



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of School Performance

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MEMO

Date: May 29, 2025

To: PPS Board of Education

CC: Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent

From: Dr. Jon Franco, Chief of Schools

Subject: Increasing Enrollment at Jefferson High School

BACKGROUND

In December 2022, The PPS Board of Education adopted [resolution 6627](#), which stated that “By the start of the 2026-27 school year, the Superintendent will initiate a process to develop a plan to increase student enrollment at Jefferson High School.” This memo and accompanying materials provides an overview of factors influencing Jefferson enrollment, and outlines strategic solutions to stabilize and grow Jefferson’s enrollment.

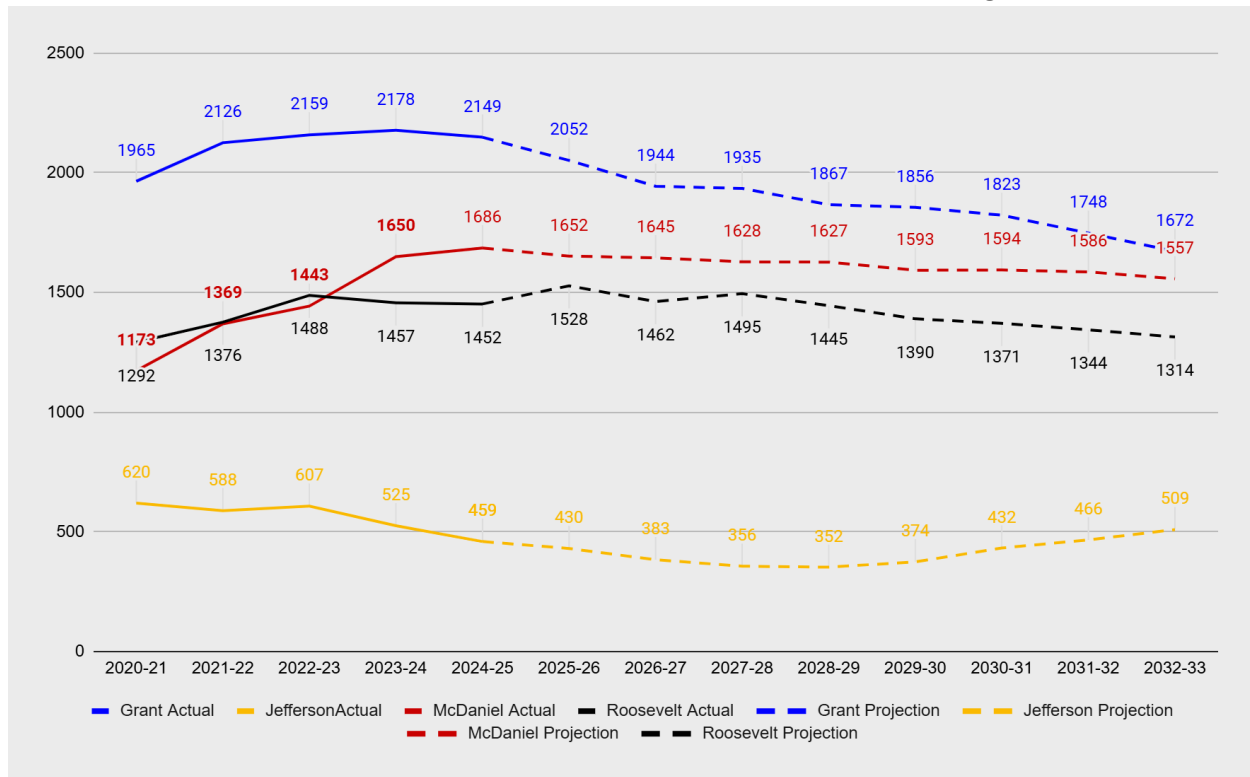
Jefferson High School has a long and storied history in PPS. For most of its existence it operated as a conventional high school with a large attendance zone, and has been the only high school in Oregon with a majority Black student population. Beginning in the 1980s, Jefferson students were allowed to transfer to other PPS schools, first through a voluntary desegregation program and then in the early 2000s through the federal No Child Left Behind program. Jefferson enrollment declined substantially, and the school was reorganized into several small schools.

In 2011, the PPS Board of Education converted Jefferson to a Middle College for Advanced Studies focus option as part of a district-wide high school system redesign. The Middle College built upon existing partnerships with Portland Community College and SEI, Inc, to create opportunities for students to earn up to 45 credits at Portland Community College, along with the academic and social support to prepare for college courses. In light of these distinct features, the Board, through [resolution 4394](#), created dual assignment zones allowing Jefferson neighborhood students to have a guaranteed option at either the Middle College focus option or a nearby comprehensive high school.

