the Enrollment and Program Balancing initiative as part of a broader district effort to address enrollment imbalances, program access, and related equity concerns across Southeast Portland schools. As part of this effort, PPS partnered with and commissioned Dr. Terrance L. Green and his team to conduct an equity audit evaluation of the enrollment and program balancing initiative process and its implementation. The partnership officially began on January 20, 2026, and the final report was submitted on June 10, 2026 and the final school-by-school analysis was submitted on June 29, 2026. .

Many PPS stakeholders and participants commonly referred to this effort as SEGC, which stands for Southeast Guiding Coalition. Since SEGC was frequently used by participants during interviews and conversations to describe the broader process, we use SEGC in many places throughout this report to reflect participants' language. Unless we are specifically referring to members of the Southeast Guiding Coalition itself, references to SEGC in this report should be understood as referring to the broader Enrollment and Program Balancing initiative and its related processes.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide PPS with empirical data to better understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced by students,² families, principals, educators, and staff, in schools that experienced boundary changes, program relocations, enrollment shifts, and other related transitions. The report also examines patterns in student outcomes in these impacted schools before and after SEGC implementation, while recognizing that these outcomes are shaped by multiple factors and should not be interpreted as solely caused by SEGC.

Findings from this evaluation are intended to identify areas of equity and inequity across the SEGC process, implementation, and outcomes, including how decisions were made, communicated, implemented, supported, and experienced over time. Through this report, we aim to provide useful, evidence-based, and humanizing data that can inform PPS's future decisions about enrollment balancing, boundary changes, program relocation, school consolidation and closures, and other districtwide changes in ways that are more equitable, transparent, and responsive to school communities.

Brief Data Sources for This Report (a detailed description of our data sources and methods in later in this report)

² While students' experiences are deeply important to understanding the full impact of SEGC, this evaluation did not include direct student interviews or focus groups for several reasons. This decision was shaped primarily by the compressed timeline for completing the report. The evaluation began several months later than originally anticipated, in part because the district was engaged in the Jefferson Rising conversations and related work, as well as ongoing budget concerns. Based on our prior experience, securing parent or guardian consent for student participation can require a longer timeline than was available for this phase of the evaluation. Similarly, this evaluation did not include new data collection from central office stakeholders. In consultation with the district, we understood that many of the central office leaders who led or were most directly involved in SEGC were no longer with PPS. Given the scope and timeline of this evaluation, we prioritized understanding how SEGC was experienced at the school level by educators, school leaders, families, and community members, as well as examining patterns in school-level outcomes before and after implementation.

For this audit, we collected data from all 20 schools that were impacted by SEGC changes. As such, we collected data from a variety of sources to address each focus area. Our data collection sources for this report includes:

Survey Responses

- 905 respondents to a family and caregiver survey
- 327 respondents to an administrator, teacher, and staff survey

Administrative Data³

- **Summary records of 51,983 students enrolled in PPS** elementary and middle schools from 2020–21 through 2024–25, and for 4,717 school-based personnel from 2020–21 through 2025–26.
- **School enrollment data:** Five years of school-level enrollment data from 2020–21 through 2024–25, including school enrollment dates and exit dates. Students who transferred into PPS after October 1 of each year were not included in the dataset. High schools were not included. For analyses, students were assigned to the school they attended for the most days during each school year.
- **Student demographic and enrollment records:** Student-level records, using masked student IDs, including grade level, gender, race and ethnicity, special education status, multilingual learner status, and home or primary language.
- **Student attendance data:** Student-level attendance records, including number of days present and absent.
- **Student discipline data:** Number and type of student-level exclusionary disciplinary incidents.
- **Student achievement data:** Student-level Oregon Statewide Assessment System (OSAS) math and English language arts (ELA) scaled scores, used to examine academic outcomes and patterns over time.
- **Dual language immersion (DLI) program access and enrollment data:** School- and student-level data on Dual Language Immersion programs, including which schools offered these programs and which students were enrolled in them.
- **Personnel data:** School staff-level data from 2020–21 through 2025–26, including position, school assignment, race and ethnicity, years of overall experience, years of experience in the district, exit dates, and exit reasons. The dataset included instructional and administrative staff (e.g., teachers, educational assistants, principals, assistant principals, librarians, instructional specialists, and office administrative assistants).

³ Administrative data refers to information routinely collected and maintained by a school district or public agency for operational, compliance, or reporting purposes, such as enrollment, attendance, discipline, staffing, program participation, and student outcome records.

- **School-level free and reduced-price lunch** (FRPL) eligibility in 2022–23 from the National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.
- PPS Board Documents related to SEGC Changes and notes prior consulting firms that helped the district through the SEGC process.

Focus Groups and Interviews with approximately 100 people

- Approximately 50 focus groups with administrators (i.e., school principals and assistant principals), staff, families, and/or SEGC members
- 10 interviews with administrators, staff, families, and/or SEGC members

Finally, we developed the anticipated SEGC changes for each school by reviewing district and Board documents related to SE Enrollment and Program Balancing Phase 2. Our primary source was the SE Enrollment and Program Balancing Phase 2 School by School Impact Analysis report, which provided school level details on proposed boundary changes, feeder pattern changes, program relocations, projected enrollment, and projected building utilization. We also cross checked these summaries against the Implementation Impacts by School, Program, and Year document and Board Resolution 6513, SE Enrollment and Program Balancing Phase 2, which formally adopted the major boundary changes, program relocations, grade reconfigurations, transportation commitments, and implementation supports. To better understand the rationale, community concerns, implementation assumptions, and broader system design behind the school specific changes, we also reviewed the May 10, 2022 Staff Report on Phase 2 SE Enrollment and Program Balancing, the SEGC Phase 2 Final Report, the Community Engagement Summary, and the SE Final Proposal Assignment Graphic. We used later enrollment and utilization materials only to contextualize current conditions and distinguished those data from the original anticipated SEGC changes.

Section 1:

School-by-School Findings of SEGC Changes

Introduction to School-by-School Findings

This section presents school-by-school findings from the SEGC Equity Audit Evaluation, and to do so, we draw on both qualitative, quantitative and survey data. While our prior report summarized findings across all schools, this section examines how SEGC-related changes were experienced, implemented, and interpreted within individual school communities. This school-level analysis is important because SEGC did not land the same across all schools. In part, because each school entered the process with different histories, enrollment patterns, program identities, leadership conditions, staffing capacity, facility contexts, and relationships with families and communities. For that reason, the findings below are intended to show both the common themes that emerged within SEGC-impacted schools and the local conditions that shaped how each school absorbed, responded to, and made meaning of SEGC-related changes.

Methodological Notes About Our Qualitative School-by-School Analysis

First, the perspectives shared in the qualitative findings section reflect the experiences and viewpoints of the administrators, teachers, staff, and other participants who contributed to this study. These perspectives offer important insight into how SEGC-related shifts were experienced within particular school communities. However, they should not be interpreted as representing every perspective within a given school. Schools are complex communities, and individuals within the same school may have experienced these shifts in different ways. Consistent with qualitative research principles of thick description,^{4 5} the findings here are intended to elevate patterns and themes that emerged from participant accounts while providing sufficient context for readers to understand the conditions under which these perspectives were shared. As such, we honor the value of participant voices while also recognizing that additional perspectives may further deepen, extend, or nuance our understanding.

Second, our preliminary analysis draws on in-depth qualitative case data collected from 9 of the 20 schools (45%) impacted by SEGC changes. In this analysis, we treat each school as a qualitative profile or case. A case, in qualitative research, is a bounded setting or unit of analysis that allows researchers to examine experiences, processes, relationships, and conditions in context.⁶ Here, each school case helps illuminate how SEGC-related changes were understood and experienced within a particular school community.

These schools were not intended to serve as a statistically representative sample of all affected schools. Rather, they were selected to provide deeper insight into varied school-level experiences. Therefore, as noted earlier, our approach is best understood as purposeful sampling

⁴ Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2024). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.

⁵ Younas, A., Fàbregues, S., Durante, A., Escalante, E. L., Inayat, S., & Ali, P. (2023). Proposing the “MIRACLE” narrative framework for providing thick description in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 1–13.

⁶ Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

of information-rich cases, which is a common qualitative research strategy used to support deep, contextualized analysis rather than statistical representativeness.^{7 8} The purpose of these case data is not to claim that the perspectives from these 9 schools represent every experience across all 20 schools. Rather, these cases provide rich insight into how SEGC-related shifts were experienced, interpreted, and implemented in particular school communities.

In qualitative research, the strength of a sample is often judged by its relevance to the research questions, the depth and specificity of the data, and the extent to which it supports meaningful interpretation, sometimes referred to as information power.⁹ Accordingly, the qualitative findings that we present in this report should be understood as patterns from information-rich cases, not as population-level estimates.

At the same time, these qualitative findings are not interpreted in isolation. Throughout the report, we augment the school-level case findings with survey data, administrative data, and other available documents when those sources help clarify, contextualize, confirm, complicate, or disconfirm patterns that emerged in the qualitative data. In some instances, survey or administrative data reinforced what participants described in interviews and focus groups. In other instances, those data added nuance or suggested that a participant experience was more context-specific than broadly shared. This mixed-methods approach allows us to honor the depth of school-level perspectives while also situating those perspectives within broader patterns across SEGC-impacted schools.

Since qualitative findings are not intended to generalize in the same way as survey, administrative or experimental findings, we attend instead to transferability, which is the extent to which readers can understand the conditions, contexts, and meanings surrounding the findings and consider how they may relate to other settings.¹⁰ For this reason, the findings are presented with attention to context, participant perspectives, and recurring themes, while also honoring, again, the possibility that additional school-level perspectives may deepen, extend, or nuance the analysis.

Third, we include attention to nuances, tensions, and variations to make sure that the qualitative findings do not flatten the complexity of participants' experiences but instead reflect both the broader patterns emerging across the data and the important differences, contradictions, and

⁷ Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544.

⁸ Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661.

⁹ Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753–1760.

¹⁰ Stalmeijer, R. E., Brown, M. E. L., & O'Brien, B. C. (2024). How to discuss transferability of qualitative research in health professions education. *The Clinical Teacher*, 21(6), Article e13762.

context-specific experiences that help explain how SEGC-related shifts were understood and experienced across school communities.

Analytic Note on Lived Experience, Observation, and Perception

It was important for our team to distinguish between participants' lived experiences and direct observations, on the one hand, and their broader perceptions or generalized interpretations, on the other. We aimed to make this distinction because both forms of evidence are important, but they do different analytic work. Lived experiences and direct observations help us understand what participants personally saw, did, heard, or experienced. For example, teaching in classrooms with more than 30 students, navigating student behavioral crises, losing a colleague, or supporting families through confusing transitions were treated as direct experiences.

At the same time, participants often used those direct experiences to make sense of broader patterns, including their perceptions of the SEGC process, the district's intentions, decision-making fairness, or which students, families, and schools were advantaged or harmed over time. These perceptions should not be dismissed, because they help explain how participants interpreted the meaning and consequences of what they experienced.

However, differentiating between direct experience and broader interpretation is important because it allows us to be clear about the kind of evidence each claim represents. So, in this report, when we refer to what participants saw, experienced, or described directly, we treat those accounts as evidence of lived experience. When we refer to what participants felt, believed, or perceived about intent, cause, fairness, or systemwide impact, we treat those accounts as meaningful interpretations grounded in experience, but not as formal causal evidence on their own.

This distinction helps preserve the integrity of our analysis. It also allows us to honor participants' voices and the patterns that emerged across their accounts, while also being careful not to overstate what the data can establish. In this way, perceptions are not treated as "less real" than lived experiences, but rather, they are treated as important evidence of how people made sense of district decisions, trust, equity, and harm in the context of SEGC-related change.

Influence of Context on Findings

We treat participants' accounts as important and credible evidence of how SEGC-related changes were experienced within school communities. Throughout the analysis, we also triangulated interview and focus group findings with available survey responses, administrative data, enrollment records, staffing records, and other district documents when those sources were available. At the same time, the context in which data were collected should be acknowledged. During parts of the data collection period, participants were navigating budget reductions, staffing cuts, declining enrollment, and rumors or concerns about possible school closures or

consolidation. Given this context, it is possible that some participants emphasized the strengths, resilience, or value of their schools in ways that were shaped by a desire to protect their school communities. This does not make their accounts less meaningful or trustworthy. Rather, it means their responses should be interpreted within a broader climate of uncertainty, where staff and families may have felt that how they described their school could matter for future district decisions. For this reason, we read participant accounts both as evidence of lived experience and as narratives shaped by the high-stakes conditions surrounding the study.

How to Read The School Profile Cases

Each school case is organized around six guiding questions that align with the audit's broader domains and research questions. For each school, we use these questions to examine how SEGC-related changes were experienced, interpreted, and implemented within that specific school context:

1. To what extent did the SEGC process affect administrator, educator, and staff morale and retention, including among personnel of color where the data allowed us to examine this?
2. To what extent did administrators, educators, and staff feel equipped to support students and families during and after SEGC-related changes?
3. How did administrators, educators, and staff experience SEGC-related changes in terms of emotional well-being and professional support, including personnel of color where this information was available?
4. How did students and families from historically underserved communities experience the quality of learning environments after SEGC-related shifts?
5. How did administrators, teachers, and staff describe the quality of learning environments after SEGC-related shifts, particularly in relation to middle grades programming and supports?
6. How did SEGC-related changes play out at each school, and what factors shaped how the school experienced, absorbed, and responded to those changes?

For each case, we first summarize the intended SEGC-related changes for that school, based on district documents and available SEGC materials. This provides important context for understanding what changes were planned or formally adopted before we discuss how participants experienced, interpreted, and responded to those changes at the school level.

Bridger Creative Science School SEGC Analysis

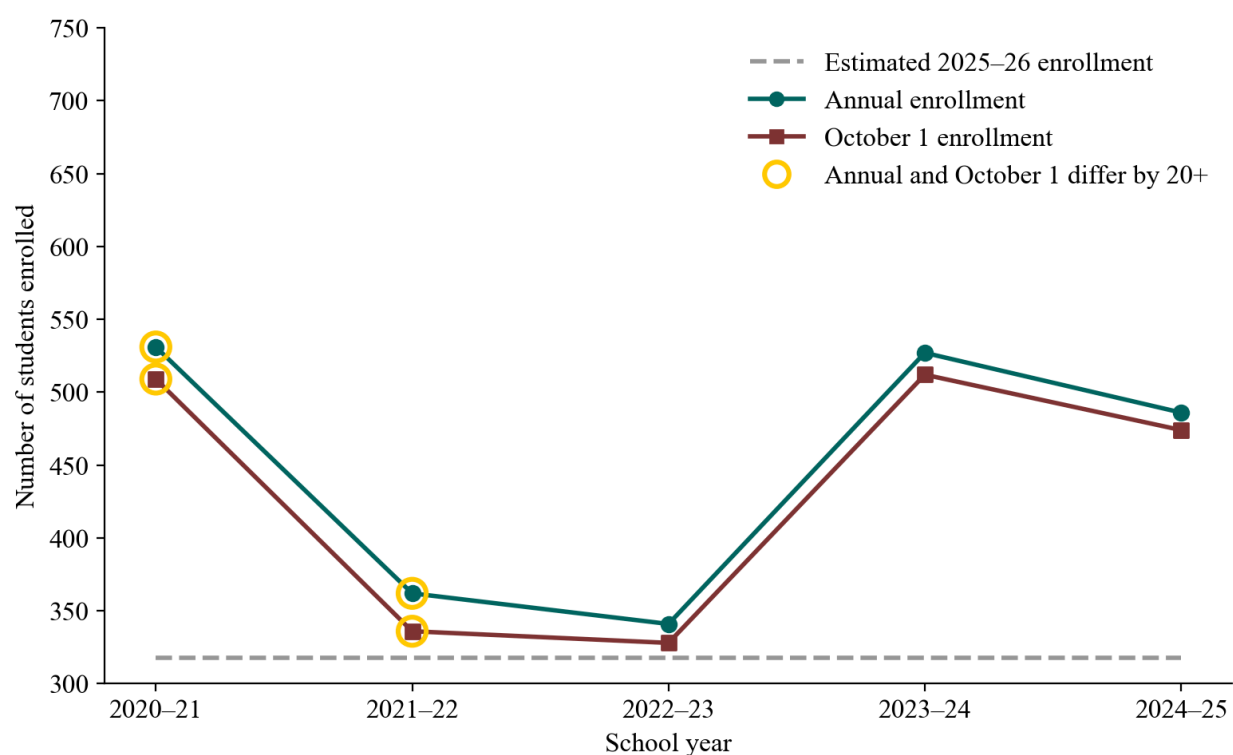
Anticipated SEGC Changes

District-related SEGC documents identified four anticipated changes for Bridger:

- a program relocation out of the school
- a program relocation into the school
- a change in instructional model
- attendance boundary changes

At the time of SEGC planning, Bridger was described as a co-located K–5 school with a small two-strand Spanish DLI program and a single-strand neighborhood program. The school had 337 students in 2021–22 and a projected enrollment of 338 students for 2025–26. Under the SEGC recommendation, Bridger’s Spanish DLI program would relocate to Lent, while Creative Science School would move from Clark to Bridger and become the instructional model for the combined Bridger and Creative Science student body. New Bridger neighborhood students were expected to be automatically assigned to the Bridger Creative Science program, with the option to request transfer to a standard program, and lottery access was expected to be reduced to prioritize neighborhood enrollment. Actual enrollment data indicate that the school exceeded projected enrollment by over 150 students after the Creative Science School relocated to Bridger.

Figure 1.1 Bridger estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Adding grades 6–8 with the Creative Science program in 2023–24 accounts for some of the enrollment increase. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Bridger Creative Science School (hereafter Bridger) was also expected to experience attendance boundary changes. Specifically, kindergartners living between Division Street and Woodward Street would enroll at Atkinson, while those living between Woodward Street and Powell Boulevard would enroll at Arleta, unless they had older siblings at Bridger or received transfers.

As a result of these changes, Bridger’s building utilization was projected to decline slightly, from 66.1% to 61.2% if the changes had been in place in 2021–22, and from 66.3% to 62.4% in the 2025–26 forecast. In short, Bridger was expected to shift from a co-located neighborhood and Spanish DLI school into a neighborhood-based Creative Science focus option model, while sending Spanish DLI students to Lent and shifting portions of its neighborhood boundary to nearby schools.¹¹

Overview

In this profile case, we share findings from survey data interviews and focus groups conducted with Bridger participants to better understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced within the school community. Since participants included individuals who were at Bridger before, during, and after SEGC implementation, their accounts offer insight into how the school changed over time and how those changes were understood by people working inside the building. Rather than treating SEGC as the sole cause of later conditions at Bridger, this chapter examines how participants connected SEGC-related shifts to broader patterns they experienced in morale, professional support, school climate, learning environments, student and family experiences, and the school’s capacity to absorb and respond to change. These accounts help illuminate how district-level decisions were lived, interpreted, and managed at the school level.

Participants

We conducted three focus groups and one individual interview with Bridger-based participants, which included nine school-based participants in total. Of these participants 6 of 9 (66%) of them were at either Bridger or Creative Science school prior to SEGC changes. Collectively, they spoke from the perspective of educators and staff who experienced SEGC-related changes in the daily life of Bridger, including changes connected to enrollment, programming, staffing, student needs, family communication, school culture, and transition support. Additionally, 15 Bridger staff responded to the staff survey and there were 87 Bridger respondents to the family and caregiver survey. Importantly, where the data did not clearly identify participants’ own racial identities or provide explicit information about personnel of color, we do not make claims about differential experiences among staff of color.

¹¹ Portland Public Schools. (n.d.). SE enrollment and program balancing phase 2 school-by-school impact analysis [PDF].

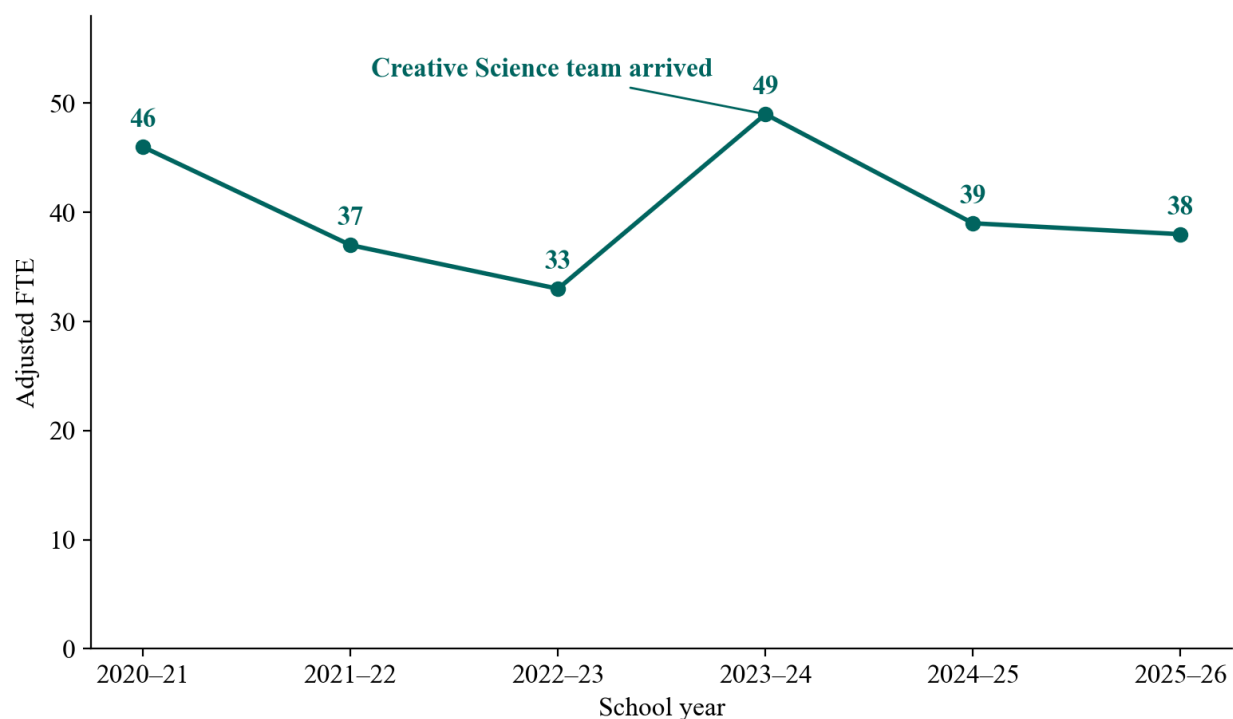
Findings

Morale and Retention

Participants described the SEGC-related changes as contributing to low morale, emotional exhaustion, and concerns about retention, layered on top of other system-wide stressors such as curriculum shifts, behavior challenges, and full time equivalency (FTE) reductions. Several teachers shared that during the first merged years, they regularly contemplated leaving the profession or taking extended leave, and they spoke of colleagues who had already taken leave and might not return. One participant described a year in which the combination of new grade-level expectations, class composition, and post-merger dynamics made continuing feel unsustainable, noting that they considered formal leave because “another year like that” felt untenable. Another participant described a year of teaching following the merger as one in which they “wanted to quit, like, every day,” underscoring the depth of strain experienced at the classroom level.

Participants also linked morale to declining support and resource cuts over time. One participant explained that while the school initially received additional positions and support roles following SEGC, within a relatively short period those “gifts” were rolled back, with roughly a dozen or more FTE lost over two years. Classroom teachers echoed that they previously had a social worker and two counselors, but now saw neighborhood students receiving fewer services even as needs remained high. Altogether, these lived experiences fed a perception that staff were being asked to absorb major structural changes and higher needs with shrinking support, which, in participants’ view, contributed to the erosion of morale and increased the risk of burnout and attrition.

The staffing record tracks the arc participants describe. Total staffing at Bridger stood at 46 FTE in 2020–21, declined to a low of about 33 FTE in 2022–23, then rose to 49 FTE in 2023–24 as the Creative Science team arrived (see Figure 1.1). It settled near 39 FTE in the two years that followed. The pattern participants summarize as an initial boost that was later rolled back is visible across these swings, and the scale of loss they describe, on the order of a dozen or more positions, is consistent with the size of the movements in the record. The leanest year, 2022–23, coincided with the conversion itself, when the building had the fewest adults available even as it was absorbing the most change.

Figure 1.2. Staffing at Bridger Creative Science School, 2020–21 to 2025–26

Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff. Adjusted FTE distributes FTE evenly across positions in cases where employees held multiple positions and were assigned 1.0 FTE for every position.

While participants frequently discussed race, equity, and impacts on students and families of color, the Bridger conversations did not provide enough explicit, disaggregated information to analyze morale or retention specifically for staff of color. For that reason, this synthesis focuses on overall morale and retention concerns at Bridger, while noting where participants raised broader equity-related themes.

Participants described SEGC-related changes as emotionally and professionally difficult. One participant stated:

“This time last year, I didn't think I was going to make it through the year... if I got another year like that... I'm looking at mental health leave.”

The personnel record allows a distinction between two strains that participants described. In the transition year of 2022–23, staffing turned over sharply. About 73% of that year's staff did not return to Bridger the following year. Part of that turnover was planned, as the Spanish DLI team relocated to Lent, but the relocation accounts for only about a third of the churn (nine educators). About 40% relocated to other PPS schools and about a quarter left the district. Separately, of the 28 Creative Science educators who relocated into the building in the 2022–23 to 2023–24

transition, 24 returned for the 2024–25 school year (about an 86% retention rate). This excludes the Creative Science principal who moved to Bridger in 2022–23, and who did not return to Bridger the following year. Building-wide retention rates also rose in the years after the transition; about 86% of 2024–25 educators continued at Bridger in 2025–26.

Feeling Equipped to Support Students and Families During and After SEGC Changes

Across the conversations, participants differentiated between their own efforts to support students and families and the systems and structures provided to help them do so. At the individual level, educators described extensive work to maintain communication, build relationships, and provide continuity for families, even as they themselves felt under-informed and overextended. For example, some teachers talked about regular newsletters, informal meet-and-greets, and early relationship-building so that the first real contact with families did not happen only at parent-teacher conferences. These were framed as deliberate choices to buffer students and families from the confusion and stress of the transition.

At the same time, participants frequently emphasized that they did not feel systemically equipped. Teachers reported that information given to families about SEGC-related changes sometimes did not match what staff were told, or that messages arrived at different times or with different levels of detail, which made it hard to answer questions or provide consistent guidance. One participant characterized their experience of supporting families during and immediately after the SEGC transition as “flying blind,” explaining that each fall always brings a new group of families, but in this period there was no additional clarity or structure provided despite the scale of change. Another participant described the absence of deliberate planning for a smooth merger, such as joint community-building, clear protocols, and coordinated messaging, saying they did not see “deliberate, intentional” efforts to make the transition run well.

Another participant similarly described walking into the merged context without transition plans or clear district guidance, recounting that it felt like the school had simply been handed “two buildings” with an expectation to make them function as one without a roadmap. Over time, participants perceived that promised supports, like dedicated community agents or mental health staff, were removed, which they felt further undermined their ability to respond to student and family needs once the immediate transition period had passed. Participants indicated:

“Sometimes it felt disconnected from what parents got versus what staff got... there was just so much happening that it was really hard to keep everyone on the same page that first year.”

“I’m just flying blind. I just approach everything the same way I always approach it... it’s just another new group of families.”

Survey respondents often felt the same way. Among the staff who answered the information items, few felt well informed: 2 of 11 agreed the changes affecting their school were communicated clearly, and 1 of 11 had a reliable source to turn to during implementation. One staff member captured the experience this way:

"We lack direction, consensus and clarity. Things are never fully thought out or planned. Everything is by the seat of our pants. It's hard to get a handle on things when surprises are constant."

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants' descriptions of their emotional well-being point to high levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional wear-and-tear, with SEGC-related changes acting as a significant contributing factor alongside other system pressures. Teachers talked about needing daily personal strategies, such as meditation, therapy, or medication, simply to sustain the work, even when they also emphasized that they cared deeply about students and often loved key aspects of teaching.

Some participants described feeling set up to fail by the combination of expectations and conditions. They pointed to large class sizes with many students who had significant academic, behavioral, or safety needs; complex new curriculum requirements; and insufficient staffing or training to meet those demands. This produced a recurring emotional theme, which was that educators' sense that no matter how hard they worked, it was impossible to fully meet expectations, which contributed to feelings of inadequacy and dread about coming to work.

One participant noted that the broader climate of district instability, including leadership turnover at the central office and frequent changes at the school-level, intensified the emotional load on staff. At times, they described receiving meaningful individual support from a supervisor who intervened when community interactions became toxic, but this was contrasted with a larger pattern in which staff felt they were often left to absorb community anger and confusion without consistent backing. Participants stated:

"I have to meditate every day. Otherwise I would... I mean, I love doing the job. It's just that it's so hard that I have to really focus."

"There's always more demands... and then not being trained on any of these things, they just throw it at you, and then they say, 'Good luck.'"

The survey data suggests the emotional toll was sharpest during the SEGC implementation period and has since eased without fully resolving. None of the staff who responded felt emotionally supported through the process (0 of 10) (0%) and none agreed that their workload was manageable during the transition (0 of 9). Reflecting on their current working conditions, 6

of the 14 who answered reported that they currently feel emotionally supported. Likewise, 6 of 14 respondents agreed their current workload is manageable. This locates the sharpest difficulty in the process of change while suggesting that strain persists.

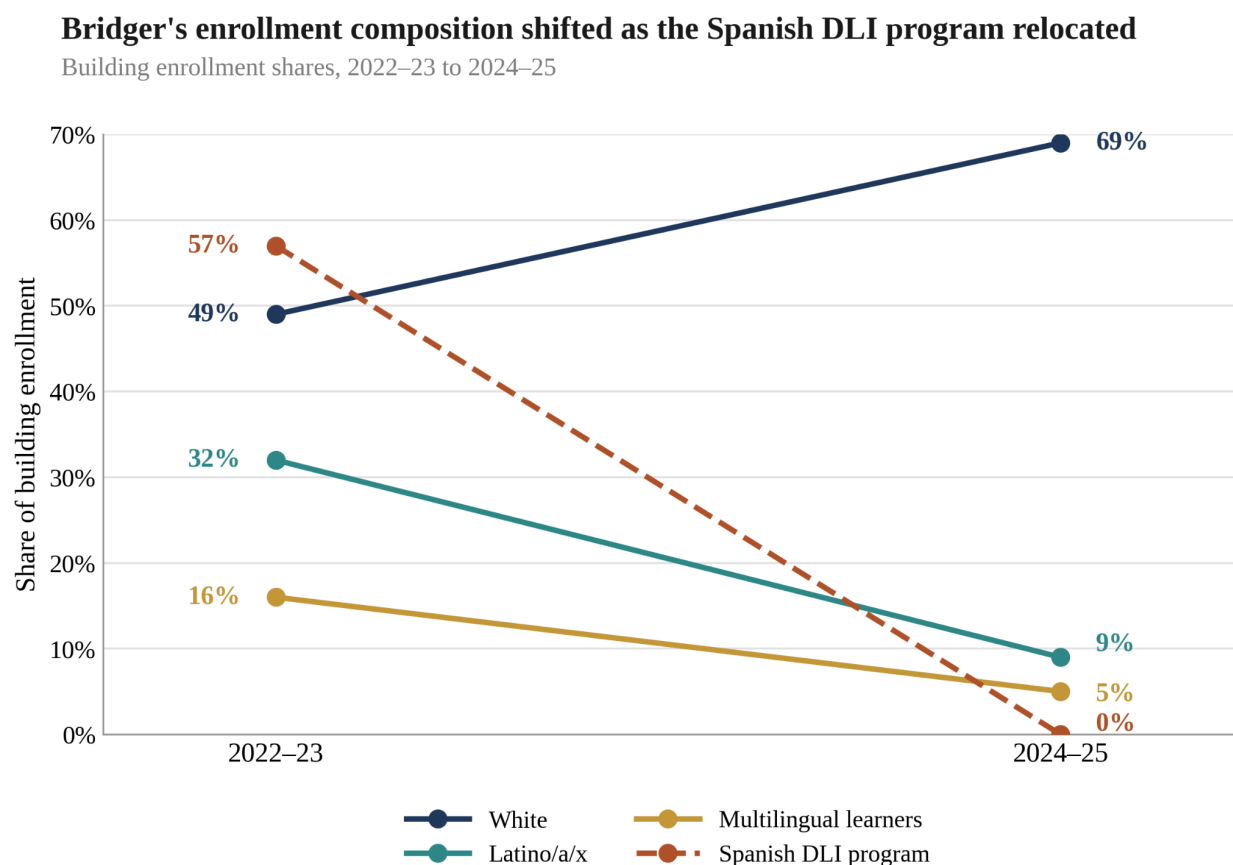
Experiences of Students and Families from Historically Underserved Communities

During our conversations, participants did not clearly identify themselves as staff of color or describe distinct emotional or professional-support experiences tied explicitly to their own racial identities as employees. Instead, discussions of race and equity focused primarily on students and families of color and on structural patterns, such as segregation and transfer patterns, which we discuss below.

Participants described SEGC-related changes as having mixed but differential impacts on students and families from historically underserved communities. Much of this discussion centered on the movement of the dual language immersion program, shifts in Title I status, and observed experiences of students of color, especially Black students and Spanish-speaking families.

At Bridger, staff recalled an earlier period when the school's combined dual language immersion and neighborhood population created a more visibly diverse, multilingual community, with regular cultural celebrations and an explicit emphasis on honoring different cultures. After SEGC, when dual language immersion moved to another site, participants experienced the Bridger student body as becoming more white and more affluent, while also losing the additional staffing and Title I support that had previously accompanied a higher-poverty enrollment. Some participants perceived that the dual language immersion community, now housed in a single dual language immersion school, gained benefits, such as a more cohesive linguistic environment, while Bridger's remaining neighborhood students lost access to robust support and to the daily presence of their dual language immersion peers.

The compositional change of student demographics participants described is visible in the enrollment record, and it tracks the program relocation. As the Spanish DLI program relocated to Lent, Bridger's white enrollment share rose from 49% in 2022–23 to 66% in 2023–24 and 69% in 2024–25, while the Latino/a/x share fell from 32% to roughly 9% over the same period (see Figure 1). The share of multilingual learners dropped from 16% to about 5%, and DLI enrollment, which had been a majority of the building at 57% in 2022–23, reached zero by 2023–24 as the program completed its move. In building-occupancy terms, Bridger's share of students who identify as Black, Indigenous or persons of color fell from 51% in 2022–23 to 31% in 2024–25.

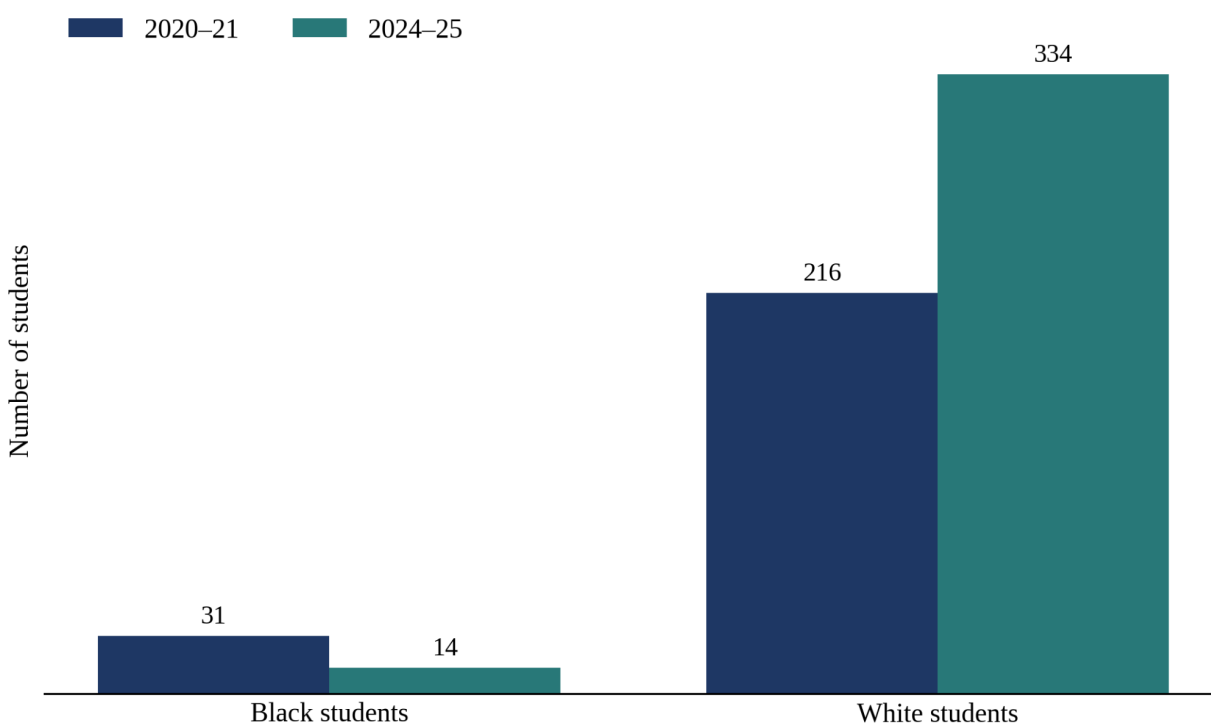
Figure 1.3. Bridger’s enrollment composition shifted as the Spanish DLI program relocated

The Spanish DLI program completed its relocation to Lent in 2023–24, reaching 0% of the building.

Note: Enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

Participants also described observations about Black students’ trajectories, noting that they often saw Black students leave Bridger and move to other schools. One participant speculated that differential discipline and how behaviors were interpreted and responded to might be contributing factors, based on their direct observations in the building, though they did not have formal data to confirm patterns district-wide.

The enrollment record is consistent with participants' observations. The number of Black students at Bridger declined from 31 in 2020–21 to 14 in 2024–25, a 55% decline, while white student enrollment rose from 216 to 334, a 55% increase. Much of the white increase reflects the Creative Science program moving into the building. The decline in Black enrollment, however, does not correspond to either the Spanish DLI or Creative Science program relocation, and the enrollment data cannot explain its causes.

Figure 1.4.. Black and White student demographic shifts between 2020-2025

Note: Enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

At the middle-level, teachers reported that new lottery or transfer students with very high needs were being placed at Bridger without the corresponding adult support they felt those students would have received at a larger, better-resourced comprehensive middle school. As a result, these students were in classes where an individual adult could not realistically provide the level of one-on-one support required, which teachers described as a disservice both to those high-needs students and to their peers. Participants perceived this as a structural inequity, even though they continued to work intensively with the students in their own classrooms. Participants stated:

“I think that the immersion community may have gained some things at their new school, but the students of color and neighborhood students here lost that everyday connection and support.”

“The last transfer students we've had through the lottery are so high needs... they would need a one-on-one, but they're not going to get that because that's not what we'll be budgeted for.”

Perceived Quality of Learning Environments After SEGC Shifts

Participants' descriptions of the post-SEGC learning environment emphasize a tension between strong classroom-level practice and strained school-level conditions. In K–5, teachers continued to describe a commitment to project-based learning, relationship-building, and affirming student identities; in middle grades, staff spoke of a historical tradition of integrated, inquiry-driven humanities and multi-age learning. Survey respondents had positive perceptions about learning

environments: 11 of the 14 who responded to the items rated student learning environments as high quality, and 9 of 14 agreed staff collaboration supports teaching and learning.

However, they also reported that structural and policy changes linked to SEGC and subsequent district decisions often undermined these strengths. K–5 participants highlighted the collapse of multiple sections into large classes with many students on individualized education plans (IEPs), 504 plans, or safety plans, and the loss of roles like social workers and extra counselors, which they felt reduced the overall quality of support and the sustainability of high-quality instruction. They also noted a reduction in school-wide cultural celebrations and explicit multicultural programming, interpreting this as a shift away from visible acknowledgment of cultural diversity in the daily life of the school.

Middle-level participants described a marked shift from flexible, integrated curriculum to more rigid, scripted programs. They shared that where students had once engaged with longer novels, independent reading, and large cross-disciplinary projects, the newer structures emphasized short texts and narrower, test-aligned materials. Educators perceived this change as reducing student engagement and diminishing the richness of the learning experience, particularly for students who had previously thrived in more inquiry-based environments. The attempt to offer a “comprehensive middle school” menu of electives and structures within a small K–8, without additional FTE or appropriate space, was seen as especially problematic, leading to schedule designs that disrupted K–2 programming and created logistical challenges for older students. Participants also noted:

“We generally believe in kids and want to make education interactive and fun and more project-based...but now there’s these big classes, kids with major needs, and fewer supports.”

“It used to be multi-disciplinary, multi-age...all of that is done now. Everything seems to be locked into grade levels and a pretty scripted curriculum.”

The staffing record supports these perceptions. As Bridger programs transitioned, its staffing mix changed in ways that match what participants describe. The DLI teaching block left with the program, and a social worker position present during the transition did not persist. At the same time the building added the elective and specialist roles a K–8 requires, including art, music, physical education, and a foreign language teacher appearing from 2022–23 onward, alongside growth in counseling and special education staff. Total staffing fell to its lowest point, about 33 FTE, in the 2022–23 conversion year before rebuilding. In other words, the building was assembling a broader grade span and program menu during the same window in which its overall staffing was thinnest, which is the structural version of the “comprehensive menu without the FTE” experience participants named.

How SEGC-Related Changes Played Out at Bridger and Factors Shaping the Experience

Across our Bridger-specific conversations, participants collectively described SEGC as reconfiguring Bridger's identity, enrollment, and internal dynamics, with effects that were then amplified by leadership churn (three principals during a three year period), resource cuts, and district-level instability. Before SEGC, participants remembered Bridger as a Title I school with a mix of neighborhood and dual language immersion students, extensive cultural celebrations, and a strong sense of being a close-knit, collaborative community. The SEGC decisions moved dual language immersion, shifted Title I status, and brought in a focus-option community used to a high degree of autonomy and parent influence, which participants experienced as changing both the student body and the power dynamics within the school.

Staff were generally very skeptical that the SEGC changes advanced equity. Among the staff who answered these survey questions, very few believed the changes were shared fairly across schools, and none believed the changes avoided creating new barriers for underserved students. Staff were also not convinced that SEGC made class sizes more equitable or balanced enrollment in meaningful ways. In short, staff survey responses suggest that many saw the changes as falling short of the equity goals PPS had attached to the process. Participants said:

“Barriers were only created, and I don't even know how to accurately capture that here. Everyone is adjusting, but we're all worse for it.”

“We were promised a classroom teacher for 3 years. That promise was broken and we have EXTREMELY high needs students and only 2 teachers instead of 3.”

Participants perceived that the merger unfolded without a clear, shared vision or adequate planning. They described minimal structured opportunities for joint culture-building, limited clarity about how positions and roles would be allocated, and repeated changes in school-level leadership during the early years of the transition. Over time, they reported that after an initial “boost” in staffing, the school experienced substantial cuts that left larger classes and fewer adults to manage increased student needs and more complex programming expectations. One survey respondent commented:

“It stressed all the teachers with the unknown and lack of leadership from principals from either schools. They made the merger harder than it needed to be and created more divide and lack of accountability and communication.”

Participants also situated their experiences of SEGC within a broader context of trauma and instability. In addition to the merger, they referenced the COVID-19 period, the loss of a beloved colleague, and the deaths of two students as events that deeply affected the community and shaped how staff interpreted subsequent changes. These lived experiences fed perceptions that

the system did not adequately recognize or address compounding harms, and that the school was often left to manage large-scale change with insufficient guidance and repair. As some participants indicated:

“We went from a close and connected community to being torn apart from our colleagues and community...and then trying to rebuild with less support.”

“We’re trying to do everything that a comprehensive middle school can do without the FTE or resources available. It almost feels like the system is trying to kill mid-level.”

The accounts above suggest that Bridger’s post-SEGC experience cannot be understood as the result of a single change or decision. Rather, participants described a layered and cumulative process in which program relocation, enrollment shifts, staffing reductions, leadership instability, reduced supports, and unresolved community tensions interacted over time. While participants continued to describe deep commitment to students, families, and the school’s educational vision, they also portrayed a school community that was asked to absorb significant change without the level of planning, communication, staffing, and emotional repair needed to make that change sustainable. For PPS, Bridger’s experience points to the importance of treating school reconfiguration not only as a technical enrollment or facilities matter only, but as an equitable, human, relational, and instructional transition that requires sustained support before, during, and well after implementation.

