



Portland Public Schools

To: Kate Snyder, Finance Chair, Portland School Committee
From: Dr. James C. Morse, Sr.
Date: March 12, 2010

Re: Superintendent's Priority List for Reinstatement

I consider the unmet needs more important than the cuts made. Most recommendations for reductions in staff were related to enrollment. However, most of our unmet needs are due to increased enrollment or program deficiencies such as those addressed in I.A., I.B., I.C., I.D. and I.E.

The next level of unmet needs are programs that need to be addressed and are critically important to Portland Public Schools as they relate to a meaningful commitment to lowering class sizes in Grades K – 2. This is to be done over a three-year period to better serve children in the primary grades so that we can increase their literacy and numeracy. This is the long term solution to lowering our drop-out rate. Finally, the School Committee has discussed the importance of World Languages at the elementary level for three years and I concur. I propose implementation over a three-year period, beginning in 2010-11 with two teachers.

My final recommendation under unmet needs is to fund wireless connectivity at Lyseth, Longfellow and Hall Schools so that they have the same educational opportunity as all other schools in Portland with access to the Internet. This is an equity issue.

Also, whatever fund the School Committee can provide for capital improvements is critically needed.

I. Unmet Needs: Listed by Priority

- A. 4 Elementary Classroom Teachers (Federally Funded – no local impact)**
 - a. Needed to maintain reasonable class size in elementary schools**
 - b. Begins commitment of goal to provide early intervention**
- B. 8.4 English Language Learner Teachers (8.4 X \$50K = \$420,000)**
 - a. Necessary to meet the needs of our immigrant population**
 - b. Important to be in compliance**
 - c. Critical in the delivery of a quality program**
- C. 3 Social Studies Teachers at Lincoln (3 X 50K - \$150,000)**
 - a. Equity among middle schools**
 - b. Balanced programming across middle schools**
- D. 1 Literacy Instructor at Moore (1 X \$50K = \$50,000)**
 - a. Equity among middle schools**
 - b. Moore does not qualify for Federal Funds so must be addressed locally**



Portland Public Schools

- E. **Instructional Technology Aid** (1 X 35K = \$35,000)
 - a. **Equity among middle schools. Both Lincoln & King have a similar position**
- F. 6.5 Kindergarten Teachers (6.5 X \$50K = \$325,000)
 - a. Items A – D may preclude this
 - b. Available classrooms may be an impediment
 - c. Critical to begin if possible
- G. 2 World Languages at the elementary level (2 X \$50K = \$100,000)
 - a. It is critical to begin a three year build up grades 3-5
 - b. Powerful statement that PPS is multilingual for all
 - c. 21 st Century skill and lays the foundation for rebuilding middle schools
- H. Wireless at Lyseth, Hall and Longfellow (\$100,000)
- I. Facilities. Any funds the School Committee can set aside for structural repairs to our buildings would be greatly appreciated. We have millions in unmet needs and are desperate for capital improvement funds.

II. Reinstatement: Listed by Priority

Most of the proposed cuts were proposed to lower enrollment or due to equity.

- A. Coop at PHS. A misunderstanding by PHS Principal & PATHS as to cost center impact needs to be corrected (.39 X \$75K = \$ 29K)
- B. Family Living. (\$75 K) We have 1 teacher left. It will take 1 more year with this teacher, the Advisory Board and our administrative staff to develop a transition plan to assure that human sexuality is taught well in Portland.
- C. Locally Funded Ed Techs. The Ed Techs are an important and relatively inexpensive way of delivering services to children. My budget calls for a reduction of 18 Ed Techs. Our students would benefit greatly, by even by a partial restoration, of Ed Techs.
- D. Music. This program was recommended to be cut due to low enrollment at the high schools as well as in elementary strings. We need a plan from the Music Department outlining how they will increase participation in Music. We have seventeen Music staff that, in some cases, are dramatically under utilized due to low enrollment.



MAR 10 2010

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Morse
From: Michael Johnson, Ken Kunin and Derek Pierce
Date: March 10, 2010
Re: Support for Additional ELL Staffing

*See
please
M.J.C.
D.P.*

As high school principals, we wanted to express our emphatic support for Grace Valenzuela's recommendation that ELL staffing in the district be increased by 8.4 teachers in the 2010-2011 school year. We know that you have included some discretionary monies for the School Committee to potentially allocate to some of the district's unmet needs, and we see no greater unmet need in our schools than ELL staffing. We urge you to continue to advocate for this increase with the School Committee, even in the midst of very painful cuts and staff reductions elsewhere.

We will not reiterate the compelling data that Ms Valenzuela recently shared with Finance Committee about the dramatic increase in the size and needs of the ELL student population and our diminished staffing resources. We will add that this recommendation may do more, over time, to increase the district's high completion – and college-going – rate – than any other new program or approach currently reflected in the budget. We will not be able to meaningfully take advantage of the possibilities inherent in a common schedule to provide extended day services for ELL, for instance, without additional ELL staffing. The additional staffing will provide more direct support for ELL students, but equally important, it will provide more direct support for our mainstream teachers of ELL students – through coaching, consulting and the sharing of expertise and resources. If our mainstream teachers are better able to effectively and efficiently meet the needs to our ELL students, all students will benefit.