Since the implementation of the dual assignment zones Jefferson enrollment has ranged from 440-670 students. Over that same period, the comprehensive high schools that receive dual

assignment students have seen significant enrollment growth, spurred, in part, by building modernizations completed at Roosevelt (2017), Grant (2019) and McDaniel (2021).

Historic and Forecast Enrollment at Jefferson, Grant, McDaniel and Roosevelt High Schools



RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

4.10.045-P Student Assignment to Neighborhood Schools

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

Of the 2,384 high schoolers who live in a Jefferson Dual Assignment zone and attend a PPS school, 381 students (15.9%) attend Jefferson. The table below shows the current dual assignment zone population by grade level and the type of PPS school the students attend.

HS Students by Jefferson Zone				
Enrolled School	Jefferson/ Grant	Jefferson/ McDaniel	Jefferson/ Roosevelt	Total
Jefferson High School	114	63	204	381
Comprehensive Option*	699	197	462	1358
Benson High School	59	37	127	223
Other PPS High Schools**	144	79	199	422
Total	1016	376	992	2384

*A student's specific comprehensive HS choice based on the home address

**Includes alternatives and other comprehensive high schools

Attached to this memo are maps showing the distribution of the current dual assignment population by race and ethnicity and by the type of PPS high school attending. It is notable that nearly 40% of Black students who live in dual assignment zones attend Jefferson High School, while 75% of White students are enrolled in their comprehensive option.

Planning for Jefferson enrollment is particularly complex because of the array of school choices available to all levels of students in dual assignment zones and the additional challenge of two or three high schools sharing feeder schools. The table below shows the current and forecast schools for 8th graders who live in Jefferson dual assignment zones this year, as evidence of how dual assignment has unintentionally fragmented the Jefferson community.

HS Choices: 2024-25 Jefferson Dual Assignment 8th graders by Current and Forecast Schools

Forecast PPS High School							
Current School	Jefferson	Grant	McDaniel	Roosevelt	Benson	Other PPS HS	Total
Ockley Green MS	16			60	13		89
Harriet Tubman MS	10	60			6	5	81
Faubion K-8	10	4	7	16	11	5	53
Vernon K-8	15	1	30	3	3	1	53
DaVinci MS	6	15	8	5	9	3	46
Portland Village School	3		2	6	2	5	18
Beaumont MS	2	4	1		1		8
Beverly Cleary K-8	1	4			2		7
ACCESS Academy		4			1	1	6
Other PPS 8th grades	5	11	2	8	7	5	38
Total	68	103	50	98	55	25	399

PPS recognizes the need to revitalize Jefferson enrollment in order to ensure equitable access to quality education within the community, optimize resource allocation, and support the successful implementation of Jefferson's modernization plan. The following strategies will be deployed immediately to further these goals.

Strengthening the student population during modernization

Research and data collection efforts are underway, and will result in a Jefferson marketing toolkit that will be deployed this summer across the Jefferson community. A media and advertising campaign will launch this fall to raise awareness of the historic investment in Jefferson. Additional outreach will occur at the main Jefferson feeder schools, Ockley Green MS, Harriet Tubman MS, Faubion K-8 and Vernon K-8, and through other sites and community partners.

Dual Assignment Community Dialogue

Beginning in fall 2025, a community dialogue will commence to consider sunsetting dual assignment and reestablishing Jefferson as a comprehensive neighborhood high school, ensuring equitable access, enrollment clarity, and long-term stability for students and schools. Process highlights over the coming school year are shown below:

Summer 2025: *Review + Initiate*

- Board presentation on current state of enrollment
- Plan for engagement

Fall 2025: *Engage + Develop*

- Form advisory committee
- Three public meetings before Winter Break
- Develop scenarios

Winter 2025-26: *Study + Recommend*

- Analyze scenarios + feedback
- Recommend action to increase JHS enrollment to Board

Changes to Dual Assignment require Board approval. Community engagement in fall 2025 will result in recommendations to the Board in winter 2026. Detailed implementation, outreach and resource plans will be part of the recommendation submitted for Board decision.

BOARD OPTIONS WITH ANALYSIS

Board discussion provided on June 10, 2025 will be used to shape the proposed actions.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. [Jefferson HS Enrollment Update](#)
- B. [Resolution 6627, December 2022](#)
- C. [Resolution 4394, January 2011](#)
- D. [Dual Assignment Students by HS Program Type](#)
- E. [Dual Assignment Students by Race and Ethnicity](#)