Clark Elementary School

Anticipated Changes

District-related SEGC documents identified four anticipated changes for Clark Elementary School (hereafter Clark):

- a building use change
- a program relocation out of the building
- a new student and program assignment into the building
- the reopening of Clark as a K to 5 elementary school connected to the Harrison Park pathway

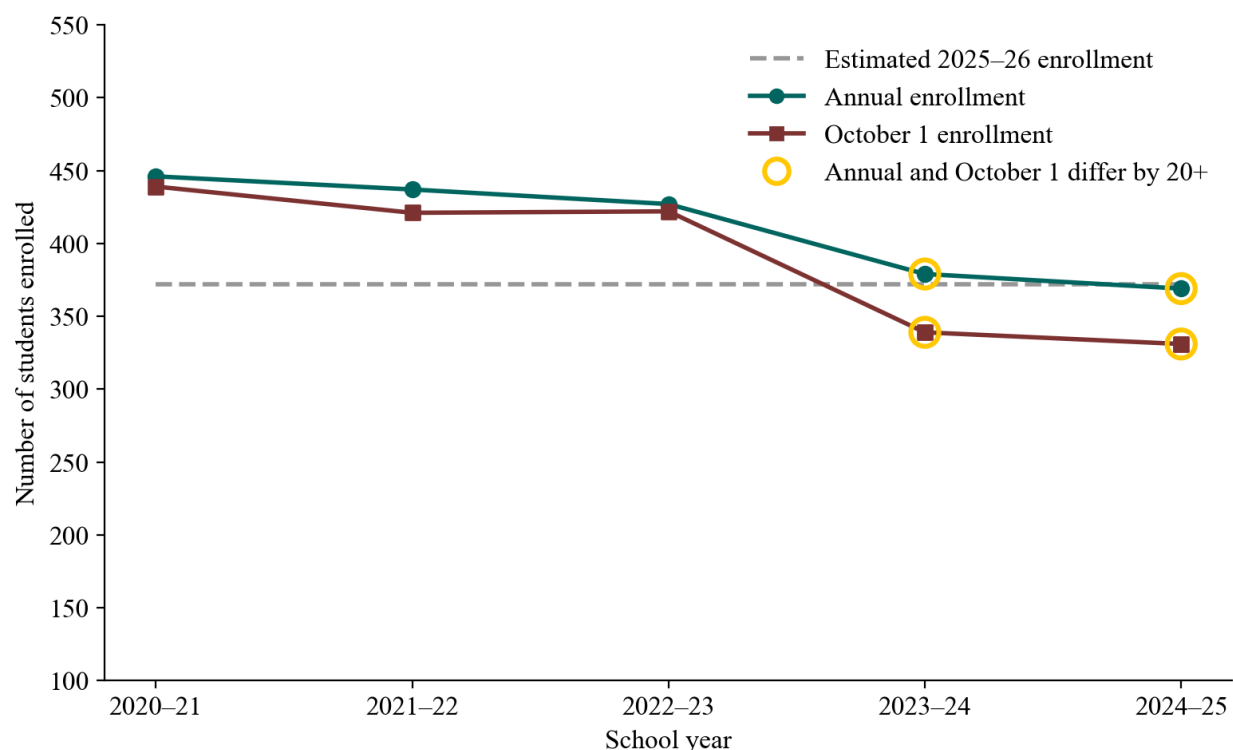
Prior to SEGC implementation, the Clark building housed Creative Science School, a K–8 focus option program with 419 students in 2021–22 and a 2025–26 forecast of 452 students. Under the SEGC recommendation, Creative Science would relocate from Clark to Bridger, and the Clark building would become the new K–5 location for Harrison Park elementary students, including students in the Mandarin DLI program. The expectation was that Clark would serve a newly configured K–5 school made up of Harrison Park neighborhood students and Mandarin elementary DLI students, with an estimated 349 students if the change had been in place in 2021–22 and a 202–26 forecast of 372 students. The projected utilization for the new Clark K–5 was 70.5% if it were in place in 2021–22 and 75.2% in the 2025–26 forecast.

In short, Clark was expected to shift from housing a K–8 focus option program to serving as a neighborhood K–5 school connected to Harrison Park. The recommendation was intended to keep Harrison Park K–5 students together, maintain the Mandarin DLI program at the elementary level, and locate elementary students in a building aligned with their assigned middle school pathway.

Overview

In this profile, we share findings from our data collection with participants at Clark to better understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced within this school community. Participants included less than five individuals. Their accounts offer insight into how the reopening and reconfiguration of Clark as a neighborhood K–5 school was experienced by people working inside the building during and after the transition. Rather than treating SEGC as the sole cause of later conditions at Clark, we examine how participants connected SEGC-related shifts to broader patterns they experienced in morale, professional support, school climate, learning environments, student and family experiences, and the school’s capacity to absorb and respond to change. These accounts help illuminate how district-level decisions were lived, interpreted, and managed at the school level.

Figure 2.1 Clark estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Losing grades 6–8 with the relocation of the Creative Science program in 2023–24 accounts for some of the enrollment decline. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Participants

We share our findings based on the qualitative and quantitative data that we collect at and about Clark. This case draws on 15 staff survey respondents and 9 family and caregiver survey respondents from Clark. However, to protect participant anonymity, we do not report the exact number of Clark participants because fewer than five individuals contributed input. In small school-level samples, reporting exact counts can make it easier to infer who participated or connect particular comments to specific individuals, especially when participants hold identifiable roles or speak about highly contextualized experiences. For that reason, using “fewer than five” serves as a confidentiality threshold and helps protect participants while still allowing us to summarize the themes that emerged.

Findings

SEGC’s Impact on Morale and Retention

Overall, participants described Clark as a highly diverse Title I school serving many students of color, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, newcomer and refugee students, and students from historically underserved communities. Their accounts also suggested that the

return of a neighborhood K–5 school to the Clark building was viewed positively by many families, even as participants identified ongoing concerns related to implementation support, staff well-being, schoolwide systems, cultural belonging, and the consistency of learning environments across classrooms.

However, participants described the SEGC-related school reconfiguration to a K–5 and reopening of Clark as having mixed but significant consequences for morale, with some long-term benefits for students and learning conditions alongside persistent stress, frustration, and a sense of missed opportunity among adults.

One participant described entering an elementary school environment that felt highly dysregulated during the transition period at the prior site, including frequent fights, concerns about safety, and limited time for sustained instruction. This context created an intense starting point for the transition, where staff were not only implementing a major school change but also trying to stabilize daily routines, rebuild trust, and create the conditions for teaching and learning. In this participant's view, district leaders responded primarily by emphasizing outcomes, accountability, and perceived shortcomings, rather than fully acknowledging the complexity of the conditions staff had inherited and were trying to address. One person asserted:

“I felt like there was a lot of blame on us [as a school], even though we inherited the school and we inherited all the problems...Changes like this take time and it doesn't happen overnight. And I felt like we were getting a lot of pressure...to turn the school around overnight.”

Additionally, participants in the focus group characterized overall morale as low, and emphasized internal tensions, leadership issues, and a small but “very vocal” group whose influence they saw as amplifying negativity. Participants simply described the morale as:

“Overall, I'd say poor.”

“There is a select group that's a small group, but a very vocal group that kind of has tentacles reaching out, and it just impacts everyone.”

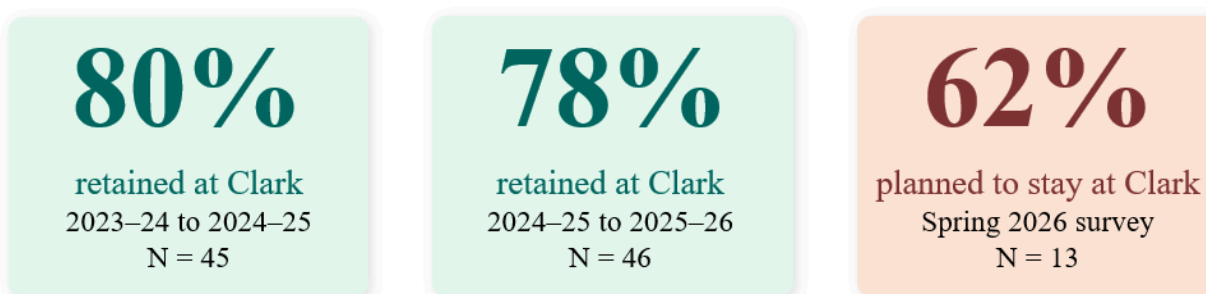
Participants perceived that retention data might look stable on paper, but that many educators would leave if they had feasible options, suggesting a hidden fragility in the workforce at Clark. A participant highlighted that:

“When you talk about retention, I could tell you at least, probably close to five teachers who would leave tomorrow if they could. But the reality is, there's just been nowhere for them to go for the last three years.”

“I’m sure our retention actually looks fine...But like, we have at least three teachers...that would happily leave.”

Year-to-year retention since the SEGC changes reinforces the “looks fine on paper” point. Of the staff present in 2023–24, 80% were still at Clark the following year. Of those present in 2024–25, 78% remained the year after. Decomposing the departures tracks what the participant described from the other side. Across both years, most of those who left did not leave the district. In fact, they transferred to other PPS schools, several back to Harrison Park, while only a small number, on the order of one to three per year with confirmed termination dates, voluntarily left PPS entirely.

Figure 2.2. Clark staff retention since SEGC changes



Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff.

Among Clark survey respondents, 62% (8 of 13) agreed they planned to be at the school the next year, well below the 79% who said the same across all PPS staff respondents. Of the remaining 5 respondents, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed they planned to stay, and 1 strongly disagreed. The cluster of noncommittal responses supports the participant's claim: a meaningful share of respondents were not affirmatively committed to stay nor actively looking to leave.

The participants did not solely connect this to SEGC changes. In fact, participants also tied current district-level budget shortfalls and layoffs, including for central-office colleagues of color, to deep anxiety and anger, with ripple effects on morale and trust. One participant stated:

“Many of them colleagues of color were called into a meeting...and basically told... if you don't see your name, you don't have a job... It just seems so inhumane... that we would treat our people like that.”

These experiences contributed to participants feeling vulnerable about their own roles, worried about additional cuts, and emotionally depleted. One participant reported not sleeping well for weeks, while another described needing a five-week mental health leave due to stress. Of 14

survey respondents, only three agreed that morale at Clark is high (21%). This reflects what focus group participants stated:

“I haven't really slept much in two weeks...it's impacting staff attendance... So yeah, I'd say that it's not... the morale isn't great.”

“One person took a several week mental health leave because it's not good... I would say overall the staff is not well.”

While participants did not explicitly identify themselves or other speakers by race, they did, from their perception, highlight that colleagues of color in central positions were heavily impacted by layoffs, raising concerns about equity and the message this sends about whose labor and expertise are valued.

Feeling Equipped or Not to Support Students and Families

Participants consistently indicated that they did not feel adequately equipped or supported to serve students and families, especially during the initial SEGC transition and in the immediate aftermath of reopening Clark as a K–5 school.

One participant described arriving to a severely under-structured and unsafe elementary environment with little prior groundwork laid, despite the scale of change involved, that is reconfiguring a school. They reported feeling that the school had to prioritize putting basic behavioral and safety systems in place before they could turn meaningfully to academics.

“We walked into... a school that we realized on day one needed to have systems and structures in place and as a school we are to take charge of that, but also we needed to create a school culture and climate...that was safe.”

Similarly, a family survey respondent with a student starting kindergarten in the building's first year as Clark K–5 wrote:

“It felt like it took these past two years to even begin to start a community...There was a leadership vacuum and we needed more support as a school establishing community.”

District support in this phase was described as misaligned and, at times, counterproductive. For example, some of the people assigned to the school during the reopening period were described as inexperienced and behaviorally challenging in ways that created more work, conflict, and stress rather than relief for the school. One person indicated:

“They [the district] gave us [some people], but [they were] brand new... it ended up causing way more hours and stress... which took away from our school.”

Other supports that might have helped, such as science-of-reading training and coordinated tier-3 supports, arrived later and were seen as a meaningful but delayed response.

Moreover, participants described feeling almost completely unequipped during the SECG transition. One participant summarized their sense of support when asked to what extent did you feel equipped to support students and families, the person proclaimed:

‘Not at all, I would say as close to zero.’”

They perceived the district’s implementation of tier-3 supports as focused on curricular tools rather than the structural and leadership issues they believed were most critical.

“We’re a tier three school, which means we get a lot of support, but like, they’re not the support that is helpful. It’s help that’s not helpful... what [we] need you guys to do is help our [school] become more cohesive.”

Participants indicated they often did not know who to talk to about these concerns or did not feel confident that raising them would lead to action. Participants made comments like:

“Do you feel safe raising these kinds of concerns or ideas?”

‘I don’t know who to talk to.’”

Survey respondents conveyed that they feel personally capable yet structurally unsupported to do their jobs. Eight of 14 respondents agreed they could carry out their responsibilities effectively but only 6 felt they had the resources to do so. One staff respondent described their working conditions, writing that “the toxic work environment and high staff turnover at this school, as well as lack of systems and organization even after three years, have severely impacted my ability to serve students and families.”

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants at Clark reported that the emotional toll of the SEGC transition, ongoing school demands, and district-level fiscal crises has been substantial. While the current fiscal deficit of PPS was not the focus of our conversations, participants consistently brought the topic up.

One participant described feeling deeply unsettled by current budget shortfalls, potential furlough days, and large-scale layoffs, particularly among long-serving colleagues, many of

whom were identified as people of color. They perceived the process as abrupt and “inhumane,” and reported that they and others were having trouble sleeping, worried both for students and for their own futures. As one participant stated:

“I absolutely feel vulnerable...It's just very hard, and I'm sad for all my colleagues that are impacted.”

Participants linked this distress to a mix of workload, perceptions of inconsistent leadership, reactive systems, and lack of clear vision, as well as to the high cost of living and financial uncertainty tied to furloughs and cuts. Participants suggested that:

“Staff want a clear vision... because right now, it feels like everything we do... is reactive... it kind of feels like we're not even quite treading water.”

“Whenever we do feel like we're making a couple steps forward...we hit a wall where there is something that we need that only an administrator can do, that doesn't get done... it's this constant battle to just like, stay at the line.”

Moreover, participants acknowledged the presence of district-provided supports, especially in the tier-3 framework (which, again, they stated arrived too late), but consistently emphasized that these supports felt misaligned with their most pressing emotional and professional needs, which centered on leadership capacity, relational trust, and coherent schoolwide systems.

The survey findings suggest a mixed picture. While the Clark survey respondents align with the strain described in interviews and focus groups, they also show that staff experiences were not uniformly negative. On whether they felt emotionally supported at work, 9 of 14 Clark respondents agreed. An open response about what had most affected well-being at work surfaced the same leadership and communication theme the focus groups raised, “the change from [Harrison Park] to Clark was fine. But the leadership at Clark is non-existent. Emails are not replied, questions are not answered, events and changes are not communicated and planned.” We interpret this comment not as a comprehensive assessment of any individual leader, but as evidence that some staff experienced gaps in communication, follow-through, and planning as consequential for their well-being.

It is also important to note that much of the distress participants raised extended beyond the SEGC transition itself. Concerns about layoffs of long-serving colleagues, fears of furloughs, and the manner in which budget cuts were communicated reflected current working conditions that appeared to compound the stress of earlier SEGC-related change.

Experiences of SEGC Changes for Students and Families from Historically Underserved Communities

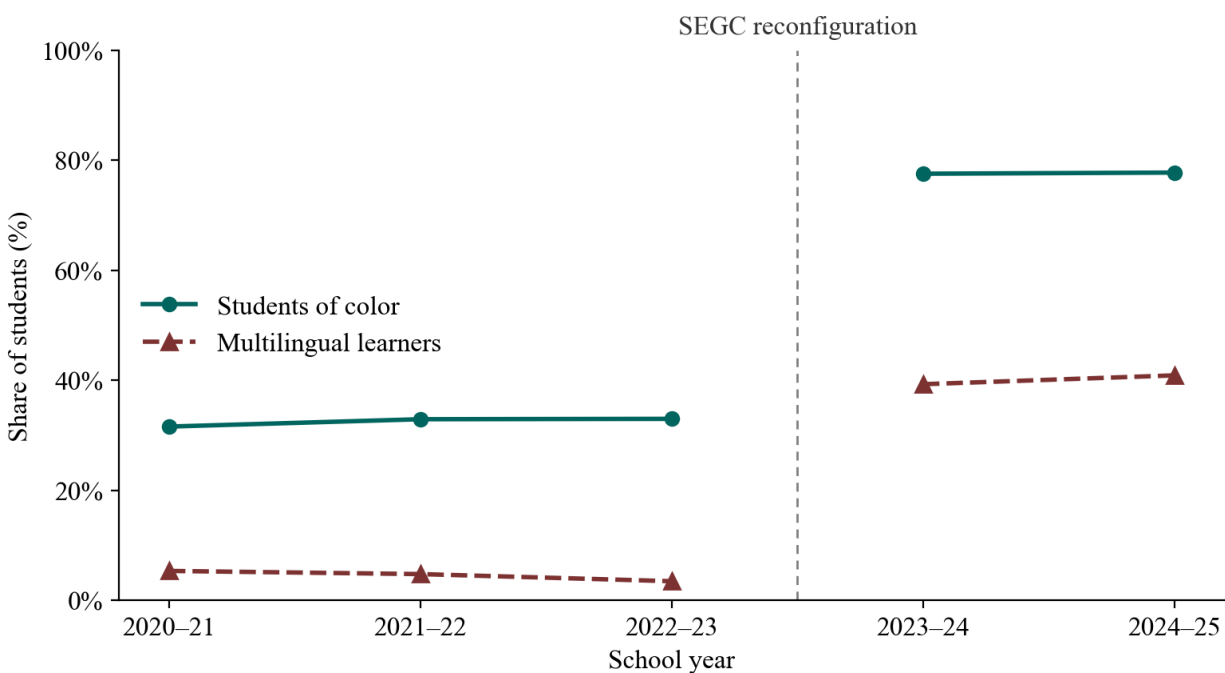
While these conversations did not include direct testimony from students or families, participants described Clark as serving a highly diverse, heavily historically underserved population, and they reflected on how the SEGC changes shaped the experience of that community.

Participants highlighted that Clark is a Title I school with majority students of color, substantial numbers of emergent bilingual students, students with disabilities, and historically underserved students. Participants noted that the surrounding neighborhood community area includes both relatively affordable single-family housing and multiple Section 8 housing complexes, and that the school serves many newcomer and refugee families from around the world. One participant shared that:

“We are one of the most diverse elementary schools... The majority of our students are students of color... about 44% English language learners...52% historically underserved...we have a lot of students that are newcomers, refugees from all over the world.”

Enrollment records track how sharply the building’s population changed when it reopened as a neighborhood K–5 with a Mandarin DLI program. Through 2022–23, under Creative Science, the building enrolled about a third of students of color (32–33%) and few multilingual learners (4–5%). When the Harrison Park K–5 students arrived in 2023–24, those figures moved to 78% students of color and 39% multilingual learners, holding at 78% and 41% the following year.

Figure 2.3 Changes in student composition at Clark, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Note: Enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

Participants reported that families in this community were largely pleased with the SEGC-driven shift that brought a neighborhood K–5 school back to the Clark building and separated elementary students from middle schoolers. According to one participant:

“In our particular community, families were very excited and happy to have the elementary school back in the neighborhood... They were also very excited to have the middle schoolers be separated from the elementary school students.”

Participants observed that younger students had previously been exposed to older students’ language and behaviors, which they perceived as developmentally inappropriate and harmful. They saw the reconfiguration into a separate K–5 as reducing that exposure and creating more age-appropriate environments.

At the same time, participants pointed to missed opportunities to advance racial equity and belonging for this diverse community. A particularly salient example was the decision to maintain the existing school name, despite concerns about its historical association and its mismatch with the student population. One participant shared that:

“We put a largely Black population to a school named after a slave owner. We didn't change the name, even though it was brought up multiple times... Why not use that opportunity to rebrand the school and make it something more appropriate for the demographic that it serves?”

They also described limited and fragmented cultural programming, such as relying on a multicultural event at another campus and having a single annual event on site, rather than building a cohesive, multi-faceted approach to honoring and engaging all communities. Participants perceived this as contributing to ongoing gaps in mutual understanding and episodes of discrimination among student groups. As one participant noted:

“There just seems to be kind of a lack of cohesion amongst the subgroups... I think a lot of our students of color . . . there's not a lot of understanding of different cultures... which causes some opportunities for discrimination towards each other based on a lack of understanding.”

Participants also raised concerns about students receiving special education services and newcomer student experiences, noting that some specialized programs, such as a new Communication and Behavior Classroom, were not well understood by staff or students, potentially increasing stigma and misunderstanding. Finally, a participant described high rates of chronic absenteeism and limited external accountability for what they described as educational neglect, which they saw as particularly harmful to students in historically underserved

communities and at odds with district rhetoric about equity and opportunity. According to one participant:

“We were at 40% last year, on average... for chronic absenteeism... it’s hard to educate kids when they’re not here, and I can’t hold anybody accountable...it’s like, the one thing that can set them up, if they can read, they can do anything, but they don’t come to school.”

The chronic-absenteeism the participant flagged bears out in district attendance records. Building-level chronic absenteeism stood near 43–44% in the years after the SEGC transition.

In sum, these accounts should not be read as evidence that SEGC-related changes directly caused all of the experiences at Clark, nor should they be read as an assessment of any single school leader. Instead, they reflect how school-based employees understood the conditions students and families were navigating in a school community that had been affected by SEGC-related reconfiguration. Importantly, participants described both perceived benefits, such as the return of a neighborhood K–5 school and a more age-appropriate elementary environment, as well as ongoing concerns related to cultural belonging, chronic absenteeism, newcomer students, students receiving special education services, and uneven learning conditions. More than anything, their accounts help illuminate the conditions within a school community that had been impacted by SEGC-related changes, as well as the kinds of student and family experiences district leaders should attend to when evaluating the longer-term effects of school reconfiguration.

Post-SEGC Learning Environments for Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

Participants agreed that the quality of learning environments at Clark after SEGC is highly variable, both academically and in terms of climate. They described wide differences across classrooms in safety, sense of student belonging, academic rigor, and curricular integrity. Participants said:

“I honestly think that it varies widely between classrooms. Some classrooms are very accepting and safe learning environments, and I feel like others are not as much.”

“From an academic perspective...there are some classrooms where it’s like high rigor, high expectations, high integrity to curricular materials, and then others... we just have both ends of the spectrum.”

The staff survey captures the variation the focus group participant noted. Asked whether students experience high-quality learning environments, 8 of 15 Clark staff agreed. Agreement that the school climate is supportive for students and staff was lower, 5 of 15, and agreement that staff collaboration supports teaching and learning was the same, 5 of 15. Views on whether class sizes

were distributed manageably were similarly mixed, 5 of 13, as was whether the current workload is manageable, 8 of 14. These are markers of the “both ends of the spectrum” participants described, with quality varying classroom to classroom.

Participants also noted that a positive school climate and strong academic rigor did not always take place in the schools as some classrooms excelled in one and struggled in the other. However, over time, one participant described moving from “out of control” conditions at the previous site (prior to Clark separate school) to gradually more solid systems, especially in behavior and safety, and then in academics, as more instructional leadership became possible. They attributed this progress to both school-based work and an eventual increase in district-level support, while stressing that the work remains incomplete.

“Our first year was really prioritized around just general safety and student behavior... we got positive behavior interventions and support in place... Every year we've gotten better... We're in a much better place [than year one].”

In sum, participants’ accounts suggest that Clark’s post-SEGC experience was marked by both meaningful gains and unresolved strain. Mainly, participants described the return of a neighborhood K–5 school as important for families and students, particularly because it created a more age-appropriate elementary environment and restored a local school presence in the community. Yet, at the same time, they described the transition as unfolding within a context of substantial instability, including urgent behavior and safety needs, variable classroom conditions, leadership and systems challenges, staff stress, and concerns about whether district support matched the school’s actual needs. Clark’s experience underscores the importance of pairing school reconfiguration with sustained implementation support and coherent schoolwide systems, both of which research identifies as central to school improvement and successful transition.¹² It also points to the need for culturally responsive community building and clear structures that support the emotional and professional well-being of the adults responsible for helping students and families experience change successfully.¹³

¹² Bryk et al., 2010; de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009

¹³ Ishimaru, 2019; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Mapp & Bergman, 2019

Lent Elementary School

Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district-related SEGC documents, Lent Elementary School was expected to experience three major types of changes:

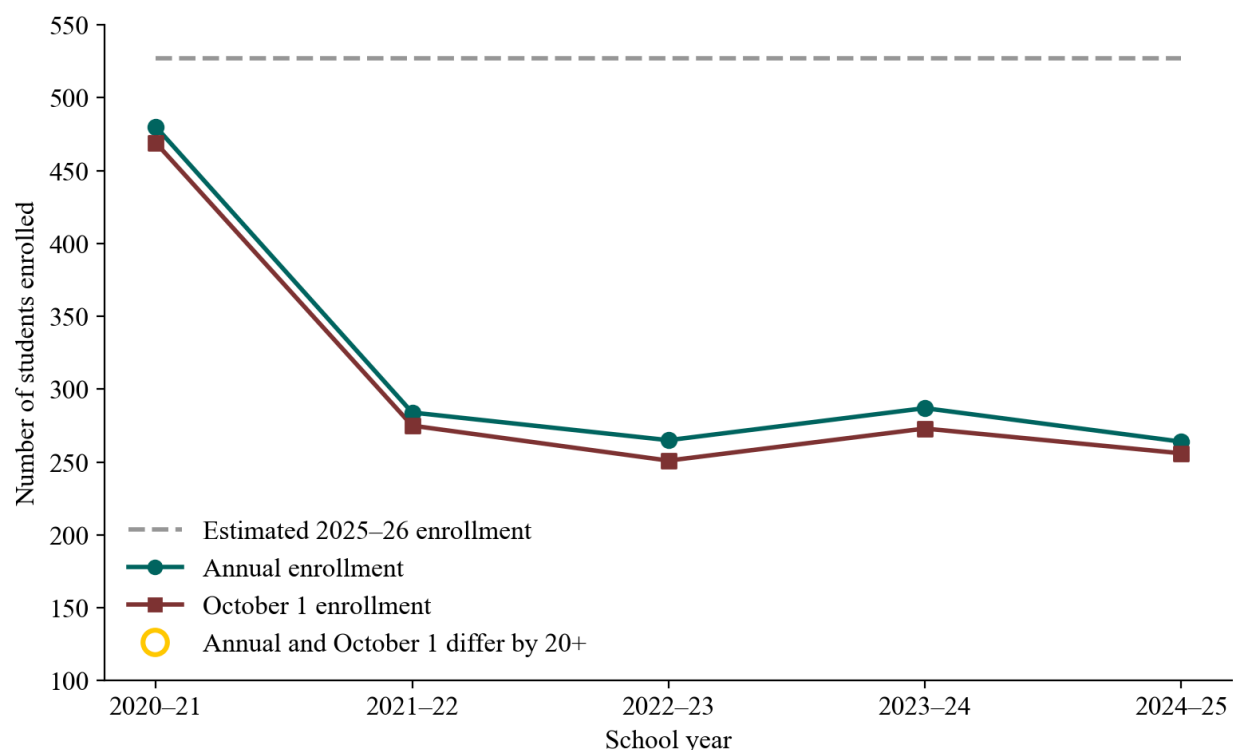
- a program reconfiguration
- a program relocation into the building
- a reassignment option for neighborhood students not enrolling in Spanish DLI

Lent was described as a co-located K–5 school with a single strand neighborhood program and a single strand Spanish DLI program, with 277 students in 2021–22, which was estimated to hold steady through 2025–26 if no SEGC changes were made. Under the SEGC recommendation, Lent would convert to a whole school Spanish DLI model by adding two strands of Spanish immersion from Bridger. Participants described this change as making Lent one of the district’s whole school Spanish DLI sites. Students in Lent’s neighborhood school program and future Lent neighborhood students who did not enroll in Spanish DLI were expected to have a pathway to Marysville, with bus service provided where applicable. Since district documents also called for additional transition planning for the Lent neighborhood school program, this move should be understood as part of an implementation process that required further planning with students, families, staff, and school leaders.

The expectation was that Lent’s total enrollment would increase substantially, from 277 students in 2021–22 to an estimated 527 students in 2025–26. Building utilization was projected to rise from 43.8% to 87.5% if the recommendation had been in place in 2021, and from a 2025 forecast of 43.8% to 83.4%.

In short, district related SEGC documents anticipated that Lent would shift from a small co-located neighborhood and Spanish DLI school into a larger whole school Spanish DLI site. The stated goals were to create a more robust immersion program, increase enrollment, and improve building utilization, while also creating a Marysville pathway for neighborhood students not participating in Spanish DLI.

Figure 3.1. Lent estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Overview

In this profile, we share findings from the qualitative and quantitative data that we collected with school-based staff at Lent Elementary School (hereafter Lent) to better understand how SEGC-related changes were experienced within this school community. Participants' accounts offer insight into how the reconfiguration of Lent from a neighborhood K–5 school into a full-school Spanish dual language immersion K–5 program (losing its neighborhood option) was experienced by people working inside the building before, during, and after SEGC-related changes.

The findings in this profile should be understood as school-based employees' (whom we spoke with) accounts of conditions within a school community impacted by SEGC-related changes. Overall, participants described both significant strain, including grief, staff and student turnover, loss of neighborhood access, under-communication, and front-line staff absorbing family frustration. However, they did describe important sources of affirmation at the school, including the current strength of Lent's dual language mission, greater cultural affirmation for Latino/a/x students and families, improved cohesion under current leadership, and pride in the school community's resilience. Together, these accounts provide a nuanced view of how SEGC-related

changes were experienced at Lent over time and what PPS should consider when evaluating the longer-term consequences of school reconfiguration.

Participants and Important Distinctions

Participants included approximately 15 staff members across our conversations, 12 staff who completed the staff survey, and 33 respondents to the family and caregiver survey. Participants described a rich mix of lived experiences, what they directly saw, did, felt, or heard, and perceptions or generalizations built from those experiences over time. Lived experiences included concrete events, such as students being reassigned to other schools, staff turnover, specific comments made by colleagues, the loss of neighborhood walkability, or the struggle to support particular students. Perceptions and generalizations emerged as participants interpreted these events and their patterns, for example, beliefs about which communities benefited or were harmed, how district leaders value Latino students and families overall, or whether specific program changes “gentrified” the school. Where participants generalized, for instance, about “the district,” “Bridger families,” or “West Side parents,” those perceptions were typically grounded in years of working at Lent and multiple episodes of advocacy or conflict, but they remain interpretations, not directly observed facts.

Findings

Morale, Retention, and Lent’s Identity After SEGC

In this report, we understand school morale as being closely connected to the organizational climate of a school, including the quality of relationships among staff, trust in leadership, collegial support, and the extent to which educators experience the school as a healthy and supportive workplace.¹⁴ Participants consistently described the SEGC implementation period as emotionally intense, marked by emotional experiences such as grief, anger, and a strong “us versus them” dynamic, particularly in the first years after the merger and reconfiguration. One staff member summarized the emotional tone of those early years as:

“Those years were really terrible, those first few years...There were a lot of tears during the transition.”

Participants who had been at Lent before SEGC described losing long-standing colleagues and neighbors, and the arrival of a large group of new staff and students who often felt like a separate community. One participant recalled:

¹⁴ Hoy, W. K., Smith, P. A., & Sweetland, S. R. (2002). The development of the Organizational Climate Index for high schools: Its measure and relationship to faculty trust. *The High School Journal*, 86(2), 38–49.

“When the merger happened, we lost two thirds of our staff again. And so the people, the teachers, who are left, are left because we want to be here, and we love this environment... we have put in the blood, sweat and tears, we have chosen this.”

Over time, many participants reported that morale has improved significantly under current leadership and with a fully dual-language immersion (DLI) configuration. As one participant observed:

“Now... I feel like we feel as a whole unit. I feel like we’re moving together. We’re working as one towards one goal... more cohesive.”

Another participant described the staff’s resilience in the face of changes, “I am proud of Lent’s resilience despite constant change.”

Experiences of Staff of Color and Bilingual Staff

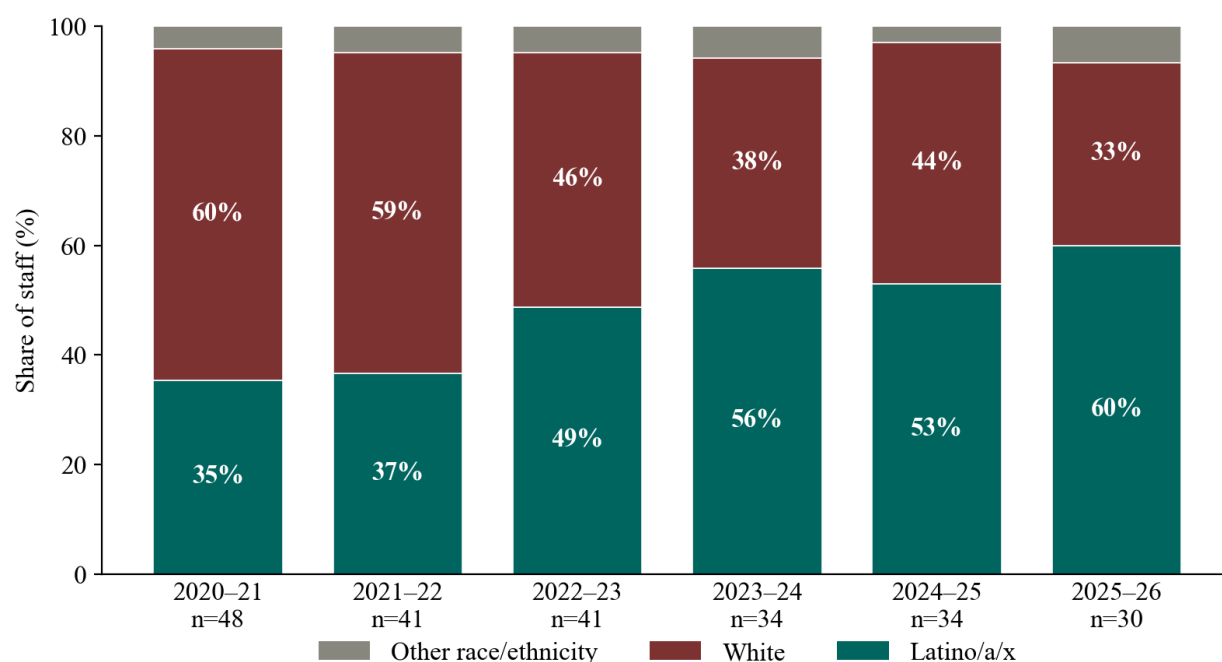
For some educators of color and bilingual staff, the SEGC changes intersected directly with racial and linguistic identity. One participant of color reflected on the demographic shift this way:

“As a brown person, I blended in here from day one, and I’ve loved it. It has been amazing, and all of a sudden. That was dope. People of color, yeah?”

Interestingly enough, a participant in the same school had a completely different experience regarding speaking Spanish. That is, another participant described being explicitly told not to use Spanish in front of colleagues:

“I’ve gotten staff members to come to me in my face and tell me, ‘don’t speak in Spanish in front of me.’ And that was in the beginning of my school time here at Lent and that was in front of other staff members.”

This participant connected such incidents to a broader feeling that dual-language staff were being asked to “stay in their lane.” They remarked, “It did feel that...it was like you stayed in your lane. We’ll stay in our lane, but make sure that your lane doesn’t spill out of your classroom.” The administrative record shows the demographic realignment that participants described. As the school converted after the 2022–23 school year, white staff left at 79% while staff of color left at 50%. Over the longer arc, the share of staff of color staff at Lent rose from 40% in 2020–21 to 64% in 2025–26, the highest of any SEGC school. Because Lent staff numbers declined over this period, the school became smaller and, concurrently, more heavily staffed by bilingual and staff of color aligned with the dual-language mission.

Figure 3.2. Racial and ethnic composition of Lent staff, 2020–21 to 2025–26

Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff.

At the same time, multiple participants described the current school as a profoundly affirming professional space for bilingual and Latino/a/x educators, especially in contrast to prior placements where they felt unwelcome or constantly challenged. One person shared:

“I went from a much harder gig, emotionally, to a school where I don’t have to explain who I am to any staff member. I don’t have to question how I’m speaking. I don’t have to overthink my language. I can just be... My well-being is higher. I lost a lot of weight in one year.”

This same participant described the dual-language mission as deeply personal and restorative:

“Being able to come to work... to a place where I can use my [Spanish] language and my culture for the benefit of others and [it] feeds my own personal soul... I did not have that at the last place I was working.”

Perceptions of Staff Retention at Lent

Participants reported significant staff and student turnover linked to SEGC changes. One staff member noted:

“When the merger happened, we lost two thirds of our population, yeah, maybe more.”

According to participants, long-time bilingual educators connected to the neighborhood side, non-DLI, were displaced to other schools, particularly Marysville, and some described deep grief about leaving their “home” community. A participant recounted:

“We had [teachers] that were the native speakers over 20–30 years teaching here who were pushed over to Marysville.”

Participants also observed that some of the families and staff who had most strongly advocated for the DLI expansion did not ultimately remain at Lent. As one participant recalled:

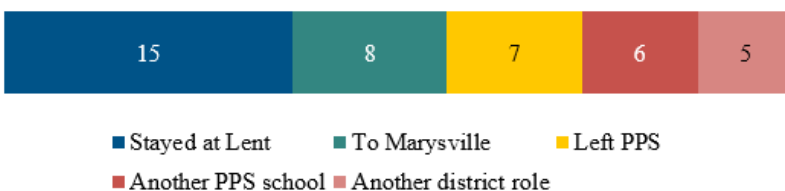
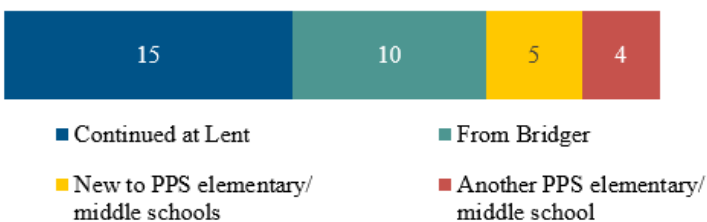
“A lot of the parents who pushed from Bridger for their kids to come to the school didn’t end up staying...they felt like it was out of their way [and that] their students didn’t feel supported.”

By contrast, multiple participants emphasized that the current staff is composed largely of people who have chosen to stay at Lent despite the upheaval, and who feel deeply tied to the community.

The scale of turnover participants described is also reflected in the personnel records. After 2022–23, the SEGC implementation year, 63% of Lent staff left the school, nearly double the SEGC-school average of 32%. Only Bridger, the school from which the Spanish DLI program relocated to Lent, had a higher left-school rate, at 73%. Lent and Bridger, the two schools at either end of the Spanish DLI program relocation, experienced substantial staff churn during the SEGC transition. This compounds an earlier wave of turnover that occurred in 2020–21: 46% of Lent staff and 48% of Bridger staff were no longer working at those schools the following year, compared with an SEGC-school average of 26%.

After the transition to whole-school Spanish DLI, many of Lent’s staff were new to the school, and by 2025–26, only about one-quarter of the staff working at Lent had been there before the SEGC changes. Lent also cycled through four principals across six years. These shifts were not only about how many staff members left or arrived, they also changed the composition of the school’s instructional model. Between 2022–23 and 2023–24, ten full-time general classroom teaching positions were removed, while DLI teaching positions increased from 8 to 15. In this sense, Lent did not simply lose staff. It was substantially reconstituted around the DLI instructional model.

The participant account of long-tenured neighborhood teachers being “pushed over to Marysville” is also verifiable. Of the 41 staff at Lent in 2022–23, 15 remained the following year. Eight of the departing teachers moved to Marysville, the school that received Lent’s displaced neighborhood students.

Figure 3.3. Sources and destinations of Lent staff through the transition to whole school DLI**2022–23 Lent staff destinations****2023–24 Lent staff origins**

Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff.

Against this history of disruption, surveys point to the more hopeful direction that participants described under new leadership. Among the roughly twelve staff who responded to the survey, most reported positive working conditions. Nine of 12 agreed that morale at the school is high, 9 of 12 that the climate is supportive for students and staff, and all 12 that they can carry out their responsibilities effectively. This is consistent with the participant sense of a staff that has stabilized into “one unit... moving together” after the upheaval, composed largely of people who chose to stay. The survey cannot speak to how the SEGC transition itself felt; too few staff answered the retrospective items for those figures to be reported. However, among participants present during that period, testimony is direct and consistent: the early years were, in one respondent’s words, “really terrible.”

Feeling Under-Informed and Under-Supported During SEGC Transition

Participants widely reported feeling under-equipped during the SEGC transition itself, both in terms of information and practical resources. One participant described the sudden disappearance of the central office SEGC lead after decisions were implemented:

“The person who was foreseeing all the Southeast Guiding Coalition was no longer in office after everything took effect. So all of the frustration that parents had...they had no one to say [it to], and that was really frustrating.”

Another participant summarized their own understanding during the SEGC changes: “I knew pretty much nothing...the former principal...was very much for [the change]... any like upset feelings that we had... we weren’t able to think about it.” From another participant’s perspective, there was also a sense that key contextual information about the school’s recent history and

community distrust had not been communicated. Moreover, other participants described being on the front lines of community anger, particularly from families who had lost neighborhood access or were unhappy about the Spanish-immersion focus. One participant explained:

“We have been cussed out. We have been yelled at...by parents who moved into the neighborhood that do not want their students to speak Spanish, and that feel that it’s unfair that their students can’t go to their neighborhood school.”

Participants also referenced feeling caught between district-level promises and the reality of implementation. As one participant noted:

“What I understand is we were promised certain things to make this go better, and those certain things were not upheld. [For example] the fourth grade parents were really upset... they were promised it would be a three strand school...and the parents [started] bringing the letters that they were promised.”

These accounts suggest that participants did not experience the SEGC transition as simply difficult because change itself is difficult. Instead, they described feeling under-informed, under-supported, and left to manage the consequences of the SEGC decisions that had been made by the district. Based on participant responses, the absence of clear communication, continuity of leadership, and reliable follow-through placed school-based staff in the position of interpreting district decisions for families, absorbing frustration, and trying to maintain trust without the information or resources they needed from the district.

Staff Experiences Years After SEGC Changes

Several participants, including those who joined more recently, felt that under the current administration they are now more able to raise issues and see concrete responses. An one participant shared:

“Since administration has changed... I have noticed a lot of actual things getting done. Like, you could actually say something...it won’t take forever to discuss it.”

At the same time, staff still pointed to significant structural challenges, especially combined grade classes, insufficient staffing, and cuts to services such as English Language Development (ELD), that they believe will strain their capacity to support students effectively.

Staff Experienced Emotional Costs of Grief, Anger, and Feeling Unheard with SEGC Changes

Participants described significant emotional strain associated with the SEGC changes such as grief for lost community, anger about process and outcomes, and a sense that their advocacy was not meaningfully heard. One participant recalled:

“There were a lot of tears during the transition, very upsetting...the staff was a little more delicate with the staff being transitioned now than what it was like with becoming [a merged site]...For us, it was more than that...this community meant everything to me.”

Another participant, reflecting on district responsiveness, said: “We went to the board meeting and everything...There were a lot of petitions signed... and still didn’t feel like it made a difference...The district doesn’t care.” From the teachers’ perspective, student and family activism, marches, testimonies, organized advocacy, was experienced as powerful but ultimately dismissed. One teacher put it this way:

“Students and families...rallied...and like it felt that no one was being heard...they felt like they were just being show ponies, because the district was like, ‘yes, we want to hear you guys’...and in the end... ‘thank you for your comments, but we’ll decide.’”

Alongside these emotional experiences, participants also described important emotional benefits, especially in the current context of the school that included a stronger sense of shared purpose, cultural affirmation, and pride in the community’s resilience.

Another participant described the dual-language school as a deeply meaningful sanctuary for Latino/a/x families in a broader national and local context of immigration enforcement. The person shared that:

“To be able to offer and provide [dual language] in a year when our federal government is picking up our families off the streets... We still are supporting families that ICE has picked up... to have a sanctuary...is amazing.”

That same participant described families’ willingness to travel long distances to keep children at Lent. They shared, “We do have parents who go out of their way... even after moving, we find a lot of families that move to a different district, and they’re like, we’re committed to bringing our students even if we have to drive 20 to 30 [minutes].”

Teachers and staff also highlighted everyday acts of allyship from some white families, such as organizing informal protections against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity. One participant described:

“For the last five months, a group of people... show up every single day... to watch for ICE... They are white families protecting our brown families.”

Multiple participants expressed pride in the school’s ability to hold together through constant change. People shared that, “I’m proud of Lent’s resilience despite constant change.” “Our community and support for one another. Staff and students [are] very supportive.”

Impacts on Learning Environments and Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Before SEGC, participants described Lent as a highly diverse neighborhood school with many local students walking to school together and a rich mix of racial and linguistic backgrounds. One staff member remembered:

“We had the... Chinese families, Russian families, Chinese families, Vietnamese families, very diverse... It was probably the most beautiful thing about this school and this community.”

According to participants, after the changes, many of those neighborhood students, particularly non-Latino/a/x families of color and third-language learners, for example, Somali, Vietnamese, Russian, no longer attend Lent and instead travel further to other schools such as Marysville. A participant reflected: “This is the Jade district... Vietnamese and Chinese and a lot of different people that are no longer [here].”

Staff described the loss of daily neighborhood presence as a major change in the learning environment, “We had a walking school bus every day... We don’t have that anymore, because our entire population gets on a bus to go home at the end of the day.” A family survey respondent echoed this loss from the parent side, describing a “loss of community...loss of walking commute to school...loss of neighborhood friends” alongside what they “gained” in “the wonderful Lent community” and “an all dual immersion school.” The learning environment before the SEGC conversion gave the building its neighborhood character. This was largely displaced, and a more linguistically coherent but less racially diverse community took its place.

SEGC’s DLI Decision as Both Opportunity and Trade-Off

Participants framed the full-school Spanish DLI program as a powerful opportunity for bilingualism, cultural affirmation, and equity for Latino/a/x students, and also as a structure that imposes trade-offs, particularly in middle school. On the positive side, teachers emphasized the intentionality and coherence of a full immersion model, contrasted with earlier split models where DLI was one strand among others. A participant shared:

“Being at a program that was neighborhood and dual language immersion combined, and now being at a full immersion school, it feels much more intentional in strengthening kids’ native

languages and also exposing our non-native speakers... The prior program had a lot of inequities...and now that's much more equitable."

At the same time, participants raised serious concerns about the downstream middle-school experience at Kellogg for DLI students. Staff explained that these students often lose access to electives because of the need to continue Spanish coursework:

"When they go to [names a middle school], our Spanish speaking students, who have now been doing DLI for their whole careers, now don't get electives...where all the other kids get two electives. They get one and more Spanish."

Interestingly, teachers worried that students feel punished for staying in the program, "They're thinking that they have all these electives that they can take, [but] no, they can't... they're almost getting punished for learning a second language."

