

Dear ACCESS Academy families,

My apologies for the length of time between our communications. We are actively working to find a home for ACCESS Academy and we have been doing a deep dive to get a better understanding of available resources and critical needs for this important program. We have an entirely new leadership team at the district and we bring a fresh perspective on how we approach this process. I recognize, and have learned from the many emails from ACCESS Academy community members, that in the past, this has not been done in a thoughtful, engaging or transparent manner. We are striving to do things differently.

The Superintendent has asked me to serve as the Executive Sponsor of this process and to present an option for his approval in enough time for successful implementation to start the school year.

An ACCESS Academy Advisory Group was established at the beginning of April. The charter of this group is to advise district leadership in identifying a location for the program in the short-term. We are evaluating a number of factors before making a final decision including: facility capabilities, boundaries, programmatic and staffing needs, transportation requirements and requirements for a successful implementation. The Advisory Group includes ACCESS Academy parents, principal and teachers and district leadership. We also have two PPS Board members participating as ex-officio members, Director Rita Moore and Director Scott Bailey.

We have established a criteria for ACCESS locations and are working through options now. This week the Advisory Group will begin touring individual schools and will be reporting out on findings from these tours. