

Education



DRAFT
FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Portland Plan Phase III:
Education Strategy

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What are the goals of this strategy?

Improve student success through community-wide collaborative efforts, address the disproportionately negative outcomes experienced by youth of color and youth in poverty, and more tightly link schools and neighborhoods to benefit both.

These goals will be achieved by focusing efforts and investments in:

A. The “Cradle to Career Initiative”

The Cradle to Career Initiative is a collaborative effort (already underway) by many educational, nonprofit and government partners to improve outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on communities of color and people in poverty. By jointly developing indicators of success and monitoring progress, partners can better target education resources.

B. Communities and Neighborhoods Supporting Youth

To improve student success, community members, organizations, parents and educational and government partners will work together to create communities and neighborhoods that offer youth enriching activities, recreation and opportunities for positive relationships with supportive mentors.

C. Workforce Preparation and Skill Building

A solid K-12 education, university or career training, mentorships and community support outside the K-12 classroom should be available to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity or income. These things are essential to building a strong workforce that can respond to economic changes and attract the businesses with family-wage jobs.

D. 21st century school facilities

Investments are critical to transform the city’s schools into quality learning spaces that provide 21st century technology and desirable community gathering places. Quality multi-functional facilities create opportunities to serve all community members.

The Portland Plan is a strategic plan for the city’s future, ensuring that Portland is a thriving and sustainable city, with health and opportunity for all. It is built on a foundation of equity and includes:

1. Equity Initiative - draft
2. Education Strategy - draft
3. Economic Prosperity and Affordability Strategy - draft
4. Healthy Connected Neighborhoods Strategy - draft



What’s inside this document?

- A set of goals to reach by 2035
- Why is this strategy needed?
- What will this strategy accomplish?
- Key policies
- Quick starts: 5-year actions to get started

Why is this strategy needed?

The success of our public schools, vocational schools, community colleges and universities are a key determinant of our City's prosperity. Support inside and outside the classroom is needed to ensure that every student can thrive at each stage of life, that is, be fully prepared for graduation, post-secondary education or training, stable and satisfying work, and engagement in community life and the global economy. Stable homes, safe neighborhoods, good nutrition and supportive adults are among the influences that contribute to school readiness and help students get a solid start.

IN PORTLAND, TODAY...

1. **Only 1 out of 3 high school graduates continue their education after high school.** Participation in post-secondary education, vocational training and workplace apprenticeships is disproportionately low for students of color, youth in poverty, and English Language Learning (ELL) students.
2. In the 2009-10 school year, at least 45% of students in Portland's public schools were students of color.
3. **However, people of color far outnumber white students among youth who do not finish high school. Students of color also have lower rates of college attendance.**
4. **Graduation rates for youth of color, youth in poverty and English Language Learners (ELL) fall below the 61% on-time graduation rate for all students.**
5. **Many of Portland's youth do not have positive adult role models or mentors, stable housing, and financial and social support systems to succeed in school.** The institutions and systems that identify and help at-risk youth to succeed in school are insufficient and hard to access.
6. **Too few children participate in quality early childhood education,** particularly those who live in poverty.
7. Volunteer and mentoring resources, and business partnership opportunities are not equitably distributed between different schools, and many schools lack these altogether.
8. Today, **aging buildings and years of deferred maintenance are a concern for school districts.** For example at least \$272 million is needed by Portland Public Schools for short-term stabilization projects, like fixing leaking pipes and roofs. This excludes costs associated with the full renovation of existing schools or constructing new schools to 21st century standards.

What will this strategy accomplish? By 2035 ...