Experiences of Underserved Communities and Equity Lens

Participants connected SEGC's local impacts to broader questions of racial equity across PPS. Some expressed skepticism that the district fully prioritizes Latino/a/x students within its stated equity framework and specifically centers Black and Native students and families. One person shared:

"For a long time in [the district], Latinos were not on the priority list of equity. It's only Native and Black...For this entire population, it feels a little bit like, do you care?"

Another staff member captured a widely shared perception about who bore the brunt of SEGC, "Who was harmed...? Marysville and us, yeah, the Lent community." At the same time, one participant emphasized that, at least at Lent, discipline data no longer showed racial disparities for Latino/a/x students, and interpreted this as evidence that the current model can support more racially equitable experiences. One participant noted:

"This is the first school I've been at that has no racial disparity in discipline, specifically for Latino students... that's impressive... this is a racially equitable way to serve Latino students."

Indeed, for 2022–23 Lent students who persisted through the transition to 2023–24, exclusionary discipline incidents fell steadily, from 0.15 per student to effectively zero by 2024–25. However, Lent family survey respondents expressed some skepticism about the equity of the changes overall. Seven of the 42 families answering agreed that the SEGC changes moved PPS closer to racial equity, and 10 of 42 that they reduced barriers for historically underserved students. Families saw a school that serves their own children well and a district process they did not experience as equitable, consistent with staff perspectives.

In sum, participants' accounts suggest that Lent's experience after SEGC cannot be reduced to a simple story of harm or improvement. In a more nuanced way, participants described a complex set of changes in which the school lost aspects of its prior identity as a diverse, walkable neighborhood school, while also becoming a more intentional and culturally affirming Spanish dual language immersion school for many Latino/a/x students, families, and educators. These accounts align with research showing that school reconfiguration and closure processes often create substantial burdens for students, staff, families, and communities, particularly when schools serve as important neighborhood institutions.¹⁵ At the same time, participants' descriptions of Lent's current dual language model also reflect, according to participants, the promise of well-supported dual language education to promote bilingualism, cultural affirmation, and stronger educational opportunities for multilingual students.¹⁶ For PPS, Lent's experience underscores the importance of evaluating school reconfiguration not only by enrollment targets or program placement, but also by how changes affect school identity, staff morale, family trust, cultural belonging, neighborhood access, and the daily learning conditions of students and educators.¹⁷

Who Stayed and Who was Displaced: Tracking the Racial Implications Lent Community through the Reconfiguration

Participants described the school's reconfiguration as a change that helped one community and cost another. Administrative records confirm participants' perceptions. Before the conversion, in spring 2022–23, 265 students attended Lent. The following year, as the school became a whole-school Spanish DLI, 113 students (43%) stayed at Lent, while 152 (57%) left. Of those who left, 79 moved to Marysville, the designated non-DLI receiving school, 39 were middle-school-age students who aged into Kellogg, and 13 went to other schools. Within two years, 49 students from the original group, (18.5%), had left PPS entirely. The students who stayed were primarily the Spanish DLI families. The students who left were largely the neighborhood families the conversion did not retain.

The racial composition of who stayed and who left tracks one participant's observation that “non-Latinx families of color and third-language learners” no longer attend Lent. Of the 129 Latino/a/x students in the pre-conversion group, 86 stayed (about two-thirds). Of the 67 white students, 20 stayed, and most of the rest moved to Marysville or, if they were entering middle school, Kellogg. The school's Black and Asian students were almost entirely displaced of 27 Black and 20 Asian students at baseline. Meanwhile Marysville absorbed the most racially diverse slice of the displaced group (13 Black, 23 white, 19 Latino/a/x, 11 Asian, and 13 Multiracial students). During the reconfiguration, the Latino/a/x share of students at Lent rose from about 50% to 69% and the white share held near 22%. This shift is best read as two distinct

¹⁵ de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Ewing, 2018; Ewing and Green, 2022

¹⁶ Lindholm-Leary, 2001

¹⁷ Bryk et al., 2010; Hoy et al., 2002

mechanisms running at once, the arrival of an established Spanish DLI program and its families, and the departure of neighborhood families without a DLI connection, rather than as a single group replacing another.

Two Lent family survey respondents captured the lived texture of the displacement that these numbers describe, including the geography that “loss of walkability” refers to:

"Removing the neighborhood kids from Lent was a real struggle... The Lent neighborhood families loved their school and the original decision to move them to Marysville wasn't handled with very much understanding or transparent communication... You move into a neighborhood with a school so your kids can walk to and from. Disrupting before and after school routines REALLY causes a burden on families, especially ones who are balancing multiple jobs and precarious childcare situations."

"To get to Marysville from right by Lent, students have to cross 205, 92nd and 82nd Ave."

As such, the racial equity implication of this finding is that school reconfigurations and program changes can strengthen one form of equity while creating new forms of racialized displacement. Lent's conversion to whole-school Spanish DLI appears to have created a stronger and more coherent Spanish DLI model and increased the share of Latino/a/x students at the school, which is a positive. However, the same change also coincided with a substantial decline in Black and Asian student enrollment and the movement of a more racially diverse group of neighborhood students to Marysville and other schools. This means that the equity question cannot *only* be about whether the school grew its Latino/a/x enrollment or whether the DLI model was educationally valuable. The more complex and nuanced question is whether PPS sufficiently accounted for how the school reconfiguration would affect Black students, Asian students, multiracial students, non-DLI neighborhood families, and the receiving schools expected to absorb students who no longer remained at Lent. In future program conversions, PPS should evaluate racial equity not only by who benefits from a strengthened program, but also by who is moved, who loses access, and whether receiving schools are resourced to support the students and families affected by that change.

Moreover the school reconfiguration changed the district-retention pattern for this community as well. In the year before the conversion, the Lent group left PPS at 7%, below the district rate of 9%. This was a population the district retained at above-average rates. In the conversion year, departures rose to 13%, nearly double the prior rate and above the district's 9%. The displacement turned a below-average-departure community into an above-average one.

For the students who stayed at Lent, academic and behavioral outcomes (which we mentioned above) are positive, supporting participants' sense that the full DLI model has been good for the

children it now serves. Tracking the DLI stayers against their own prior-year performance, the group gained ground academically (math growth reached +0.235 standard deviations and ELA +0.409 standard deviations by 2024–25). Chronic absenteeism fell from 42% to 24%, and, again, exclusionary discipline incidents fell to zero among this group. The displaced students fared less well at their receiving schools. Those at Marysville and Kellogg showed flat-to-negative growth in math and ELA scores and chronic absenteeism in the 39–43% range. A smaller group that scattered to other schools fared worst on academic growth, attendance, and discipline. While these results do not prove causality, they describe diverging outcomes for a cohort of students, some of whom stayed at Lent and others who left.

Ultimately, the roughly 43% of students who stayed fared well in the reconfigured Spanish DLI school, most of whom were Latino/a/x or white. There were measurable costs for the 57% who were displaced, including longer commutes and bus rides, adjusting to new school climates and rules, and building new relationships with peers and adults, and these students were disproportionately Black and Asian Lent neighborhood families.

Overall Conclusion About the Lent Case

The Lent case, again, cannot be accurately described as either a simple success story or a simple story of harm. Instead, Lent illustrates one of the central tensions of SEGC, which is that a school reconfiguration can strengthen one equity goal while simultaneously creating new equity concerns. On one hand, participants described Lent’s current whole-school Spanish DLI model as more coherent, intentional, culturally affirming, and professionally sustaining for many Latino/a/x students, families, bilingual educators, and staff of color. Staff morale also appears to have improved over time, and students who remained at Lent showed positive academic, attendance, and behavioral patterns.

At the same time, these gains were accompanied by significant costs. Lent’s conversion disrupted the school’s prior identity as a racially and linguistically diverse, walkable neighborhood school, produced substantial staff turnover, left some staff feeling under-informed and under-supported during implementation; and displaced a majority of the pre-conversion student group. The displacement was racially disruptive, with Black and Asian neighborhood students especially likely to leave Lent, while Marysville and other receiving schools absorbed a more racially diverse group of students who did not experience the same positive outcome patterns as students who remained at Lent. In sum, Lent demonstrates the promise of a strong, culturally affirming Spanish DLI model, but it also shows the racial equity risks of achieving that model through a process that displaced other students of color and altered the school’s neighborhood identity.

Marysville Elementary School

Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Marysville K–5 was impacted through 4 anticipated changes:

- three attendance boundary changes
- one additional receiving school role connected to Lent Elementary School’s reconfiguration to a full Spanish DLI model.

The district documents also indicated that Marysville remained a K–5 neighborhood school assigned to Kellogg Middle School and Franklin High School, but its attendance area was adjusted through boundary changes with nearby schools. The proposal added one area from Arleta to Marysville, reassigned one area from Marysville to Arleta, and reassigned another area from Marysville to Woodmere. In total, the boundary changes were expected to impact 26 students when implemented. In addition, Marysville was expected to receive future Lent neighborhood students who did not enroll in Spanish DLI, although the district’s enrollment projections for Marysville did not yet include those students. The expectation from the boundary changes alone was that Marysville’s enrollment would increase modestly, from 248 students in 2021–22 and a 2025–26 forecast of 246 students to an estimated 260 students if the changes had been in place in 2021–22 and a 2025–26 forecast of 281 students. In short, Marysville was expected to remain a small K–5 neighborhood school, but with somewhat stronger enrollment through boundary adjustments and the additional possibility of receiving non DLI Lent neighborhood students (see Figure 4.1). Later family accounts suggest that Marysville became part of the broader receiving school experience connected to Lent’s conversion to the whole school Spanish DLI.

Participants

This case profile draws on survey respondents from 11 staff and 6 family members and caregivers, focus groups and interviews. Across conversations at Marysville, we heard from 10 school-based participants who represented a range of roles and vantage points within the school community. Several participants also brought family or caregiver insight, either because they were parents of Marysville students or because they had first become connected to the school through parent or volunteer roles before later joining the staff.

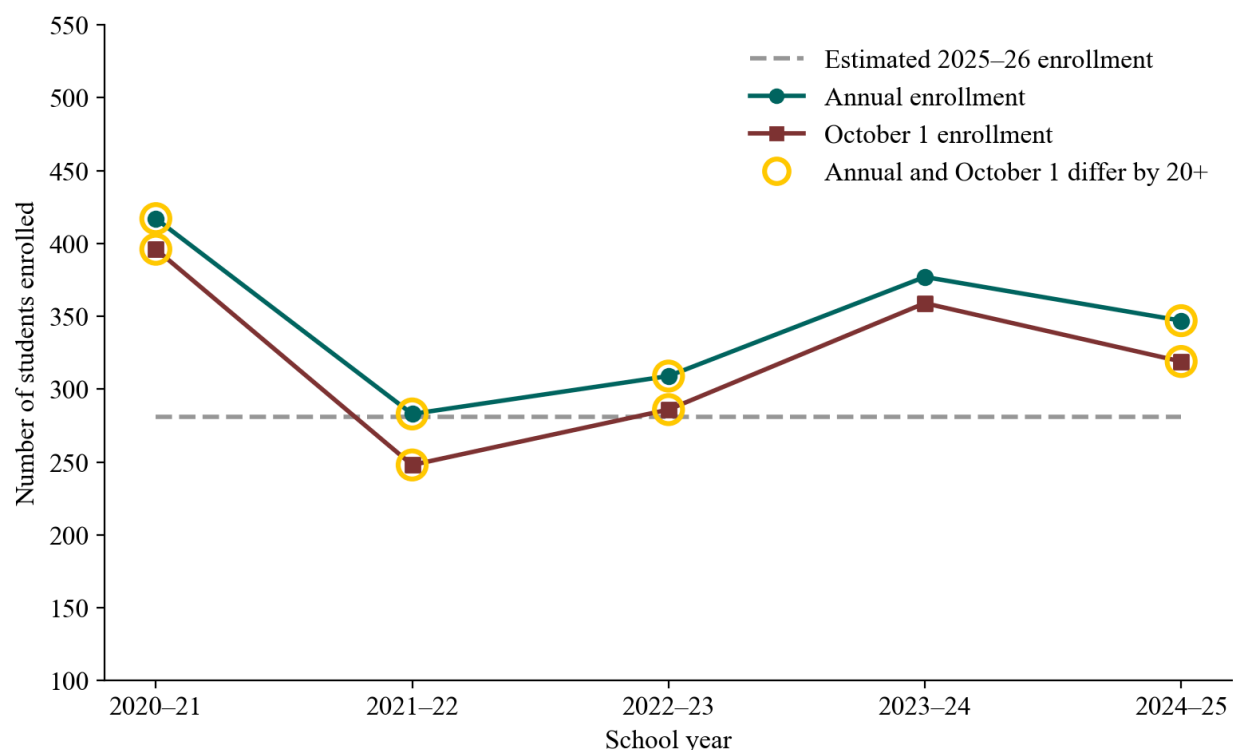
The participant group included people with deep historical knowledge of Marysville, including staff who had worked at the school for many years and could describe changes in the school’s identity, leadership stability, enrollment, student needs, and relationship to the broader Southeast Portland context. Seven of the 10 participants had experienced Marysville before SEGC-related changes were implemented, which provided important pre-SEGC context. Eight participants

were present during the SEGC transition, allowing them to speak directly about how the changes unfolded and how staff, students, and families experienced the implementation period.

The conversations also included participants who had worked in other PPS schools before joining Marysville, including some with direct experience at Lent before the SEGC-related transition. As a result, the Marysville conversations included both long-standing Marysville perspectives and cross-school perspectives from staff who experienced the Lent–Marysville connection more directly.

Participants spoke from experience across early, intermediate, and upper elementary grades, as well as from roles involving day-to-day support for students and families. These perspectives were especially important because participants described how families navigated housing instability, utility debt, food insecurity, attendance challenges, language access needs, and other forms of economic or social vulnerability. Together, these accounts provide insight into how district-level decisions and communication practices were experienced by families who often relied heavily on school-based staff for information, interpretation, and support during and after the SEGC transition.

Figure 4.1. Marysville estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Overview

Participants described Marysville as a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse school community with long-standing relationships, deep staff commitment, and significant student and family needs. Rather than treating SEGC as the sole cause of later conditions at Marysville, this chapter examines how participants connected SEGC-related shifts to broader patterns they experienced in morale, retention, professional support, school climate, student and family experiences, learning environments, and the school's capacity to absorb and respond to change.

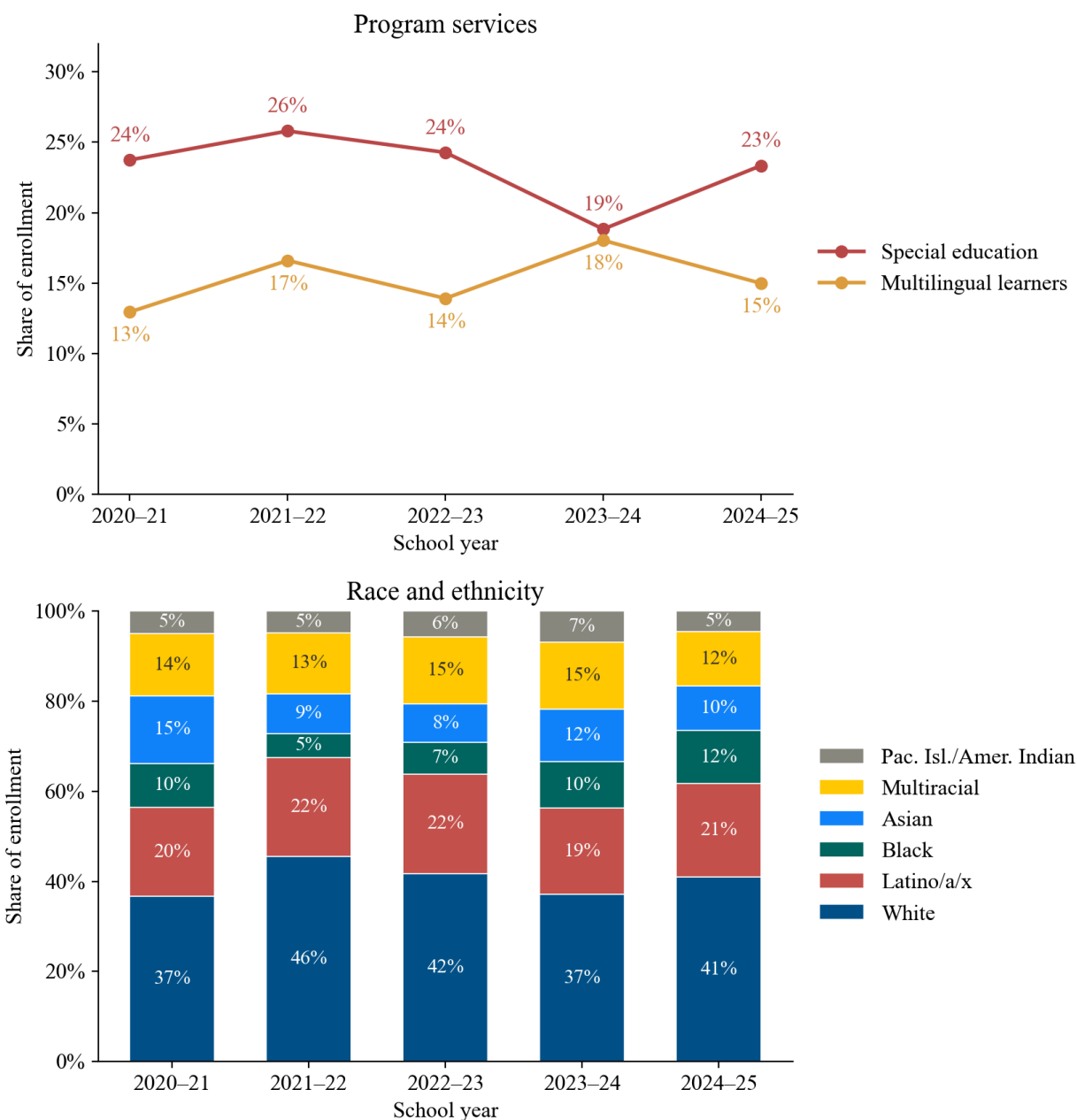
Findings

Impact of SEGC-Related Changes on Marysville

Participants described Marysville as a resilient, community centered school that had already navigated several major transitions before and around the SEGC period, including shifting from a K–8 to a K–5 configuration, rebuilding after a devastating fire, and adapting to changes in how students with social emotional and disability related needs were served. In participants' accounts, SEGC did not arrive in isolation. Rather, it layered onto a school community that was already managing significant organizational change.

Also, participants described the SEGC process and related district policy shifts as bringing an additional cluster of changes to Marysville. These included Marysville taking on a receiving school role for some Lent neighborhood students and staff connected to Lent's conversion to a whole school Spanish DLI model, serving students from a broader set of neighborhood and pathway changes, transitioning toward a more neighborhood inclusive model for students with IEPs, and continuing to support a growing number of students experiencing poverty and housing instability, including students connected to a nearby shelter. In considering these changes, participants framed Marysville not simply as a school with a modest boundary adjustment, but as a school absorbing multiple layers of transition at once.

Despite these mounting pressures, staff consistently described Marysville as a “good place to be” with strong relationships, a stable and long-serving principal, and a culture where people tend to stay once they arrive. At the same time, they emphasized that SEGC-related enrollment and program shifts intensified challenges that were already present, including very large class sizes, increasingly complex behavioral and academic needs, and frequent crises that left staff feeling overextended and emotionally drained. Participants often held two truths at once, that is, Marysville was a caring, joyful, and inclusive community that many were proud to work in, and it was also a place where burnout felt “imminent for everybody” under current conditions, according to one teacher.

Figure 4.2. Marysville student demographics, 2020–21 to 2024–25

Note: Enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

As one participant summarized, staff felt constantly in motion, trying to keep the system functioning in the face of compounding changes:

“We’re surviving, like we’re keeping the boat afloat. But am I really like, am I doing, like, my very best quality work with each child? Probably not...I’m like, putting out fires.”

Enrollment records are consistent with participants' portrait of Marysville as a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse school serving students with significant support needs. Across the 2020–21 to 2024–25 period, students of color made up roughly 54% to 63% of Marysville's enrollment. During that same period, students receiving special education services made up approximately 19% to 26% of enrollment, and multilingual learners made up approximately 13% to 18% (see Figure 4.2).

The enrollment data also show changes that are consistent with participants' accounts of Marysville absorbing students affected by the Lent reconfiguration. Black student enrollment declined to about 5% in 2021–22 and then rose to roughly 12% by 2024–25. Across this same period, Marysville remained one of the more racially diverse SEGC schools.

Indicators of student need were also persistently high. Chronic absenteeism remained in the high 30% to high 40% range across the 2020–21 to 2024–25 period. These patterns support participants' sense that SEGC-related shifts intensified the demands on a school that was already serving a racially diverse student body with significant academic, linguistic, social-emotional, and family support needs.

Morale, Burnout, and Staff Retention

Across roles, participants described Marysville's staff as unusually committed, collaborative, and cohesive, often using the language of "community" and "family" to characterize their relationships. Teachers and paraeducators spoke of working closely across grades, supporting each other's students, and building strong ties with colleagues over many years. One staff member noted that many educators had completed their student teaching at Marysville and then remained for a decade or more, reinforcing a sense of continuity and deep investment in the school.

At the same time, this cohesion was often described as emerging in part from shared hardship. Several participants characterized the staff as "trauma-bonded," referencing cumulative experiences of school fire and displacement, K–8 restructuring, SES program transition, COVID-19 disruptions, and then SEGC-related shifts layered on top. In this context, morale was described as both strong, in the sense of commitment and mutual care, and simultaneously fragile, in the sense that staff felt pushed to or beyond their sustainable limits. Participants shared:

"I think part of that is like a trauma bond, you know, it's a lot...we're pretty tight."

"Marysville has always been a good place to be."

Staff survey responses reflect this same tension. Marysville staff rated the school climate more positively than they rated overall morale, and most respondents who answered the retention items indicated that they intended to stay. At the same time, responses to several well-being items were mixed or negative. Only 2 of 10 staff respondents agreed that morale at the school was high, and ratings related to well-being at work generally fell at or below the neutral point on the agreement scale. In other words, staff attachment to Marysville as a school community appeared to coexist with significant concern about burnout, workload, and sustainability.

Participants echoed this tension in interviews and focus groups. Even as they affirmed their commitment to the school and its students, staff spoke candidly about exhaustion and the sense that current expectations were unsustainable.

According to participants, SEGC-related changes contributed to larger class sizes, with some kindergarten and first-grade classes serving approximately 27 students and some upper-grade classes serving more than 30 students. Participants described these larger classes as occurring alongside high behavioral, academic, and social-emotional needs, creating what they experienced as “constant crisis mode.” The daily reality of frequent behavioral incidents, uneven access to support staff, and continuous interruptions made it harder for educators to feel that they could do their best work with each child, even as they worked persistently to keep students safe, supported, and engaged.

Staff Turnover, Unassignment, and Job Insecurity

Participants also connected SEGC-related enrollment shifts and the inclusive neighborhood model to staffing instability and job insecurity, particularly among para-professionals, education assistants, and some classroom teachers. Several participants described turnover not simply as a personnel issue, but as part of the cumulative strain created by high student needs, limited support, changing enrollment, and uncertainty about staffing allocations. One participant reported that, in two consecutive years, staff members left mid-year “due to the trauma, due to the burnout and lack of support,” underscoring how these overlapping stressors contributed to attrition.

Paraprofessionals and education assistants described the experience of being “unassigned” at the end of the school year despite strong performance and extensive responsibilities supporting students with significant needs. Since some positions were shaped by seniority rules, enrollment projections, and shifting staffing allocations, participants described months of uncertainty about whether they would have a position at Marysville the following year. Participants explained:

“At the end of the year, it’s a seniority-based job, and we were, I was just unassigned...I have to wait months to find out...This is my first time working in a seniority-based job and not a performance-based job.”

“We’re projected to have four paras for next year with adding a kindergarten class...that’s terrifying.”

Participants linked this staffing instability to enrollment projections, budget decisions, and district staffing formulas rather than to SEGC alone. However, they also emphasized that the promise of a “stronger combined school” (per SEGC) or an inclusive neighborhood model had not been matched by stable adult capacity in classrooms. One educator summarized this mismatch directly:

“I would say that when they moved everybody in together for the inclusive model, I feel like they grossly underestimated the amount of support that was actually going to take to execute everything that we’re supposed to do.”

The qualitative data suggest that while some staff, especially long-tenured staff and school leaders, remained deeply anchored at Marysville, paraprofessional roles and some classroom positions felt more precarious. Participants described repeated cuts, un-assignments, and uncertainty even as student needs remained high. At the same time, participants did not provide enough systematic information to analyze staff retention by race or ethnicity, so this section does not make claims about differential retention patterns for staff of color.

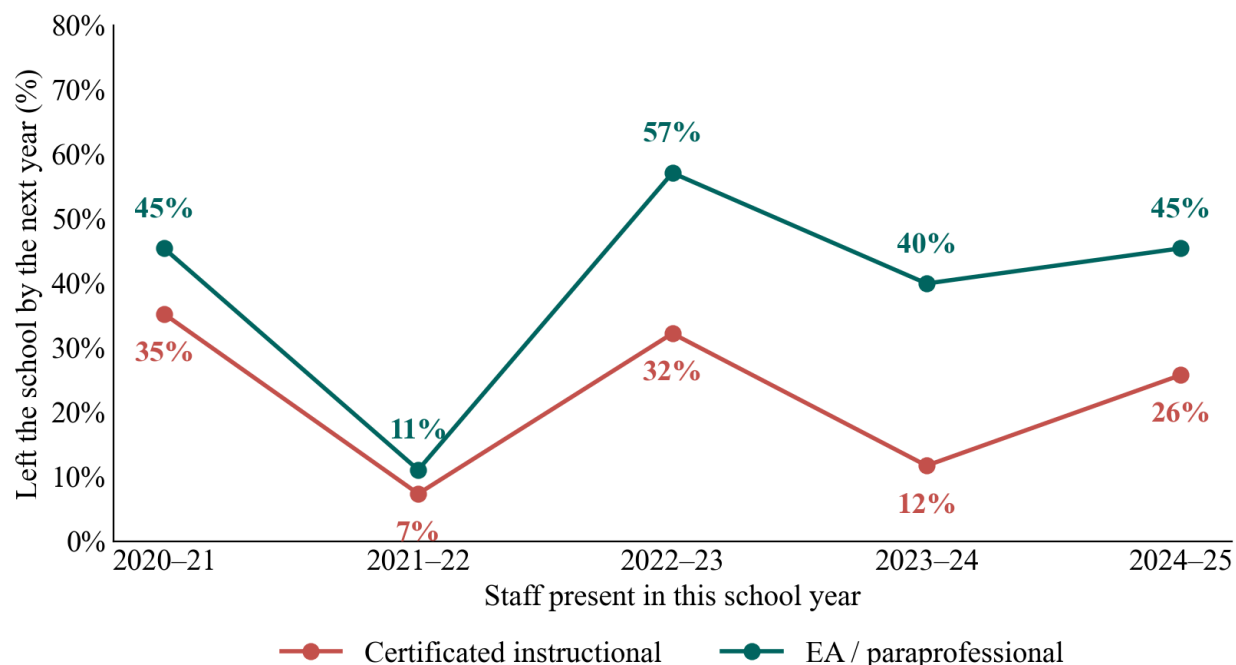
However, personnel records support the broader pattern participants described: Marysville had school leadership continuity, but substantial staffing movement beneath that stability. Marysville retained the same principal across all six years of the study window, making it the only school in the Bridger-Clark-Lent-Marysville cluster with unbroken principal continuity. This aligns with participants’ descriptions of stable, long-tenured leadership. Beneath that stability, however, staffing shifted considerably.

In 2022–23, the year the reconfiguration took hold, approximately 39% of staff turned over. In 2023–24, roughly 37% of staff were new to the building as Marysville absorbed incoming students and staff from Lent. Education assistant and paraprofessional roles showed the most persistent year-to-year movement, consistent with participant accounts of unassignment and job insecurity (see Figure 4.3).

The personnel data also show that the staff who transferred from Lent to Marysville did not remain as a stable, long-term group. Eight staff members moved from Lent to Marysville as neighborhood students arrived, including seven teachers and one education assistant, all of whom first appeared at Marysville in 2023–24. Within two years, six of the eight had left the school. This pattern is best understood as movement followed by attrition among reassigned positions, rather than as a durable staffing transition. Marysville’s staffing transition involved both

leadership stability and significant instability in the classroom and support roles most directly connected to daily student support.

Figure 4.3. Turnover among Marysville instructional staff by role, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as teachers, classroom educational assistants, counselors, and specialists.

Capacity to Support Students and Families

Across the Marysville conversations, administrators, teachers, education assistants, and student support staff converged on a common concern: Marysville was asked to implement the inclusive neighborhood model and absorb neighborhood students from Lent without the corresponding increase in adult support, training, mental health resources, and staffing stability needed to make the model work well. Participants did not describe resistance to inclusion itself. Rather, they described a gap between the district's inclusive vision and the level of support needed to implement that vision effectively for students, families, and staff.

Participants also described classrooms where multiple students had IEPs, significant communication or behavioral needs, trauma histories, or other intensive support needs, while para-educators and education assistants were stretched across several students and multiple rooms. In some cases, participants described students who appeared to require near one-to-one adult attention for safety, even when their IEPs did not formally designate them for that level of support. This left staff responsible for constant vigilance without the staffing ratios they believed students' needs required. Participants explained:

“Many students [are] coming in without any extra support, especially with our kinder and the first...you can see that they are suffering through every day with the kids needing one-on-one support, but all the one [adult] is surviving with multiple kids... not vocal, who have extra needs.”

“If I have seven cases in my classroom on my caseload...everybody’s needs are getting met, but are we all thriving? I don’t know.”

Participants also described district processes for adding support, such as securing an additional special educator or other adult capacity, as slow and bureaucratic. They described weeks or months of documentation, repeated requests, and delayed responses before help materialized. Even when additional staffing did arrive, participants said it sometimes coincided with other cuts, creating a zero-sum dynamic rather than a meaningful net increase in capacity.

Despite these constraints, participants consistently emphasized that Marysville staff collaborated creatively and persistently to meet students’ needs. Staff described “spreading the love,” improvising sensory breaks and walks, sharing responsibility across classrooms and grade levels, and stepping in for one another throughout the day. These strategies reflected strong internal commitment and collaboration. However, participants also described this level of improvisation as exhausting and difficult to sustain.

Staffing records and survey data support participants’ account that the inclusive model arrived without sufficient capacity to support it over time. After an initial staffing increase when Lent students and staff transferred to Marysville, the school lost approximately 13 FTE, or 11 staff, over two years. Participants described these reductions as including restorative justice staff, interventionists, specialist time in art, music, and physical education, a multilingual education assistant, a special education teacher, and coaching roles. The staff survey reflects the same capacity concern in which only 3 of 10 (30%) staff respondents agreed that they had the resources needed to do their job effectively, and none of the 10 (0%) respondents agreed that class sizes were distributed across grade levels or teams in a manageable way. Taken together, the qualitative and survey data point to a central finding, which is Marysville staff were deeply committed to students and families, but they were trying to implement a high-need inclusive model within a staffing structure they experienced as insufficient and unstable.

Supporting Families and Providing Communication During SEGC

Participants described family support and communication during SEGC as another area where school-based staff carried much of the burden. This was especially true for families of color, families with limited English proficiency, and families navigating economic instability. Participants described school staff as the people families most often turned to for interpretation,

explanation, reassurance, and practical help, even when staff themselves did not always have clear or timely information from the district.

One participant described organizing meetings for Vietnamese-speaking families to explain boundary changes and program shifts because many families had not received or understood the district's communication. The participant explained:

"I had to gather the Vietnamese population...to let them know, 'Hey, we have a meeting with the principal about the change coming up.' And they say, 'What? There's a change coming up?'"

Participants also described challenges with new communication systems. The move from Remind to ParentSquare reportedly left many families disconnected from school communication. At the time of the focus group, participants reported that fewer than 100 accounts, including staff accounts, were active in a school serving roughly 300 students. This limited the school's ability to share timely information about events, options, and support with families who were already navigating complex transitions, long commutes, and changing school routines.

Transportation emerged as a central equity issue. Before SEGC, participants described Marysville as a largely walkable school. After the boundary expansion and the Lent transition, Marysville had multiple bus routes, and some families had to travel several blocks just to reach a bus hub. Participants described long bus rides, missed buses, difficulty attending half-days, and the burden placed on families who had to take time off work for very short school days. One participant explained:

"Now we go across the highway...It was the first time we ever had since we were dislocated, having to have buses...the inconvenience again, falling on families who had the least amount of means for getting around and traveling."

Participants acknowledged that district-funded buses were sometimes provided for evening events to make Marysville more accessible to Lent families. However, some participants experienced these efforts as limited because they still required families to gather at a secondary pickup location and did not fully address the broader access barriers created by the new geography.

Within these constraints, Marysville staff invested heavily in community-building and outreach. Participants described summer popsicle and chalk events, family game nights, music and festival-style gatherings, and proactive efforts to bridge Marysville and Lent staff and families. Staff spoke with pride about these efforts, but they also emphasized that much of this work was school-initiated rather than part of a comprehensive district transition plan.

Family voice on the Marysville transition is available primarily through open-ended survey responses because the closed-ended family items were answered by too few caregivers to report without overstating their precision. Within that limitation, family comments echoed staff concerns about strain. One caregiver wrote that Marysville had “shouldered a lot of strain in the changes,” contrasting Marysville with nearby schools they perceived as less disrupted and describing the school as “less calm, more crowded and more chaotic now.” A family of color described a similar gap between growing demand and shrinking support, writing that “the class sizes have grown and the support has not; in fact, teachers have been cut despite student population growth.” Other families also pointed to larger classes, reduced services, and the need for more teachers and smaller groups. These family responses reinforce the staff account of a transition whose logistical, emotional, and instructional load was carried heavily by the school community.

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants described SEGC-related changes as emotionally taxing, especially when layered onto existing stressors, high student needs, budget reductions, and staff shortages. Again, educators and staff spoke about frequent behavioral crises, students with significant trauma histories, and the strain of balancing academic instruction with intensive emotional support for children and families.

Education assistants and teachers, especially in the early grades, described days when they were physically and emotionally drained. Participants described managing students who hit staff, monitoring nonverbal children for safety, responding to meltdowns and elopement, and trying to maintain instruction while also keeping students safe. One participant shared:

“Some days, some of one of my kids will body slam me multiple times and like, not only am I like physically exhausted, but then I’m just also mentally exhausted from just having having to keep that calm exterior... that’s hard to contain.”

Another participant described the cumulative strain across the building:

“By the end of the year...I feel like we’re spread really thin... You’ve got a fifth grader flipping desks in the hallway, and girls looking over the stalls at each other in the bathrooms... everyone’s just running.”

These accounts suggest that SEGC-related restructuring did not simply introduce logistical complexity. Participants experienced it as intensifying emotional labor, reducing recovery time, and increasing the daily strain of supporting students and families with significant needs.

At the same time, participants repeatedly emphasized that Marysville's internal culture and leadership served as protective factors. Stable administration, collaborative teams, and a strong sense of shared purpose helped make the school feel emotionally supportive even when the work itself felt overwhelming. Participants described Marysville as a place where staff cared for one another, shared responsibility, and worked to maintain joy and community even during difficult periods.

One participant described intentionally drawing on previous schoolwide work around staff well-being and emotional regulation, initiated after an earlier school fire and displacement, to help staff navigate the discomfort and conflict surrounding SEGC. This participant framed change as a constant and emphasized the importance of centering the whole person, not only academics:

"We realized that we needed to center the whole person and well-being for all... By the time four years later we moved back to this campus, we had tried to have that as a thread running through... we needed to attend to that as much as the academics."

Participants also pointed to leadership continuity as unusual and stabilizing. One participant explained:

"Since 1998 we've had four administrators as principal...that is pretty much unheard of... People want to be here because we have people that care."

Participants described feeling comfortable raising concerns with building leadership and characterized school administrators as strong advocates with the district. However, they distinguished this from their perceptions of district responsiveness, which they viewed as inconsistent, constrained by budget decisions, or disconnected from the daily realities of the school.

Experiences of Historically Underserved Students and Families

Participants widely perceived that SEGC-related changes placed disproportionate burdens on historically underserved communities, particularly Lent families, Black and Latino/a/x families, families experiencing poverty, families who are linguistically diverse, and families navigating housing instability or other forms of economic vulnerability. Participants were especially concerned that students from a working-class, multicultural neighborhood were reassigned across major roads and I-205 into a more gentrified area where Marysville is located. Several participants understood this as echoing older patterns of displacement, where students and families with fewer resources carried the inconvenience and risk of district decisions.

Participants explained:

“Now, once again, we’re back to like busing students, mostly BIPOC students, over into a now gentrified neighborhood... even though we might say we’re doing this equity, it really does still fall hardest on those [Lent] community.”

“It was weird for the district to do that in the 2020s...to bus kids out of their multicultural, working-class neighborhood across 82nd Street to a more affluent area.”

Participants also described Marysville as serving students and families with significant needs beyond the SEGC transition. One participant reported that all students residing in a nearby shelter were assigned to Marysville, even though the shelter was roughly equidistant from several schools. This participant emphasized that students in the shelter were often navigating trauma and instability, making Marysville’s role especially complex:

“Somehow that shelter is within our boundary... all that kid did not have any extra support beside us.”

Participants also observed that families with greater financial and social capital, often described as white and more affluent, were better positioned to exercise school choice or avoid SEGC’s impacts on Marysville. Participants described families using charter or private schools, changing addresses, or otherwise navigating systems in ways that were less available to lower-income families and families of color. In contrast, participants described many low-income families and families of color as having fewer practical options, especially if they needed transportation or access to specialized programs.

Administrative records support participants’ accounts that the Lent-to-Marysville transition involved a racially diverse group of displaced students. Of the 265 students enrolled at Lent in 2022–23, the year before Lent’s whole-school Spanish dual language conversion, 79 were reassigned to Marysville as their designated neighborhood school. That group included 13 Black students, 23 white students, 19 Latino/a/x students, 11 Asian students, and 13 multiracial students. This is consistent with participants’ observation that many neighborhood families moved while the dual language population largely remained at Lent.

The tracked student data also suggest that this displaced group experienced a difficult transition. Compared with their own prior-year performance, the cohort showed a small positive change in math in the first year and roughly flat results afterward. Reading results declined in the first year and then improved slightly. Chronic absenteeism for this group remained in the 39% to 43% range. These data should not be interpreted as estimates of Marysville’s effect on students or as causal evidence about SEGC. Rather, they provide cohort-level context showing that the students

who bore the costs of displacement entered a school environment that participants described as already carrying substantial demands.

One family survey respondent from the displaced community described that harder landing directly, writing that the move from Lent to Marysville “was not handled very well.” The family reported a rise in behavioral issues and bullying, larger classes, reduced learning time, and diminished support for an older child with an individualized education program who eventually transferred schools. This single account does not represent every displaced family’s experience. However, it provides a concrete example of how the transition was experienced by at least one family and helps contextualize the cohort-level patterns.

Participants also reflected critically on how SEGC’s stated equity goals around dual language immersion and regional balance played out in practice. One participant recalled that early phases of SEGC framed dual language immersion as a strategy for better serving students whose home language was not English. However, participants questioned whether final decisions fully aligned with that intent. They noted that the DLI strand was concentrated in a school farther from many Latino/a/x families, while Atkinson, located in a whiter and more affluent neighborhood, retained a single-strand DLI program. Participants also observed that some immigrant families may have been hesitant to enroll their children in full Spanish immersion in the broader political climate, preferring rapid English acquisition for reasons of perceived safety. One participant said:

“The intention, I think, can really be there...But what ended up, though, was not what necessarily happened... If [DLI] was a real driver for this process, I’m not sure that that really was fulfilled.”

At the school level, participants described Marysville’s own efforts to support belonging for historically underserved students. Staff highlighted culturally specific affinity groups, including groups for Pacific Islander students, neurodivergent students, and LGBTQ+ students. Participants described these groups as important mechanisms for helping students feel seen, supported, and connected to school. One participant explained:

“We run a lot of affinity groups that embrace the student and motivate the student to come to school, make them feel a sense of belonging.”

Together, these accounts suggest a complex equity picture. Participants viewed the regional SEGC process as producing mixed and sometimes inequitable outcomes, particularly for families who were displaced or had fewer choices. At the same time, they described Marysville as investing in school-level practices designed to support belonging, affirmation, and care for historically underserved students once they arrived.

Quality of Learning Environments After SEGC-Related Shifts

Participants described Marysville’s post-SEGC learning environment as both deeply caring and significantly strained. Again, educators consistently characterized the school as inclusive, relationship-rich, and committed to students. At the same time, they described large classes, wide skill ranges, intensive behavioral needs, and frequent disruptions as making it harder to provide the academic instruction, differentiation, and enrichment they wanted all students to receive.

Teachers in early grades described classrooms of approximately 25 to 28 students, including multiple students with IEPs, students who are nonverbal, and students with developmental or safety needs that required significant environmental adaptation. Participants described removing materials that could be swallowed, limiting some enrichment activities because they were unsafe for particular students, and managing transitions with intense adult supervision.

Upper-grade teachers described classes with more than 30 students, but with many students performing two or more grade levels below expectations, alongside students who were on grade level or advanced. Participants said this range made differentiation extremely difficult. One participant noted that students who were ready for deeper learning sometimes received less attention because staff had to prioritize crisis management and foundational skills.

At the same time, participants described powerful examples of social inclusion that they associated with the inclusive model. They described classmates making room for a child who rarely joined carpet time, students helping nonverbal peers access preferred items, and entire classes “rallying around” students with significant needs. One participant reflected:

“It was like the class just rallied around him and he was so loved and cared for... That’s the kind of thing that I think is what we need in the world. But we also somehow need to get them to show growth in MAP scores or whatever.”

Another participant described the tradeoff this way:

“I feel like it’s a slight on the academic side for a boost on the social aspect of it.”

Participants therefore did not describe Marysville’s learning environment as simply weak or strong. Rather, they described a caring and inclusive environment where social-emotional growth, empathy, and peer inclusion were visible, but where academic instruction was harder to deliver at the desired level because of class size, student needs, staffing constraints, and frequent interruptions.

The staff survey supports this mixed picture. Among staff who answered, 4 of 11 (36%) agreed that students experienced high-quality learning environments, and only 3 of 10 (30%) agreed that

the learning environment was equitable. Staff collaboration was rated more positively, with 6 of 10 (60%) respondents agreeing. This suggests a school where committed adults were working collaboratively within constrained conditions. The survey pattern aligns with participants' descriptions of genuine social inclusion and strong staff commitment alongside large classes, wide skill ranges, and frequent behavioral disruption.

Schoolwide test-score records should be interpreted cautiously. Marysville's standardized math and reading scores were below the district average across the period and moved only modestly between 2021–22 and 2024–25. Math scores changed from approximately -0.61 to -0.53 standard deviations, while reading scores changed from approximately -0.52 to -0.41. Because Marysville's population changed over this same period as the school absorbed a displaced and higher-need cohort, these schoolwide figures reflect shifting student composition as well as classroom conditions. They should not be read as evidence that SEGC caused academic improvement or decline. Instead, they provide context in that Marysville's measured outcomes did not collapse under the added strain participants described, but schoolwide test scores alone cannot resolve questions about instructional quality, differentiation, or the daily experience of learning after SEGC.

How SEGC-Related Changes Played Out at Marysville

Participants described SEGC-related changes at Marysville as a convergence of boundary adjustments, enrollment shifts, program changes, grade reconfiguration, and the implementation of the inclusive neighborhood model. These changes occurred within the context of a Title I, shelter-serving school already supporting students and families with substantial needs.

Marysville became the neighborhood school for a group of students reassigned from Lent. Participants estimated that roughly 90 to 100 students and about 11 staff members, including teachers and para-educators, transferred from Lent to Marysville in the initial year of the transition. Marysville's catchment area also expanded from a compact, walkable zone to a much larger area stretching roughly from 72nd to 112th, crossing major roads and I-205. As a result, Marysville shifted from a school participants described as bus-free to one with multiple bus routes, including routes serving students from the shelter.

Marysville also transitioned from a K–8 to a K–5 school as Kellogg reopened for middle grades. At the same time, the school phased out self-contained SES classrooms and became a fully inclusive neighborhood school, serving students with diverse IEP needs in general education settings unless they required alternative placements. Two pre-K classrooms were also added and initially integrated into Marysville's staffing and support structures, though participants described those classrooms as later becoming more administratively separate while remaining on campus.

Participants identified several factors that shaped how Marysville absorbed these changes. Leadership stability and staff culture were repeatedly described as central. Participants pointed to the principal's long history at the school and the deep roots of many staff as helping Marysville approach the transition with a sense of shared identity and purpose. Participants also described proactive community-building as a major factor. School staff visited Lent, participated in difficult community conversations, and worked to validate the anger and grief families felt. One participant described the stance this way:

“There was a lot of really... upset and tears and anger... I’m fine with that. I’m not going to try and convince you it’s not... but I’ll be here whatever happens.”

In the spring and summer before and after the transition, Marysville hosted joint family game nights, festivals, and informal “popsicle and chalk” events to help Lent and Marysville families meet one another and begin building trust. Staff also waited to revisit the school’s values until the communities were together, then co-constructed shared commitments for the combined school community. One participant explained:

“We did a lot of work around it as a team here, and tried to do a lot of community building work and events and sort of redid our values... We waited till we were all together so we could... talk about our combined sense of what we wanted to do.”

At the same time, participants were clear that district-level design decisions shaped the broader conditions in which Marysville operated. Several participants believed that SEGC drew a “hard line” that excluded more affluent Southeast schools from major changes, leaving Marysville and similar schools to absorb more disruption. Some participants also argued that DLI and focus-option decisions advantaged families with greater mobility, information, and political access. In their view, enrollment balance in some schools came “at the expense” of others, and financial or political considerations often appeared to outweigh the district’s stated equity goals.

