



## **SOUTH PORTLAND SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

### **ELEMENTARY BOUNDARIES AND CONFIGURATION STEERING COMMITTEE October 2023-January 2024**

In February 2023, the district convened a group of stakeholders to conduct a careful examination of the school boundaries (or attendance zones) and grade-level configurations of our elementary schools. The stakeholder group, the Boundaries and Configurations Steering Committee ([web page here](#)), includes staff members and parents.

The district initiated this work for the following reasons:

- The district had not undertaken a holistic examination of elementary boundaries and configurations for 15 years.
- Our elementary schools have substantially differing demographic and student achievement characteristics. It is important for the district to examine, understand and discuss this reality.
- Many stakeholders are interested in expanding district Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) programs. Such expansion would have budgetary and physical space implications.<sup>1</sup>

Between February and April, the Committee met multiple times, and a number of parents who were not part of the Committee also participated in the meetings. Two virtual Community Forums were also held. After these discussions, the Steering Committee provided [a preliminary report](#) to the School Board last spring. In that report, the group committed to reconvening this fall. This document outlines the plan for deliberation and recommendations in the coming months.

The process outlined below will provide 8 specific opportunities for public participation in the process prior to any potential Board vote on elementary boundaries and configurations. These will include:

- 2 Steering Committee meetings with two opportunities during each meeting for public comment
- 2 virtual Community Forums
- 1 in-person Community Forum at the Redbank Community Center
- 3 Board Meetings (November, December, and January public comment periods)

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<sup>1</sup>The district added one Pre-K section for the 2023-24 school year.

Additionally, for those community members who prefer to share input in writing:

- A [public comment form has been created](#). This form is accepting responses at this time and will be posted on the Boundaries and Configurations web page. All responses will be shared with the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee's email address is functioning and has been posted on the web page ([bcsc@spsdme.org](mailto:bcsc@spsdme.org)). Input received from that email address will be shared with the Steering Committee.
- A survey will be distributed to the community to request input after the Steering Committee submits recommendations to the Board.

Other notes:

- Video recordings of this fall's Community Forums and minutes from the Steering Committee meetings will be posted on the web page.
- SPSD staff can participate through the opportunities listed below and by sharing input at forums that will be held at each elementary school.

### **Scope of Authority**

The Boundaries and Configurations Steering Committee has no decision-making authority to implement changes in the district. Its role is to discuss issues related to this topic and make a set of recommendations to the Board. The Board will review those recommendations and then modify, accept and/or reject them. District administration will then implement the direction established by the Board.

### **TIMELINE**

- Wednesday, October 18 (5:00pm): Steering Committee Meeting
  - See meeting format below. Steering Committee meetings will take place in the SPSD library unless otherwise posted.
  - Tentative agenda for this meeting: Data updates, review key discussions from previous meetings
- Tuesday, October 24: Community Forum at the Redbank Community Center (tentative, details to follow)
- Monday, October 30 (6:00pm): Virtual Community Forum
- Wednesday, November 1 (5:00pm): Steering Committee Meeting
- Prior to November 13: Steering Committee Work Session (Date and time to be announced)

- Monday, November 13 (6:00pm): Steering Committee presentation to the School Board
- Tuesday, November 28 (6:00pm): Virtual Community Forum
- Between November 13-December 11: Faculty meeting presentations at each elementary
- Monday, December 11 (6:00pm): Boundaries and configurations workshop as part of regular Board meeting
- Monday, January 8, Board Meeting (6:00pm): Vote on proposal (tentative)

***The Steering Committee meetings on October 18 and November 1 will have the following format:***

- Presentation from staff
- Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members
- Open comment (Guests and Steering Committee members)
- Steering Committee discussion
- Open comment (Guests and Steering Committee members)
- Adjournment