1. **Ready to learn:** Every child in Portland enters school prepared to learn and supported inside and outside school, so that they can succeed academically, graduate from high school, enroll in post-secondary education or training and enter a career by age 25.
2. **Equitable participation:** Youth of color, youth in poverty, English Language Learning (ELL) youth, and first generation college students participate in post-secondary education, vocational training, and workplace apprenticeships at the same rate as all students.
3. **Graduation rate:** The high school graduation rate for all Portland youth is 95-100% on-time, and all schools provide a strong core curriculum and specialization options for K-12 students.
4. **Stable funding:** The Oregon state tax system is structured to provide stable, adequate funding for excellence in curriculum and teaching quality.
5. **Mentorship:** Parents, public agencies, public schools, higher education institutions, businesses and non-parent community members collaborate to offer volunteer and mentoring opportunities at every public school.
6. **Comprehensive student support:** At-risk youth have comprehensive, coordinated support systems and live in safe neighborhoods with ample workforce training, education and employment options.
7. **Wrap-around services:** Neighborhood schools offer appropriate wrap-around community services, before- and after-school programs, parental engagement and lifelong learning opportunities for all community members.
8. **Early childhood education:** All children have access to quality childcare, such as Head Start, pre-school, or in-home early childhood education, so they can enter Kindergarten ready to learn.
9. **Reduce barriers to success:** Scholarships and financial aid reduce financial barriers to post-secondary education and training and other life-skills classes, and all students are provided with resources and knowledge on how to take advantage of these opportunities.
10. **Arts education:** All of Portland's K-12 schools have regular access to arts education (dance, music, etc.), with expanded resources for training and professional development.
11. **Learning environments:** All school buildings in Portland provide a safe, warm learning environment and meet life safety regulations. Portland's investment in education reflects pride of schools as honored places of learning.
12. **Partnerships:** Public agencies involved in education have clear roles and responsibilities and have established strong partnerships.

Key 25-Year Policies and Quick Start Actions

- These policies and actions will help Portland accomplish the goals and objectives of this strategy.
- The 25-year key policies provide direction for the City's Comprehensive Plan and for partner agencies. They also serve as a guide to help the City and partners make critical investment and budget decisions over the long term.
- The quick starts lay out some of the first steps the City of Portland and partners will take to set this strategy in motion, including specific tasks to be completed during the Comprehensive Plan update.

Key 25-Year Policies and Quick Start Actions

A. The Cradle to Career Initiative

Many efforts have been made in the past to improve Portland's educational system, but they have often occurred in isolation or focused on a limited piece of the education system.

In fall 2009, local educational leaders established a partnership to improve the educational outcomes in the region. Based on research of programs around the country, they developed Portland's Cradle to Career Initiative, modeled after the successful Strive model in Cincinnati.

The Cradle to Career Initiative:

- Addresses the needs of learners from birth through adulthood inside and outside of the classroom
- Aligns the efforts of educational partners and institutions
- Uses evidence to set key milestones of success for students
- Continually assesses and tracks progress to key milestones and fine-tunes approaches and efforts over time.

The responsibility for supporting learners cannot rest on the shoulders of educational institutions alone. Implementing the Initiative will depend on the collaborative efforts of many partners, including nonprofit organizations and community members.

Institutional and community efforts need to be aligned to ensure that resources are not spread too thin. Being selective and focused is critical but challenging, when so many different agencies, organizations and institutions have worthy missions and programs to improve educational success.

Quick Start Actions

- Action 1:** Collect data that tracks youth outcomes on educational, social and community indicators to help ensure that Portland youth are on track to educational success and self-sufficiency.
- Action 2:** Continue to identify and enlist partners whose work affects youth outcomes in the short and long term.
- Action 3:** Support the role of the Portland Schools Foundation as convener and facilitator of the Cradle to Career Initiative and help guide diverse agendas toward alignment.
- Action 4:** Support the Metropolitan Education Partnership, which seeks to coordinate student teacher placement and professional development conducted by metro-area universities and partnering local school districts.

Key Policies

- Conduct outreach and dialogue with the public, including youth, about education goals, desired outcomes, and potential plans for improving the success of our public schools.
- Participate in a countywide, collaborative approach that identifies strategic actions to improve student success.
- Using community-generated feedback and current data, focus and align the City's educational support efforts with education partners for the greatest impact on key milestones that best predict positive outcomes for our city's youth.
- Invest in cost-effective, neighborhood-based student supports with a proven track record of enhancing student success.
- Support funding strategies to ensure increased affordability and access of residents to early childhood and higher education.
- Initiate an Education Policy in the Portland Comprehensive Plan that supports partnerships with education organizations, while directing City resources toward appropriate and effective tools to enhance the lives of our city's youth.