Administrative data help clarify why participants experienced the 2022–23 to 2023–24 window as especially intense. During that period, Marysville moved through its pandemic enrollment trough, absorbed displaced families, experienced approximately 39% staff turnover, brought in roughly 37% new staff, lost 8.5 FTE, saw its exclusionary discipline rate rise from effectively zero before the changes to among the highest among SEGC schools, and added bus routes for a community that had previously been largely walkable. The clustering of these changes in a short period supports participants’ account that Marysville was absorbing multiple major transitions at once.

Overall, participants framed Marysville as a case where SEGC may have “worked” in a narrow enrollment sense by stabilizing the school’s size and sustaining a robust school community, but

only because school-level leadership, staff culture, and community-building efforts compensated for gaps in district planning, resourcing, and communication. What distinguished Marysville's response was the stability underneath the change. The school retained the same principal across all six years of the study window and maintained a core of long-tenured staff. The data show how much Marysville had to absorb; the participant accounts show why many experienced that absorption as survivable rather than wholly destabilizing. This should not be interpreted as proof that SEGC caused any single outcome at Marysville. Rather, it shows how SEGC, pandemic effects, budget reductions, student need, staff stability, leadership continuity, and local community-building interacted to shape Marysville's experience.

Lewis Elementary School

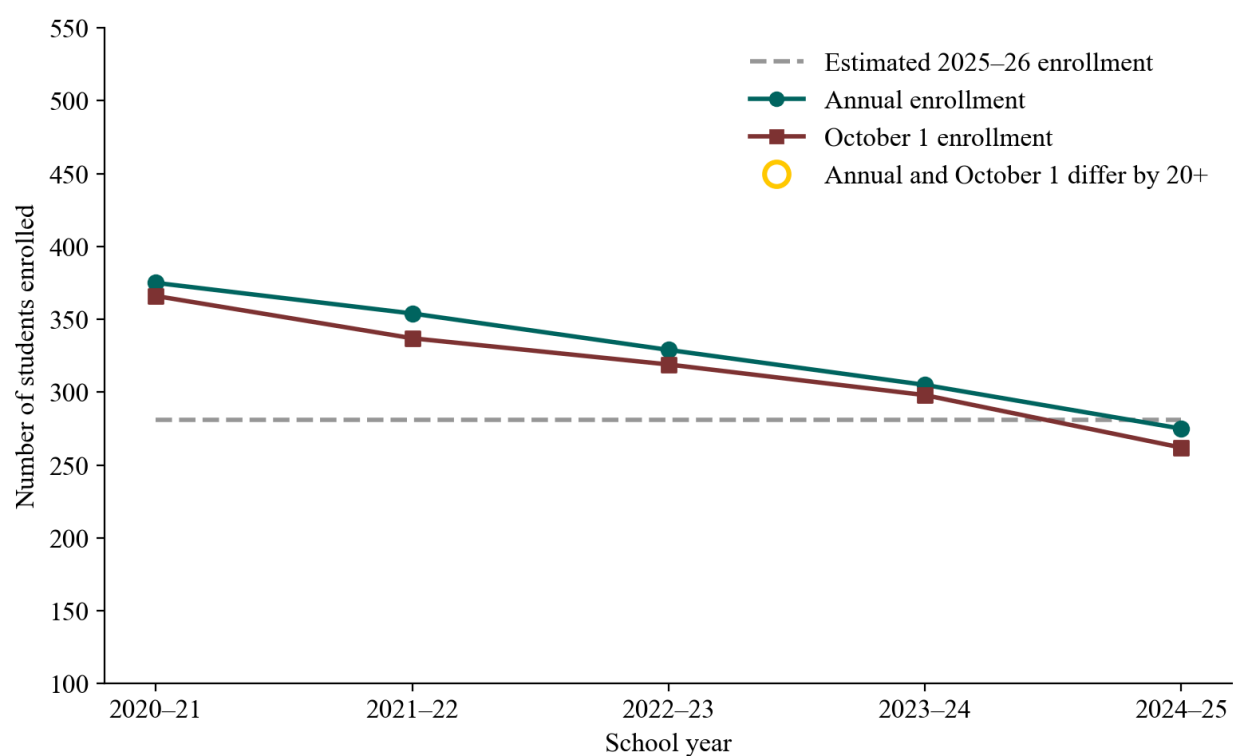
Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Lewis Elementary School was impacted mainly through:

- a boundary change (which made its catchment smaller)

Lewis Elementary School (Lewis) remained a K–5 neighborhood school. Under the SEGC recommendation, the eastern portion of the Lewis attendance area was reassigned to Whitman Elementary School. District documents identified Lewis as a school that had exceeded the district’s 80% target utilization in recent years, with a 2025–26 forecast utilization of 80.6% before the recommended change. After the boundary adjustment, Lewis’s projected 2025–26 enrollment decreased from 358 students to 281 students, and its projected utilization decreased from 80.6% to 63.3%

Figure 5.1. Lewis estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

In short, Lewis was expected to become a smaller and less crowded school, while Whitman was expected to receive additional students and move toward a more stable enrollment level. The change was part of the broader SEGC effort to balance enrollment across Southeast schools. At the same time, before SEGC was implemented, community feedback reflected concerns about

the limited scope of the process, opposition to split feeder possibilities between Sellwood and Lane, and mixed views about shifting some students toward Whitman and Lane.

Participants

In this chapter, we share findings from survey respondents interviews and focus groups conducted with school based participants at Lewis. Across the Lewis conversations, we heard from 13 unique school-based participants. The participant group provided a strong longitudinal perspective on the SEGC transition. Eleven of the 13 participants, or 84%, worked at Lewis before, during, and after SEGC-related changes. Their perspectives allowed us to compare how participants described Lewis's pre-SEGC identity, staffing, enrollment, and school conditions with how they described the school after SEGC implementation. The remaining 2 participants were connected to Lewis during and after the SEGC-related changes, which offered insight into how those changes continued to shape the school's current conditions even for staff who did not have the same pre-SEGC point of comparison. Eleven Lewis staff responded to the staff survey and there were 43 respondents to the family and caregiver survey.

Overview

In this chapter, we examine how participants connected SEGC related changes to broader patterns they experienced in morale, retention, professional support, school climate, student and family experiences, racial and socioeconomic diversity, and the school's capacity to absorb and respond to change. These accounts help illuminate how district level decisions were lived, interpreted, and managed at the school level by the educators, staff, and administrators responsible for supporting students and families through transition. The goal of this profile is to illuminate how SEGC related decisions were experienced at Lewis not only as boundary or enrollment balancing changes, but as changes that affected the daily work of educators, the experiences of students and families, the school's racial and socioeconomic composition, and the identity and functioning of the school community.

Findings

Participants Described Lewis as a High-Functioning School Community Strained by SEGC-Related Enrollment Loss

Overall, at a high level, participants described SEGC as reshaping Lewis primarily through boundary changes that reduced enrollment, shifted the school's racial and socioeconomic composition, contributed to staffing reductions, and disrupted some students' middle school pathways.

At the same time, participants consistently described Lewis as a high-functioning, tight-knit, and "special" school community whose staff culture, whole-child focus, and neighborhood relationships helped the school absorb some of the SEGC changes. One person summarized the school this way:

“If we walked through the building right now, you would see basically everybody doing what they're supposed to be doing... it's a pretty special little place here... I've been in some rough and rumbles in my career, and this is definitely a little sweet spot.”

Teachers echoed this image, emphasizing both the relational culture and the neighborhood feel. Participants said:

“The staff here... very healthy and supportive, and just really have each other's backs.”

“It's like the neighborhood feel here... the school is this meeting place where kids just show up. You can drive by on a Friday at five o'clock and there might be a kid playing basketball that you taught.”

Essentially, participants depicted Lewis as a small, relationship-rich elementary school whose strengths lie in its culture and staff cohesion. These are precisely the kinds of intangible assets that can be most vulnerable when enrollment shrinks and resources are cut.

Survey data corroborate this portrait of a strong school-level community. Among Lewis families responding to the survey (N = 50), ratings of the school itself were high. Families rated their student's sense of belonging at about 4.5 on a five-point scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. This means that roughly half of families strongly agree and half of families agree their student feels a sense of belonging at Lewis. Similarly, families indicated that their students felt safe (mean 4.3/5), and about 9 in 10 families reported feeling welcome communicating with the school and feeling that their family belongs and is respected there. Staff also had positive perceptions of their working conditions. All 11 responding staff agreed that the climate is supportive for students and staff (mean 4.6/5). Nearly all agreed that students experience high-quality learning environments (mean 4.6/5) and that staff collaboration supports teaching and learning (mean 4.5/5).

Morale, Retention, and the Impact of SEGC on Staff Stability

According to participants, morale at Lewis was described as a tightrope between a strong school culture and chronic stress. Participants generally described day-to-day morale as relatively high, especially compared to other schools in the district, but layered with profound fatigue, grief over repeated cuts, and growing distrust of district leadership. One educator captured the dual reality:

“I'd say, relatively speaking, compared to a lot of other schools...morale [here] probably higher than those. At the same time...budget goes down, expectations go up...I feel like we're like on this tightrope right now.”

Another person similarly distinguished between internal climate and system-level pressures:

“Morale wise, like overall is good...when you talk about just the day-to-day, come in, close your door, do your job, have fun with your kids. But as soon as you start bringing in the reality of what's going on just as a district...that's where it's tough. You still get a lot of the ‘what’s next?’ questions.”

The survey data is consistent with this dual reality. Among responding staff, the current-conditions well-being items sat in positive territory, with school climate rated supportive (mean 4.6/5, all 11 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing) and most staff reporting they felt emotionally supported at work (mean 4.2/5). At the same time, the items related specifically to the SEGC period were uniformly negative. Across the SEGC implementation period items about well-being, the average response was 2.5 on a five-point scale (9 survey respondents were at Lewis during the transition), with staff disagreeing that changes were implemented with dignity and care (mean 2.4/5) and reporting that the changes added stress and lowered morale during the process. The split between a positive present and a negative SEGC-period recollection mirrors the “tightrope” participants described. In other words, participants described Lewis as a locally strong culture carrying the weight of district-level strain. Workload was the one current-conditions survey item that fell into negative territory. Staff rated workload manageability at an average of 2.7 out of 5, which is consistent with participants’ descriptions of staff feeling stretched thin as positions have been reduced.

Staff morale at Lewis appears to rest on a strong, locally cultivated culture of collaboration, kindness, and mutual support. At the same time, participants described anxiety and disillusionment as being driven largely by district-level conditions and decisions, including SEGC-related enrollment changes, budget shortfalls, staffing reductions, and perceived inequities in how resources and burdens were distributed. Participants did not attribute all of these concerns directly to SEGC. However, the current budget deficit and related staffing cuts were clearly on their minds and shaped how they made sense of the school’s current conditions.

Repeated Cuts and Churn to Staff Impacts on School Morale

Multiple participants described a pattern of annual FTE reductions, un-assignments, and staff bouncing between schools, largely as a function of declining enrollment triggered by SEGC boundary changes and broader PPS trends. One teacher explained:

“We’ve lost staff...not because they’re moving on to something else, because they want to, but because the district has unassigned them or cut our FTE, which is a little heartbreaking when you’ve invested so much in your relationships...we’ve had several staff who have had to bounce back and forth between [schools].”

Another participant summarized the pattern over time:

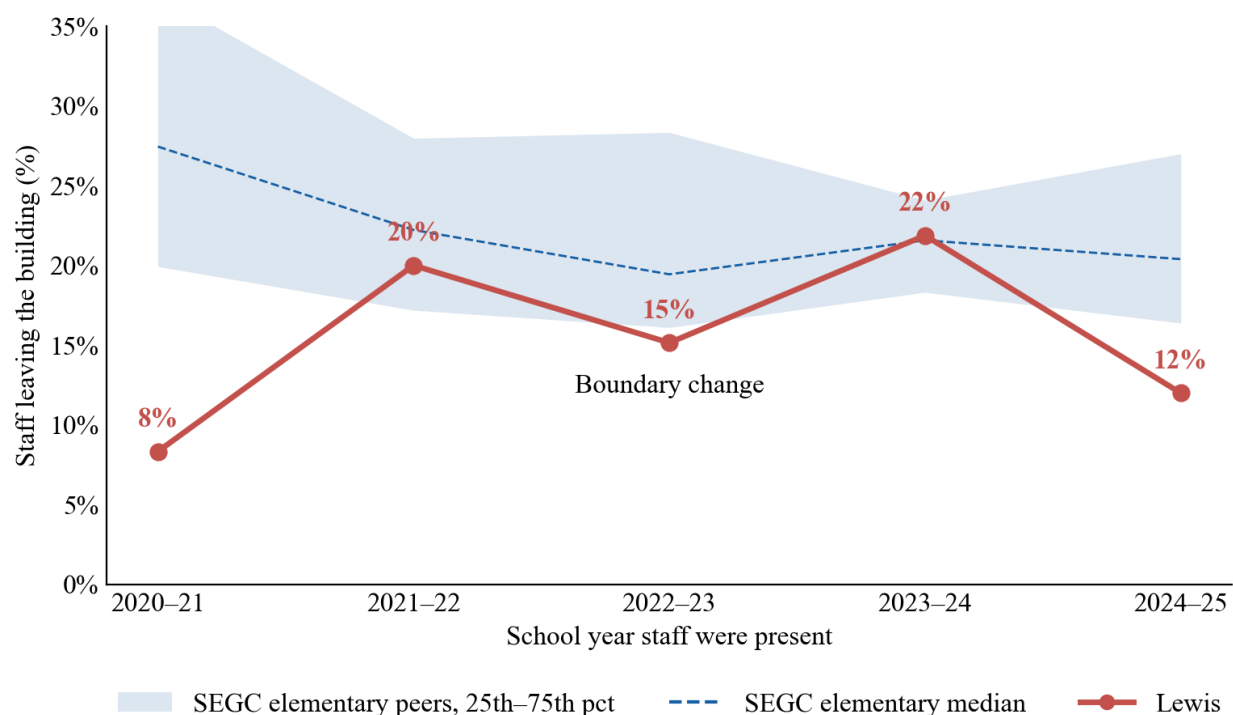
“Every single year that I’ve been here, there has been a reduction in at least a half-time staff member or a full-time staff member... in the library that’s meant

going from a position that covered two half-time workers to now just one half-time worker, but I still have the same amount of books and almost the same number of classes.”

These are lived experiences of concrete staffing losses and reassignments that participants described. However, participants then generalized to a broader narrative that Lewis and similar schools are, as one participant stated, “bleeding out” staff year after year, not due to internal (school) dysfunction but because of structural decisions about boundaries, enrollment targets, and budgets.

The administrative record complicates, but does not dismiss, participants’ description of Lewis as “bleeding out.” Participants’ sense of loss was grounded in real year-over-year reductions in staffing, positions, and school capacity. However, the personnel data suggest that Lewis was not an outlier in overall staff turnover compared with other SEGC elementary schools. The share of staff leaving the building reached approximately 22% in 2023–24 and 20% in 2021–22, but across SEGC elementary schools, the share of staff leaving schools generally ranged from about 20% to 26%. Lewis therefore sat at or below the peer range throughout this period. In 2022–23, the year the boundary change took effect, Lewis’s staff departure rate was approximately 15%, which was lower than both the broader SEGC elementary comparison range and Lewis’s own surrounding years.

Figure 5.2. Lewis elementary staff turnover rates relative to other SEGC elementary schools, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff.

This distinction helps tell the fuller story. Personnel records do not support interpreting Lewis as an outlier for turnover, and this is consistent with participants' own descriptions of Lewis as having stronger morale and cohesion than many peer schools. At the same time, the records do confirm the pattern of staffing contraction that participants experienced as heartbreaking. For Lewis staff, the concern was not only who left, but what the school could no longer sustain as enrollment and staffing declined.

Additionally, several participants emphasized the importance of school leadership in shaping how staff experience district-level change. Since Lewis was getting smaller, leadership continuity could not prevent enrollment-related staffing reductions, FTE losses, or the broader effects of budget constraints. However, it appears to have helped buffer some of the relational and organizational strain associated with those changes. Lewis was one of the few schools in the analysis that had the same principal across the full six-year study window, from 2020–21 through 2025–26. This continuity helps contextualize participants' repeated praise for the current leader's role in maintaining trust, protecting staff culture, and helping the school remain cohesive during a period of shrinking enrollment and reduced staffing capacity. It also distinguishes Lewis from schools where SEGC-related change occurred alongside leadership turnover, making it harder for staff to experience stability, communication, and relational trust during major change.

Feeling Equipped or Not to Support Students and Families Through SEGC Changes

Participants across our conversations highlighted a persistent information gap between district-level decision-making and school-level implementation during SEGC and its aftermath. School-level staff were expected to hold family anxiety, explain boundary lines, and promote new feeder patterns without clear or timely guidance. One participant described the experience of fielding boundary questions this way:

"We had to answer a lot of questions...a lot of questions we didn't have answers to. Parents were always, 'Is that my street? One more street over?' And then they'd [the district] send us these maps that were like, even with a magnifying glass you couldn't see on your computer...Does that say 43 or 45? I don't know."

Another participant similarly reflected:

"We felt like we did a lot of listening...[and would respond] Yeah, I'm really sorry, that's not fair,' but I don't feel like we were equipped very well... and neither were families. Families were confused, why the wealthier schools weren't impacted, and what their options were."

In the same manner, another participant characterized the district communications more bluntly during SEGC:

“We got emails...[but] we didn’t get the sense that any of us had any say. I think it always felt like it was kind of like, well, they’re gonna do it. The process went on for a really, really long time, and then it was kind of like, ‘It’s done,’ without big announcements or ‘This is how it’s gonna work.’”

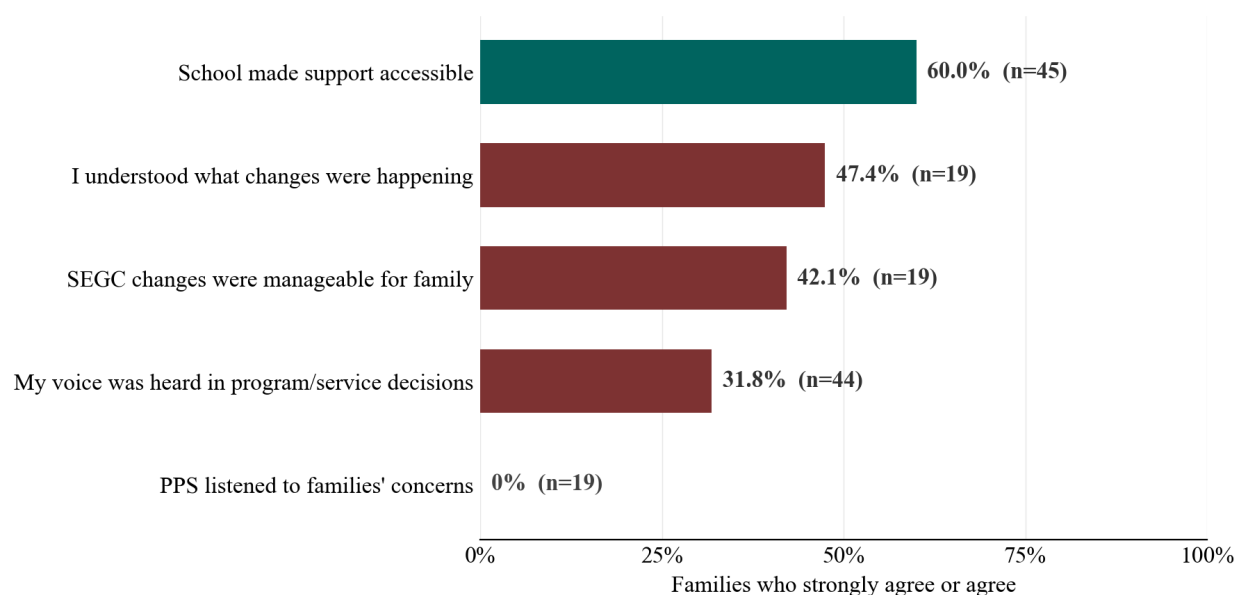
These personal accounts of specific practices, including having to explain unreadable maps to families, mass emails, and long online meetings that all hurt communication and the schools ability to respond to SEGC changes. From these experiences, participants inferred a broader pattern, which was that the central office “listening sessions” felt performative rather than genuinely responsive, and building leaders were left to absorb community distress with little real support.

Both the staff and family surveys corroborate this information deficit. Among responding staff, the SEGC-period access-to-information items averaged 2.6 on a five-point scale,¹⁸ with staff disagreeing that the changes were communicated in a way that made the timeline and expectations clear, and that they had a reliable point of contact for accurate answers about SEGC changes. The SEGC-period support items were similarly low (category average 2.4/5). Current-conditions access to information was rated only modestly better (mean 3.7/5), and current access to the resources needed to do the job remained negative (mean 2.5/5), which tracks the accounts of staff covering gaps left by reduced positions.

The family survey complements the qualitative findings and points in the same direction, adding another direct source of family voice about communication, manageability, and trust. Among Lewis families, fewer than half agreed that they understood what was happening during the 2023–24 SEGC year or that the changes were manageable for their family. Moreover, the pattern is notable that only about one-third of respondents agreed that their voice was heard in decisions about programs or services for their child. Families rated district listening lowest of all with no responding family agreed that PPS listened to families’ concerns when making decisions affecting the school community. By contrast, school-level supports were rated more positively, with about 6 in 10 families agreeing that the school made support accessible. This reinforces the case’s broader distinction between families’ positive experiences with Lewis as a responsive school community and their more negative experiences with the district-level SEGC process.

¹⁸ “Nonmissing N” refers to the number of respondents who provided a usable response to a specific survey item. In this case, the statistic is based on 9 respondents who answered the item, rather than the full survey sample.

Figure 5.3. Lewis family perceptions about the SEGC process and current support at their school.



Note: The green bar indicates a survey item concerning perceptions of current school climate. Red bars represent items about perceptions of the SEGC process in 2023–24 and before.

Moreover, staff at Lewis devoted significant energy to helping fifth graders and their families transition to middle school under new, split feeder patterns brought on by SEGC changes. One teacher described the isolation of two students now assigned to Lane while the rest of their peers go to Sellwood:

“We have two kids that are isolated from all their peers that they've been with because of this boundary...they live on the other side of 52nd. They were allowed to stay at Lewis once the division changed, but they weren't allowed to go to middle school with the rest of their peers. It's so isolating. I just can't believe it.”

Families also described how new feeder patterns disrupted peer continuity, leaving some students separated from classmates they had attended school with for years. In these accounts, the harm was not only logistical; families described students feeling socially isolated when boundary changes allowed them to remain at Lewis for elementary school but prevented them from following the same middle school pathway as their peers.

Another participant explained what they could offer families:

“There really wasn't much we could tell them... A lot of the conversation was, ‘Families make schools better. If you have this perception about the middle school your child is going into, get really involved.’ That was what we were sharing, but that's really all we could offer.”

Participants also described feeling under-equipped when trying to support students with high or complex needs. In several accounts, staff said they reached out to the district for help, but experienced the response as focused more on monitoring, documentation, or compliance than on providing additional support. One participant described a case involving a young student of color who spoke a less common home language and had significant learning needs:

“We have a situation this year, young student of color who really struggles with learning... the amount of effort that has gone into trying to get somebody from the district to help out a little bit...instead, it literally feels like, as a school, we're on a plan of improvement, and we have to document all this stuff. We didn't get any help, we just got oversight.”

Another participant described this as a broader pattern:

“Sometimes you get told what you're supposed to do, rather than support in doing what you'd like to do... with a new student they'll say, 'Do a better job,' instead of, 'Can we give you temporary support while you figure this out?'"

These comments help explain why participants did not always feel equipped to support students and families after SEGC-related changes. The concern was not that school staff lacked commitment or knowledge. On the contrary, participants felt that the school was expected to meet increasingly complex student needs without enough practical assistance from the district. In these accounts, staff experienced a gap between being held accountable for student support and being given the staffing, expertise, and temporary resources needed to provide that support well.

Analytically, the specific student case and the associated documentation demands represent participants' direct lived experience. The broader conclusion that the system prioritized documentation over substantive assistance is an interpretation participants drew from those experiences. This distinction matters, but the pattern remains important: staff felt less equipped when district support arrived primarily as oversight rather than as concrete help.

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants described significant emotional strain, burnout, and, in some cases, moments when educators came close to leaving their roles. Several participants spoke directly about the cumulative effects of larger classes, reduced support staff, tighter schedules, and changing assignments. One teacher explained:

“I've almost almost quit...larger classes plus tighter duty schedules, and then an absence of support staff... makes you feel like a really bad teacher when you're not able to pick up the needs. You know what kids need, but you can't meet it.”

Other participants linked morale and stress to the ongoing experience of doing more with less after SEGC-related enrollment changes and subsequent staffing reductions. Participants described the strain this way:

“Smaller school, less support staff... it just made it harder on everybody, trying to pick up the gaps that are suddenly gone, not feeling like you can do a good enough job at it.”

“We are being cut and we are losing classes... I've done a 2–3 blend, I've done second grade, I've moved classrooms, now I'm teaching first grade, now I'm going to be teaching a 1–2. It is very stressful and draining and traumatic at times.”

These accounts describe direct lived experiences of burnout, role churn, emotional fatigue, and professional frustration. Participants were not speaking abstractly about change. In fact, they were describing what it felt like to work in a school where staffing reductions, changing assignments, and increased student needs made it harder to provide the level of support they believed students deserved. The interpretive layer is that participants understood SEGC-related enrollment shifts, budget constraints, and broader district decisions as collectively creating a teaching environment that felt increasingly unsustainable, even for highly committed educators.

Survey findings reflect this same tension between strain and commitment. Several responding staff members agreed they had considered leaving the school due to SEGC-related changes, and several also reported considering leaving PPS. These responses align with accounts from educators who described coming close to quitting. At the same time, staff also reported a strong intention to remain, with nine in ten agreeing that they planned to work at the school the following year. Together, these findings suggest that staff commitment to the school remained strong, even as educators reported significant stress, fatigue, and concern about the sustainability of current conditions.

Participants also described being pulled between care for staff and families and a lack of timely, transparent information from the central office, especially during the recent budget crisis. One participant explained:

“We just learned... we have a \$14 million shortfall, and people are like, ‘Who's running that checkbook?’ ... They never told the principals in the district. We all heard about it on the same day as everybody else. And now, like, we're hearing nothing.”

Participants described the emotional labor of managing staff anxiety about unpaid days, shifting calendars, and uncertainty about pay. One participant shared:

“Teachers are like hyperventilating... ‘Do I save my money this month because I might not have four days worth of pay in June?’ ... As an admin, we're just dangling... I came in this morning and triaged. I can move Field Day. I can move promotion. But I can't solve anybody's pay.”

These comments reflect direct experiences with high-stakes uncertainty, limited information, and the emotional labor of trying to support others without clear answers. Participants then extended those experiences into a broader critique of district communication and decision-making, describing a pattern in which central-office uncertainty cascaded into stress for school staff, students, and families. The concern was not only that difficult decisions were being made, but that the lack of timely, actionable communication made those decisions harder for school communities to absorb.

Trust, Safety, and District Feedback

When asked whether they felt safe raising concerns during SEGC-related changes, most participants distinguished between feeling safe within the school and feeling confident that district leaders would listen or respond. Participants generally described Lewis as a place where they could raise concerns with school leadership, especially with the current administrator. However, they expressed much less confidence that concerns raised beyond the school level would lead to meaningful district action. One person drew a distinction:

“I felt safe raising concerns to my principal, but at the same time I didn't feel like anyone else was going to be listening... I didn't feel like we had a voice there.”

Another participant reframed the issue as less about fear and more about low confidence in district responsiveness:

“It's probably not safety, it's just apathy. It's like, well, why bother? I just don't have confidence that they're going to make a good decision... we talk a lot, but it doesn't go anywhere.”

A third participant described the emotional cost of watching students, families, and staff testify during the SEGC decision-making process without seeing that testimony meaningfully reflected in final decisions:

“The district needs to do a better job of not graciously accepting testimony and feedback as if they're gonna implement it... Kids get up at a board meeting and talk about how they're losing their entire friend world, and the board says, ‘We really respect and value your voice,’ and then they do what they were going to do anyway... If I did that to a fourth grader, they would be so upset with me.”

These comments combine direct observations, such as board meeting testimony, unanswered questions, and perceived gaps in follow-through, with participants' broader interpretations of district listening and decision-making. The central concern was not primarily fear of retaliation. Rather, participants described a sense of futility: they felt compelled to advocate for students and families but did not believe that advocacy would meaningfully shape district decisions.

Survey data suggest that this low trust was shared by both staff and families. Among responding staff, the trust category averaged 1.9 on a five-point scale among nine respondents. Agreement that the district could be trusted to handle rightsizing decisions fairly and equitably averaged 1.6/5, and no responding staff agreed that PPS followed through on its commitments. Families reported similar concerns. Agreement that the district could be trusted to handle rightsizing fairly and equitably averaged about 2.1/5, with only about one in ten families agreeing. No responding family agreed that the benefits and burdens of SEGC changes were distributed equitably across Southeast Portland schools.

The qualitative and survey data synthesized above suggest a sharp distinction between trust in Lewis as a school community and trust in district-level decision-making. Staff and families generally described Lewis's teaching, learning environment, and school-level relationships positively. However, they expressed much lower confidence in PPS's ability to listen, follow through, and distribute the burdens of major district decisions fairly.

Equity, Diversity, and Learning Environments After SEGC

Across our conversations with Lewis participants, a consistent theme was that SEGC-related boundary changes altered the school's racial, socioeconomic, and neighborhood composition. Participants repeatedly described the loss of specific boundary areas as a loss of diversity, community connection, and neighborhood identity. One participant described the shift this way:

"We were a much more diverse school... half of [my child's] class was out of neighborhood boundaries, and there was a lot more diversity coming in. Now the demographics have changed a lot. The school community has gotten smaller and whiter."

Another staff member connected this directly to the boundary change:

"Because of the boundary change we just have fewer students of color. Those 10 blocks we lost from 52nd to 62nd, that's a pocket with much more diversity."

A third participant described the change in even more relational terms:

"You literally took all the cultural diversity we had out of here... That was part of the love of this building, making everybody feel like it's a true community that supports everybody. People were really sad about that. 'Why are you doing this to us?'"

These accounts reflect participants' direct observations of changes in the school community, especially the loss of particular neighborhood areas that staff understood as more racially,

culturally, and socioeconomically diverse. They also reflect participants' perceptions of how those changes affected the feel of the school and the experiences of students of color and lower-income students who remained. In their view, Lewis became smaller and less connected to some of the diverse neighborhood relationships that had previously shaped the school's identity.

Although students and families of color were not direct participants in these Lewis staff conversations, participants described what they saw and heard regarding impacts on lower-income students and students of color. One participant reflected:

"I think our poor students are affected the most... they feel more isolated in the community as we've grown richer, as we've cut that 52nd... there's more othering as the school community has gotten smaller and whiter."

Participants also described specific cases in which boundary and feeder-pattern decisions created disproportionate burdens for students and families who needed additional support navigating transfer processes. One participant described two fifth-grade students who were separated from their peers because of the boundary change:

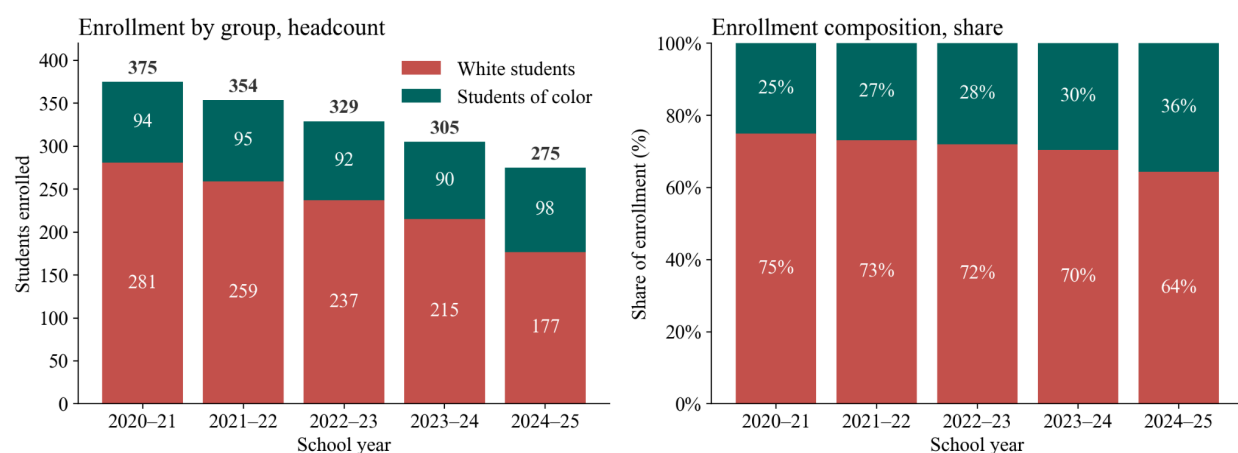
"These are also families that need a lot of support with [transfer paperwork] and wouldn't know otherwise to jump through these hoops, and there's no guarantee. So there's two kids that are isolated...It's so nuts to me. I just can't believe it."

These accounts are grounded in participants' direct observations of particular children, families, and neighborhood changes. The broader conclusion that SEGC concentrated harm on lower-income students and students of color by making some students more isolated and less supported is an interpretation participants drew from those concrete experiences. That interpretation is important to report, but it should be understood as participant meaning-making rather than formal causal evidence on its own.

Family survey responses are consistent with participants' sense that families did not experience SEGC as advancing equity at Lewis. Among Lewis families, agreement that SEGC changes increased diversity at the school averaged 1.7 on a five-point scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. Agreement that the changes moved PPS closer to racial equity averaged 1.9/5, and 0% of responding families agreed that the benefits and burdens of SEGC changes were distributed equitably across Southeast Portland schools.

At the same time, student enrollment records both support and qualify participants' descriptions. Lewis enrollment declined substantially, from 375 students in 2020–21 to 275 students in 2024–25. White student enrollment accounted for most of that numerical decline, falling from 281 to 177 students. As a result, the share of Lewis students identifying as white declined from approximately 75% to 64%, while the combined share of students of color increased from approximately 25% to 36%. In this sense, Lewis became smaller and proportionally less white over time, even as participants experienced the school as having lost particular sources of racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity.

Figure 5.4. Lewis elementary enrollment decline and composition shift, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Note: Enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

Interestingly, both findings can be true at the same time. The administrative data do not support a simple claim that Lewis became proportionally whiter overall. However, the qualitative data show that participants were not only describing percentages. They were describing the loss of specific neighborhood blocks, relationships, peer groups, and forms of community diversity that had mattered to the school's identity. In other words, the findings would suggest that the diversity participants mourned was tied to place, relationships, and neighborhood access, not only to the schoolwide racial percentage.

A second pattern is also worth noting carefully. The share of students receiving special education services rose over the period, from approximately 20% to 28%, while the actual number of students receiving special education services stayed relatively stable, from roughly 73 to 77 students. This appears to be a denominator effect,¹⁹ which is that as total enrollment declined,

¹⁹ A denominator effect occurs when the percentage or share of a group changes primarily because the total population used to calculate the percentage changes, rather than because the number of people in the group changed substantially. In this case, the number of students receiving special education services remained relatively stable, but total school enrollment declined; as a result, students receiving special education services became a larger share of the school population. This follows the basic logic of proportions, where a percentage is calculated by dividing a subgroup numerator by the total population denominator.

students receiving special education services became a larger share of the school population, even though the number of students receiving those services did not substantially increase. This does not, by itself, establish a change in the student population or explain why the shift occurred. However, it does help explain why participants may have experienced Lewis as a smaller school with fewer resources but continued responsibility for serving students with significant support needs.

Perceptions of Middle School Options and Unequal Access to Choice

Participants described how family perceptions of middle school options shaped how some families responded to SEGC-related feeder pattern changes. Importantly, these accounts should be read as participants' perceptions and second-hand observations, not as a direct evaluation of Lane or Sellwood as schools. The central equity issue participants raised was not simply that families preferred one middle school over another, but that families with more information, time, resources, and social capital appeared better positioned to navigate around new assignments.

One participant described the difficulty of helping families adjust when students who previously expected one middle school pathway were assigned elsewhere:

"In this community, everybody went to Sellwood...we switched the boundaries...our whole low socioeconomic group is now going to either Whitman or Lane, which the community was really upset about... Lane is a middle school that has struggled for years...the district has done nothing to make Lane exciting."

The same participant described efforts to make the new middle school pathway feel more welcoming and positive for students:

"We did our fifth-grade move-up day... We sent them with a teacher, we paid for them to go to Dairy Queen... 'This is going to be awesome. Look what's in your neighborhood.' They had a great time when they got there. But the community culture is like, 'I don't want my kids there.'"

Other participants described how families with greater resources could sometimes use formal or informal strategies to avoid assigned pathways. One participant noted:

"We have families who file grievances...kids who went to Sellwood and Cleveland who had access to information and privilege to use the narrowest of loopholes...whereas some of our families wouldn't know how to do that. And there are families who literally rent apartments or find another address to get into a different school."

These accounts are important because they show how boundary and feeder pattern changes can interact with unequal access to information, advocacy, and choice. The specific examples of move-up days, grievances, and address changes reflect participant accounts of what they observed or heard in their school community. The broader equity concern is that even when assignment rules appear neutral, families with more time, knowledge, flexibility, or resources

may be better able to navigate exceptions, while lower-income families may be more likely to absorb the assigned change. For PPS, this suggests that future feeder pattern or boundary changes should include proactive family support, clear transparent transfer rules, and careful monitoring of whether exceptions and workarounds reproduce inequities by race, income, language, or neighborhood.

How SEGC Played Out at Lewis and What Shaped That Experience

Across the Lewis data, participants described SEGC as reshaping the school primarily through enrollment loss, boundary changes, staffing reductions, and disrupted student pathways. Participants consistently described Lewis as becoming smaller after SEGC-related boundary changes, with enrollment declining from roughly 400 or more students to approximately 260 students. They connected this decline first to the loss of key boundary areas, including areas east of 52nd Avenue and, in earlier boundary changes, areas between 39th and 41st, and then to COVID-19-related shifts and broader demographic changes. Participants emphasized that, from their perspective, Lewis lost boundary area and enrollment without receiving an offsetting program, population, or resource addition in return.

Participants also described significant staffing and program reductions as part of Lewis's post-SEGC experience. These included the loss of multiple paraeducators, Learning Center paraeducators, reading specialists, partial reductions in PE and music, and substantial reductions in library and ELL staffing. Staff also anticipated the possibility of multilingual learner services dropping to zero FTE despite the continued presence of students needing multilingual learner support. In participants' view, these reductions affected the school's ability to provide the same level of individualized support, intervention, enrichment, and whole-child programming that had long been central to Lewis's identity.

Participants further described one-class cohorts and blended grades as important features of Lewis's current conditions. Some cohorts now have only one classroom moving through the grade levels, and staff anticipated multiple 1–2 and 2–3 blended classrooms in the coming year. Participants viewed these structures as challenging because they may be misaligned with the adopted curriculum, developmentally difficult for students, and demanding for teachers who must plan for multiple grade levels within the same classroom.

Overall, these are concrete school-level changes, including enrollment decline, boundary shrinkage, reduced FTE, fewer support positions, and changing class structures. Staff interpreted these changes as evidence that Lewis experienced SEGC largely as a loss of students, staff, and capacity rather than as a reconfiguration that brought new resources or opportunities. This does not mean SEGC alone caused every challenge Lewis now faces. However, the Lewis case shows how boundary changes, declining enrollment, staffing formulas, budget pressures, and broader demographic shifts can combine to make a strong school feel increasingly vulnerable.

Several factors shaped how SEGC landed at Lewis. First, participants pointed to district process design. They described long virtual meetings that felt difficult to follow and not always responsive, complex documents and maps that were challenging for families and even school leaders to interpret, and limited visible district presence at Lewis to explain the rationale, tradeoffs, and consequences of the proposed changes.

Second, participants described frustration with what they perceived as the inequitable distribution of burden across Southeast schools. Several participants believed that nearby, more affluent schools with strong parent networks were largely protected from major SEGC-related changes, while Lewis and other less affluent schools absorbed more of the disruption. Participants experienced this as inconsistent with the district's stated racial equity and social justice commitments.

Third, local leadership and staff culture shaped how Lewis absorbed the changes. Participants widely described Lewis as having a strong culture of collaboration, care, and mutual support. They credited school leadership with helping rebuild trust, protect staff culture, and preserve some programming, including specials, for as long as possible despite shrinking allocations. This local culture appeared to buffer some of the harm associated with SEGC-related changes. At the same time, because relationships at Lewis were so strong, the loss of staff, students, and services was experienced as especially painful.

Finally, participants placed SEGC within a broader neighborhood and citywide context. They pointed to rising housing costs, gentrification, limited rental housing, and fewer young families in the immediate neighborhood as additional forces contributing to enrollment decline. In this sense, Lewis's experience was shaped not only by SEGC decisions, but also by larger housing, demographic, and fiscal conditions beyond the school's control.

Harrison Park Middle School

Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Harrison Park K–8 was impacted through five major anticipated changes:

- a grade reconfiguration
- a relocation of K–5 students to Clark
- one boundary change
- two middle school feeder changes
- one program receiving change

Harrison Park was designated to convert from the last neighborhood K–8 program in Southeast Portland into Harrison Park Middle School. Its K–5 students, including students in Mandarin DLI, were expected to move to Clark K–5, while Harrison Park became a middle school serving a newly configured set of neighborhood and program students. The proposal moved one boundary area from Harrison Park to Kellogg, and added one boundary area from Mt. Tabor to Harrison Park. It also shifted the Atkinson neighborhood feeder from Mt. Tabor to Harrison Park, and shifted the Vestal neighborhood feeder from Roseway Heights to Harrison Park. Overall, the changes were anticipated to impact approximately 240 students once implemented. In addition, the Woodstock Mandarin DLI middle school pathway, which had previously fed to Hosford, was relocated to Harrison Park, involving 116 students.

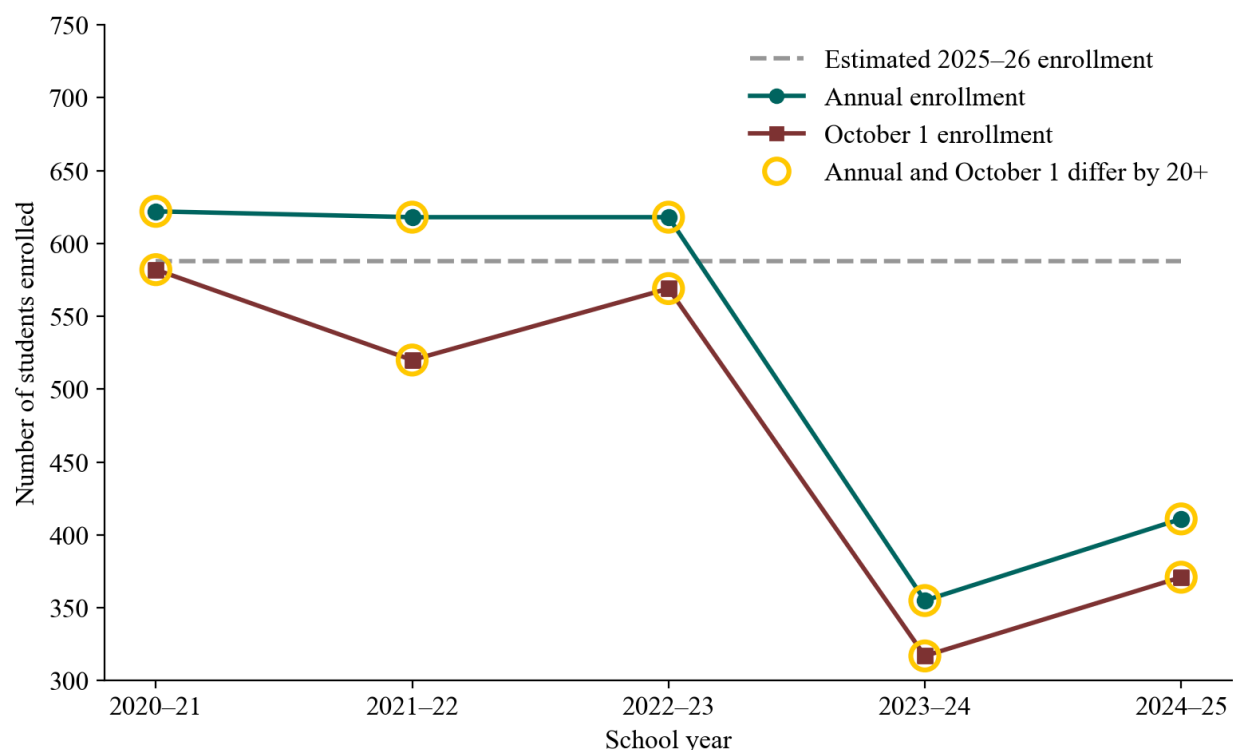
The expectation was that Harrison Park Middle School would open with an estimated 558 students if the changes had been in place in 2021–22 and a 2025–26 forecast of 588 students, with projected utilization of 62.7% and 66.1%, respectively. In short, Harrison Park was expected to become a larger regional middle school, keep its existing elementary community together at Clark, and serve as the consolidated middle school location for Mandarin DLI (see Figure 6.1).