In the coming weeks, we know that the ELL community may not have many speakers come to the microphone at public hearings to advocate for the resources they deserve. But, as you know, this relative silence is another sign of the vital and monumental work we still have before us. We know that proposed cuts to programs such as 7-12 co-curriculars are deep, but before any money is restored in non-instructional areas, we urge you to continue to vigorously support the addressing of an essential, urgent district unmet need that has existed for years - and is growing rapidly.

Part of our charge as principals is to assure that our programs and services are in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations and to advise you when we see otherwise. Without additional ELL teachers at the levels that Ms. Valenzuela has indicated, and without the flexibility you have pledged to her for use of ELL resources, it is our judgment that in addition to not providing critical learning resources for our students, we will remain out of compliance in a manner that will cost us additional resources in the years ahead.

Please feel free to share this memo with the School Committee as they continue with their budget deliberations – or other interested parties. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Portland Public Schools

King Middle School

92 Deering Avenue
Portland, ME 04102
Tel: 207-874-8140
Fax: 207-874-8290

TO: Dr. Morse

FROM: Mike McCarthy, Lee Crocker, Steve Nolan

DATE: March 10, 2010

RE: ELL Staffing

This note is to add the middle school voice to support the additional ELL staffing proposed by Grace Valenzuela. The increase in the number of new beginner ELL students has been unprecedented this year. There is also an increase in the complexity of their needs. These are students who are not only learning English but have never been to school. Many have suffered undiagnosed trauma in their life, which adds to their difficulty in school.

We would support this additional funding before any restoration of the painful cuts we took in other areas. We have worked hard to make sure our kids' sports needs have been addressed. We would prefer to put resources into this pressing need in our ELL program.

Hopefully these positions would make a Lyman Moore program a reality thereby allowing all ELL kids to attend their district school. At King and Lincoln the goal is to use early mainstreaming with in class support to enhance our program. Because of the shortage in staff we have many ELL students in mainstream classes without the support required by State and Federal law. Early mainstreaming can only be done if the beginner program class size is brought down from 22-25 student level that it is currently. As you know, it is much more difficult for adolescents to acquire formal language than it is in the early years. Our teachers are doing a masterful job with 22-25 kids in class who have no English, no alphabet in their home language, and have never experienced school. They are teaching these classes with students from numerous countries with no additional help in the room.

We at the middle school fully support the proposal put forth by Grace Valenzuela.



Portland Public Schools

www.portlandschools.org



Portland Public Schools

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. James Morse
From: Dawn Carrigan, Beverly Coursey, Carol Dayn, Timothy Devaney Marcia Gendron,
Kelly Hasson, Nancy Kopack, Cyndy Loring and Lenore Williams
Date: March 12, 2010
Re: Support for Additional ELL Staffing

As principals of Portland's ten elementary schools, we fully endorse Multilingual Director Grace Valenzuela's recommendation that ELL staffing be increased by 8.4 teachers for the 2010-2011 school year. In her 03/01/10 budget presentation to the Finance Committee, Ms. Valenzuela presented compelling data of the dramatic increases in ELL enrollment over the past twelve years.

Annual increases in ELL enrollment support the reality of the demographic transformation that has occurred within Portland Public Schools. Furthermore, the complexities that lie within our growing ELL numbers include a multiplicity of learning needs and cultural differences that our students bring to school each day. While we embrace Portland's rich diversity, we also recognize that additional ELL teachers are essential to the success of our multilingual students so they will have highly qualified staff that is needed to identify and respond to their intricate learning profiles.

In addition to administering ongoing assessments and providing direct instruction tailored to students' needs, additional ELL teachers are needed to share their critical expertise, resources and support to our mainstream teachers. ELL teachers provide the necessary knowledge, skills and structures for mainstream teachers that embed an understanding of English language acquisition, U.S. acculturation and the linguistic nuances of language. Moreover, a fruitful collaboration between ELL teachers and mainstream teachers is integral to enhance understandings of the social and pedagogical components of ELL instruction. These components include, but are not limited to, building background knowledge, teaching academic vocabulary and integrating ongoing support across all curriculum areas. Opportunities for such integrated professional learning communities, however, require adding more ELL teachers to a program that has been understaffed in the face of a multilingual population that continues to expand exponentially. In our view, Portland Public Schools cannot afford to ignore this startling pattern of growth and the corresponding educational needs of our ELL students.

Home and school partnerships are important factors that help shape students' success in school. Due to obvious language barriers for most of our ELL families, we, as administrators, feel responsible for speaking on behalf of those who cannot advocate for their children at public hearings and other meetings with School and City officials. With an increased demand for ELL staffing, coupled with a decline of resources over the years that has placed us out of compliance with the LAU Plan, we urge you to follow Ms. Valenzuela's recommendations to reverse this trend and provide the essential support needed for our ELL students.