B. Communities and Neighborhoods Supporting Youth

Strong positive relationships with caring and supportive adults and safe and healthy environments with recreational opportunities and enriching activities improve the likelihood of student success and overall outcomes for youth.

Stable housing is also a key contributor to student achievement: Data shows that when students move frequently and change schools, achievement often suffers.

Early childhood learning is critical to success later in school. Unfortunately, many youth of color and youth of poverty, enter Kindergarten far behind other students, creating an achievement gap that widens with time. Investments in accessible, quality and affordable childcare administered through partnerships such as Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), as well as support for home-based childcare, are crucial to supporting early childhood development.

Partners in the Portland Plan can affect community qualities through programs such as Safe Routes to Schools, strong after-school programs and affordable quality childcare. Coordinated, targeted, social and community supports outside the classroom are key to the success of our youth.

Quick Start Actions:

- Action 5:** As part of the Cradle to Career initiative, explore how coordinated effort and investment in community development can create neighborhood conditions that better support student outcomes in neighborhoods where this is most likely to produce results.
- Action 6:** Expand presence of Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) to all schools in the city.
- Action 7:** Increase or target rental assistance programs to low-income households with students and invest in housing for homeless families with students, particularly where schools are experiencing high student mobility rates.
- Action 8:** Increase the availability of family skills classes such as English as Second Language classes, financial literacy and other related subjects for families and neighbors in high poverty areas.

In the Healthy Connected Neighborhoods Strategy, further actions directly address sidewalk and bike networks, transit service, vibrant neighborhood centers, neighborhood safety, and parks facilities and programs around targeted schools to ensure a youth-supportive environment.

Key Policies

- Focus on improving outcomes at low performing schools.
- Focus on reducing disparities faced by youth of color, families in poverty and at-risk youth.
- Use long-term public investment and community development strategies to improve educational outcomes.
- Stabilize housing for homeless and low-income families with public school students to reduce student mobility rates and provide educational continuity for students throughout the school year.

C. Workforce Preparedness and Skill building

Opportunities for specialized training and education beyond high school are essential to build a workforce that can respond to economic changes, and attract the businesses that bring family-wage jobs to Portland. Partnerships between public schools (Portland Public, Parkrose, David Douglas, Centennial, Reynolds and Riverdale School Districts), community colleges, training programs and local employers are needed to provide a seamless path for students toward meaningful work and stable careers.

Community colleges are also seeing a need for adult and remedial educational efforts, to boost the success and performance of workers seeking re-training for a new career. Again, support for students outside the classroom (e.g., mentors and internships) boost students' opportunities for enduring success in the workplace and beyond.

Increasingly, pursuing educational training, apprenticeships, mentorships or college after high school is a critical step toward obtaining a living wage job and a high quality of life for Portlanders. Expanding support and opportunities for Portland youth to excel in languages, science, math, engineering and other disciplines necessary for a globally competitive workforce must be pursued. Gaining access to such training and education beyond high school, as well as arts and recreational programming, is an aspiration that should be available to all students, regardless of background, race/ethnicity or income.

The Economic Opportunity and Affordability Strategy includes additional support for adult education, career training and education-related economic development tools.

Key Policies

- Strengthen collaboration among government, public schools, higher education and local businesses to accomplish the following:
 - Increase enrollment of high school graduates in the higher education system
 - Align education and research programs with targeted workforce development
 - Expand internships and training opportunities for high school youth
- Support and invest in key partnerships that guarantee at least two years of education or training past high school, to increase the number of Portland youth who obtain living wage careers by age 25.
- Support area community colleges and universities to expand dual-enrollment programs with our high schools, and adult education courses leading to careers in growing business sectors and industries.
- Expand effective vocational mentoring, apprenticeships, and college access programs city-wide.