Participants

Across the Harrison Park conversations, we heard from three school-based participants who brought broad perspectives on the school’s SEGC-related transition. In addition, there were 4 staff and 13 family and caregiver survey respondents. Together, their accounts provided insight into how the school experienced changes in grade configuration, student enrollment, school identity, staff culture, student support, and day-to-day implementation. Two of the three participants had experience at Harrison Park before SEGC-related changes took effect, when the school operated as a K–8. All three participants were present during the SEGC transition or implementation period, and all three remained connected to Harrison Park after the school

became a comprehensive middle school. As a result, the Harrison Park conversations provide a before, during, and after view of how SEGC-related changes were experienced, managed, and understood within the school community.

Figure 6.1. Harrison Park estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Overview

This chapter examines how SEGC-related decisions were experienced at Harrison Park. The analysis looks beyond the formal changes themselves, including boundaries, feeder patterns, program relocation, and grade reconfiguration, to consider how those changes affected the daily work of school staff, the experiences of students and families, the school’s racial and socioeconomic composition, and the identity and functioning of the school community.

This school-based analysis is especially important because participants described Harrison Park as experiencing both meaningful gains and significant strain. That is, on one hand, participants described expanded middle school opportunities, improved facilities, increased access to electives and specialist teachers, and a more developmentally appropriate structure for middle school students. On the other hand, they described demographic shifts, concerns about the loss of racial and socioeconomic diversity, stress associated with district processes, limited

implementation guidance, and ongoing questions about whether SEGC fully reflected PPS's stated equity commitments.

Overall, the Harrison Park case shows that SEGC-related changes cannot be understood only as policy adjustments to enrollment or program placement. They also reshaped how the educators in the school understood itself, how staff supported students and families, and how the promise of a stronger comprehensive middle school was experienced alongside concerns about equity, implementation, and community change.

Findings

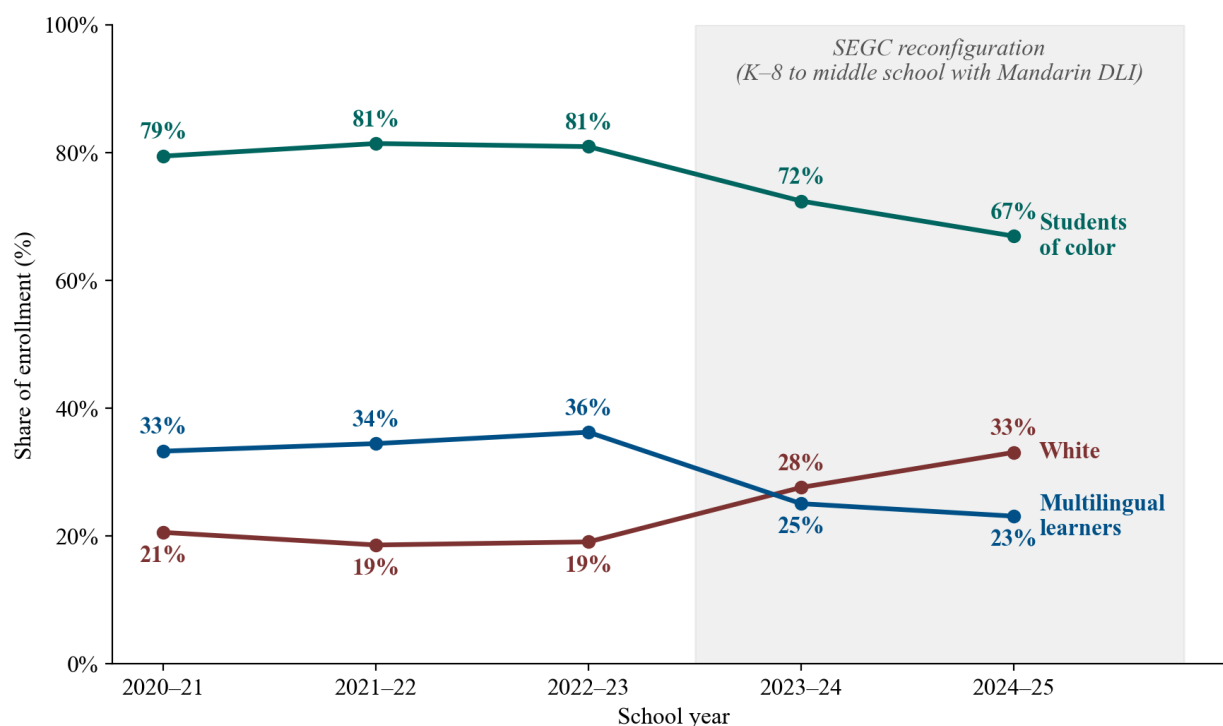
How SEGC Shaped Harrison Park

SEGC-related changes at Harrison Park unfolded as part of a dense web of transitions. The school shifted from a K–8 model to a comprehensive 6–8 middle school, underwent major capital construction, absorbed new feeder patterns, received the middle-grades portion of a Mandarin DLI program, and navigated the broader context of the pandemic, labor actions, and budget instability. Participants emphasized that these changes did not land as isolated policy or technical adjustments. Together, they reshaped Harrison Park's demographic profile, learning opportunities, school identity, and day-to-day functioning.

The central story of Harrison Park is therefore one of expanded opportunity accompanied by significant disruption. Participants described meaningful improvements for middle school students, including a more developmentally appropriate grade configuration, more electives, greater access to specialist teachers, a stronger library experience, improved classrooms, air conditioning, and a rebuilt interior environment. At the same time, they described demographic shifts, equity concerns, limited district implementation guidance, and a sense that school-level staff had to absorb and solve many of the practical challenges created by SEGC.

Administrative records support participants' account that the reconfiguration year marked a clear shift in the school's composition. During the K–8 years, Harrison Park's enrollment was about 81% students of color. After SEGC-related changes, that share declined to 72% in 2023–24 and 67% in 2024–25. White enrollment rose from about 19% during the K–8 years to 33% in 2024–25, Black enrollment declined from roughly 23% to 14%, and multilingual learner enrollment declined from about 36% to 23%. Participants experienced these shifts not only as demographic changes, but also as changes in the culture, identity, and equity context of the school.

Figure 6.2. Harrison Park racial/ethnic and multilingual learner composition, 2020–21 to 2024–25



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year.

These transitions were concentrated in a short period. In 2023–24, Harrison Park experienced the enrollment inflection from 618 students to 355 students, the shift in racial composition, the simultaneous staffing of Clark and Harrison Park, the relocation of the Mandarin DLI middle-grades pathway, and continued construction-related disruption. Participants described this period as one in which the school had to manage multiple forms of change at once, while also maintaining stability for students, families, and staff.

Morale, Retention, and Adult Well-Being

Across the Harrison Park conversations, participants described a strong internal school culture that helped buffer the strain of SEGC-related change. They repeatedly emphasized staff cohesion, leadership stability, and shared commitment as reasons staff continued to stay, even when external conditions were difficult. One participant summarized the staff climate this way:

“We don’t have a lot of staff turnover, and that, in of itself, is a testament of, like, the climate and culture that [the principal] has created and maintained.”

Participants also described the K–8 to middle school transition as revealing staff commitment to the school. When the elementary and middle grades separated, all classroom teachers whose

roles placed them in the middle school program returned to Harrison Park after its reconfiguration to a middle school. Personnel records support this account. Of the 22 Harrison Park staff in 2022–23 whose position titles placed them clearly in the middle school program, 20 continued at Harrison Park Middle School in 2023–24, a continuation rate of 91%. When narrowed to classroom teachers, the continuation rate was 20 of 20.

The post-reconfiguration record adds nuance. Harrison Park maintained very high teacher retention in the first two years after conversion: 25 of 26 teachers, or 96%, returned from 2023–24 to 2024–25. In the most recent year, however, school-based staff reported that teacher retention declined to 73%, with 24 of 33 teachers returning for the 2025–26 school year, due in part to budget-related staffing cuts.

Participants connected the school's ability to absorb change to long-standing leadership and a strong sense of collective responsibility. One participant described the staff's response to construction, room moves, a strike, and SEGC-related change as a shared experience:

“We’ve gone through a strike... all of this construction... I had more than half of my staff have to move mid year... and our staff has been really flexible, and I think a lot of part of that is because we’re all in it together.”

At the same time, participants were clear that this internal resilience did not eliminate the emotional toll of the process. SEGC meetings, construction disruption, pandemic conditions, labor actions, and budget instability were described as cumulative stressors. One participant described the weekly SEGC sessions during the pandemic as emotionally taxing:

“It was three hours of my life every Thursday night, sitting in my room on a computer... there’s some trauma... I had to pick up a rock.”

Another participant connected adult well-being to broader district systems, especially for staff and leaders of color. This participant described Harrison Park as a school where their racial, cultural, and linguistic identity felt valued, while also naming a larger district pattern of insufficient support:

“I’m in a much better place now that I’m at a school where my racial, cultural, linguistic identity is an asset... That wasn’t the case in previous spaces.”

“I continue to see... an exodus of administrators of color, of staff of color, because there aren’t systems and supports in place.”

These accounts suggest a dual reality. Harrison Park's internal culture, staff cohesion, and leadership stability helped sustain morale and retention through significant change. At the same time, participants experienced district-level processes as stressful, uneven, and insufficiently attentive to adult well-being, particularly for staff and leaders of color.

School-Level Capacity and District Support During and Post SEGC Implementation

Participants consistently described SEGC implementation at Harrison Park as a process in which school-level staff had to create systems, solve problems, and manage complex implementation tasks without a clear district playbook, defined responsibilities, or sufficient central-office guidance. Participants did not describe themselves as lacking commitment or capacity. Rather, they described having to rely heavily on their own experience, relationships, and initiative because the transition did not come with a clear implementation playbook. One participant described the challenge of staffing and planning the new middle school while simultaneously managing the departing elementary school:

“I was in charge of doing the staffing and hiring and getting all the people ready for the middle school, and at the same time doing all of that work for the elementary school that was departing... There was not this, ‘Here’s this guidebook, here’s what you’re supposed to be doing.’ It was just I had to figure it out.”

Participants also described how some SEGC implementation supports were not clearly defined. In one account, a person assigned to support planning arrived without clear direction from the district about what the role was supposed to involve. As the participant recalled, when asked, “What were you told to do?” the person responded that they had not been given specific guidance.

Participants also described this lack of clarity as part of a broader district pattern. Harrison Park staff often acted first, solved immediate problems, and communicated upward afterward rather than waiting for central office direction. One participant described this posture as grounded in responsibility to the school community:

“I don’t need that support. That’s not who I am... I’m just gonna do what I need to do... because that’s what our community needs.”

Participants also pointed to missed opportunities to strengthen support for historically underserved students. One participant described a grant opportunity that could have connected the building renovation to expanded student programming, but said it was not supported by district leadership. Another described the creation of a newcomer hub for recently arrived multilingual students, which participants saw as successful but short-lived:

“We worked really hard to build a newcomer hub...and we ran it for a year. It was very successful... and we were really seeing a different set of growth... Unfortunately, [the department] pulled back on it right away. It was really heartbreaking.”

These examples shaped participants’ broader view that district support was often episodic and fragile. They saw Harrison Park as capable of building strong local solutions, but not always

supported by durable district systems. One participant summarized this concern by describing PPS as large but lacking clear, consistent processes:

“We’re a huge district that doesn’t seemingly have very clear systems on how to do, like, almost anything.”

For Harrison Park, then, staff felt equipped to support students and families largely because of school-level expertise, trust, and improvisation, not because SEGC came with a comprehensive implementation infrastructure.

Historically Underserved Students and Families

Participants described SEGC changes as significantly altering Harrison Park’s racial and socioeconomic composition. Before the transition, participants described Harrison Park as one of the most racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse schools in the district, with a small white student population, a large Somali and broader African student population, and substantial Asian and Latino/a/x communities. One participant recalled:

“When I started here, I think we were probably the most diverse school... We were 14% white. And... we had like 38 languages... our black population was about half African American and half African.”

Another participant emphasized the scale of the shift:

“When I came here... we were about 17% white... one of the largest Somali populations... very, very diverse... now we are, I think at least 42% white, and that has really shifted things in the building.”

Administrative data show a similar pattern. When Harrison Park shifted from a K–8 to a middle school, the more diverse K–5 population left for Clark along with the elementary portion of the Mandarin DLI program, while a reconfigured middle school population arrived through new feeders. In raw counts, Black enrollment declined from 143 students in 2022–23 to 57 students in 2023–24, white enrollment declined from 118 to 98, and total enrollment declined from 618 to 355. The following year, the middle school grew to 411 students with a whiter racial composition than the prior K–8 school.

Participants also raised concerns about how power and voice operated during SEGC. Several participants perceived that white, middle-class, and more affluent parents from across the region had greater influence in SEGC deliberations, while families of color, immigrant families, and lower-income families had less access to the process. One participant described the subtext they heard in some parent concerns about Harrison Park:

“We want our kids to be in the neighborhood school... we want this, or we want that... what wasn’t being said is they didn’t want to come here. That was very clear... what it really came

down to is, 'I don't want my kids to go to school with those kids.' And we know who those kids are... our students of color."

Another participant summarized the broader pattern this way:

"The more white and affluent a community was, the less change that they saw, and the more likely that their voice was heard and their desires honored."

Participants worried that historically underserved families, including Black, Latino/a/x, Native, immigrant, and low-income families, had less time, language access, familiarity with district processes, and political influence to shape SEGC decisions. As one participant explained:

"Our white population is definitely the predominant population [districtwide], and they're also the noisiest, and they also know how to work the system the best... Our families [at Harrison Park] aren't the ones that are getting heard as much... I worry... the voices of our Black, Latinx, Native families weren't heard."

Family survey responses add nuance to this picture. Among current Harrison Park family respondents, 83% agreed that their student's culture and language were valued at school, 78% felt welcome communicating with the school about their student's needs, and 76% reported that their student felt a sense of belonging. At the same time, instructional and equity items were more mixed as 46% agreed that the learning environment was high quality, 54% agreed that the school responded helpfully when their student needed additional support, and 66% agreed that learning experiences had been fair or equitable.

Open-ended family responses also complicate the diversity-loss theme. Many current families entered Harrison Park through new SEGC feeder patterns and therefore compared Harrison Park to their prior middle school pathway, not to Harrison Park's former K–8 baseline. One family described the challenge as "mainly proximity to middle school now farther" and a "perceived loss of prestige switching from Tabor Middle to Harrison Park," while also naming benefits such as "attending a more ethnically and socio-economically diverse school," having a reliable bus, and seeing their child learn to use TriMet independently. This does not contradict staff accounts of diversity loss. Rather, both can be true: Harrison Park became less diverse than it had been as a K–8 school, while still being more diverse than some of the schools from which new students arrived.

A Spanish-speaking DLI family also described the transition as an adjustment while emphasizing that teacher continuity helped:

"El cambio por un año a Clark (5to. Grado) y luego de regreso a Harrison fue un ajuste que tomó un poco de tiempo... Afortunadamente los maestros se mantuvieron en su puesto y eso ayudó mucho."

Translated, the caregiver was essentially saying that “The move for one year to Clark (5th grade) and then back to Harrison was an adjustment that took a little time... Fortunately, the teachers stayed in their positions, and that helped a lot.” This comment reinforces a broader theme in the Harrison Park case: the transition was difficult, but continuity in relationships helped some families and students absorb the change.

Learning Environments After SEGC

Participants were clear that, from a programmatic and facilities standpoint, Harrison Park’s middle school students now experience a richer learning environment than they did under the K–8 model. Participants described the K–8 configuration as limiting the school’s ability to fully serve middle school students. One participant reflected:

“We were not doing our middle school students justice when we were K–8... nine grade levels... a Mandarin immersion school... a district behavioral classroom... I could do all of those things marginally, but never felt like I was doing an outstanding job at any one thing.”

As a comprehensive middle school, Harrison Park was able to offer more electives, arts and music opportunities, library access, and interventions. One participant described the shift this way:

“Our middle school students definitely have a richer experience... they didn’t have a whole lot of electives... now they have access to librarian, band, art, more often.”

Family survey responses align with this programmatic improvement. Sixty-four percent of current Harrison Park families agreed that their student could access the classes, programs, or learning opportunities they needed, and 74% agreed that their student had access to programs and opportunities regardless of race, language, disability, or family background. Participants also described the capital project as a major improvement to the learning environment. One participant emphasized that the rebuilt interior signaled care and respect for students:

“This school now has been rebuilt from the inside. The outside facade is the same, but 40 million has been put into this building... every student deserves to be in a space that is aesthetically pleasing where they feel valued.”

Participants also noted improvements in the behavioral climate after the shift to a focused middle school grade span. With K–1 grades no longer in the building and the school focused on grades 6–8, participants described fewer serious behavioral incidents and a generally calmer middle school environment:

“What’s happening here... it’s pretty minimal. It’s a pretty chill environment in terms of behaviors... We don’t have very many fights. We don’t have very many big problems... we have a lot of little problems.”

At the same time, participants described classrooms where students had very different levels of academic preparation and family resources. Some students were at or above grade level and had strong support outside of school, while others were significantly below grade level or needed more intensive academic, behavioral, or social-emotional support. Participants said this wide range of needs made it more difficult for teachers to differentiate instruction and support all students equitably. One participant described the challenge:

“We have a significant chunk of students who are at or above grade level, and a significant chunk who are well below, and there isn’t a significant middle ground... that sets a really difficult space for teachers.”

This growing disparity, combined with limited intervention resources, made differentiation more difficult. Participants therefore described the learning environment as improved in structure, facilities, and opportunities, but still challenged by academic stratification and uneven student need.

Overall Interpretation

The Harrison Park case shows why SEGC cannot be evaluated only by whether a school gained or lost enrollment, received a program, or changed grade configurations. According to participants, Harrison Park experienced real gains, including a stronger middle school structure, improved facilities, more electives, better access to specialist teachers, and a clearer developmental focus for early adolescents. Participants consistently recognized these benefits and, in many cases, viewed the shift to a comprehensive middle school as educationally important.

At the same time, these gains came alongside substantial disruption and unresolved equity concerns. Harrison Park became less racially and socioeconomically diverse than it had been as a K–8 school, lost a substantial portion of its Black and multilingual learner population, and entered a new phase in which families’ experiences of diversity differed depending on whether they were comparing Harrison Park to its former K–8 identity or to the schools and neighborhoods from which they arrived. Participants also described a district process that felt reactive, overly responsive to the loudest voices, and insufficiently guided by a coherent equity-centered implementation strategy.

What helped Harrison Park absorb the change was not simply the design of SEGC. It was the school’s internal stability. Long-standing leadership, strong staff cohesion, shared hardship, and deep commitment to students helped the school manage a concentration of transitions that might otherwise have produced greater instability. The personnel record supports this interpretation: staff continuity through the immediate conversion was unusually strong, even though more recent retention patterns suggest that the strain may be catching up over time.

In sum, SEGC at Harrison Park functioned as an intense, locally managed remaking of the school. It expanded opportunity for middle school students while also raising difficult questions about demographic change, equitable voice, implementation support, and district accountability.

Kellogg Middle School

Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Kellogg Middle School was impacted through three major anticipated changes:

- one feeder or boundary change to Hosford
- two small boundary changes to Lane
- one Spanish DLI program receiving change from Mt. Tabor.

Kellogg was expected to remain a Franklin High School feeder middle school serving both neighborhood students and Spanish DLI students. However, the SEGC recommendation adjusted Kellogg's enrollment in two directions. On one hand, Kellogg was expected to lose the Creston neighborhood feeder to Hosford, along with two small areas on the southern edge of Kellogg's boundary that would shift to Lane. On the other hand, Kellogg was expected to receive the Spanish DLI program from Mt. Tabor, specifically the Atkinson-fed Spanish DLI middle school pathway. Altogether, 177 students enrolled at the time of implementation were expected to be impacted by the changes.

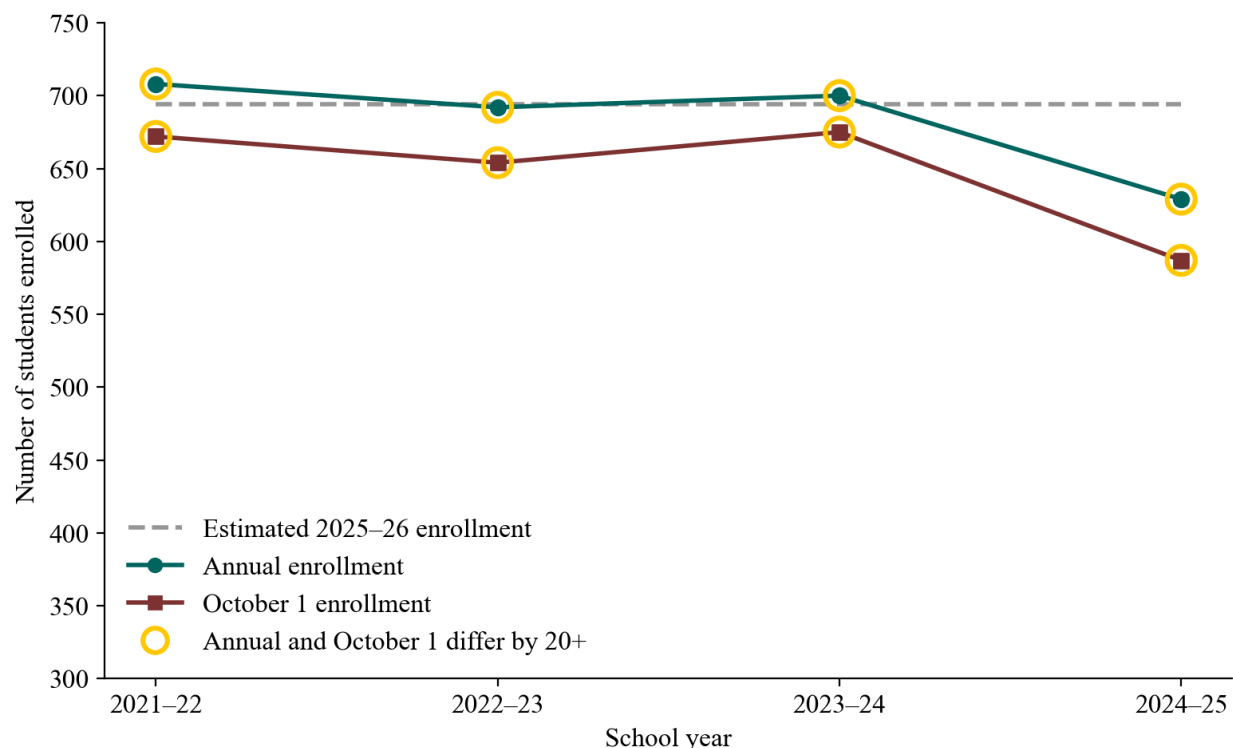
The net effect was expected to be a modest enrollment decrease. District documents listed Kellogg's enrollment at 684 students in 2021–22, with a 2025–26 forecast of 727 students. If the recommended changes had been in place in 2021–22, Kellogg's estimated enrollment would have been 659 students, with a 2025–26 forecast of 694 students. Utilization was also expected to remain high, shifting from 87.9% in 2021–22 and 93.4% in the 2025–26 forecast to 84.7% and 89.2%, respectively. In short, Kellogg was expected to remain one of the larger and more highly utilized middle schools in Southeast Portland, while becoming the consolidated middle school site for Spanish DLI.

Participants

Across the Kellogg Middle School conversations, we heard from three school-based participants who brought broad perspectives on the school's post-SEGC experience alongside 11 staff and 21 family survey respondents. Together, their accounts provided insight into school climate, staffing, student support, intervention services, dual language programming, and the ongoing effects of boundary and program changes. Since Kellogg had recently reopened as part of the broader Southeast Portland middle school reconfiguration, most participants spoke primarily from a post-SEGC vantage point. They described how Kellogg was experiencing the effects of SEGC after implementation, including the consolidation of the Spanish DLI pathway, staffing reductions, student support needs, and the development of the school's middle school culture.

One participant also brought a broader cross-school perspective connected to the Spanish DLI consolidation. This perspective helped illuminate how SEGC-related changes were experienced before, during, and after implementation across schools connected to that program pathway. Importantly, the Kellogg conversations provide insight into how a newly reopened middle school absorbed SEGC-related boundary changes, program consolidation, and post-implementation staffing and student support challenges.

Figure 7.1. Kellogg estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2021–22 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Overview

The aim of this chapter is to illuminate how SEGC related decisions were experienced at Kellogg not only as boundary, feeder pattern, or program placement changes, but as changes that affected the daily work of school leaders and educators, the stability of the Spanish dual language immersion program, the supports available to students, and the broader functioning of the school community.

Findings

Overall Impacts of SEGC-Related Changes at Kellogg

Across the Kellogg conversations and survey respondents, participants described SEGC-related changes as part of a larger set of structural shifts that shaped the school after its reopening. Kellogg was described as a diverse middle school with a substantial Spanish DLI program, a strong internal commitment to students, and a staff culture that participants viewed as improving over time. At the same time, participants emphasized that the consolidation of Spanish DLI, boundary adjustments, and post-reopening growth occurred alongside deep budget cuts, staffing reductions, and ongoing uncertainty about the school's capacity to sustain the support students needed.

Additionally, participants described SEGC as strengthening the coherence and identity of the Spanish DLI pathway, while broader fiscal and staffing conditions limited the school's ability to fully realize the benefits of that change. In their accounts, Kellogg's staff remained committed to students and to one another, but the school was repeatedly asked to do more with fewer adults, fewer support roles, and less stability.

Participants described Kellogg as a place where students want to be and where families actively seek access. One participant pointed to the school's strong demand for transfers and its "unique diversity," including Latino/a/x, Black, Asian American, Native, Pacific Islander, multiracial, and white students. Administrative records are consistent with this portrait of Kellogg as a substantively diverse middle school. Latino/a/x students increased from 30% of enrollment in 2021–22 to 34% in 2024–25. Black students remained between 5% and 6%, multiracial students remained at about 10%, and Asian students declined from 11% to 7%. White students remained the largest single racial group, at approximately 41% to 42% across all four years. In other words, Kellogg's diversity was real and stable through the SEGC implementation window, rather than simply a new outcome produced by SEGC.

Participants also emphasized that Kellogg's diversity and program strengths unfolded within a difficult staffing context. They described the school as losing 11 staff members in one year and five more the next, including key support roles and experienced DLI teachers. Participants did not always separate SEGC-related impacts from broader budget and staffing challenges. However, they consistently described the same pattern: SEGC created or reinforced important programmatic possibilities at Kellogg, but the school's ability to deliver on those possibilities was constrained by staffing cuts, increased workloads, and fragile student support systems.

Morale and Retention

Participants described morale at Kellogg as both improved and fragile. On one hand, participants described a stronger internal culture, better relationships with current building leadership, and a more cohesive staff climate than in earlier years. One participant described staff survey results as

having improved sharply over time, especially around staff relationships with building administration. They attributed this improvement to a people-centered approach that emphasized listening, matching staff to roles that fit their strengths, and creating opportunities for teachers to lead in areas such as advisory and social-emotional learning.

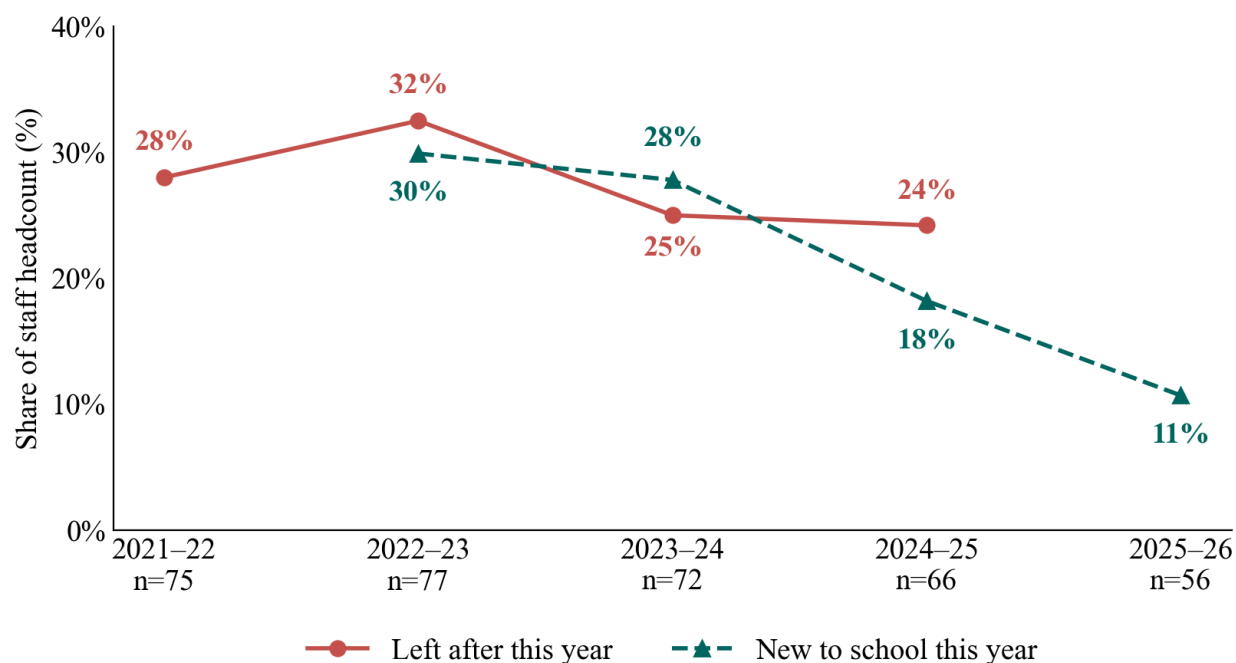
Teachers also described a strong sense of collegial respect. One teacher described Kellogg as “a fairly united staff” where “everyone on staff has a really high regard for everyone.” This internal cohesion mattered because many staff had worked together across multiple years and schools, and those relationships helped stabilize the school during a difficult period.

At the same time, participants repeatedly described burnout, insecurity, and fatigue. Connected to SEGC changes, one teacher noted that “we have been burnt out for a number of years,” connecting that burnout to repeated staffing reductions, expanding roles, and the emotional toll of trying to maintain support for students with fewer adults. Retention and job security emerged as central concerns. One teacher reported having been “cut or unassigned twice... in five years,” describing how hard it was to imagine a long-term future in the district under such conditions. Another described living “year to year” and concluded, “this doesn’t feel like a secure job.” A different participant’s account reinforced this sense of instability. This participant described the pain of seeing two long-serving, highly regarded DLI teachers unassigned because of staffing reductions:

“This year was rough because we had to take two 10-year veterans or DLI teachers that are loved by the kids, loved by the community, loved by their peers, and we had to unassign them... Those are hard because we love them. We care about them.”

Personnel records support participants’ description of ongoing instability. Of approximately 75 staff present each year, between 24% and 32%, left Kellogg after each of the first four years. New-staff intake remained between 18% and 30% each year. This level of sustained turnover was unusual among SEGC schools, where turnover more often spiked during a transition year and then stabilized. At Kellogg, turnover was elevated from the beginning and remained elevated. Confirmed district-exit rates were 20% and 23% in the first two years, indicating that early churn included a substantial share of staff leaving PPS entirely rather than simply transferring to other district schools.

The staffing footprint also contracted substantially. Total staff FTE fell from 74 in 2021–22 to 55 in 2025–26, a net reduction of 19 FTE. Kellogg also experienced three different principals across its first five years. Participants described current staff-leadership relations as improving, but that improvement occurred within the context of prior leadership turnover, repeated staffing cuts, and ongoing uncertainty. Thus, Kellogg’s morale story is best understood as a partial recovery in internal culture amid continued structural instability.

Figure 7.2. Kellogg's turnover rate

Note: The sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff.

Capacity to Support Students and Families

Participants consistently described Kellogg staff as deeply committed to supporting students, while also feeling under-resourced and structurally constrained. Teachers described clear awareness of students' needs in areas such as social-emotional learning, regulation, conflict resolution, restorative approaches, and individualized support. However, they also said the training and staffing needed to implement those supports were often insufficient, especially for teachers expected to meet a wide range of needs in general education classrooms. One teacher explained:

"We have a real need for social, emotional skill building... and it needs more specific attention and more expert approach... Kids who need a check in, check out or need an escort plan, we struggle to follow through on things like that because teachers are being spread too thin."

Participants described the work as a "management beast," where teachers were expected to plan instruction, meet legal and IEP-related responsibilities, cover for missing adult roles, manage student behavior, and respond to crises with limited backup. Teachers described calling the office during a crisis and reaching voicemail or not receiving in-person follow-up because there were not enough administrators or support staff available to respond. One participant described similar constraints from a resource-allocation perspective. With limited discretionary FTE, the school had to choose between hiring climate or coaching staff and investing in reading and math

intervention. The participant framed the decision to prioritize intervention as a moral necessity because so many students were reading or performing below grade level.

Other participants agreed that intervention classes were making a meaningful difference for students. They described reading and math intervention as helping students feel “seen and heard and helped and met where they are.” However, these interventions were fragile because preserving them required sacrificing other support roles. One teacher described working as a full-time math interventionist while also teaching a PE elective and leading a grade-level success work, essentially carrying multiple jobs within one FTE. Another teacher warned that intervention access could shrink as staffing was reduced:

“These intervention classes are what’s making the difference overall, and we’re having to scramble to keep them... Those classes are going to grow. Those kids are going to have less access to interventions if they need them.”

Personnel records align with participants’ accounts of reduced support capacity. Counselor FTE declined from 4.0 in 2021–22 to 3.0 in 2024–25. Social worker FTE declined from 2.0 in 2021–22 to zero in 2025–26. The combined student-management, behavior, and mental-health category dropped from 3.5 FTE in 2022–23 to 1.5 FTE in 2025–26. Kellogg also lost about 2.5 FTE in education assistant roles between its opening and 2025–26.

Staff survey findings reinforce the same pattern. Among the 11 staff who responded, only three (27%) agreed that they had the resources they needed to do their jobs effectively, and all 11 indicated that SEGC-related changes added stress to their work. One staff respondent wrote that Kellogg needed “another elective teacher and more teachers in general to create more flexibility in our master schedule,” noting that classes were “full, especially electives,” and that scheduling students had become difficult. These findings suggest that Kellogg had committed staff and promising student supports, especially interventions, but lacked the stable staffing capacity needed to make those supports broad, sustainable, and reliable across the school.

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants described emotional well-being at Kellogg as shaped by two opposing realities: meaningful relational support inside the school and persistent stress from workload, staffing cuts, and district-level decisions, in which some of these participants contributed to SEGC changes. One participant described receiving useful professional development, mentoring, and induction support, including coaching on difficult tasks such as staffing conversations. This participant described being able to call district leaders and mentors when they felt “lost,” and characterized that support as important for sustaining new principals.

Teachers also described collegial and principal support as strengths. They described a staff that “get[s] along really well” and “work[s] together very well.” One teacher noted that with the current principal, “if I have any questions or concerns or needs, I can raise them,” while another

said they “could bounce any idea off” the principal. These relationships helped create a sense of local trust, even when staff felt the larger system constrained what could actually change.

At the same time, participants described significant emotional fatigue. Teachers repeatedly referenced burnout, “doing more with less,” and the stress of filling gaps left by staffing reductions. They described teaching multiple preps, covering electives outside their primary expertise, leading schoolwide initiatives, and taking on unpaid or informal duties such as supervising dismissal and after-school safety. One teacher described the daily stress of dismissal this way:

“I’m just trying to help the special ed buses get out, or help kids get across the street without getting hit by a car, and then parents are actively trying to hit them with their cars... Parents have only tried to hit me with their cars three times.”

Another participant described days when behavioral crises were happening simultaneously across the building, leaving limited adult capacity to respond:

“If there’s like a fight on the third floor and then there’s a kid having a crisis on the second floor and then there’s something happening on the first floor, and there’s only one administrator in the building, you have to pick which kid to go deal with.”

Staff survey responses are consistent with this mixed picture. Of the 11 staff who responded to the workload item, five agreed (45%) that their current workload was manageable. Four of 11 agreed that morale at the school was high, and five of 11 agreed that they felt emotionally supported at work.

Class-size pressure was another major source of stress. Only 1 of 11 staff (9%) respondents agreed that class sizes were distributed in a manageable way. One staff member wrote that “classes of almost 40 are too large for students to thrive in.” Another wrote that “staff cuts and increased classroom sizes create a culture of stress,” with student behaviors “taking over and causing disruptions, which create an unproductive learning environment.”

Participants also expressed frustration with district-level decisions, including shifting deficit figures and investments they perceived as disconnected from direct student support. One participant argued that the system had become “top heavy” and that more licensed educators should be working directly with students:

“More people who are licensed to work with kids should be working with kids, and there should be less roles outside of the classroom... If you’re in our industry and you’re not working with kids, I think that you need to be put under a magnifying glass.”

These accounts reflect professional pride and commitment alongside a perception that the system is not adequately configured to sustain the emotional health of school-based staff. Participants

discussed initiatives for historically underserved students, but they did not provide enough direct evidence to analyze whether emotional well-being differed by staff race or ethnicity.

Experiences of Historically Underserved Students and Families

Participants repeatedly described Kellogg's diversity as central to the school's identity and mission. They described the school as serving Latino/a/x students, Black students, Asian American students, multiracial students, Native and Pacific Islander students, and white students, as well as students in Spanish DLI and students needing academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support.

Administrative records support the description of Kellogg as a diverse middle school with a substantial Spanish DLI pathway. The Spanish DLI program grew from 159 students at Kellogg's opening in 2021–22 to 233 students in 2023–24, where it remained in 2024–25. The consolidation of Spanish DLI from Mt. Tabor is visible in the data between 2022–23 and 2023–24, when Kellogg's DLI enrollment rose by 62 students.

Participants described this consolidation as especially important for Latino/a/x students and Spanish DLI students. One teacher argued that having “the dual language community all centered in one location is much more helpful,” especially compared with the prior configuration in which there was only “one section per grade” and limited collaboration among DLI teachers. At Kellogg, the DLI team initially grew, allowing for stronger collaboration and a more coherent program.

At the same time, participants offered a critical interpretation of the broader SEGC process. One participant argued that the schools and communities most affected by boundary and program changes were often communities of color and lower-income communities, while wealthier and whiter neighborhoods experienced less disruption. The participant stated:

“If you live in Sellwood, your school didn't change. If you live in Laurelhurst, your school didn't change... across all five or six schools that had big changes, it was communities of color who were most affected and lowest socio-economic.”

The same participant recalled early SEGC proposals that would have placed both Chinese and Spanish immersion at Harrison Park rather than in the new Kellogg building. Families perceived this as racially inequitable:

“That was the perception of shoving all the Latino kids and all of the Chinese immersion students at Harrison Park and letting a bunch of white neighborhood kids be here at the brand new school... It was a big racial issue.”

According to participants, advocacy helped shift Spanish DLI into Kellogg, and the current configuration is viewed as better serving Latino/a/x students and DLI students by placing the

program in a more central and well-resourced middle school building. However, participants also worried that repeated budget cuts, especially the unassignment of experienced DLI teachers, undermined the stability of the very program SEGC had consolidated.

These accounts suggest a nuanced equity finding. At Kellogg, SEGC appears to have strengthened one important equity goal by consolidating Spanish DLI into a larger, more coherent middle school program. At the same time, participants believed that the broader SEGC process placed disproportionate burdens on lower-income communities and communities of color across Southeast Portland. In other words, SEGC may have advanced equity in one programmatic respect at Kellogg while also reinforcing perceptions that communities with less power carried more of the disruption.

Quality of Learning Environments

Participants described Kellogg's learning environment as shaped by the tension between a standardized comprehensive middle school model and the diverse needs of the students the school serves. Participants noted that PPS uses high-quality instructional materials aligned to state and national standards, which can provide consistency across schools and smoother transitions for students who move between buildings. However, a participant also described limits to this approach:

“The curriculum doesn’t always speak to the diverse needs of our kids... teaching and learning for... brown and black populations works differently than a standardized kind of sit and get type of model.”

One person argued that Kellogg needed more differentiated, inquiry-driven, and experiential approaches to better engage its students. However, implementing that kind of pedagogy at scale was difficult under current staffing and resource constraints, especially when many students entered below grade level in reading and math. Other teachers' accounts reinforced this concern. They described large classes, multiple preps, and wide-ranging academic needs as barriers to deeper instruction. One teacher framed the challenge this way:

“Teachers can only go so deep when you’re doing three different things with 35 different kids. So how can we get more adults... working with smaller groups of kids?”

Within this context, intervention classes were described as a bright spot. Teachers described reading and math interventions as transformative for some students, especially when students' behavioral challenges were connected to academic frustration or low skill levels. Participants described students in intervention classes as feeling “seen and heard and helped and met where they are.” They also described notable academic growth among some participating students.

However, administrative records complicate any simple interpretation of the learning environment. Kellogg's exclusionary discipline rate increased across the SEGC implementation

window, from 0.13 incidents per student in 2021–22 to 0.17 in 2022–23, 0.27 in 2023–24, and 0.38 in 2024–25. Chronic absenteeism remained between 38% and 40% across the four years, while attendance remained between 87% and 88%. These are descriptive school-level trends, not causal estimates of SEGC’s effect. Still, the direction of the discipline trend sits in tension with participants’ descriptions of intervention gains for participating students. It also overlaps with the period when behavior, student-management, and mental-health support staffing declined.

The most accurate interpretation is that Kellogg’s learning environment contained both promising and strained elements. The school offered important intervention support and a more coherent Spanish DLI structure, but large class sizes, reduced support staffing, contributed to increased discipline incidents, and persistent absenteeism limited the extent to which those supports could reach all students consistently.

How SEGC Changes Played Out at Kellogg

At Kellogg, SEGC-related changes were experienced most directly through the consolidation of the Spanish DLI program and related boundary and feeder-pattern adjustments. Spanish DLI students from Mt. Tabor arrived in 2023–24, two years after Kellogg’s reopening. Administrative records show 58 students leaving Mt. Tabor’s Spanish DLI program and 62 students being added to Kellogg’s enrollment. One teacher described moving from another middle school to Kellogg along with students when DLI was centralized. The participant acknowledged that the transition was disruptive for students, some of whom experienced being “tossed together” and continued to describe the move as “mildly traumatic.” Over time, however, this participant viewed the consolidation as programmatically beneficial:

“Specifically here, having the dual language community all centered in one location is much more helpful... It is better for the teachers and it’s better for the program at the middle school level, in my opinion.”

This consolidation did not occur in isolation. Participants located it within a broader sequence of events. Kellogg’s reopening, the multi-year SEGC process, leadership transitions, the end of pandemic relief funds, declining state and district budget capacity, and repeated staffing reductions. During 2023–24 and 2024–25, several pressures converged: Spanish DLI consolidation, principal transition, major FTE reductions, and an exclusionary discipline rate that more than doubled between 2022–23 and 2024–25. These patterns do not prove causation, but they show how SEGC-related changes interacted with other conditions that shaped Kellogg’s experience.

Participants also pointed to leadership, staff culture, and district communication as key factors in how Kellogg absorbed these changes. They contrasted earlier leadership instability and strained teacher-administration relationships with the current principal’s more relational, people-centered approach, which they believed helped repair “super old wounds” and rebuild trust. They also

described a relatively cohesive staff, many of whom had prior working relationships, as an important buffer against the stress of change.

At the district level, participants' experiences were more mixed. One participant described central office leaders as generally accessible and responsive when called. Others, however, expressed skepticism about district priorities and communication, citing shifting deficit numbers, confusing SEGC scenarios, and contested investments. One teacher argued that the district took too long in SEGC planning and that a shorter, clearer, more transparent process that acknowledged fiscal realities and equity tradeoffs would have better served communities.

Overall, participants' accounts suggest that SEGC-related changes at Kellogg, especially the Spanish DLI consolidation, were experienced as educationally sound in principle but difficult to sustain in practice. The consolidation strengthened the program's identity and coherence, but underfunding, staffing reductions, leadership transitions, and reduced support capacity limited the school's ability to realize the full promise of those changes for students, families, and staff.

Overall Interpretation

The Kellogg case illustrates one of the central tensions of SEGC which is that a structural change can be programmatically sensible and still be difficult to implement equitably if the school does not have stable staffing, adequate support roles, and sufficient resources. Kellogg appears to have benefited from the consolidation of Spanish DLI in several important ways. Participants described a stronger DLI identity, more collaboration among DLI teachers, and a clearer middle school pathway for students. Administrative data show the program grew substantially after consolidation.

At the same time, Kellogg's ability to sustain these gains was undermined by repeated staffing reductions, ongoing turnover, reduced support capacity, large classes, increased discipline rates, and persistent absenteeism. Participants described a school with strong commitment, improving internal culture, and promising interventions, but also one where staff were stretched thin and where key student supports remained fragile.

Mt. Tabor Middle School

Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Mt. Tabor Middle School was impacted through three major anticipated changes:

- one boundary change
- one middle school feeder change
- one program change.

Mt. Tabor remained a middle school serving its neighborhood, Japanese DLI, and, at the time, Spanish DLI students, but the proposal removed some students and program enrollment from Mt. Tabor to reduce crowding and support broader regional program consolidation. A small boundary area east of NE 60th Avenue was reassigned to Harrison Park. The current Atkinson neighborhood feeder pattern also shifted from Mt. Tabor to Harrison Park. In addition, the Atkinson Spanish DLI pathway shifted from Mt. Tabor to Kellogg. These changes were estimated to impact 180 students in total once implemented.

The expectation was that Mt. Tabor's enrollment and utilization would decline substantially, from 645 students in 2021–22, to a 2025–26 forecast of 660 students, to an estimated 479 students if the changes had been in place in 2021–22, and to a 2025–26 forecast of 456 students. In short, Mt. Tabor was expected to become less crowded, while Harrison Park gained neighborhood feeder enrollment and Kellogg became the regional home for Spanish DLI at the middle school level.

Participants

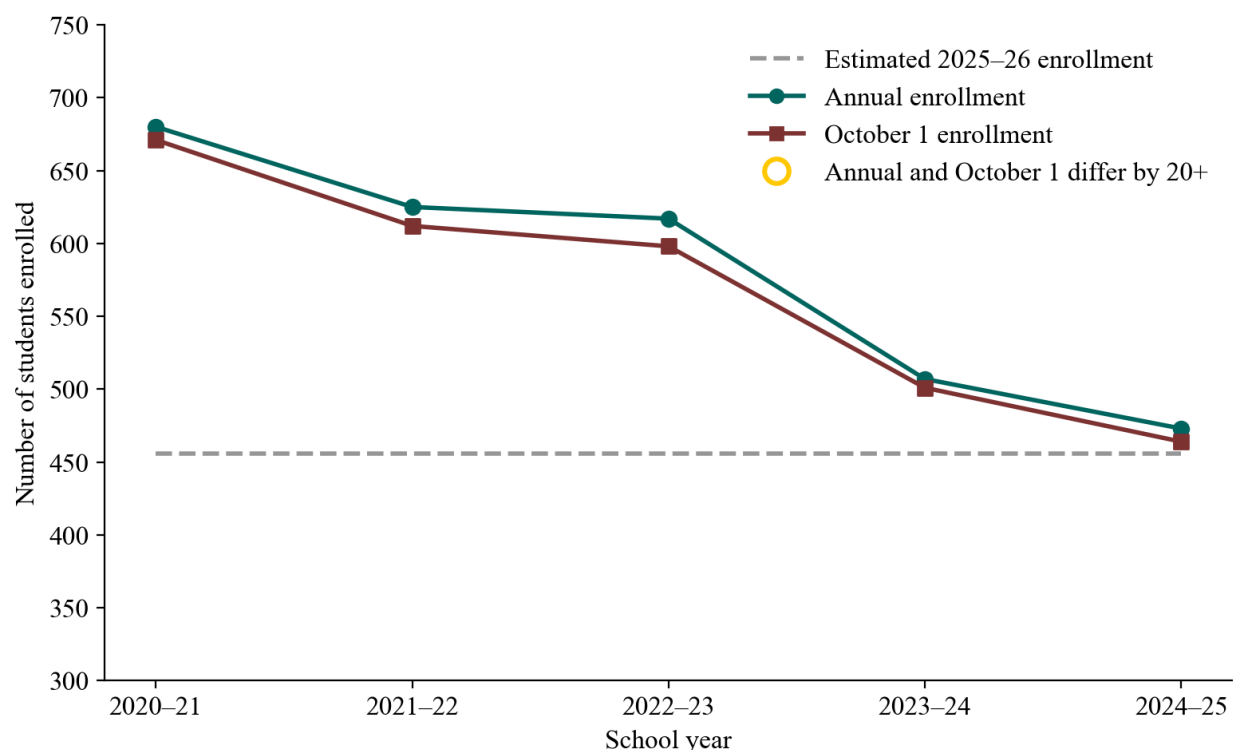
Across the Mt. Tabor Middle School conversations, we heard from seven school-based interview and focus group participants who brought a range of perspectives on the school's SEGC-related experience. In addition, 11 staff and 27 family members and caregivers responded to surveys. Collectively, participants spoke about changes in enrollment, staffing, student support, specialized services, school culture, learning conditions, and the broader identity of the school community.

The participant group included both long-standing members of the Mt. Tabor community and participants who became connected to the school as SEGC planning or implementation was underway. Three of the seven participants were at Mt. Tabor before, during, and after SEGC-related changes, which allowed them to describe how the school shifted over time. Four participants were present during and after the SEGC-related changes, offering insight into how

the school experienced implementation and how those changes continued to shape current conditions.

Together, these perspectives provide both historical and current insight into Mt. Tabor's SEGC-related experience, including how participants understood changes in the school's enrollment, diversity, staffing, learning environment, student support capacity, and internal culture.

Figure 8.1. Mt. Tabor estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Overview

In this chapter, we share findings from survey respondents, administrative data, interviews and focus groups conducted with school based participants at Mt. Tabor to better understand how SEGC related changes were experienced within this school community. More specifically, the aim of this chapter is to illuminate how SEGC related decisions were experienced at Mt. Tabor not only as boundary, feeder pattern, or program placement changes, but as changes that affected the daily work of educators, the supports available to students, the school's racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity, and the identity and functioning of the school community.

Findings

A Strong School Community Experiencing Cumulative Loss

Across the Mt. Tabor administrative data, survey response, and conversations, participants described SEGC-related changes as a multi-year process that reshaped the school's size, composition, staffing, and program capacity. Participants repeatedly emphasized that Mt. Tabor entered SEGC as a large, over-capacity middle school with multiple feeders and language pathways. After SEGC-related changes, the school lost a feeder, portions of another boundary area, and its Spanish DLI program. Participants connected these changes to a substantial enrollment decline, repeated staffing reductions, larger classes, fewer electives, reduced supports, and diminished racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Administrative records support the broad arc participants described, while clarifying some of the details. Mt. Tabor's enrollment declined from 680 students in 2020–21 to 473 students in 2024–25, with the steepest single-year drop occurring between 2022–23 and 2023–24, the year the Spanish DLI program left. Staffing also declined substantially, from about 58 FTE in 2020–21 to about 33 FTE in 2025–26. The largest headcount drop corresponded with the departure of the Spanish DLI program.

Participants did not describe this as a single moment of disruption, but as a slow erosion. Each year brought new reductions, sometimes several staff positions at a time, until Mt. Tabor fell below the enrollment level participants understood as necessary to sustain a robust comprehensive middle school. Several participants described this as especially frustrating because SEGC had been presented as part of a broader regional balancing strategy, but the anticipated future changes that might have replenished Mt. Tabor's enrollment did not occur.

Nevertheless, nearly every participant emphasized Mt. Tabor's strong internal culture. Participants described the school as caring, collaborative, well-organized, and deeply committed to students. They praised the strength of staff relationships, the consistency of schoolwide systems, and the sense that students experience Mt. Tabor as a safe and supportive place to learn. As one participant explained:

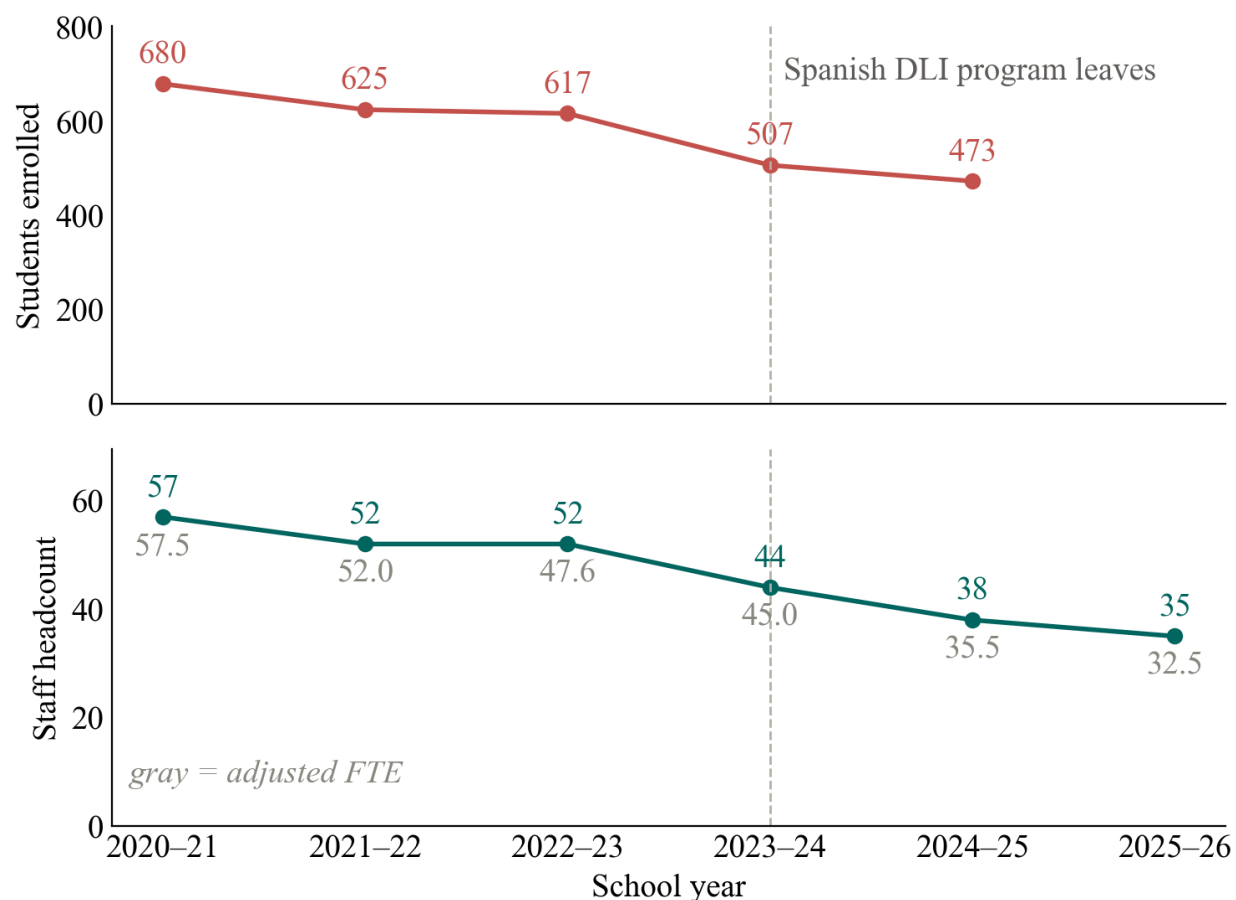
“This is such a good school because we have great, seasoned, caring teachers who collaborate...I wish more kids could come to the school, because they get a good education.”

Another participant described the school's climate this way:

“We have a really inclusive learning environment at the school...We work really hard to promote a safe, positive school climate where kids can feel like they belong.”

Participants essentially held two truths at once: Mt. Tabor remained a strong school community, and it also experienced SEGC as a process that reduced its enrollment, staffing, diversity, and program breadth without the compensating support or future balancing changes participants expected.

Figure 8.2. Mt. Tabor enrollment and staff counts, 2020–21 to 2025–26



Note: Student enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. The staff sample includes instructional employees, such as administrators, teachers, educational assistants, counselors, and specialists in addition to front office staff. Adjusted FTE distributes FTE evenly across positions in cases where employees held multiple positions and were assigned 1.0 FTE for every position.

Morale, Retention, and Trust

Participants drew a sharp distinction between trust inside the school and trust in district-level decision-making. Within Mt. Tabor, participants described strong collaboration, supportive school-based leadership, and shared systems that helped staff maintain a sense of cohesion despite repeated cuts. Participants described colleagues as working well together, supporting one another, and sustaining a strong learning environment for students.

The staff survey supports this picture of a strong internal climate. Among 11 Mt. Tabor staff respondents, 10 agreed that staff collaboration supported teaching and learning, 10 agreed (90%)

that the school climate was supportive for students and staff, and all 11 agreed that students experienced high-quality learning environments. However, the same respondents were more divided on morale as only 4 of 11 agreed (36%) that morale at the school was high.

Participants connected morale concerns to repeated staffing cuts. They described years of losing multiple staff positions, including educators they viewed as newer, more diverse, more energized, or more connected to equity and inclusion work. Participants experienced these losses as both practical and relational because fewer adults meant fewer support for students, but also fewer colleagues carrying the school's culture and equity commitments.

Personnel records help clarify this pattern. Staff departures from Mt. Tabor did not spike dramatically over time. In fact, departures eased across the study period. The larger issue was that departing staff were not replaced. New staff hires fell sharply after SEGC-related enrollment losses, which meant the school's workforce shrank. Staff FTE declined substantially even though most departures were internal moves within PPS rather than exits from the district. In other words, participants' sense of loss was not primarily about a mass exodus from the profession. It was about the school enrolling fewer students and employing fewer staff over time.

The personnel data also complicate participants' perceptions about staff diversity. The share of staff who were white remained relatively stable, while the absolute number of staff of color declined as the total workforce shrank. Participants who described losing colleagues of color were therefore naming a real loss in people, even though the proportional composition of the staff did not shift in the same way. The administrative data do not capture the age, energy, disability inclusion practices, or equity orientation that participants also associated with the colleagues they lost.

While participants described strong trust in school-based relationships, they expressed very low trust in district-level follow-through. Participants described unrealized promises, limited access to transitional supports, late changes to SEGC recommendations, and engagement processes that felt unlikely to alter final decisions. Several participants recalled that SEGC was supposed to be part of a broader multi-phase regional process, with future boundary work expected to bring new enrollment to Mt. Tabor. From their perspective, that follow-up work did not materialize, leaving the school smaller and less resourced.

One participant summarized this sense of broken promise:

"There were some promises from the district that weren't actualized... we've dropped... to 430, so we've lost about 300 students... and there's no support to make sure that we're still able to offer that robust programming."

Another participant described the engagement process as feeling performative:

“They spent so much money doing all of these research and focal groups [for SEGC]...but, you know, they basically did what they wanted to do in the first place. So what was the point?”

Survey responses reflect this lack of system-level trust. None of the 10 respondents who answered the question agreed that PPS followed through on its commitments, only 1 of 11 agreed (9%) that the district could be trusted to handle rightsizing fairly and equitably, and none of 11 agreed that SEGC changes were distributed equitably. Yet 10 of 11 respondents (90%) still planned to return to Mt. Tabor the following year. This pattern reinforces the larger finding that participants remained committed to the school, but expressed deep distrust in the district systems shaping the school’s future.

Capacity to Support Students and Families

Participants described Mt. Tabor staff as committed to supporting students and families, but not consistently equipped with the information, resources, or staffing needed to manage SEGC-related changes well. Some district support was available, including communication templates, offers for central staff to attend meetings, and limited transition funding. However, participants emphasized that much of the practical work of helping families understand and navigate the changes fell to individual schools. One participant explained:

“More of it... was on individual schools to be responsive to their own communities and figure out, how do we do that? ... It really was like on individual schools to figure out, how do we support our students and their parents in the best ways possible?”

Participants described local efforts to support families, including transition events where staff from receiving schools came to meet students and families, explain new school settings, and answer questions. However, participants also said that many classroom teachers, counselors, and staff working with students receiving specialized services did not receive enough practical guidance about how to respond to family questions or support students through the changes. One participant stated:

“No one talked to us at the building level or asked us our opinions about these [SEGC] changes... There wasn’t anything given to us like that.”

The staff survey aligns with this sense of limited support. Among Mt. Tabor respondents, only 2 of 11 agreed (18%) that they had the resources needed to do their jobs effectively. During the SEGC process specifically, none of 10 respondents agreed that they had the information and resources needed to respond to student and family questions, none agreed that they had support to address challenges, and only 1 of 10 agreed (10%) that they had the support needed overall.

Participants also described feeling unable to offer families meaningful solutions when students or siblings were affected by boundary and feeder changes. Staff said they could explain the rules, but they could not change them. In some cases, the only practical advice participants felt able to give families was to pursue hardship transfers or move into the desired boundary. One person stated:

“When families would talk to me about... their older sibling went here... all I could say was, there’s nothing I can do to help you unless you move into our neighborhood boundary.”

These accounts suggest that Mt. Tabor staff carried significant relational and communication labor during SEGC, but did so without a coherent field-level implementation strategy that equipped them to answer questions, support transitions, or resolve the concerns families brought to them.

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants described SEGC conditions as emotionally taxing, even though many felt supported within the school. The emotional strain was especially evident in descriptions of reduced staffing, larger classes, increased caseloads, and the feeling of not being able to meet students’ needs as fully as educators believed they should.

One participant described the impact of losing specialized staffing and absorbing additional student needs midyear:

“It’s hard because it’s just me... I have students that I know their needs are not getting met, even though I try really, really hard every single day...”

Other participants described classes with more than 40 students, multiple course preparations, and the loss of intervention positions and specialist supports. These conditions affected both instructional quality and professional efficacy. One participant explained:

“It’s more difficult to feel that you’re doing your job well. We’ve spread so thin, so many students, so many preps... I feel like just when you start to get momentum in one class... the other two get left behind.”

Staff survey responses converge with these accounts. Only 2 of 11 respondents (18%) agreed that their current workload was manageable, and only 2 of 10 agreed (20%) that workload was manageable during the SEGC process. These findings suggest that participants’ concerns about workload were not isolated comments, but reflected a broader pattern among survey respondents.

At the same time, participants again distinguished between system-level strain and school-level support. Several participants said they felt safe raising concerns within the school and credited school-based leaders and colleagues with communicating updates, solving problems, and buffering staff where possible. One participant stated that:

“In my building, with my community, my principal, my staff, my students, it’s... wonderful, but the systemic issues make morale lower.”

One participant added an important disability justice perspective. This participant described experiencing the school and district as inaccessible and marginalizing for disabled staff and students, even while others described Mt. Tabor as an inclusive school. They described serious facility and access barriers, including inaccessible restrooms, doors too narrow for a wheelchair, and the need to map which entrances and exits a wheelchair-using student could safely use. The participant also described broader district practices that made disabled staff feel unsupported:

“We’re left out, we’re ignored, we’re forgotten... My students are not considered. They’re not included...”

This testimony complicates the broader story of Mt. Tabor’s strong culture. It shows that an organization can be experienced as caring and inclusive by many participants while still failing to provide adequate structural access and belonging for students and staff with disabilities. This distinction matters because internal goodwill does not substitute for accessible facilities, adequate accommodations, or inclusive systems.

Survey findings reinforce the difference between current school-level support and SEGC-period support. Seven of 11 respondents (63%) agreed that they currently felt emotionally supported at work, while only 2 of 10 agreed (20%) that they felt emotionally supported during the SEGC process. This suggests that participants may now experience Mt. Tabor as a supportive school, but did not feel adequately supported during the period of SEGC-related change.

Experiences of Historically Underserved Students and Families

Participants consistently described SEGC as reducing Mt. Tabor’s racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity, especially through the removal of the Spanish Immersion program and changes to feeder patterns. Participants said the departure of the Spanish DLI program reduced the number of Latino/a/x and Spanish-speaking students, shifted the school’s culture, and left remaining neighborhood Latino/a/x students with fewer peers who shared similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

One participant explained:

“It’s not as diverse as it was before, meaning that we no longer have a large population of students who were in the Spanish Immersion program... The neighborhood Hispanic students don’t have as many students to identify with.”

Administrative records support the specific loss participants described while complicating the broader claim that the school became “whiter.” Latino/a/x enrollment declined from about 11% to 12% before the program moved to 8.5% in 2023–24, dropping from 71 to 43 students that year. Multilingual learner enrollment also declined, from 4.4% to 2.0%, as the Spanish DLI program moved to Kellogg. These figures support participants’ accounts that Mt. Tabor lost a particular linguistic and cultural community.

However, the overall racial composition did not become whiter by percentage. The white student share declined from 63% in 2020–21 to 58% in 2024–25, while the multiracial share increased from 19% to 26%. The reconciliation is that both counts and proportions matter. The number of students of color declined as the school became smaller, and the Latino/a/x and Spanish-speaking community declined in both count and share. Participants were therefore describing real departures and the loss of a specific community, even though the school’s overall percentage of white students did not increase.

Participants also described the loss of support and spaces that had centered Spanish-speaking families and Latino/a/x students, including a monthly Spanish-speaking family coffee, a Hispanic student affinity group, and more regular translation and interpretation practices. Someone shared:

“We used to have a monthly... coffee for Spanish speaking parents. We lost that... We used to have a student affinity group for Hispanic students. So we lost that...”

Participants also described Spanish DLI students as experiencing repeated instability. They noted that the program had been relocated before and was moved again under SEGC, requiring some students to change schools late in their middle school experience. One participant described students who had completed seventh grade successfully at Mt. Tabor but were required to move for eighth grade because of SEGC:

“For us to uproot those kids... that’s not providing stability... that is once again being like your program doesn’t matter.”

At the same time, another participant suggested that consolidating the Spanish DLI program at another school could provide students with a larger peer community and stronger wraparound support. This points to an important tension in the Mount Tabor accounts. Mount Tabor lost an important source of diversity and program identity, while the receiving school may have gained a

more coherent Spanish DLI pathway. Since these are staff perspectives rather than direct accounts from students and families after the move, claims about benefits at the receiving school should be understood as perceptions rather than established outcomes.

However, enrollment records show the program shift clearly. Spanish DLI enrollment at Mt. Tabor declined from 75 students in 2020–21 to zero after the program moved to Kellogg. Of the Spanish DLI students enrolled at Mt. Tabor in 2022–23, 36 transferred to Kellogg the following year and remained enrolled in Spanish DLI. The students followed the program, but the staff did not move as a full team. Meanwhile, Mt. Tabor’s Japanese DLI program remained at the school and grew to represent a much larger share of total enrollment after the Spanish DLI program departed.

Overall, participants viewed the loss of Spanish DLI as more than a program change. They understood it as a loss of cultural community, family engagement structures, peer representation, and equity-centered practice within Mt. Tabor.

Quality of Learning Environments After SEGC

Participants described Mt. Tabor’s learning environment as both strong and constrained. On the positive side, they highlighted consistent schoolwide systems, collaborative teacher planning, strong student support routines, standards-based grading, and a culture where students experience classrooms as focused on learning. Participants described Mt. Tabor as a school where adults work closely together, expectations are clear, and students are supported academically and socially. One participant explained:

“They definitely see that the teachers work closely together, even on the curriculum... it’s rigorous and grade level appropriate... there’s a real culture of learning in the classroom.”

Another participant described the school’s inclusive climate:

“We have a really inclusive learning environment... We work really hard to differentiate instruction so [students] can access it, and we work really hard to promote a safe, positive school climate where kids can feel like they belong.”

At the same time, participants were explicit that SEGC-related enrollment loss and staffing reductions weakened the school’s ability to sustain the full range of learning opportunities and support associated with a comprehensive middle school. They described core classes with more than 40 students, multiple course preparations for teachers, fewer elective sections, reduced intervention supports, and fewer adults available for restorative practices, student support, and enrichment. Participants also described the library becoming less accessible because the librarian had to teach content classes. A participant shared that:

“Kids can’t go to the library throughout the school day because our librarian now has to teach content classes... our book circulation this year is abysmal.”

Another participant summarized the central issue:

“Class size... is the foundation of all of our success. It’s the foundation of all of our problems.”

Survey findings show the same dual reality. All 11 respondents agreed that students experience high-quality learning environments, and 9 of 11 agreed that the learning environment is equitable. Yet only 1 of 11 agreed that class sizes are distributed in a manageable way. Only 3 of 11 agreed that students have equitable access to high-quality programs and opportunities, and only 2 of 11 agreed they have the resources needed to do their jobs effectively. This suggests that participants believed Mt. Tabor still provided strong teaching and climate, but did so under resource conditions that made equitable access harder to sustain.

Participants also raised concerns about disabled students in specialized programs who joined mainstream electives. With 40 or more students in some classes, participants worried that general education teachers did not always have the time, training, or capacity to implement accommodations and modifications well. A person indicated that:

“You put [students receiving specialized services] into 40 plus students, the teachers don’t have the time or the energy to make the modifications or accommodations... so then they’re being failed.”

A recurring theme was the gap between district rhetoric about comprehensive middle schools and Mt. Tabor’s post-SEGC reality. Participants recalled that district leaders had described 500 students as the threshold needed to support robust middle school programming. Participants believed Mt. Tabor had previously functioned as that kind of comprehensive middle school, with strong electives, supports, and staff capacity. After SEGC, however, the school remained below that threshold without sufficient compensatory FTE. A participant indicated that:

“They [the district] talked about...middle schools need to have at least this number of students enrolled in order to be able to offer the robust programming that we need, and that threshold was 500 students. Clearly, we haven’t been at 500 students in several years...and there’s no support to make sure that we’re still able to offer that robust programming.”

Another participant stated the concern more directly:

“What we had with more students, the comprehensive Middle School, is what the goal was for all middle schools, and in creating it for other middle schools, they took it away from us.”

This became one of the core interpretive frames participants used to understand SEGC: in trying to create more comprehensive middle school experiences elsewhere, they believed the district made Mt. Tabor less comprehensive.

How SEGC Played Out at Mt. Tabor

Participants described SEGC’s impact at Mt. Tabor as a sequence of interconnected changes. Before SEGC, Mt. Tabor served a neighborhood program, a Japanese dual-language immersion pathway, and a Spanish DLI pathway. The school’s combined enrollment placed it above capacity and allowed it to sustain a broad range of programming and supports.

SEGC changed this structure by removing a major feeder, relocating the Spanish DLI middle grades program to Kellogg, shifting portions of another boundary area, and leaving the Japanese DLI at Mt. Tabor. Over time, these decisions contributed to a steep enrollment decline, which then triggered staffing reductions and program contraction. Participants described losing specialized roles, intervention supports, restorative justice capacity, climate positions, and elective sections.

Participants also emphasized unrealized balancing moves. They believed SEGC was not supposed to stand alone, but was expected to be followed by future boundary work in other parts of the district that would bring new enrollment to Mt. Tabor. When that did not happen, participants experienced the school as being left under-enrolled and under-supported. As noted by a participant:

“[SEGC] was not supposed to live on its own...we figured within that three-year time span... another movement in North and Northeast... would happen, and we would see an influx... That did not materialize at all.”

Another participant summarized the outcome:

“The biggest change is a lot fewer students, which has resulted in less staff, less diversity... Our school is under-enrolled and has suffered great losses while we’re waiting for the changes to come.”

Administrative data confirm that 2023–24 was an especially intense year of change. The Spanish DLI program departed, enrollment dropped sharply, Latino/a/x and multilingual learner shares fell, the multiracial share rose, exclusionary discipline incidents per student increased, and total FTE continued its decline. These patterns should not be interpreted as proof that SEGC caused

each outcome. Other factors, including districtwide enrollment decline, pandemic recovery, and budget constraints, were also operating. However, the clustering of these changes helps explain why participants experienced SEGC as a major turning point in the school's trajectory.

Several conditions shaped how Mt. Tabor absorbed these changes. Leadership continuity and communication helped buffer some of the disruption. Staff collaboration and strong internal norms also helped the school adapt to new schedules, enrollment realities, and student needs. Meanwhile, participants described district politics, inequitable community voice, and delayed follow-up planning as intensifying the harm. They perceived that certain "pockets of privilege" had greater influence during SEGC, while less advantaged communities struggled to have concerns heard. Participants also described the long duration of the process and virtual engagement during the pandemic as barriers to authentic participation.

Facility and accessibility constraints also shaped the experience, especially for students and staff with disabilities. Participants described an older building where physical access issues made inclusion more difficult and where district commitments to inclusion were not always matched by accessible infrastructure.

Overall Interpretation

The Mt. Tabor case illustrates how a school can remain strong internally while being weakened structurally. Participants described Mt. Tabor as a caring, collaborative, and academically strong middle school. Survey responses support this view, particularly around school climate, collaboration, and high-quality learning environments. Yet the same participants and survey respondents also described low system-level trust, unmanageable workload, insufficient resources, large class sizes, and deep frustration with SEGC's implementation and follow-through.

The strongest throughline across the Mt. Tabor data is cumulative loss. Participants experienced SEGC as reducing the school's enrollment, staffing, diversity, language programming, family engagement structures, and comprehensive middle school capacity. Administrative records support much of this account, especially the enrollment decline, Spanish DLI departure, staffing contraction, and loss of Latino/a/x and multilingual learner enrollment. At the same time, the records complicate some perceptions, including the idea that the school became proportionally whiter overall. This distinction matters: participants were describing real losses in specific students, communities, programs, and relationships, even when some schoolwide percentages moved in more complex directions.

In short, SEGC at Mt. Tabor was experienced less as a single boundary adjustment and more as a redistribution of students, programs, and resources that left the school smaller and less comprehensive than it had been. Mt. Tabor's internal culture helped the school continue serving

students well, but it also masked how much the school was absorbing. For PPS, the key lesson is that strong school culture cannot substitute for adequate enrollment, staffing, accessibility, program support, and district follow-through. Future districtwide changes should not assume that a high-functioning school can absorb repeated losses without weakening the very conditions that made it strong.

Kelly Elementary School

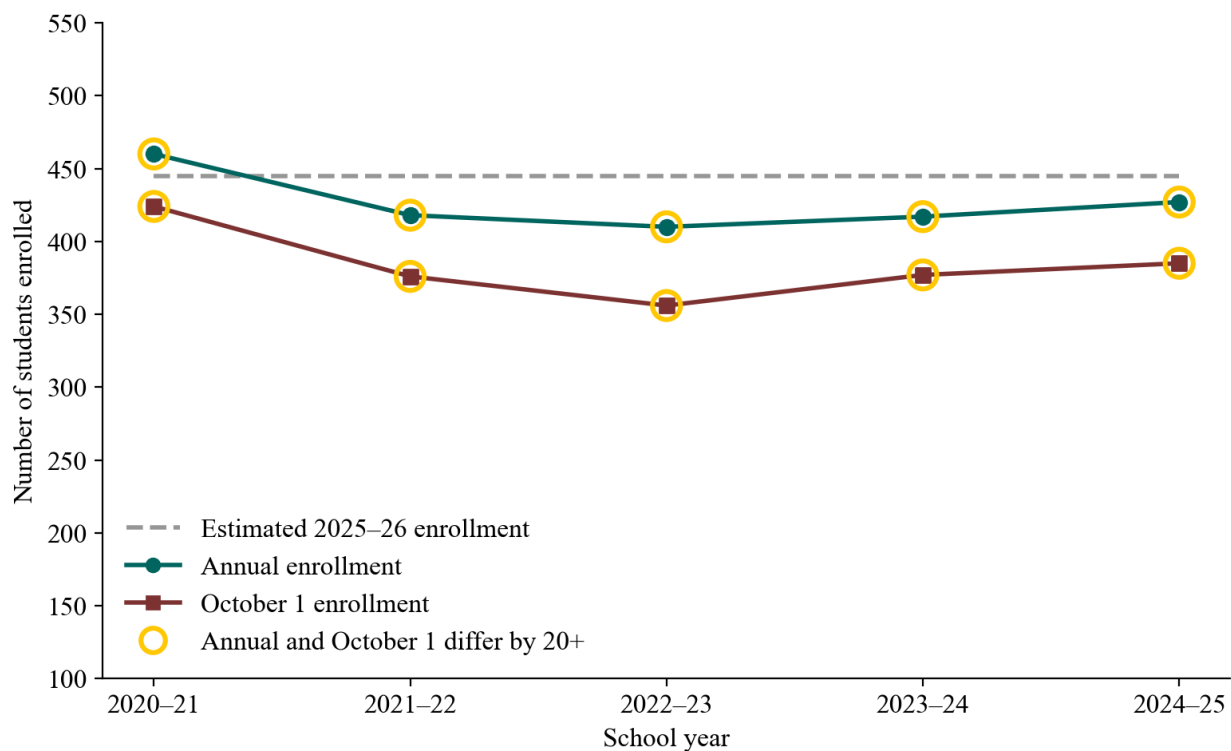
Anticipated SEGC Changes

According to district SEGC documents, Kelly K–5 was included in the SEGC review scope but had no proposed structural changes. Kelly remained a K–5 school with both a neighborhood program and a Russian DLI program, assigned to Lane Middle School and Franklin High School.

District documents noted that Kelly’s neighborhood program had one of the highest concentrations of racially and culturally diverse students in the region. They also noted that Kelly’s Russian DLI program served mostly students who lived outside PPS and had been shrinking from two strands to one strand per grade level. One option considered changing the Russian DLI middle school feeder pattern from Lane to Harrison Park.

In short, Kelly was expected to remain structurally unchanged under SEGC, with its existing neighborhood and Russian DLI configuration intact and no boundary, feeder, program, or grade reconfiguration changes proposed. At the same time, Kelly remained connected to the broader SEGC ecosystem because its middle school pathway, Lane, was part of the regional balancing work.

Figure 9.1. Kelly estimated, annual, and October 1 enrollment, 2020–21 through 2024–25.



Note: Enrollment is measured by enrollment in the building, not by program. Annual enrollment is based on assignment of students to the school they attended for the most days during the school year. October 1 enrollment counts students enrolled in the school on that single date.

Participants

Across the Kelly conversations, we heard from five school-based participants who brought a range of perspectives on the school's SEGC-era experience during interviews and focus groups along with 16 staff and 15 family members or caregivers who responded to surveys. Collectively, participants spoke about changes in enrollment, staffing, student support, family communication, school culture, language programming, and the broader uncertainty facing the school community.

The participant group included both long-standing members of the Kelly community and participants who became connected to the school during or after SEGC implementation. Three of the five participants were at Kelly before, during, and after SEGC-related changes, which allowed them to describe how the school shifted over time. One participant joined during the SEGC implementation period and remained afterward, offering insight into how the changes were experienced while they were unfolding. One participant joined after SEGC-related changes had already been implemented, providing a current perspective on how enrollment shifts, staffing pressures, program concerns, and broader district uncertainty continue to shape the school.

Together, these perspectives provide both historical and current insight into Kelly's SEGC-era experience and help illuminate how participants understood the school's changing conditions before, during, and after implementation.

Overview

This chapter examines how SEGC-related and SEGC-adjacent changes were experienced at Kelly Elementary School. Participants described Kelly as a culturally and linguistically diverse school with strong relationships, a calm and structured learning environment, and an important role serving immigrant, refugee, multilingual, and low-income families. At the same time, they described the SEGC era as part of a broader period of uncertainty shaped by staffing reductions, enrollment and boundary shifts, proposed grade-level blends, the contraction of the Russian DLI program, transportation barriers, and concerns about future consolidation and/or school closures.

Findings

A School Community Navigating Uncertainty

Across the Kelly conversations, participants described the school as having a strong internal core and a "bright future," even as it operated within a district context marked by financial uncertainty, staffing reductions, and concerns about future consolidation. Most participants did not describe SEGC as a process they understood in detail. Instead, they experienced SEGC-related and SEGC-adjacent changes through concrete effects and risks, including proposed grade-level blends, enrollment and boundary shifts, program contraction, transportation

barriers, and ongoing questions about whether Kelly would be protected or destabilized in future district decisions.

Administrative records support participants' sense that Kelly remained relatively stable internally during SEGC implementation while the broader district context was shifting. Enrollment was essentially consistent from 2021–22 through 2024–25, ranging from 410 to 427 students. Kelly also experienced within-year enrollment growth after the October 1 count in each school year from 2022–23 to 2024–25. Since the study does not include records of students who transferred into PPS after October 1, these midyear increases are likely underestimated. Participants' report of a substantial midyear increase is therefore supported within the available data.

Kelly's student composition also shifted somewhat during this period. White enrollment declined from approximately 55% to 45%, Latino/a/x enrollment increased from approximately 17% to 23%, and multilingual learner enrollment remained high, ranging from roughly 43% to 51%. According to participants, these changes appear to reflect broader neighborhood and enrollment patterns rather than a direct SEGC effect, but they provide important context for understanding the school community participants described.

Participants consistently portrayed Kelly as calm, relationally strong, and deeply connected to students and families. They described staff as “banding together” through repeated stressors and credited long-standing relationships, school-based leadership, and student support systems with helping the school remain stable for families. The overall picture is of a school whose internal culture helped buffer some of the most visible impacts of district-level uncertainty, even while participants remained concerned about future cuts, program changes, and consolidation.

Morale and Retention

Participants described staff morale at Kelly as resilient but pressured. On one hand, they described deep attachment to the school and strong relationships among staff. One participant explained:

“I work with a lot of the same people that were here when I was hired, and it feels like family... It's kind of a tough school... and that consistency for the families that we work with... I feel really proud of.”

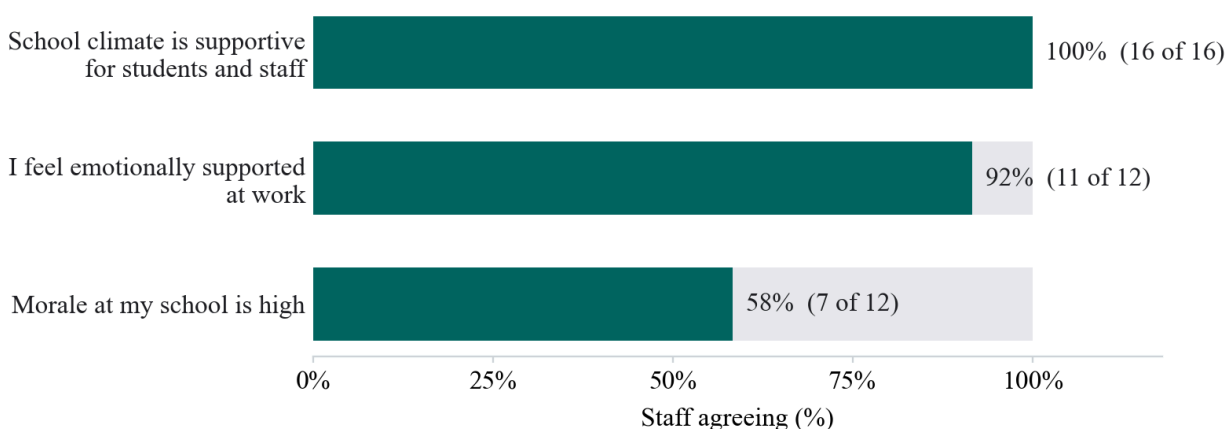
Another participant described staff relationships as a kind of “trauma bonding,”²⁰ emphasizing that repeated stressors had pushed staff to rely on one another:

“I feel like we're very bonded. It's almost like trauma bonding, like we have to band together, because every year... people are getting unassigned. There's staff reductions, there's fewer budgets...”

²⁰ Interestingly, a participant from another school used the same framing of trauma bonding.

The staff survey reflects this same mix of attachment and strain. All 16 responding (100%) staff agreed that the school climate was supportive, and most respondents reported feeling emotionally supported at work. At the same time, agreement that morale was high was more moderate, with 7 of 12 respondents (58%) agreeing. This suggests that staff viewed Kelly as a supportive place to work, while also feeling the cumulative pressure of budget uncertainty, staffing reductions, and program vulnerability.

Figure 9.2. Kelly staff survey respondents’ perceptions about support and morale



Participants were especially concerned about how future district decisions could affect staffing and retention. The Russian immersion program was described as central to Kelly’s enrollment, staffing, identity, and family community. One participant explained the risk this way:

“Something that could happen to us would be that they removed the Russian immersion program, and there goes 30% of our student population, and there goes 30% of our teachers, and it happens overnight.”

Staff also described the loss of enrichment and support roles over time, including music and after-school programming, and connected those reductions to fewer opportunities for students and more strain on adults. However, available personnel data do not suggest a major SEGC-driven wave of staff departures at Kelly. Instead, the data suggest gradual pressure, with one more difficult year followed by recovery. Staff retention dipped in 2022–23 but then improved for two consecutive years, reaching 89% in the most recent observable year. This aligns with participants’ descriptions of staff trying to “hold the line” rather than leave the school.

Capacity and Communication During SEGC-Related Changes

Participants generally felt capable of supporting students and families in day-to-day school life. They described relying on strong relationships, trauma-informed routines, counseling and social work supports, and deep knowledge of families’ needs. However, when asked specifically about

SEGC-related changes, participants often expressed uncertainty about what had happened, what was being proposed, or how decisions affected Kelly.

Survey responses reflect the same distinction between general confidence in day-to-day practice and uncertainty about SEGC-specific communication. Most staff respondents agreed that they were generally given clear guidance when questions came up about changes affecting their work and that they could carry out their responsibilities effectively. SEGC-specific communication was much weaker. Among those who answered the SEGC-specific items, no respondents agreed that communication made the timeline and expectations clear, and none agreed that they had a reliable point of contact who could provide accurate answers when questions came up.

Participants therefore described a gap between local capacity and district communication. They felt equipped to care for students and families because of the school's internal systems and relationships, not because SEGC-related decisions were communicated clearly or supported through a coherent implementation plan. For Kelly, this meant that school staff could maintain day-to-day stability while still feeling uncertain about the larger district decisions shaping the school's future.

Emotional Well-Being and Professional Support

Participants located SEGC within a broader period of exhaustion that included COVID-19 recovery, budget crises, contract disputes, layoffs, furlough discussions, and anxiety about future consolidation. One participant described the district context as “really grim times financially.” Another described the emotional dissonance of being asked to focus on compliance metrics immediately after major staffing reductions. One person noted that:

“The district just got done un-assigning nearly 250 people... then they called all the principals together... They want to talk to them about how many times they need to go into every classroom and check the box that the teachers have their learning targets up... It's detached, it's dehumanizing, it's transactional.”

Participants also connected emotional well-being to class size and student need. Some described recent years with smaller class sizes as far more sustainable and emotionally healthy. One participant explained:

“This year has been, like, amazing... I had 18 kids [previously] and this year I had 19... Those are very small classes, and that has highly affected my emotional well-being.”

At the same time, survey responses show that workload remained a serious concern. Only 3 of 12 staff respondents agreed that their current workload was manageable. Family survey comments also reflected concern about class size, with one family writing that “30 kids is too many” and another identifying “large class size and difficult behavior issues” as negative factors affecting learning.

Taken together, these findings suggest that staff well-being at Kelly was shaped less by any single SEGC decision and more by the cumulative uncertainty surrounding the school. SEGC-related proposals, such as grade-level blends, became one additional source of stress layered onto budget cuts, program reductions, workload pressures, and the ongoing demands of post-pandemic recovery.

Experiences of Historically Underserved Students and Families

Participants repeatedly emphasized Kelly's importance for immigrant, refugee, multilingual, and low-income families. They described the school as a form of critical infrastructure for families who rely on school-based relationships, language access, counseling, social work, food and housing support, and trusted adults.

One participant explained:

"We have a lot of students that see our school as critical infrastructure to their lives... access our local social worker or Morrison counseling services for licensed therapy sessions or access to English language skills."

Another participant described the school's linguistic and cultural diversity:

"There's 29 home languages spoken in our school... We are among the most diverse elementary schools in the whole city... when kids and families come here, they see themselves, and they're loved and cared for..."

Family survey responses, while based on a small sample, align with this positive view of Kelly. Nearly all responding families reported that their student felt safe at school and was learning a lot. Most also reported that their child felt a sense of belonging, that their child's culture or language was valued, and that they felt welcome communicating with the school. Open-ended family responses emphasized caring teachers and administration, with one family simply naming "his teachers" as what helped their child learn.

Participants were especially concerned about how transportation, program contraction, and boundary policies affected families already navigating vulnerability. One participant described the frustration of families living in a nearby shelter being denied transportation because they were just inside the one-mile radius. They said:

"We think we have like a path shelter home within a mile of our school... I've had to tell many families that we don't provide transportation... It's pretty much an automatic no from the Transportation Department."

Participants also connected the contraction of the Russian immersion program to newly arriving Ukrainian refugee families. One participant explained that the program had previously had two strands per grade, but had been reduced to one, even as demand increased:

“We used to have two strands [in Russian immersion]... it has been cut to one... there has been a huge surge of the Ukrainian refugees that come in, and they're not able to get enrolled, because we have a limited space as well...”

Administrative records show that Russian DLI enrollment has remained stable at approximately 150 students each year since 2021–22, and available staffing records show continuity among Russian DLI educators. However, participants and family survey comments indicate that families continued to value the program and, in some cases, wanted it expanded. One Russian-speaking family described Russian-language instruction as important because Russian is their native language. Another asked the district to open an additional Russian dual-language immersion class.

These accounts suggest that SEGC-era decisions and future consolidation concerns carry heightened risk for Kelly because many families rely on the school not only for academics, but also for language, culture, services, safety, and belonging.

Quality of Learning Environments

Participants described Kelly’s learning environment as calm, structured, and supportive, especially given the level of student need. They emphasized consistent routines, trauma-informed practices, respectful relationships, and classrooms where students are generally engaged in learning. One participant described the school this way:

“When you walk the halls here it is quiet. Kids are in their classrooms... When you go into classrooms, kids are learning. I think that for the most part, we have calm, engaged learning environments...”

Another participant connected this calm to structure and mutual respect:

“I think it's pretty structured... which students get used to and at the same time, it's friendly to both students and teachers... respecting each other.”

A third participant emphasized the importance of trauma-informed routines:

“Our routines are very trauma-informed... kids know that school is going to be the same in a good way every time that they come, and that the adults are here to keep them safe.”

Staff survey findings strongly support participants’ descriptions of a positive learning environment. All responding staff agreed that staff collaboration supported teaching and learning and that the school climate was supportive. Nearly all agreed that students experienced high-quality learning environments and that the learning environment was equitable. These ratings were notably stronger than the districtwide pattern among survey respondents.

At the same time, participants stressed that the quality of Kelly's learning environment is not automatic. It depends on class size, staffing, support services, and the school's ability to avoid disruptive structures such as grade-level blends that staff believed would be harmful for particular cohorts. Survey responses also point to this vulnerability that staff responses about whether class sizes were manageable were split, with the average response near neutral.

Participants therefore described Kelly's learning environment as strong but precarious. The school's calm and supportive climate is produced through ongoing adult effort, predictable routines, and stable relationships. If staffing is reduced, class sizes increase, or grade-level blends are imposed without regard to student need, participants believed the conditions that make Kelly work could weaken quickly.

How SEGC-Related Changes Played Out at Kelly

Participants did not describe Kelly as experiencing a major program relocation or grade reconfiguration directly through SEGC. Instead, again, as mentioned prior, they described SEGC-related and SEGC-adjacent dynamics as part of a broader pattern of district decision-making that affected the school's sense of security. These included boundary and enrollment shifts, proposed 4/5 grade blends, the contraction of the Russian DLI program, transportation barriers, and concerns that Kelly could become part of a future consolidation process.

The proposed 4/5 blend was one of the clearest examples participants raised. Participants described the cohort as having significant needs, including refugee students and students with serious trauma histories, and said school staff worked hard to prevent a blend they believed would undermine students' ability to have their needs met. One participant explained:

“There was a lot of concern about blending the fourth and fifth grade... that particular cohort had four or five students that had to be separated... several different administrators have had different values, [but] every single one identified this as a serious area of concern and has done as much as they could to prevent that from impacting our school or our students' ability to have their needs met.”