Quick Start Actions

- Action 9:** Strengthen the pipeline between high school and post-high school education.
- Action 10:** Develop an initiative to guarantee access to at least two years of education or training past high school, leading to a career or technical credential, industry certification or two years of college.
- Action 11:** Increase the number of dual-enrollment high school seniors attending classes in the higher education system.
- Action 12:** Expand access to and participation in college access programs for high school students (ASPIRE, Trio and others).
- Action 13:** Develop career readiness certificate programs in partnership with target sector businesses, Worksystems Inc., public schools and community colleges.
- Action 14:** Develop ongoing funding for the City's Summer Youth Connect program.
- Action 15:** Allow City of Portland employees limited paid time for mentoring and volunteering in K-12 public schools.
- Action 16:** Invest in continuous, integrated arts learning programs for every K-12 student in Portland, (e.g., Any Given Child, The Right Brain Initiative), using school, nonprofit and community resources.

D. 21st Century School Facilities

While our focus is on improving student success, many of the facilities available to students and faculty are not up to the task. In some East Portland districts, many schools are overcrowded. Across the city, students attend school in buildings with inadequate heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, and in need of upgrades for earthquake preparedness.

School districts face longstanding problems in raising funds for building improvements. While state funds are available for teaching and administration, building (capital) investments and regular maintenance and energy upgrades are dependent on local funding. The ability of local districts to raise the funds often does not match the need.

Breaking out of this bind requires innovating how we share, combine and leverage local sources of funding. For instance, are there ways to meet the school facility needs in fast growing areas such as the Central City and East Portland through sharing finance or facilities among local governments and institutions?

Progress also requires longer-term changes at the state level. For instance, we could explore changing state law to require annual investments in facility improvements, similar to the approach taken in the State of Washington.

Quick Starts

Action 17: Develop funding strategy for the Gateway Education Center as a partnership of Parkrose and David Douglas school districts, Mount Hood Community College, Portland State University and the City of Portland.

Action 18: Develop or update joint-use agreements between Portland Parks & Recreation and all local school districts. Explore a greater level of facility and grounds management coordination and cost sharing.

Action 19: Create new Comprehensive Plan policies and zoning for schools, colleges and universities to accommodate multiple community-serving functions, while maintaining accountability to neighborhood concerns regarding impacts.

Action 20: Develop agreements between the City of Portland and each of its school districts to outline protocols for consultation related to issues and decisions of mutual interest and concern.

Key Policies

- Enable educational and community facilities serve multiple purposes to help combine and leverage public capital funds.
- Operate more efficiently, predictably and in a more cost effective manner through intergovernmental agreements among the City, government agencies and school districts. These IGAs could address opportunities to share resources and reduce costs for facilities and maintenance, to coordinate on decisions that affect each others short and long term operations, and to preempt issues related to neighborhood/school issues.
- Support legislative efforts in Salem to reform education funding in Oregon, to improve the ongoing maintenance of our school facilities, and to correct recent economic pressures affecting necessary maintenance over time.

Next Steps

After the Portland Plan Fairs and follow-up outreach efforts, the draft strategies will be revised, based on input from the community, Portland Plan partners and national experts.

The revised strategies will be the core of the strategic plan, which will be available for comment and review this summer and will be presented to the Planning and Sustainability Commission this fall.

Portland Plan Partners

The Portland Plan is being developed in partnership with the community and the following agencies:

City of Portland
Multnomah County
Metro
TriMet
Portland Development Commission
Portland State University
Mt. Hood Community College
Portland Public Schools
David Douglas School District
Parkrose School District
Reynolds School District
Centennial School District
Oregon Health & Science University
Portland Community College
Housing Authority of Portland
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Oregon Department of Transportation
West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
Multnomah County Drainage District
Worksystems, Inc.
Multnomah Education Service District
Port of Portland

For more information, please go to www.pdxplan.com