Participants also linked SEGC to future consolidation conversations. One participant described the school's strategy as trying to secure a “seat at the table” rather than waiting for decisions to be made elsewhere:

“It's either going to happen without us or it's going to happen with us. And if we don't have a seat at the table, things will happen to us.”

Participants described both risk and possibility in this future-facing conversation. The feared scenario was that the Russian DLI program could be removed, leading to a sudden loss of students, staff, and community identity. The more hopeful scenario was that Kelly could become

a consolidation site, grow enrollment, reoccupy its annex space, and strengthen its role as a stable hub for students and families.

Several factors shaped how Kelly responded to these uncertainties. Participants described a local approach that involved shared problem-solving, staff input, and efforts to define school needs clearly. Staff cohesion and tenure also mattered; participants repeatedly described Kelly as a “family” whose long-standing relationships supported collective problem-solving. The school’s facility and enrollment profile also shaped its position: participants viewed Kelly’s capacity, annex space, and relatively low retrofit costs as making it both viable and exposed in future consolidation decisions.

Overall, Kelly’s SEGC-era experience was less about one discrete change and more about ongoing uncertainty. Participants described a school trying to protect what works, serve a highly diverse and high-need community, and position itself proactively in district conversations that could reshape its future.

Overall Interpretation

The Kelly case shows how SEGC-related change can be experienced indirectly, through uncertainty, program vulnerability, staffing concerns, and future consolidation risk rather than through one major immediate reconfiguration. Participants did not portray Kelly as a school that had been dramatically disrupted by SEGC in the same way as some other schools. Instead, they described Kelly as a strong and stable school community operating in a fragile district environment.

The central tension is that Kelly appears to be working well for students and families, especially immigrant, refugee, multilingual, and low-income families, but participants worried that the conditions making the school work could be weakened by staffing cuts, transportation barriers, program contraction, grade-level blends, or future consolidation decisions. Administrative and survey data generally support this picture that enrollment remained stable, midyear enrollment growth was plausible, school climate and learning environment ratings were strong, and staff retention recovered after a difficult year. At the same time, workload, class size, and district communication remained areas of concern.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned from School-by School Analysis

The school-by-school findings show that SEGC was experienced less as a single enrollment balancing initiative and more as a series of locally lived changes that landed differently across school communities. SEGC as a district-level change strengthened some program pathways, reduced crowding in some places, and created more developmentally appropriate grade configurations. However, at the same time, it also produced enrollment loss, staffing reductions, disrupted relationships, transportation burdens, diminished trust, and new equity concerns in other places. For this reason, SEGC should not be evaluated only by whether it balanced enrollment, improved school utilization rates, or relocated programs according to the district's original plan. It should also be evaluated by how those changes were experienced inside schools by the students, families, educators, staff, and school leaders who carried the consequences over time.

The central lesson from this school-by-school analysis is that racial equity and social justice are not achieved through intent or rhetoric alone. They become real, or can be often undermined, in implementation. Racial equity and social justice are experienced in whether families understand what is happening and why, whether students remain connected to peers, trusted adults, and accessible programs, whether receiving schools have the staffing and support to absorb change, whether historically underserved and racially minoritized communities carry disproportionate burdens, and whether the district follows through on what it promised. Across the schools, participants often recognized the stated equity goals behind SEGC, but they also described gaps between those goals and the lived realities of implementation.

As such, these school-by-school findings offer several lessons for PPS.

One major lesson is that strong schools can still be weakened by repeated losses. Several schools in our analysis were described as caring, collaborative, relationship-rich communities with strong internal cultures. These strengths helped schools absorb SEGC-related changes, but they did not eliminate the consequences of enrollment decline, staffing reductions, program movement, or reduced support. In some cases, the very schools that were able to “make it work” did so because staff and leaders stretched themselves to compensate for gaps in district planning and resources. Given this, PPS should be careful not to mistake school-level resilience for evidence that SEGC change was adequately supported or accomplished. A school's culture, relationships, and trust are real assets, but they are not unlimited resources.

A second lesson is that program coherence can come with displacement costs. Some SEGC decisions appear to have strengthened important programmatic goals, especially around dual language immersion and middle school configuration. For example, consolidating language

pathways or creating fuller middle school structures may provide real benefits for students who remain in or enter those programs. However, those benefits must be weighed alongside the experiences of students and families who were moved, who lost neighborhood access, who faced longer transportation routes, or who entered receiving schools under strained conditions. Future program decisions should therefore ask not only whether a program is stronger after reconfiguration, but also who was displaced to make that strength possible and whether those students and families were equitably supported.

A third lesson is that receiving schools need more than enrollment. They need organizational capacity to equitably and properly support students. Several schools were asked to receive students, staff, programs, or new grade configurations while also managing existing student needs, budget pressures, staffing instability, and COVID-19 post-pandemic recovery. Receiving students is not simply a matter of assigning them to a new building. It requires transition staffing, transportation planning, multilingual communication, student support services, family engagement, special education and multilingual learner capacity, and time for school communities to build trust. Future districtwide enrollment changes should include a receiving-school readiness plan before implementation begins.

A fourth lesson is that families and staff judge equity by follow-through, not just words. Across school communities, participants often distinguished between being invited to speak about SEGC changes and believing their input mattered. Many described SEGC engagement processes where they shared concerns, attended meetings, testified, reviewed maps, or supported families, but did not see clear evidence that community input shaped final decisions or implementation supports. This distinction matters for trust. Future family and community engagement processes related to enrollment should make clear what is open for influence, what has already been decided, what criteria will guide decisions, and how community feedback changes the final plan. Without visible follow-through, engagement can be experienced as procedural rather than meaningful.

A fifth lesson is that PPS should evaluate the cumulative burden before adding new changes to any school community (we offered this lesson in our phase 1 report that included our cross-school findings). Many SEGC-related changes were not experienced one at a time. They overlapped with leadership transitions, construction, budget reductions, labor disruptions, COVID-19 recovery, staffing cuts, program changes, and broader demographic shifts. We learned that a boundary change that looks manageable on paper may feel very different in a school that has already lost staff, absorbed displaced students, changed grade configurations, or endured repeated uncertainty. Future enrollment planning should include a cumulative impact review that asks what a school has already absorbed, what supports remain in place, and what additional burden a proposed change would create.

Finally, PPS should build stronger mechanisms for post-implementation learning and course correction measures. School change does not end when boundaries are redrawn, programs are

relocated, or students move buildings. For students, families, and staff, the real work begins after implementation. Future districtwide enrollment changes should include public checkpoints, clear indicators of success and harm, family and staff feedback loops, and the authority to adjust course when unintended consequences emerge. These mechanisms should track not only enrollment and utilization, but also staffing stability, class size, student belonging, transportation burdens, program access, discipline, attendance, family trust, and whether receiving schools are able to provide the support students need.

In sum, the school-by-school findings suggest that future enrollment balancing, program relocation, consolidation, closure, or rightsizing efforts should be designed as multi-year equity implementation processes, not one-time technical and policy decisions. PPS should be able to show not only what will change, but why it is necessary, who will benefit, who may be burdened, what supports will be provided, how promises will be tracked, and how the district will respond if the lived experience of students, families, and staff does not match the intended goals. The most important lesson from SEGC is that districtwide change must be judged not only by the logic of the plan, but by the justice of the experience.

RESOLUTION No. XXXX

Sports for Creston Elementary graduates attending Hosford Middle School

RECITALS

- A. WHEREAS, Portland Public Schools (PPS) is committed to student success and equitable access to ensure every student can reach their full potential; and
- B. WHEREAS, Sports in middle school are crucial for physical health, social development, academic performance, and personal growth; and
- C. WHEREAS, Creston Elementary School ("Creston") 5th grade graduates do not all go to the same PPS middle school. Specifically, a small number of Creston 5th grade graduates are split from their elementary school friends and relationships of six years and tracked to attend Hosford Middle School ("Hosford") (which is a Cleveland-cluster middle school). Those students spend three years together making new friends and relationships, to then split again from their Hosford friends who are Cleveland High School ("CHS") bound. The Creston students then attend Franklin High School ("Franklin"); and
- D. WHEREAS, in the 2025-2026 year, there were Creston graduates who wanted to stay after school at Hosford to participate in sports practice at Hosford with their Hosford friends, but were denied that chance. Those sports include, but are not limited to, cross-country, volleyball, basketball, track and field.
- E. WHEREAS, many of those Creston students are documented to have opted OUT of sports because they are not permitted to play sports at Hosford with their new middle school friends, the same students they see in school the day before and after sports practice. Instead, they have to play at a different middle school (one which is a Franklin cluster middle school) with students they do not know and do not get to see the next day at middle school; and
- F. WHEREAS, those Creston students cannot simply stay after school at Hosford, but instead must get to a different middle school in order to attend practice. This causes transportation issues and cost problems for families and PPS; and
- G. WHEREAS, middle school sports was discussed during the SouthEast Guiding Coalition ("SEGC") process and families were promised that the boundaries would be resolved before their students got to high school; and
- H. WHEREAS, Participation in sports ensures that middle school students engage in regular physical activity, which is essential for overall health and well-being. Sports help improve cardiovascular fitness, strength, coordination, and flexibility, while also promoting long-term

healthy habits. Establishing these habits early can reduce the risk of obesity and other lifestyle-related health issues.

- I. WHEREAS, Research indicates a positive link between sports participation and academic performance. Middle school athletes often achieve higher GPAs and have a greater likelihood of graduating high school, tying directly into one of the PPS Board of Education goals. Physical activity may enhance brain function through increased blood flow, which supports concentration, memory, and learning. Additionally, sports cultivate skills such as goal-setting, discipline, and perseverance, which translate into classroom success, directly tying to PPS Board of Education goals.
- J. WHEREAS, Sports provide a structured environment for students to develop social skills, teamwork, and communication. Working together toward a common goal teaches collaboration, conflict resolution, and empathy. Being part of a team also fosters self-esteem, confidence, and a sense of belonging, helping students navigate the social challenges of adolescence. Inclusive sports programs allow students of all skill levels to participate, promoting mutual respect and good sportspersonship.
- K. WHEREAS, Middle school sports offer opportunities for leadership development. Students can serve as team captains, mentor peers, and demonstrate accountability, which builds self-confidence and responsibility. Time management and decision-making skills are also strengthened, as students balance practices, games, and academic responsibilities. These skills are valuable for future academic, professional, and personal endeavors.
- L. WHEREAS, Engaging in sports supports mental health by reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering resilience. Students who participate in athletics are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and more likely to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The sense of achievement and camaraderie gained from sports contributes to emotional stability and overall well-being.
- M. WHEREAS, Research from the Women's Sports Foundation shows that girls who play sports are more likely to hold leadership roles later in life. Skills like teamwork (73%), learning from mistakes (53%), handling pressure (51%), and pushing physical boundaries (46%) are directly transferable to careers and civic life. Even without professional play, sport participation builds a "leadership pipeline" that benefits society and the economy.
- N. WHEREAS, Sport participation helps girls build stronger bones, reducing the risk of osteoporosis later in life. Weight-bearing activities can increase bone mineral density by up to 10%, which significantly lowers fracture risk. It also supports cardiovascular health, weight management, and overall fitness.
- O. WHEREAS, Girls who play sports report lower rates of depression and anxiety, improved self-esteem, and better body image. The structure, social support, and sense of achievement in sports provide protective factors during adolescence and into adulthood.
WHEREAS, Sports foster belonging, confidence, and positive social connections. They also help

Draft resolution proposed by Director Engelsman

girls develop problem-solving skills, adaptability, and the ability to work in diverse teams—qualities essential in any profession.

- P. WHEREAS, Despite these benefits, girls drop out of sports at twice the rate of boys by age 14, often due to cost, lack of access, and social barriers. Ensuring equitable opportunities—through affordable programs, safe facilities, and supportive coaching—is critical to maximizing these benefits for all girls.

RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education directs the Superintendent to:

1. For the 2026-2027 school year, allow Creston Elementary School graduates who attend Hosford Middle School but are in the Franklin High School cluster to choose whether they would like to play sports for Cleveland High School or Franklin High School.



The Fund for PPS Annual Report to PPS Board of Education

**2025-26 School Year in Review
and a Look Ahead to 2026-27**

Jackie Wirz, Ph.D, Chair

Nick Brodnicki, Interim Executive Director



2025-26 Program Investments

A Year of Districtwide Impact



Thanks to the generosity of donors across Portland, The Fund invested into student success at the majority of schools districtwide this year.

High Impact Tutoring for K-3rd grade students	400+
Math Supports for 9th-10th grade students	7,000
Food Pantries in 20 Community Schools	7,000
Total Student Support for 2025-26	14,400+ students served

Every dollar was directed by the Parent Advisory Committee.

High Impact Tutoring is a Proven Literacy Strategy Benefitting K-3 Students



With our investment of \$660,000, 45 schools received in-person High Impact Tutoring (HIT) in literacy skills this school year.

- 30 schools had tutors from Reading Results
- 15 schools had Educational Assistants, including bilingual tutors in Spanish DLI
- Tutoring was 3x/week - 30 minutes per session - 30 weeks
- Students were more likely to attend school on tutoring days

2026-27 Program Investments Recommended by Parents and Students



On June 8, 2026, the Parent Advisory Committee recommended **\$152,000** for next school year, and The Fund’s Board added **\$10,000** more for food assistance.

High Impact Tutoring - 7 additional schools	\$144,000
Food Pantries - 9 Community Schools	\$18,000
Total Investment in PPS for 2026-27	\$162,000

With this investment, **47 PPS elementary schools** will receive High Impact Tutoring to **more than 1,000 students** districtwide. This is an important continuation of services for most school communities.

Looking Ahead to 2026-27: Signature Fundraising Event



The Inaugural Fund for PPS Gala

- Our first-ever standalone fundraising event, bringing Portland's civic, business and philanthropic leaders together for PPS students
- A focus on the business community and economic development framing
- Systemic approach with multi-year commitment conversations

Looking Ahead to 2026-27: Signature Community Events



- **Fund for PPS Nights with the [Portland Timbers](#)** at Providence Park on September 5th and 9th
 - Discounted tickets through our dedicated link, with a giveback to The Fund on every ticket sold
- **End of Year Giving Focus**
- **PPS Giving Day** on Tuesday, April 27, 2027 (tentative)

Looking Ahead to 2026-27: A Stronger, More Sustainable Fund



- **Corporate partnership conversations continued** with leading Portland employers on multi-year support for students
- **Fully independent governance** updates are creating updated bylaws, an expanding board of directors, and a strengthened partnership with PPS
- **Modernized operations** have been set up to support new gift approaches, financial and donor stewardship policies built for growth, and updated timelines
- **A growing community of donors** investing in programs that reach students at every PPS school



Thank you for your collaboration!

fundforpps.org

fundforpps.org/contactus

<https://fundforpps.org/donate>

Resolution No. 7357

Resolution to Establish the Portland Public Schools Standing Committees for the 2026-27 School Year

RECITALS

- A. The Portland Public Schools Board of Education recognizes the value of Board Committees in supporting effective governance and in ensuring that complex issues receive the necessary time and attention for thoughtful consideration.
- B. In accordance with Policy 1.20.014-P Board Committees, the function of special Board Committees is to consider actions or issues in detail that would otherwise monopolize the Board agenda and to provide policy advice for the Board's action or consideration, as appropriate.
- C. Board Committees serve in a fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory capacity rather than as legislative or administrative bodies, and they do not have independent decision-making authority. Any recommendations developed by a Board Committee are presented directly to the full Board, which alone retains the authority to take action on such matters.
- D. A Board Committee will not have the power to act on behalf of the Board and its primary role remains to provide informed recommendations to the Board for consideration.

RESOLVED

The Portland Public Schools Board of Education approves the following Board Committees for the 2026-27 school year: Intergovernmental Affairs Committee; Facilities Improvement and Oversight; Teaching, Learning, and Enrollment; Audit; and Policy.

RESOLUTION No. 7358

Resolution to Adopt Revised Policies:

- I. 2.10.010-P Racial Educational Equity Policy
- II. 2.20.010-P Naming School District Property
- III. 2.30.010-P Religious and Cultural Observances
- IV. 2.50.010-P Public Access to District Records
- V. 2.50.020-P Student Education Records

RECITALS

- A. On April 27, 2026 and May 18, 2026, the Board Policy Committee reviewed and considered proposed revisions of:

- I. 2.10.010-P Racial Educational Equity Policy
- II. 2.20.010-P Naming School District Property
- III. 2.30.010-P Religious and Cultural Observances
- IV. 2.50.010-P Public Access to District Records
- V. 2.50.020-P Student Education Records

- B. On June 9, 2026, the Board presented the first reading of the revisions to each of those policies.

- C. Pursuant to District policy, the public comment was open for at least 21 days.

RESOLUTION

The Board hereby adopts the revised policies:

- I. 2.10.010-P Racial Educational Equity Policy
- II. 2.20.010-P Naming School District Property
- III. 2.30.010-P Religious and Cultural Observances
- IV. 2.50.010-P Public Access to District Records
- V. 2.50.020-P Student Education Records

and instructs the Superintendent to amend any relevant administrative directives to conform to these adopted policies.



Date: April 22, 2026 (Updated May 11, 2026)

To: Policy Committee

From: Emily Courtnage, Senior Legal Counsel
Sharon Toncray, Chief Legal Officer

CC: Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Section 2.00.000 Policies (District Administration)

May 11, 2026 update:

Based on discussion at the April 27, 2026 Policy Committee meeting, staff made the following updates to the policies presented below:

1. 2.10.010-P (Racial Educational Equity Policy): Add a final sentence to the policy to require that the Superintendent's updates and reports to the Board on student achievement include achievement data disaggregated by race and reflect measures to address racial disparities in student experience and outcomes. This reflects current practice and ensures its continuity.
2. 2.50.020-P (Student Educational Records): Modify Section VI to add “and students 18 years or older with disabilities” and “and federal [law]” to the second sentence.

Staff recommend reviewing, revising, and rescinding the Section 2 policies relating to District Administration as shown in the attached redlines and summarized below. Many of the Section 2 policies have been updated in recent years and now require only minor updates including reformatting and non-substantive language and grammar adjustments. Staff recommend rescission of one policy that is duplicative and outdated.

In reviewing and suggesting changes to the Section 2 policies, we relied in part on review of related Beaverton School District (BSD) and Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) policies. (Beaverton SD adopts Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) model policies, typically without revision.) In some cases, staff recommend borrowing or adapting language from BSD/OSBA to improve our policies or add important detail. Where applicable, we have attached the relevant policies to each redline for the Board's review.



Staff recommend applying the following non-substantive formatting and language updates to all policies:

- Apply consistent template, heading, margins, spacing, font, etc., based on an updated template developed by the Board Office
- Apply consistent capitalization to Superintendent, Board, etc.
- Correct typos
- Remove hyperlinks
- Update language: Replace all instances of “District” with “PPS” and “shall” with “will”; change “she/he” to “they” or “his/her” to “their”

These non-substantive changes have been incorporated in the attached redlines. (However, in order to render the redlined policies more readily readable with a focus on substantive changes, staff did not redline the format or numbering adjustments.)

Policy	Title	Date of Last Revision	Proposed Action	Summary of Changes
2.10.010-P	Racial Educational Equity Policy	6/2011	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates and deletion of obsolete or duplicative language; updated reference to Oregon law
2.20.010-P	Naming School District Property	12/2023	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates only
2.30.010-P	Religious and Cultural Observances	1/2024	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates only
2.40.020-P	Student Participation	5/2001	Rescind	Outdated and duplicative. Student participation in District Student Council, Board, and Board Committees are addressed in 1.20.012-P . Optional student participation in school site councils is addressed in 7.10.010-P . See also 4.40.010-P (Student



				Participation in School Affairs).
2.50.010-P	Public Access to District Records	7/2018	Revise	Non-substantive updates and alignment of appeal procedure with Oregon Public Records Law.
2.50.020-P	Student Education Records	10/2023	Revise	Update with language adapted from BSD/OSBA policy



Date: May 28, 2026

To: School Board

From: Emily Courtnage, Senior Legal Counsel
Sharon Toncray, Chief Legal Officer

CC: Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

Subject: Revisions to Section 2.00.000 Policies (District Administration)

Attached is a staff memo to the Policy Committee, dated April 22, 2026 and updated May 11, 2025, describing proposed updates to the Section 2.00.000 policies, including five revisions and one rescission. The Policy Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed updates on April 27 and May 18, 2026. In the course of their review, Committee members asked staff to make two adjustments; these are detailed in the May 11, 2026 update in the attached staff memo and incorporated in the redlines presented to the Board.

On May 18, 2026, the Policy Committee referred these five revisions and one rescission to the full Board for a first reading.



Racial Educational Equity Policy

The Board of Education for Portland Public Schools is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools. The mission of Portland Public Schools is that by the end of elementary, middle, and high school, every student by name will meet or exceed academic standards and will be fully prepared to make productive life decisions. We believe that every student has the potential to achieve, and it is the responsibility of our school district to give each student the opportunity and support to meet their highest potential.

In light of this mission and our beliefs, PPS's historic, persistent achievement gap between white students and students of color is unacceptable. While efforts have been made to address the inequities between white students and students of color, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Recognizing that there are other student groups that have not reached their achievement potential, this policy focuses on the most historically persistent achievement gap, which is that between white students and students of color. Closing this achievement gap while raising achievement for all students is the top priority of the Board, the Superintendent, and all PPS staff. Race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement and success.¹

In PPS, for every year that we have data, white students have clearly outperformed Black, Latino/a/e and Native American students on state assessments in every subject at every grade level. White students consistently graduate at higher percentages than students of color, while students of color are disciplined far more frequently than white students. These disparities are unacceptable and are directly at odds with our belief that all students can achieve.

The responsibility for the disparities among our young people rests with adults, not the children. We are aware that student achievement data from school districts across the country reveal similar patterns, and that complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities our students face. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating disparities, Portland Public Schools must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.

Portland Public Schools will significantly change its practices in order to achieve and maintain racial equity in education. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. The concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality -- where all students are treated the same -- to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, have the opportunity to benefit equally. Educational equity benefits all students, and our entire community. Students of all races will graduate from PPS ready to succeed in a racially and culturally diverse local, national and global community. To achieve educational equity, PPS will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all students, including students of color.

In order to achieve racial equity for our students, the Board establishes the following goals:

¹ For the purposes of this policy, "race" is defined as "A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups." Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. (2007).

- A. PPS will provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
- B. PPS will create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of our diverse students, and will actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial groups.
- C. PPS will recruit, employ, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel, and will provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in achievement. Additionally, in alignment with the Oregon Educators Equity Act, PPS will actively strive to have our teacher and administrator workforce reflect the diversity of our student body.
- D. PPS will remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under-representation in programs such as Talented and Gifted and Advanced Placement.
- E. All staff and students will be given the opportunity to understand racial identity, and the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others.
- F. PPS will welcome and empower students and families, including underrepresented families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) as essential partners in their student's education, school planning and PPS decision-making. PPS will create welcoming environments that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community. In addition, PPS will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise -- including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community in general -- in meeting our educational outcomes.

The Board will hold the Superintendent and central and school leadership staff accountable for making measurable progress in meeting the goals. Every PPS employee is responsible for the success and achievement of all students. The Board recognizes that these are long term goals that require significant work and resources to implement across all schools. As such, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop action plans with clear accountability and metrics, and including prioritizing staffing and budget allocations, which will result in measurable results on a yearly basis towards achieving the above goals. Such action plans will identify specific staff leads on all key work and include clear procedures for PPS schools and staff. The Superintendent's updates and reports to the Board on student achievement will include achievement data disaggregated by race and measures to address racial disparities in student experience and outcomes.

Legal References: ORS 342.433.

History: Adopted 6/11, Amended ____



Naming School District Property

I. Responsibility and Authority

- A. The naming of all Portland Public Schools properties including, but not limited to, schools, school facilities, programs, non-school facilities, as well as school mascots, symbols and other images considered for representation of a school or PPS. is the responsibility of the Board of Education.
- B. In considering appropriate names for any school, facility, programs, or representative images, it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the name properly reflects the type and mission of the school, facility, and focus option so as to not cause public confusion. In respect for the diversity of our community, names will have broad acceptance in a multicultural society as determined by the Board.
- C. In the naming process, the Board recognizes the importance of soliciting student, staff, parent and community input, as appropriate, in the selection of names. Names may be presented by individuals, by petition, by chosen committees, or by other representative groups. While efforts will be made to respect student, staff, parent, and community preferences, the Board retains the final authority over selection of names for schools, facilities, programs and representative images.
- D. Requests for renaming of PPS properties may be presented by individuals, by petition, by chosen committees, or by other representative groups to the Board. The petition needs to demonstrate diverse school community support or indicate the name change is being requested in accordance with section II (A) in this policy.
- E. The Board will take one of these actions:
 - i. Direct the Superintendent to conduct a renaming process;
 - ii. Decline the request; or
 - iii. Defer action on the request to a later date.
- F. If the Board directs the Superintendent to conduct a renaming process, the Superintendent will note the staff or financial resources needed to conduct the process.

II. General Criteria for Names

When evaluating school, non-school facility, program names, and representative images, the following general criteria will be followed:

- A. Names submitted for consideration may:
 - i. be known and significant to the community, students and staff;
 - ii. relate to local neighborhoods, to relevant geographic areas; to places of historical, geographical, geologic or cultural significance; to indigenous and characteristic flora or fauna;

- iii. be persons or groups of persons, deceased at least three years, who have demonstrated international, national, state or local leadership in the fields of education, arts and sciences, or public service; or be thematic to reflect the character of the community culture and history; or
- iv. reflect features of the facility or program type and the mission of the facility.
- v. All considerations must reflect our commitment to eliminating racism and other systemic discrimination based on protected classes and its impact on student learning and educational activities.

B. Names submitted for consideration will not:

- i. conflict with the names of other schools or programs in PPS or surrounding school districts;
- ii. reflect the names of specific cities with the exception of Portland;
- iii. be a person, location or character whose primary identification is of a religious nature or be a name of a religious group or members;
- iv. include the word 'neighborhood' in the school name unless the school has defined attendance barriers; or
- v. include the word 'school' in its name if it is a special program that does not meet the definition of a school as stated in Board Policy 6.10.022-P.

III. Special Recognition of Specific Persons

- A. The Board acknowledges that communities served by PPS facilities periodically desire to recognize individuals for long and honorable service. Locations within school facilities or buildings may be named for former PPS employees, citizens or students (not necessarily deceased) who have made specific contributions to education within PPS.
- B. Naming of locations inside schools and school facilities are subject to the approval of the Superintendent, with notice to the Board of the naming and the reasons for the recognition.

IV. Gifts

The Board acknowledges that it has the authority to accept monetary or in-kind donations from individuals and entities. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to naming locations within a school or non-school facility for a significant gift as determined by the Board, in consultation with the Superintendent. Any names in this instance will be consistent with all Board policies and will reflect the donor's appropriate financial support as well as the donor commitment to PPS's mission and vision and the objectives of the public school system.

V. Charter Schools

Agreements signed between public charter schools and PPS will contain the requirement that the word 'Charter' be included as part of the charter school name. Charter schools do not have defined attendance boundaries and, thus, will not have the title 'neighborhood' as part of their name.

VI. School Conversions, Mergers, or Reconfigurations

When a school undergoes conversion or is reconfigured into separate distinct units, each of which meets the definition of a school as stated in Board Policy 6.10.022-P, those schools will be named following the conditions and criteria for new schools as outlined in this policy. When two or more schools are merged and there is community support for a name other than the current name of the facility, the school community will go through the renaming process using the criteria in this policy. PPS will waive the fiscal impact statement in these cases.

VII. Renaming or Amending of Current Names

- A. The Board recognizes that renaming existing schools or facilities or amending existing names by adding or deleting words or phrases is a serious, considered decision, and should not be made arbitrarily, frivolously, or in haste.
- B. Such a decision must take into account PPS's focus on eliminating racism and other systemic discrimination based on protected classes and its impact on student learning and educational activities.
- C. Because the impact of renaming an existing school or amending an existing name is substantial in terms of potential public confusion, and administrative and fiscal costs, the burden is upon the party or parties proposing the name change to present persuasive evidence that the benefits of renaming outweigh community and PPS impacts.
- D. Central PPS staff will provide significant support to school-based administrators during a renaming process.
- E. In considering a name change, the Board will consider input and recommendations from the school community and the community at large. The request for a name change must be accompanied by a fiscal impact statement and a proposed method of covering the expense of the name change.
 - i. PPS will allow for an exemption to the fiscal impact statement and proposed method of covering the expense of the name change when a party can show the change is being made to address discrimination.

VIII. Implementation

- A. The Board has the ultimate authority to determine if the criteria in this policy have been satisfied.
- B. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop procedures which provide for implementation of this policy.

History: Adopted 7/12/2004; Amended 4/2018, 12/2023, _____



Religious and Cultural Observances

We respect and protect the constitutional rights of our students, families, and employees to practice and observe their religion or to practice no religion at all. We also respect and protect our students, families, and employees' rich and diverse cultural observances and practices. At all times, we seek to balance those important individual rights with the constitutional requirement that PPS, as a public-school district, may not favor or promote a particular religion over another. And, at all times, we encourage all students, families, and staff to show respect, tolerance, and curiosity about religious and cultural practices that differ from their own. These differences and our acceptance of them make our school community an inclusive and welcoming community in which all students can authentically thrive.

I. Excused Absences & Other Accommodations

Students and families may request accommodations to enable them to observe their religious and cultural practices. Those accommodations may include excused absences for religious instruction or holiday observances. Requests for absences or other accommodations should be in writing from a student's parent/guardian directed to a teacher and/or principal at the student's school.

A. Classes. Students may be excused from classes for their individual religious or cultural practices without penalty. Students who have missed an assignment or assessment must be given a reasonable opportunity to make up that test or assessment. Make-up opportunities will not be required of a student on the school day immediately after a student is absent from school to observe a religious or cultural holiday.

B. Co-Curricular and Extracurricular activities. Students may also be excused from co-curricular and extracurricular activities for their individual religious or cultural practices without penalty.

II. Identification of Major Religious Holidays and Cultural Observances

As part of the annual school calendar creation and adoption process, the Superintendent will identify major religious and cultural holidays in our community using legally acceptable methods to do so. PPS and each of its schools should avoid scheduling grade-, school- or district-wide events (e.g., Back-to-School nights, all-school assemblies, parent-teacher conferences, School Board meetings) on those dates. Such events can be scheduled on major religious holidays only if such scheduling is reasonably necessary to carry out the proper functioning of a school program or course of study, to avoid an unreasonable burden on other students, or if such scheduling is outside the control of PPS employees. Staff will inform students and parents of plans as far in advance as possible so that conflicts with religious or cultural observances can be avoided if possible and otherwise accommodated if not.

III. Non-PPS-Sponsored Events

When school or PPS events are scheduled and controlled by organizations other than PPS (e.g., OSAA, Outdoor School, national testing organizations), PPS will advocate with those organizations that such events are not held on major religious or cultural holidays.



Public Access to District Records

To promote transparency and provide an accurate accounting of how PPS carries out the public's business, it is the intent of the Board that all PPS records be disclosed courteously and consistent with state and federal law. PPS will rely upon the definition of "Public Record" set forth in Oregon law.

- I. The Superintendent will hire a Public Records Officer and develop administrative directives and procedures to provide clarity and consistency to the public about access to PPS public records. The Public Records Officer will process all requests as soon as practicable and without unreasonable delay, without regard to the nature of the records or identity of the requester.
- II. It is the goal of PPS to provide the public with records at no or minimal cost when the documents requested are not voluminous or do not require significant time to locate and process. The Superintendent will develop clear guidelines regarding when it is appropriate to charge fees and to provide clarity to requesters as to how fees are determined.
- III. PPS recognizes that it is in possession of sensitive and confidential information about our students, staff, and families. Upon receiving a public records request seeking potentially sensitive, personal, or private information related to a staff member, PPS will notify the staff member and the staff member's union (if represented) in writing of the existence and nature of the records request. In responding to public records requests, PPS will follow state and federal law.
- IV. When public records are requested that could be considered exempt under one of the conditional exemptions under Oregon law, PPS will construe the public interest liberally in favor of disclosure.
- V. The Public Records Officer will, with the advice and counsel of the General Counsel or its designee, make determinations as to whether (a) a record is responsive to a public records request; (b) a record contains information PPS is prohibited from disclosing; or (c) a record is exempt from disclosure. The Public Records Officer will have the responsibility of ensuring exemptions are legally and appropriately applied.
- VI. Records will be made available to persons with disabilities in an appropriate format on request in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. No fee to cover the costs of providing records in an alternative format will be charged. All other actual costs may be recovered, consistent with Board policies, administrative directives, and the public records law.
- VII. If PPS requires clarification from the requester, such clarification will be requested in writing, and the requestor will be informed that work on the request will stop until the clarification is received. If the original scope of a request is likely to necessitate high fees, the Public Records Officer will offer to work with requesters to negotiate or narrow the scope to reduce the costs.
- VIII. Requesters who believe PPS has inappropriately withheld records or assessed fees may request review from the Multnomah County District Attorney in accordance with ORS Chapter 192.
- IX. No PPS employee, student, or Board member may engage in unlawful retaliation against any person who requests public records or requests review of a public records decision. Any

employee who engages in any form of retaliation for requesting public records, or requesting review of public records decisions, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

- X. To avoid possible conflicts of interest, no employee will make the final decision on the application of exemptions to a given public records request if they are named in that request. If an in-house PPS attorney is making the final decision on the application of exemptions applicable to a public records request and they also provided material legal advice regarding the records at issue prior to the records being requested (e.g. a personnel investigation), the in-house attorney will disclose that fact to the Superintendent's designee prior to making the final decision. Any employee who knowingly and intentionally violates this paragraph will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Legal References: ORS Chapter 192; ADA, 1990, 42 U.S.C. Section 12101 et seq. 29 CFR Part 1630

History: Adopted 12/8/80; Amended 1/84, 9/02, 7/18, _____



Student Education Records

- I. Education records are those records maintained by PPS that are directly related to a student.
- II. The primary reason for the keeping and maintaining of education records for students is to help the individual student in their educational development by providing pertinent information for the student, their teachers, and their parents/guardians. These records also serve as an important source of information to assist students in seeking productive employment and/or post-high school education.
- III. PPS will maintain confidential education records for students in a manner that conforms with state and federal laws and regulations.
- IV. Information recorded on official education records should be carefully selected, accurate, and verifiable, and should have a direct and significant bearing upon the student's educational development.
- V. PPS has an affirmative duty to provide records requested by another school district to determine a student's appropriate placement.
- VI. PPS will comply with a request from parents/guardians or a student 18 years or older to inspect and review records without unnecessary delay. PPS will give parents of students with disabilities, and students 18 years or older with disabilities, an opportunity to examine all student education records in accordance with state and federal law, including all education records with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the student and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.
- VII. PPS will give full rights to education records to either parent, or legal guardian, unless PPS has been provided legal evidence that specifically revokes or modifies these rights. However, once the student reaches age 18, those rights transfer to the student.
- VIII. A copy of this policy and related administrative directive will be made available upon request by parents/guardians, students 18 years or older or emancipated, and the general public.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 (2000). Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, 34 CFR § 300.501 (2000); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC §§ 1400-1419; ORS 107.154; ORS 326.565; ORS 326.575; ORS 343.181; OAR 581-021-0220 to 581-021-0440.

History: Adopted 6/71; Amended 8/75, 10/81, 5/84, 5/86, 7/86, 5/87, 12/89, 1/91, 10/92, 9/02, 10/23, _____



Racial Educational Equity Policy

The Board of Education for Portland Public Schools is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools. The mission of Portland Public Schools is that by the end of elementary, middle, and high school, every student by name will meet or exceed academic standards and will be fully prepared to make productive life decisions. We believe that every student has the potential to achieve, and it is the responsibility of our school district to give each student the opportunity and support to meet ~~their~~^{his or her} highest potential.

In light of this mission and our beliefs, ~~Portland Public Schools~~ PPS's historic, persistent achievement gap between white students and students of color is unacceptable. While efforts have been made to address the inequities between white students and students of color, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Recognizing that there are other student groups that have not reached their achievement potential, this policy focuses on the most historically persistent achievement gap, which is that between white students and students of color. Closing this achievement gap while raising achievement for all students is the top priority of the Board, ~~of Education~~, the Superintendent, and all ~~PPS district~~ staff. Race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement and success.¹

In ~~PPS Portland Public Schools~~, for every year that we have data, white students have clearly outperformed Black, ~~Latino/a~~^{Hispanic} and Native American students on state assessments in every subject at every grade level. White students consistently graduate at higher percentages than students of color, while students of color are disciplined far more frequently than white students. These disparities are unacceptable and are directly at odds with our belief that all students can achieve.

The responsibility for the disparities among our young people rests with adults, not the children. We are aware that student achievement data from school districts across the country reveal similar patterns, and that complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities our students face. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating disparities, Portland Public Schools must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.

Portland Public Schools will significantly change its practices in order to achieve and maintain racial equity in education. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories.² The concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality -- where all students are treated the same -- to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, have the opportunity to benefit equally. Educational equity benefits all students, and our entire community. Students of all races ~~will~~^{shall} graduate from PPS ready to succeed in a racially and culturally diverse local, national and global community. To achieve educational equity, PPS will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all students, including students of color.

In order to achieve racial equity for our students, the Board establishes the following goals:

¹ For the purposes of this policy, "race" is defined as "A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups." Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. (2007).

² ~~Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton *Courageous Conversations About Race*, p. 46 (2006).~~

- A. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
- B. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of our diverse students, and ~~will~~shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial groups.
- C. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall recruit, employ, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel, and ~~will~~shall provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in achievement. Additionally, in alignment with the Oregon ~~Educators Equity~~Minority Teacher Act, ~~PPS~~the District ~~will~~shall actively strive to have our teacher and administrator workforce reflect the diversity of our student body.
- D. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under-representation in programs such as ~~talented and gifted~~ and Advanced Placement.
- E. All staff and students ~~will~~shall be given the opportunity to understand racial identity, and the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others.
- F. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall welcome and empower students and families, including underrepresented families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) as essential partners in their student's education, school planning and ~~PPS~~District decision-making. ~~PPS~~The District ~~will~~shall create welcoming environments that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community. In addition, ~~PPS~~the District will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise -- including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community in general -- in meeting our educational outcomes.

The Board will hold the Superintendent and central and school leadership staff accountable for making measurable progress in meeting the goals. Every ~~PPS~~Portland Public Schools employee is responsible for the success and achievement of all students. The Board recognizes that these are long term goals that require significant work and resources to implement across all schools. As such, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop action plans with clear accountability and metrics, and including prioritizing staffing and budget allocations, which will result in measurable results on a yearly basis towards achieving the above goals. Such action plans ~~will~~shall identify specific staff leads on all key work, and include clear procedures for ~~PPS~~district schools and staff. ~~The Superintendent will present the Board with a plan to implement goals A through F within three months of adoption of this policy. Thereafter, the Superintendent will report on progress towards these goals at least twice a year, and will provide the Board with updated action plans each year.~~ The Superintendent's updates and reports to the Board on student achievement will include achievement data disaggregated by race and measures to address racial disparities in student experience and outcomes.

Legal References: ~~"The State of Black Oregon" (The Urban League of Portland 2009); "Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Report" (Coalition of Communities of Color/Portland State University 2010); "The Economic Cost of the Achievement Gap" (Chalkboard Project 2010); "The Hispanic/White Achievement Gap in Oregon" (Chalkboard Project 2009); "A Deeper Look at the Black-White Achievement Gap in Multnomah County" (Chalkboard Project 2009); ORS 342.433.~~

History: Adopted 6/11



Naming School District Property

I. Responsibility and Authority

- A. The naming of all ~~Portland Public Schools School District~~ properties including, but not limited to, ~~School District~~ schools, school facilities, programs, non-~~school~~ facilities, as well as school mascots, symbols and other images considered for representation of a school or ~~PPS District~~, is the responsibility of the Board of Education.
- B. In considering appropriate names for any school, facility, programs, or representative images, it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the name properly reflects the type and mission of the school, facility, and focus option so as to not cause public confusion. In respect for the diversity of our community, names ~~will~~^{shall} have broad acceptance in a multicultural society as determined by the Board ~~of Education~~.
- C. In the naming process, the Board recognizes the importance of soliciting student, staff, parent and community input, as appropriate, in the selection of names. Names may be presented by individuals, by petition, by chosen committees, or by other representative groups. While efforts will be made to respect student, staff, parent, and community preferences, the Board ~~of Education~~ retains the final authority over selection of names for schools, facilities, programs and representative images.
- D. Requests for renaming of ~~PPS District~~ properties may be presented by individuals, by petition, by chosen committees, or by other representative groups to the ~~School~~ Board. The petition needs to demonstrate diverse school community support or indicate the name change is being requested in accordance with section II (A4) in this policy.
- E. The ~~School~~ Board will take one of these actions:
 - i. Direct the Superintendent to conduct a renaming process;
 - ii. Decline the request; ~~or~~
 - iii. Defer action on the request to a later date.
- F. If the ~~School~~ Board directs the Superintendent to conduct a renaming process, the Superintendent will note the staff or financial resources needed to conduct the process.

II. General Criteria for Names

When evaluating school, non-school facility, program names, and representative images, the following general criteria ~~will~~^{shall} be followed:

- A. Names submitted for consideration may:
 - i. be known and significant to the community, students and staff; ~~or~~
 - ii. relate to local neighborhoods, to relevant geographic areas; to places of historical, geographical, geologic or cultural significance; to indigenous and characteristic flora or fauna; ~~or~~

- iii. be persons or groups of persons, deceased at least three years, who have demonstrated international, national, state or local leadership in the fields of education, arts and sciences, or public service; or be thematic to reflect the character of the community culture and history; or
- iv. reflect features of the facility or program type; and the mission of the facility.
- v. All considerations must reflect our commitment to eliminating racism and other systemic discrimination based on protected classes and its impact on student learning and educational activities.

B. Names submitted for consideration ~~will~~shall not:

- i. conflict with the names of other schools or programs in ~~PPS the School District~~ or surrounding ~~S school D districts~~;
- ii. reflect the names of specific cities with the exception of "Portland";
- iii. be a person, location or character whose primary identification is of a religious nature or be a name of a religious group or members;
- iv. include the word 'neighborhood' in the school name unless the school has defined attendance barriers; or
- v. include the word 'school' in its name if it is a special program that does not meet the definition of a school as stated in Board Policy 6.10.022-P.

III. Special Recognition of Specific Persons

A. The Board ~~of Education~~ acknowledges that communities served by ~~PPS School District~~ facilities periodically desire to recognize individuals for long and honorable service. Locations within school facilities or buildings may be named for former ~~PPS School District~~ employees, citizens or students (not necessarily deceased) who have made specific contributions to education within ~~Portland Public Schools~~ PPS.

B. Naming of locations inside schools and school facilities are subject to the approval of the Superintendent, with notice to the Board of the naming and the reasons for the recognition.

IV. Gifts

The Board acknowledges that it has the authority to accept monetary or in-kind donations from individuals and entities. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to naming locations within a school or non-school facility for a significant gift as determined by the Board, in consultation with the Superintendent. Any names in this instance ~~will~~shall be consistent with all ~~School~~ Board policies and ~~will~~shall reflect the donor's appropriate financial support as well as the donor commitment to ~~the School District~~ PPS's mission and vision and the objectives of the public- school system.

V. Charter Schools

Agreements signed between ~~P public C charter S schools~~ and ~~PPS the School District~~ will contain the requirement that the word 'Charter' be included as part of the ~~C charter S school~~ name. Charter schools do not have defined attendance boundaries and, thus, ~~will~~shall not have the title 'neighborhood' as part of their name.

VI. School Conversions, Mergers, or Reconfigurations

When a school undergoes conversion or is reconfigured into separate distinct units, each of which meets the definition of a school as stated in Board Policy 6.10.022-P, those schools will be named following the conditions and criteria for new schools as outlined in this policy. When two or more schools are merged and there is community support for a name other than the current name of the facility, the school community ~~will~~**shall** go through the renaming process using the criteria in this policy. ~~The district~~**PPS will**~~shall~~ waive the fiscal impact statement in these cases.

VII. Renaming or Amending of Current Names

- A. The Board recognizes that renaming existing schools or facilities or amending existing names by adding or deleting words or phrases is a serious, considered decision, and should not be made arbitrarily, frivolously, or in haste.
- B. Such a decision must take into account ~~the District~~**PPS's** focus on eliminating racism and other systemic discrimination based on protected classes and its impact on student learning and educational activities.
- C. Because the impact of renaming an existing school or amending an existing name is substantial in terms of potential public confusion, and administrative and fiscal costs, the burden is upon the party or parties proposing the name change to present persuasive evidence that the benefits of renaming outweigh community and ~~PPS School District~~ impacts.
- D. Central ~~PPS District~~ staff will provide significant support to school-based administrators during a renaming process.
- E. In considering a name change, the Board ~~will~~**shall** consider input and recommendations from the school community and the community at large. The request for a name change must be accompanied by a fiscal impact statement and a proposed method of covering the expense of the name change.
 - i. ~~PPS The District~~ will allow for an exemption to the fiscal impact statement and proposed method of covering the expense of the name change when a party can show the change is being made to address discrimination.

VIII. Implementation

- A. The Board ~~of Education~~ has the ultimate authority to determine if the criteria in this policy have been satisfied.
- B. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop procedures which provide for implementation of this policy.

History: Adopted 7/12/2004; Amended 4/10/18; Amended 12/2023



Religious and Cultural Observances

We respect and protect the constitutional rights of our students, families, and employees to practice and observe their religion or to practice no religion at all. We also respect and protect our students, families, and employees' rich and diverse cultural observances and practices. At all times, we seek to balance those important individual rights with the constitutional requirement that PPS, as a public-school district, may not favor or promote a particular religion over another. And, at all times, we encourage all students, families, and staff to show respect, tolerance, and curiosity about religious and cultural practices that differ from their own. These differences and our acceptance of them make our school community an inclusive and welcoming community in which all students can authentically thrive.

I. Excused Absences & Other Accommodations

Students and families may request accommodations to enable them to observe their religious and cultural practices. Those accommodations may include excused absences for religious instruction or holiday observances. Requests for absences or other accommodations should be in writing from a student's parent/guardian directed to a teacher and/or principal at the student's school.

A. Classes. Students may be excused from classes for their individual religious or cultural practices without penalty. Students who have missed an assignment or assessment must be given a reasonable opportunity to make up that test or assessment. Make-up opportunities will not be required of a student on the school day immediately after a student is absent from school to observe a religious or cultural holiday.

B. Co-Curricular and Extracurricular activities. Students may also be excused from co-curricular and extracurricular activities for their individual religious or cultural practices without penalty.

II. Identification of Major Religious Holidays and Cultural Observances

As part of the annual school calendar creation and adoption process, the Superintendent ~~will~~^{shall} identify major religious and cultural holidays in our community using legally acceptable methods to do so. ~~PPS The District~~ and each of its schools should avoid scheduling grade-, school- or district-wide events (e.g., Back-to-School nights, all-school assemblies, parent-teacher conferences, School Board meetings) on those dates. Such events can be scheduled on major religious holidays only if such scheduling is reasonably necessary to carry out the proper functioning of a school program ~~or~~^{or} course of study, ~~or~~^{or} to avoid an unreasonable burden on other students, ~~or~~^{or} if such scheduling is outside the control of ~~PPS District~~ employees. Staff will inform students and parents of plans as far in advance as possible so that conflicts with religious or cultural observances can be avoided if possible and otherwise accommodated if not.

III. Non-~~PPS District~~-Sponsored Events

When school or ~~PPS District~~ events are scheduled and controlled by organizations other than ~~PPS the District~~ (e.g., OSAA, Outdoor School, national testing organizations), ~~PPS the District~~ ~~will~~^{shall} advocate with those organizations that such events are not held on major religious or cultural holidays.



Public Access to District Records

~~In order to~~ To promote transparency and provide an accurate accounting of how ~~PPS the district~~ carries out the public's business, it is the intent of the Board that all ~~PPS district records should~~ be disclosed courteously and consistent with state and federal law. ~~PPS The district will~~ ~~shall~~ rely upon the definition of "Public Record" set forth in Oregon law.

- I. The Superintendent ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ hire a Public Records Officer and develop administrative directives and procedures to provide clarity and consistency to the public about access to ~~PPS district~~ public records. The Public Records Officer ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ process all requests as soon as practicable and without unreasonable delay, without regard to the nature of the records or identity of the requester.
- II. It is the goal of ~~PPS the school district~~ to provide the public with records at no or minimal cost when the documents requested are not voluminous or do not require significant time to locate and process. The Superintendent ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ develop clear guidelines regarding when it is appropriate to charge fees and to provide clarity to requesters as to how fees are determined.
- III. ~~PPS The district~~ recognizes that it is in possession of sensitive and confidential information about our students, staff, and families. Upon receiving a public records request seeking potentially sensitive, personal, or private information related to a staff member, ~~PPS the District will~~ ~~shall~~ notify the staff member and the staff member's union (if represented) in writing of the existence and nature of the records request. In responding to public records requests, ~~PPS the District~~ will follow state and federal law.
- IV. When public records are requested that could be considered exempt under one of the conditional exemptions under Oregon law, ~~PPS the district will~~ ~~shall~~ construe the public interest liberally in favor of disclosure.
- V. The Public Records Officer ~~will~~ ~~shall~~, with the advice and counsel of the General Counsel or its designee, make determinations as to whether (a) a record is responsive to a public records request; (b) a record contains information ~~PPS the district~~ is prohibited from disclosing; or (c) a record is exempt from disclosure. The Public Records Officer ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ have the responsibility of ensuring exemptions are legally and appropriately applied.
- VI. Records ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ be made available to persons with disabilities in an appropriate format on request in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. No fee to cover the costs of providing records in an alternative format ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ be charged. All other actual costs may be recovered, consistent with Board policies, administrative directives, and the public records law.
- VII. If ~~PPS the district~~ requires clarification from the requester, such clarification ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ be requested in writing, and the requestor ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ be informed that work on the request will stop until the clarification is received. If the original scope of a request is likely to necessitate high fees, the Public Records Officer will offer to work with requesters to negotiate or narrow the scope ~~in order~~ to reduce the costs.
- VIII. Requesters who believe ~~PPS the district~~ has inappropriately withheld records or assessed fees may request ~~an expedited review of such decisions by the Board, which will decide whether to hear the appeal and, if it does, issue a decision within 30 days. The Board's procedures will preserve the confidentiality of the records in question during such an~~

~~appeal. Requesters retain their statutory right to request such review from the Multnomah County District Attorney in accordance with ORS Chapter 192., and the availability of an appeal to the Board does not preclude a requester from appealing a denial directly to the District Attorney rather than to the Board.~~

- IX. No ~~PPS~~~~District~~ employee, student, or Board member may engage in unlawful retaliation against any person who requests public records or requests review of a public records decision. Any employee who engages in any form of retaliation for requesting public records, or requesting review of public records decisions, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- X. To avoid possible conflicts of interest, no employee ~~will~~~~shall~~ make the final decision on the application of exemptions to a given public records request if they are named in that request. If an in-house PPS attorney~~s~~ is making the final decision on the application of exemptions applicable to a public records request and they also provided material legal advice regarding the records at issue prior to the records being requested (e.g. a personnel investigation), the in-house attorney ~~will~~~~shall~~ disclose that fact to the Superintendent's designee prior to making the final decision. Any employee who knowingly and intentionally violates this paragraph will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Legal References: ORS ~~Chapter~~ 192; ADA, 1990, 42 U.S.C. Section 12101 et seq. 29 CFR Part 1630

History: Adpt 12/8/80; Amd 1/84; Amd 9/9/02; BA 2418, Amd 7/17/18



Student Education Records

- I. Education records are those records maintained by ~~PPS the District~~ that are directly related to a student.
- II. ~~In addition to the protection and procedures included in this policy and accompanying administrative directive, students with disabilities and their parents have additional rights under federal and state law with regard to student education records. Those rights and procedures have been included in the [Special Education Manual](#) located on the District website.~~ ¶
- III. ~~The primary reason for the keeping and maintaining of education records for students is to help the individual student in their educational development by providing pertinent information for the student, their teachers, and their parents/guardians. These records also serve as an important source of information to assist students in seeking productive employment and/or post-high school education.~~
- IV. ~~The District~~ PPS ~~will shall keep~~ maintain confidential education records for students in a manner that conforms with ~~as required by~~ state and federal laws and regulations.
- V. Information recorded on official education records should be carefully selected, accurate, and verifiable, and should have a direct and significant bearing upon the student's educational development.
- VI. ~~PPS The District~~ has an affirmative duty to provide records requested by another school district to determine a student's appropriate placement.
- VII. PPS will comply with a request from parents/guardians or a student 18 years or older to inspect and review records without unnecessary delay. PPS will give parents of students with disabilities, and students 18 years or older with disabilities, an opportunity to examine all student education records in accordance with state and federal law, including all education records with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the student and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.
- VIII. ~~PPS The District will shall~~ give full rights to education records to either parent, or legal guardian, unless ~~PPS the District~~ has been provided legal evidence that specifically revokes or modifies these rights. However, once the student reaches age 18, those rights transfer to the student.
- IX. A copy of this policy and ~~related administrative directive regulation will shall~~ be made available upon request by parents/guardians, ~~and~~ students 18 years or older or emancipated, ~~and the general public.~~

Legal References: ~~ORS 30.864; ORS 107.154; ORS 326.565; ORS 326.575; ORS 343.177 (3); OAR 166-405-0010 to 166-415-0010; OAR 581-021-0210 to 0440; OAR 581-022-1660; OAR 581-022-1670; Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975, as amended, 20 U.S.C. Sections 1400-1427, as amended and renamed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476, 104 Stat 1103 (1990), as amended P.L. 105-17 (1997). Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 (2000). Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, 34 CFR § 300.501 (2000);~~ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC §§ 1400-1419; ORS 107.154; ORS 326.565; ORS 326.575; ORS 343.181; OAR 581-021-0220 to 581-021-0440.

History: Adpt. 6/71; Amd. 8/11/75; Amd. 10/1/81; Amd. 5/84 ed.; Amd. 5/8/86; Amd 7/10/86;
Amd. 5/14/87; Amd. 12/14/89; Amd. 1/24/91; Amd. 10/22/92; Amd. 9/02, BA 2424; Amd 10/23.

RESOLUTION No. 7359

Resolution to Rescind 2.40.020-P Student Participation Policy

RECITALS

- A. On April 27, 2026 and May 18, 2026, the Board of Education's Policy Committee reviewed and considered the necessity and relevance of 2.40.020-P Student Participation Policy.
- B. On June 9, 2026, the Board presented the first reading of each of those policies for rescission.
- C. The public comment period was open for at least 21 days and no public comments were received.

RESOLUTION

The Board hereby rescinds 2.40.020-P Student Participation Policy and instructs the Superintendent to rescind and/or revise any administrative directives that are no longer accurate or relevant as a result of rescinding these policies.



Date: April 22, 2026 (Updated May 11, 2026)

To: Policy Committee

From: Emily Courtnage, Senior Legal Counsel
Sharon Toncray, Chief Legal Officer

CC: Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

Subject: Proposed Revisions to Section 2.00.000 Policies (District Administration)

May 11, 2026 update:

Based on discussion at the April 27, 2026 Policy Committee meeting, staff made the following updates to the policies presented below:

1. 2.10.010-P (Racial Educational Equity Policy): Add a final sentence to the policy to require that the Superintendent's updates and reports to the Board on student achievement include achievement data disaggregated by race and reflect measures to address racial disparities in student experience and outcomes. This reflects current practice and ensures its continuity.
2. 2.50.020-P (Student Educational Records): Modify Section VI to add “and students 18 years or older with disabilities” and “and federal [law]” to the second sentence.

Staff recommend reviewing, revising, and rescinding the Section 2 policies relating to District Administration as shown in the attached redlines and summarized below. Many of the Section 2 policies have been updated in recent years and now require only minor updates including reformatting and non-substantive language and grammar adjustments. Staff recommend rescission of one policy that is duplicative and outdated.

In reviewing and suggesting changes to the Section 2 policies, we relied in part on review of related Beaverton School District (BSD) and Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) policies. (Beaverton SD adopts Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) model policies, typically without revision.) In some cases, staff recommend borrowing or adapting language from BSD/OSBA to improve our policies or add important detail. Where applicable, we have attached the relevant policies to each redline for the Board's review.



Staff recommend applying the following non-substantive formatting and language updates to all policies:

- Apply consistent template, heading, margins, spacing, font, etc., based on an updated template developed by the Board Office
- Apply consistent capitalization to Superintendent, Board, etc.
- Correct typos
- Remove hyperlinks
- Update language: Replace all instances of “District” with “PPS” and “shall” with “will”; change “she/he” to “they” or “his/her” to “their”

These non-substantive changes have been incorporated in the attached redlines. (However, in order to render the redlined policies more readily readable with a focus on substantive changes, staff did not redline the format or numbering adjustments.)

Policy	Title	Date of Last Revision	Proposed Action	Summary of Changes
2.10.010-P	Racial Educational Equity Policy	6/2011	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates and deletion of obsolete or duplicative language; updated reference to Oregon law
2.20.010-P	Naming School District Property	12/2023	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates only
2.30.010-P	Religious and Cultural Observances	1/2024	Revise	Non-substantive and formatting updates only
2.40.020-P	Student Participation	5/2001	Rescind	Outdated and duplicative. Student participation in District Student Council, Board, and Board Committees are addressed in 1.20.012-P . Optional student participation in school site councils is addressed in 7.10.010-P . See also 4.40.010-P (Student



				Participation in School Affairs).
2.50.010-P	Public Access to District Records	7/2018	Revise	Non-substantive updates and alignment of appeal procedure with Oregon Public Records Law.
2.50.020-P	Student Education Records	10/2023	Revise	Update with language adapted from BSD/OSBA policy



Date: May 28, 2026

To: School Board

From: Emily Courtnage, Senior Legal Counsel
Sharon Toncray, Chief Legal Officer

CC: Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

Subject: Revisions to Section 2.00.000 Policies (District Administration)

Attached is a staff memo to the Policy Committee, dated April 22, 2026 and updated May 11, 2025, describing proposed updates to the Section 2.00.000 policies, including five revisions and one rescission. The Policy Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed updates on April 27 and May 18, 2026. In the course of their review, Committee members asked staff to make two adjustments; these are detailed in the May 11, 2026 update in the attached staff memo and incorporated in the redlines presented to the Board.

On May 18, 2026, the Policy Committee referred these five revisions and one rescission to the full Board for a first reading.

2.40.020-P Student Participation

- (1) The district affirms the proposition that student input and participation is important to committees dealing with decisions that affect the students. Therefore, committees shall provide opportunities for student participation, input and involvement, except for matters which are reserved for discussion with district employees or are legally reserved for a specific party. Examples of appropriate instances for student representation include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (a) Any curriculum design and evaluation committees;
 - (b) Committees regarding testing, benchmarks and standards;
 - (c) Committees on district budget or policy;
 - (d) Committees regarding the selection of principals, administrators and faculty, with exceptions for specific components involving confidential personnel information;
 - (e) Ad hoc committees;
 - (f) Committees involving the planning or discussion of activities and events;
 - (g) Committees dealing with the principles and philosophies of the district; and
 - (h) Site councils.

Legal References:

History: Adpt 5/21/01, BA 1878

RESOLUTION No. 7360

Resolution to Adopt the Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools Policy

RECITALS

- A. On May 18, 2026, the Board Policy Committee reviewed and considered the proposed Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools Policy
- B. On June 9, 2026, the Board presented the first reading of the revisions to each of those policies.
- C. Pursuant to District policy, the public comment was open for at least 21 days.

RESOLUTION

The Board hereby adopts the Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools Policy and instructs the Superintendent to amend any relevant administrative directives to conform to these adopted policies.



Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools

Portland Public Schools will ensure that all students have equitable access to education regardless of actual or perceived immigration or citizenship status.

PPS recognizes that access to a free, high-quality public education is a fundamental right. This commitment includes ensuring that students and families are not excluded from participation, denied services, or subjected to discrimination based on immigration status.

This policy builds on PPS's commitment to equity and social justice by fostering barrier-free environments where all students, regardless of identity or circumstance, have the opportunity to learn, belong, and thrive.

To ensure access, safety, and nondiscrimination for all students, PPS commits to the following:

I. Access to Education; Safe and Supportive School Environments

- A. PPS will provide every PPS student with equitable access to enrollment, instruction, and school-based services, regardless of immigration or citizenship status.
- B. PPS will eliminate barriers to access, including policies or practices that directly or indirectly discourage enrollment, attendance or participation by students or families based on immigration status. This includes proactively identifying and addressing unintended impacts of existing policies and procedures that may result in exclusion or loss of access to education.
 - i. This commitment includes students who experience compounding barriers to access and stability, including those receiving services under McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness), Title III (Multilingual Learners), Indian Education, and students in foster care. PPS recognizes that these student groups may be disproportionately impacted by immigration-related barriers and will ensure that policies and practices are implemented in ways that protect continuity of enrollment and access to services.
 - ii. PPS will review and align related policies, including those governing enrollment, attendance, and withdrawal, to ensure that students are not unintentionally excluded from school due to immigration-related fears or circumstances.
- C. PPS will maintain school environments that are safe, welcoming, and free from fear, intimidation, or disruption.
- D. PPS will implement trauma-informed practices to support students and families impacted by immigration enforcement-related events.

II. Interactions with Immigration Enforcement

- A. PPS will establish and implement clear procedures for responding to immigration enforcement activities on or near school property. At a minimum, PPS will:
 - i. Designate a primary and secondary point of contact for coordinating interactions with federal immigration authorities occurring on or near school property;

- ii. PPS's Office of Legal Counsel will review, verify the validity of, and respond to requests from federal immigration enforcement in coordination with the central office designee;
 - iii. Require school staff to immediately notify school administration office staff when immigration enforcement is present and follow PPS protocols;
 - iv. Identify at least one administrator or designee to confirm and provide notice to the central office designee that a federal immigration authority has entered school property for immigration enforcement;
 - v. Prioritize student safety and the continuity of the learning environment;
 - vi. Prohibit federal immigration enforcement access to non-public areas of PPS facilities or property; and
 - vii. Prohibit school staff from signing documents presented by federal immigration authorities or giving consent to any immigration action.
- B. If federal immigration officers request to board a school bus or appear at a school sponsored event, PPS will follow the protocols in the PPS Immigration Enforcement Toolkit.

III. Protection of Student Information

- A. PPS will protect the confidentiality of student and family information to the fullest extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, student education records will not be disclosed without appropriate legal authorization, such as a judicial warrant or lawfully issued subpoena. Administrative warrants or requests that do not meet this standard are not sufficient for the release of student information.
- B. PPS will not:
- i. Require disclosure of immigration or citizenship status unless required by law;
 - ii. Collect or maintain information for the purpose of immigration enforcement; or
 - iii. Share student records without appropriate legal authorization.
- C. All requests from immigration enforcement for student information will be referred to the PPS Office of Legal Counsel.
- i. Unless otherwise prohibited by law or court order, PPS will provide notice to the student or parent/guardian of a student when PPS has provided information related to the student to a federal immigration authority.

IV. Family and Community Partnerships; Notice of Immigration Enforcement Presence

- A. PPS will create welcoming environments and communication systems that ensure families have access to accurate information, resources, and support regardless of immigration status. This includes ensuring that all communications related to this policy are accessible in the primary languages of enrolled students, consistent with Title III obligations and PPS's Language Access Plan.
- B. PPS will provide notice to students, parents/guardians, and community partners when a federal immigration authority is confirmed to be on school property for immigration enforcement. Notice will include, but is not limited to, the general location of the

federal immigration authority and whether classes or school operations are affected by the presence of the federal immigration authority.

- i. Notice may not include personally identifiable information or any other information that may not be legally disclosed. PPS may not disclose information that may threaten the health or safety of students or employees or that is prohibited by court order.
 - ii. PPS will utilize multiple modes of communication to reach families, including translated written materials, oral interpretation, phone calls, text messaging systems, school websites, and community-based outreach channel.
- C. PPS will prioritize outreach to students and families who may face heightened barriers to access, including Multilingual Learners and newly arrived or newcomer students, and partner with community-based organizations to ensure information is accessible, trusted, and culturally responsive.
- D. PPS will actively engage and partner with community-based organizations to provide culturally responsive supports, including coordination of services, referrals to community resources, and agreements that expand access to social, legal, and wellness supports for students and families impacted by immigration enforcement actions.

V. Training and Capacity Building

- A. PPS will provide training and guidance to all staff regarding this policy and related procedures at least every other year. Training will be accessible to all staff, including licensed, classified, and support staff, particularly those who may be the first point of contact at school entry points. Training will include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Staff roles and responsibilities during immigration-related incidents;
 - ii. Student privacy protections;
 - iii. State sanctuary law requirements;
 - iv. Communication protocols with families;
 - v. Application of PPS's Equity Lens in decision-making; and
 - vi. Guidance on distinguishing between a judicial warrant (signed by a federal judge or magistrate) and an administrative immigration warrant (signed by a federal agency official), including that only a judicial warrant compels compliance under Oregon law.
- B. PPS will ensure access to this policy and the PPS Immigration Enforcement Toolkit in the Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook and on the PPS website.

Legal References: HB 4079 (2026); SB 1538 (2026)

History: Adopted _____.



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Racial Equity and Social Justice Department

501 North Dixon Street / Portland, OR 97227

Telephone: (503) 916-2000

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3107 / 97208-3107

Memorandum

Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026

TO: PPS Policy Committee

FROM: Will Fernandez, Director Racial Equity and Social Justice

SUBJECT: Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Community Advisory Committee Appointments

The attached draft policy, *Protecting Student Access and Safe Schools*, is being brought forward for Policy Committee discussion and consideration on an expedited basis. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear districtwide framework for protecting student access to education, ensuring safe and supportive school environments, and aligning PPS practices with newly enacted Oregon law related to immigration enforcement in schools.

This draft policy aligns with both Oregon Laws 2026 (SB 1538) and Oregon Laws 2026 (HB 4079). HB 4079 requires that school districts adopt conforming policies by September 30, 2026.

SB 1538 requires Oregon school districts to adopt policies and procedures related to immigration enforcement interactions, student privacy protections, staff training, access to education regardless of immigration status, and nondiscrimination protections connected to immigration status. HB 4079 establishes additional requirements related to notification procedures when federal immigration authorities are present on or near school property for immigration enforcement purposes. The draft policy incorporates both of these statutory requirements throughout the policy's sections related to student access, immigration enforcement response protocols, notice requirements, staff training, and protection of student information.

Importantly, this policy does not create an entirely new operational structure for PPS. PPS began developing guidance in 2019 and in this past year, PPS has significantly expanded and refined guidance, protocols, communication tools, safety procedures, and community response resources related to immigration enforcement scenarios and student safety. This includes the PPS Immigration Enforcement Toolkit referenced throughout the draft policy.

This draft is being shared for Policy Committee discussion, feedback, and consideration regarding next steps for formal Board review and adoption before September 30, 2026.



To: Board of Education
From: Director Michelle De Pass
RE: May 18, 2026 Policy Committee Meeting Report
Date: August 4, 2026

Agenda

- Section 2 Policies
- Internal Auditor Policy
- Climate/clean air-not at this time
- Screens in classes (look at LAUSD)-Michelle/Rashelle bringing a draft
- DSC By-laws

Committee Members in attendance: DePass, Chase-Miller, and student Isles, Englesman' s absence is excused.

1. Public Comment
 - a. Technology use in schools
 - b. AI in schools
 - c. Varsity baseball at Jefferson has been cut
2. Section 2 Policies: District Administration

See table in Board Books to review the list of policies. One policy has been rescinded, (Student Participation; content is addressed in other policies) and 5 policies have been updated but are non-substantive formatting changes. There are a couple policies updated to either align with OSBA Policy Oregon Public Records law.

- Racial Educational Equity 2.10.010 Requires updates be disaggregated by race, which reflects current practice going back to 2011.
- Student Educational Records 2.50.020 We added language regarding students 18 years and older with disabilities to align with state law.

The committee has agreed to move Section 2 policies to the full board.

3. Discussion: Screen time/technology in schools

The Teaching and Learning Committee is discussing screen time concerns and we will discuss a policy proposal in the Policy Committee. Committee Directors Chase-Miller and DePass are

bringing a draft policy based on the LA Unified Policy forward for discussion at the two Committees. The Teaching and Learning will be a space to continue to have the conversation. There is a lot of interest in the topic from a variety of stakeholders, including parents, students and teachers. A draft has been shared with staff for review. We will get community input, and input from other stakeholders. There will be opportunities to review and provide comment on the draft policy.

4. Discussion: District Performance Auditing Policy 1.60.040 District Performance Auditing

The last time this policy was updated was in 2024. We have a redlined document and the original policy document. We will be working from the original policy document (not the redlined version) with the full board with input from the board and other stakeholders. We will schedule this conversation for an upcoming board retreat when we can address this and other Section 1 policies.

5. Policies in the 21-Day Public Comment period

- a. 1.70.020P Policies and Administrative Directives – proposed revision
- b. Section 7.00.00P Policies – proposed revisions and recissions

These are on the PPS [Draft Policies](#) website for review and comment.

6. Future Topics – There were none.



To: PPS Board of Education
From: Virginia La Forte, Chair, Facilities Improvement & Operations Committee
RE: May 27, 2026 Committee Report
Date: August 4, 2026

COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee was unable to establish a quorum.

On the day of the meeting, I was notified that the Director Chase-Miller and Director DePass would be unable to attend the meeting. Given the significance of the agenda items including and the preparation by staff, I elected to continue the meeting for informational purposes. No committee action was taken.

Public Comment – Indian Education

Lisa Jackson Spotted-Elk, a longtime advocate for Native American students and families, testified during public comment.

She raised several concerns, including:

- Continued concern that Indian Education has not been incorporated into the Jefferson High School planning process.
- Concern that the program has been displaced without a permanent long-term location and the Native community has not received a meaningful update.
- Lack of meaningful engagement with the District.

Following the meeting, I added Indian Ed to the June 24, 2026 FIO agenda for follow-up. Staff declined to present, citing no update. Dr. Franco has indicated, "I'd be happy to sit down with you to discuss conversations we have had with the RISE team, the schools team, FACE and the Native community as it is a bit nuanced with the timeline as well as possible future locations. The team has been engaging with the Native community and there will be a robust engagement plan moving forward."

Follow-up: Add to future FIO Agenda to discuss engagement plan.

Pool RFP Process

This item was added to agenda following Board approval of several "not-to-exceed" contracts utilizing Pool Requests for Proposals (Pool RFPs).

During previous Board discussions, RISE indicated that Pool RFPs had been used previously within PPS. The District was unable to locate similar examples following the meeting, prompting this discussion.

Director of Purchasing & Contracting Paul Williams provided an excellent overview of the procurement process and acknowledged that while Pool RFPs are not new, "pools of this size and this quantity are different for us," adding that in terms of "size and scale-wise," this approach is new to PPS.

Discussion

The presentation highlighted operational efficiencies associated with Pool RFPs. But, it also raised governance and oversight questions that remain unresolved.

During both the April 14 Regular Board meeting and subsequent discussions, vendors responding to the Pool RFPs submitted questions about the expanded scope of these procurements and how they differed from previous district practices.

My primary concern is governance and transparency.

Because the Board approves the overall pool rather than individual task orders, contracts that would otherwise require Board approval in response to the District's \$150,000 threshold, will instead be awarded administratively without subsequent Board review. While this may improve administrative efficiency, it also reduces Board visibility into significant expenditures.

It's my opinion that the Board should consider an approved reporting process that provides regular visibility into:

- Task orders exceeding the Board approval threshold of \$150,000;;
- Remaining contract capacity.

Follow-up: Staff has added a new pricing bid information sheet for each vendor to relevant Pool RFPs that had not been included in prior Board materials, improving transparency during the approval process. Would recommend Board training on Pool RFPs and a system reporting process for contracts/task orders that exceed \$150,000

Athletic Facilities Update

Staff provided updates on several athletic facility projects.

Grant Bowl

- Field lighting installation is complete.
- Staff is awaiting confirmation of the date the lights will be energized for community use.
- Planning and land use work for the next phase—including restrooms, concessions, seating, and other site improvements—is expected to begin during the second half of this year.
- A Type III land use application is anticipated by year-end.

- Staff indicated the previous master plan will not necessarily be used and that a new design team will be assembled.

I expressed concern that perimeter fencing should be explored to address crowd control and meet OSAA playoff requirements. Because Grant operates as an open campus and the lease requires continued community access, this should be developed through a collaborative community engagement process involving both the school and neighborhood.

I also emphasized that, unlike the lighting project, this phase begins with essentially no permanent spectator amenities and should include robust public engagement before design decisions are finalized.

Marshall Campus

- Track, field, and tennis improvements are complete.
- Phase 2 is underway and includes a new multi-use field for soccer, baseball, and softball.
- Staff anticipates submitting land use applications in Q4, with hearings and decisions targeted for Q2 2027.

Jackson Middle School

- Project remains in the design phase.

Powell Park

- Lease negotiations continue.
- Timing has become a significant concern. Without an executed lease in the near future, field improvements could be delayed..

Jefferson High School

- Athletic field construction has begun.

West Sylvan

- Land use application is in progress.

Athletic Swing Sites

The committee requested an updated report on athletic swing sites associated with upcoming high school modernizations. Athletics staff prepared a comprehensive spreadsheet that should serve as a useful reference for the Board and community.

Bond Audit Update

Year 6 Recommendation #13 (Misabeled in FIO Presentation)

Recommendation #13 calls for comparing staffing capacity with projected bond workload to identify staffing gaps and determine whether resources are under- or over-utilized. The recommendation was originally identified for closure in January 2026 by RISE.

The Bond Performance Auditor has reopened it with the following comment:

Our Bond Auditor's current comment states:

"No comparison of capacity to workload with gap identification was provided. Recommendation remains in progress."

In practical terms, this means the District has not yet demonstrated that it has compared expected bond work to available staffing resources or identified potential capacity gaps or excesses.

During the meeting, staff indicated it could potentially be closed with comments in April; however, it remains open.

Follow-up: Assume this will be addressed in pending Bond Audit.

BAC Charter

Greg DiLoreto, the Bond Accountability Committee (BAC) Chair, commented that the BAC had reviewed their proposed charter revisions developed with BAC members, FIO input, and input from PPS legal team. The BAC recommended it be sent to the Facilities Improvement and Oversight Committee for review.

Discussion included whether the BAC should receive copies of program-level and project-specific Program Management Plans containing key performance indicators. Staff indicated they would confirm that BAC members have access to those materials. There were questions regarding KPIs referenced in the Committee Charge section, and whether bond expenditure testing should be included in the district's financial audit process.

Director La Forte stated the BAC Charter would go to the Board for approval—via the BAC, not FIO—at the June 9th meeting.

Follow-up: The BAC Charter was adopted by the Board with a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION No. 7351

Expenditure Contracts that Exceed \$150,000 for Delegation of Authority

RECITAL

Portland Public Schools (“District”) Public Contracting Rules PPS-45-0200 (“Authority to Approve District Contracts; Delegation of Authority to Superintendent”) requires the Board of Education (“Board”) enter into contracts and approve payment for products, materials, supplies, capital outlay, equipment, and services whenever the total amount exceeds \$150,000 per contract, excepting settlement or real property agreements. Contracts meeting this criterion are listed below.

RESOLUTION

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve these contracts. The Board accepts this recommendation and by this resolution authorizes the authorized signer per the Purchasing and Contracting Delegation of Authority Administrative Directive (8.50.105-AD) to enter into the following agreements.

NEW CONTRACTS

No New Contracts

NEW COOPERATIVE PURCHASING AGREEMENTS

No New Cooperative Purchasing Agreements

NEW INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (“IGAs”)

No New Intergovernmental Agreements

AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING CONTRACTS

Contractor	Amendment Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Amendment Amount; New Contract Amount	Responsible Administrator, Funding Source	Certified Business
Resource Synergy, LLC	7/8/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Digital Resource DR 92190 Amendment 8	Waste container sensors for District-wide use. This amendment adds funding for the 2026/27 school year. Sole Source PPS-47-0275	\$136,393.20 \$607,489.20	J. Franco Fund: 101 Dept: 5596	No

RESOLUTION No. 7352

Expenditure Contracts that Exceed \$150,000 for Delegation of Authority

RECITAL

Portland Public Schools ("District") Public Contracting Rules PPS-45-0200 ("Authority to Approve District Contracts; Delegation of Authority to Superintendent") requires the Board of Education ("Board") enter into contracts and approve payment for products, materials, supplies, capital outlay, equipment, and services whenever the total amount exceeds \$150,000 per contract, excepting settlement or real property agreements. Contracts meeting this criterion are listed below.

RESOLUTION

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve these contracts. The Board accepts this recommendation and by this resolution authorizes the authorized signer per the Purchasing and Contracting Delegation of Authority Administrative Directive (8.50.105-AD) to enter into the following agreements.

NEW CONTRACTS

Contractor	Contract Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Contract Amount	Responsible Admin, Funding Source	Certified Business
Highstreet IT Solutions	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Digital Resource DR 98108	Hosting and managed support services for the District's PeopleSoft environment Special Procurement - Software and Hardware Maintenance PPS 47-0288 (11)	\$1,568,881.32	T. Odgers Fund: General, Bond Dept: 5581, 5582	No
Kelly Services, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Personal Services PS 98109	Temporary Staffing for Information Technology (IT) Direct Negotiation – Ongoing, long-term relationship PPS 46-0525(3)	\$600,000	T. Odgers Funding Source Varies	No
Learning Ally, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 8/4/2028	Digital Resource DR 98149	Site licensing for audiobook solutions for K5 and K8 school sites. Special Class Procurement – Copyrighted Materials and Creative Works PPS-47-0288(4)	\$275,785	K. Howard Fund: Bond Dept: 5445	No
Go to Ms. Sams, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 7/1/2031	Digital Resource DR 98148	Social emotional learning curriculum. Special Class Procurement – Copyrighted Materials and Creative Works PPS-47-0288(4)	\$446,250	K. Howard Fund: Bond Dept: 5445	No
Opsis Architecture	8/5/2026 Through 8/4/2029 Option to renew for three additional one-year terms through 8/4/2032	Architecture ARCH 98134	Architecture and Engineering Design services for full roof replacement and partial seismic rehabilitation at Beach. Request for Proposals 2025-038	\$977,545	T. Odgers Fund: Bond Dept: 5511	No
State of Oregon	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Purchase Order PO 270116	Required local match payment for IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) SBSH (Student Based Health System) Medicaid reimbursement.	\$801,848	J. Buno Fund: General Dept: 9999	N/A

Contractor	Contract Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Contract Amount	Responsible Admin, Funding Source	Certified Business
State of Oregon	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Purchase Order PO 270117	Required local match payment for EI/ECSE (Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education) evaluation claims, needed to release Federal Medicaid reimbursement.	\$228,923	J. Buno Fund: General Dept: 9999	N/A
State of Oregon	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Purchase Order PO 270118	Required Match payment for Non-IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) claims needed to claim Medicaid reimbursement.	\$1,092,699	J. Buno Fund: General Dept: 9999	N/A
Stagecraft Industries, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 11/30/2027	Construction C 98118	Replace stage rigging and curtains at Jackson. Invitation to Bid 2026-031	\$172,000	T. Odgers Fund: Bond Dept: 5511	No
Meridian Partners, LLC	8/5/2026 Through 7/31/2031	Digital Resource DR 98158	ERP Modernization Euna Grants Deployment Request for Proposals 2025-043	\$1,434,627	T. Odgers Fund: Bond Dept: 5581	No
Radio Cab Company	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Services S 98155	Transportation for students with specialized transportation needs. Special Class Procurement – Secure, Specialized Transportation for Special Needs Students PPS 47-0288(19)	\$1,500,000	T. Odgers Fund: General Dept: 5560	No
PDX Yellow Cab, LLC	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Services S 98179	Transportation for students with specialized transportation needs. Special Class Procurement – Secure, Specialized Transportation for Special Needs Students PPS 47-0288(19)	\$1,000,000	T. Odgers Fund: General Dept: 5560	No
Par-Tech Construction, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Construction C 98178	Follow-on projects for Benson High School Modernization. Invitation to Bid 2026-033	\$848,351	J. Franco Fund: Bond Dept: 5511	No
Assist Services dba Buckled In	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Services S 98190	Transportation for students with specialized transportation needs. Special Class Procurement – Secure, Specialized Transportation for Special Needs Students PPS 47-0288(19)	\$1,500,000	T. Odgers Fund: General Dept: 5560	No
Broadway Cab, LLC	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Services S 98207	Transportation for students with specialized transportation needs. Special Class Procurement – Secure, Specialized Transportation for Special Needs Students PPS 47-0288(19)	\$1,000,000	J. Franco Fund: General Dept: 5560	No

*A Certified Business is a for-profit business certified as a Minority-Owned Businesses (MBE), Women-Owned Businesses (WBE), Emerging Small Businesses (ESB), and/or Service-Disabled Veteran Businesses (SDV) by the State of Oregon Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity.

NEW COOPERATIVE PURCHASING AGREEMENTS

No New Cooperative Purchasing Agreements

NEW INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (“IGAs”)

Contractor	Contract Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Contract Amount	Responsible Administrator, Funding Source
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Oregon Department of Human Services	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Intergovernmental Agreement IGA 98172	Curriculum Development for 7 th grade Sex Education and Violence Prevention.	\$174,500	K. Howard Fund: Bond Dept: 5445
TriMet	8/25/2026 Through 6/20/2027	Intergovernmental Agreement IGA 98191	Provide student transit passes to 9 th -12 th grade students who lack regular yellow bus service.	\$1,987,333	T. Odgers Fund: General Dept: 5560

AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING CONTRACTS

Contractor	Amendment Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Amendment Amount; New Contract Amount	Responsible Administrator, Funding Source	Certified Business
Tom Stevens Boiler Repair, Inc.	8/5/2026 Through 5/31/2029	Services S 94824 Amendment 1	District Boiler service and repair, as-needed. Amendment 1 increases contract value to cover ongoing maintenance and repair. Informal Quotes	\$110,000 \$250,000	T. Odgers Fund: General Dept: 5592	No
Fifth Asset Inc., DBA DebtBook	8/5/2026 Through 6/29/2028	Digital Resource DR 93234 Amendment 2	District Debt Management Software. Amendment 2 adds funds to cover subscription fees through the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Special Procurement - Software and Hardware Maintenance PPS 47-0288 (11)	\$20,000 \$162,000	M. Morrison Fund: General Dept: 5520	No
Field Turf	8/5/2026 Through 2/28/2027 (Future Renewal Terms Already Approved Through 2/28/2028)	Cooperative Agreement COA 97331 Amendment 2	Synthetic turf surface materials and installation. Amendment 2 adds funds to cover adding scope at Marshall High School, West Sylvan, and Roosevelt.	\$50,895,312 \$64,895,312	J. Franco Funding Source Varies	No
Alifanz & Westlind LLC	8/5/2026 Through 12/31/2027	Legal Services LS 94028 Amendment 2	Ongoing and new legal services as needed. Amendment 1 adds funds and extends the contract. Direct Negotiation – Legal Services PPS-46-0525(13)	\$100,000 \$249,000	S. Toncray Fund: General Dept: 5460	No

RESOLUTION No. 7353

Revenue Contracts that Exceed \$150,000 for Delegation of Authority

RECITAL

Portland Public Schools (“District”) Public Contracting Rules PPS-45-0200 (“Authority to Approve District Contracts; Delegation of Authority to Superintendent”) requires the Board of Education (“Board”) enter into contracts, except as otherwise expressly authorized. Contracts exceeding \$150,000 per contractor are listed below.

RESOLUTION

The Superintendent recommends that the Board approve these contracts. The Board accepts this recommendation and by this resolution authorizes the authorized signer per the Purchasing and Contracting Delegation of Authority Administrative Directive (8.50.105-AD) to enter into the following agreements.

NEW REVENUE CONTRACTS

No new Revenue Contracts

NEW INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (“IGAs”)

Contractor	Contract Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Contract Amount	Responsible Admin, Funding Source
United States Department of Education	10/1/2026 Through 9/30/2028	Intergovernmental Agreement / Revenue IGA/R 98140	Oregon DeafBlind Project funding	\$267,086	J. Buno

AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING CONTRACTS

Contractor	Amendment Term	Contract Type	Description of Services	Amendment Amount; New Contract Amount	Responsible Admin, Funding Source
21PSTEM	8/5/2026 Through 12/31/2029	Revenue R 96470 Amendment 1	Math standards-based grading grant. Amendment 1 extends the scope and adds additional funds.	\$592,056 \$810,873	K. Howard
Trillium Family Services	8/5/2026 Through 6/30/2029	Lease Agreement / Revenue LA/R 90693 Amendment 1	Extends lease through 6/30/29	\$502,180.10 \$1,330,591.90	T. Odgers
The Wallace Foundation	7/1/2026 Through 6/30/2027	Revenue R 90675 Amendment 7	Wallace Grant for Education Leadership Development. Amendment 7 extends date and increases contract value for another year.	\$1,050,000 \$9,385,000	K. Howard

RESOLUTION No. 7354

Resolution to Approve the Formula for Distribution of Funding to Individual Schools Administered by the Fund for PPS

RECITALS

- A. The Portland Public Schools Board of Education District-Wide Advocacy and Fundraising Policy (7.10.020-P) requires that the Parent Advisory Committee develop, in advance of the following school year, a recommended formula for the distribution of any funding to individual schools ("Distribution Model for Funding") .

RESOLUTION

The Board of Education approves the recommendations made by the Parent Advisory Committee for the Distribution Model for Funding administered by The Fund for PPS (attachment "A").

Attachment "A"

High Impact Tutors - \$660,000

Our number one priority is to add student-facing staff in schools. We also considered adding teachers, counselors and full-time Educational Assistants, but investing in High Impact Tutors

(HIT) for Reading in Elementary Schools will serve more students in more schools, given the funding we have available. This investment is also measurable, which will help in reporting back to donors the impact of their donations.

This model aligns with national and local best practices for High Impact Tutoring, integrating: Frequent, consistent tutoring sessions; Strong student-tutor relationships; Data-driven, skill-based interventions; Alignment with PPS literacy curriculum and instructional priorities.

IXL Digital Platform - \$70,000

IXL Digital Platform for 9th and 10th graders allows us to also impact high school students with the aim to increase success in Algebra, a key determinant of high school graduation. IXL provides a suite of PPS adopted curriculum-aligned adaptive digital mathematics support, individualized skill practice, and real-time skill assessments designed to bolster algebra proficiency, improvements in graduation rates, and post-secondary readiness.

Food Pantries in 20 Community Schools (Title I K-5/K-8 Schools) - \$200,000

According to the Needs Assessments conducted by PPS Community Schools Site Coordinators, access to food was the first priority need expressed by families. Given the uncertainty of funding for hunger relief from all levels of government (e.g. USDA, Mult Co), PAC wanted to prioritize food. Some of the schools are starting from scratch with their food pantries and this investment will provide the infrastructure needed (e.g. refrigerators, shelving). Remaining funds will be used for purchases of culturally specific nutritional food to supplement what is acquired through community partnerships, Oregon Food Bank and other donations.

Seed Fund for Future Fundraising - \$100,000

After spending so many hours dedicated to this process, PAC representatives want to ensure the future success of fundraising for the district wide model, with a goal of fundraising closer to \$4,000,000 in the next year. This would enable funding High Impact Tutors and potentially other staff in potentially all schools and serving more students. Seed funding will be utilized for marketing and fundraising efforts to engage PPS families and the broader community in supporting Champion PPS Schools, the campaign for this districtwide model coordinated by The Fund for PPS, fundforpps.org.

Endowment

The committee is also interested in establishing an endowment for Champion PPS Schools. One idea is to invite people to donate directly to an endowment. In addition, there is interest in setting aside 10% of donations to deposit in an interest-bearing account for the endowment.



Date: August 4, 2026

To: PPS Board of Education

CC: The Fund for PPS Board of Directors

From: Nick Brodnicki, Interim Executive Director

Subject: Recommendation for \$152,000 Investment for 2026-27 School Year

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Distribution of Donations for Staffing recommends the following the allocations of the \$152,000 available:

High Impact Tutoring - \$144,000 - Seven Additional PPS Schools

With this investment, PPS will be able to serve seven additional schools with High Impact Tutoring, which allows the district to maintain current service levels. PPS already has funding in place to serve 40 Schools with High Impact Tutoring (31 schools with Reading Results plus an additional 9 schools with Educational Assistants (English/Spanish). Learning Acceleration requested additional funding to serve three to seven schools with a strong preference for serving seven schools, thus enabling 47 PPS elementary to provide High Impact Tutoring to over 1,000 students districtwide.

Food Pantries - \$8,000

PAC representatives felt it was important to continue to support PPS Food Pantries, which they invested \$200,000 in 2025-26. With the allocation of \$8,000, nine PPS Community Schools with the highest amount of unmet need and a lack of other nutritional supports/partnerships will receive \$2,000/school for additional food support.

Also note that on June 4, 2026, The Fund for PPS Board of Directors voted to approve an additional \$10,000 for PPS Food Pantries from donations under their discretion, to be added to the \$8,000 recommended by the PAC, for a total of \$18,000.

Background

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Distribution of Donations for Staffing was convened by Robyn Faraone, Director of Strategic Partnerships four times from April-June 2026. This committee includes an adult representative from each PPS Cluster plus two high school students for a total of twelve representatives. More information about the committee and links to all public meeting materials, minutes, and recordings are available at the committees webpage: <https://www.pps.net/departments/strategic-partnerships/parent-advisory-committee>.

RESOLUTION No. 7355

Settlement Agreement

The Board of Education grants authority to pay a total of \$1,050,000.00 to resolve a disputed claim. The settlement agreement will be in a form approved by the Chief Legal Officer.

Resolution No. 7362

Adoption of the Minutes

The Following Minutes are offered for Adoption:

- July 7, 2026

RESOLUTION No. 7363

Revised Calendar of Board Meetings School Year 2026-2027

RESOLUTION

The Board of Education hereby adopts the below revised calendar as its schedule of Board Meetings for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year:

Portland Public Schools
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Schedule of Board Meetings
2026-2027 School Year

Board meetings are usually held at 501 North Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon, 97227, and begin at 6:00 pm on Tuesdays unless otherwise noted and are subject to change.

July 7, 2026	January 26, 2027 **
August 4, 2026	February 2, 2027
August 18, 2026 - CANCELLED	February 16, 2027 **
September 1, 2026	March 2, 2027
September 15, 2026 **	March 16, 2027 **
October 6, 2026	April 6, 2027
October 20, 2026 **	April 20, 2027 **
November 4, 2026*	May 11, 2027
November 17, 2026 **	May 25, 2027 **
December 1, 2026	June 15, 2027
December 15, 2026 **	June 29, 2027 **
January 12, 2027	

*This meeting falls on a Wednesday, due to Election Day.

** Board Work Session

RESOLUTION No. 7364

Settlement Agreement

The Board of Education grants authority to pay a total of approximately \$232,000, to resolve a disputed claim. The settlement agreement will be in a form approved by the General Counsel.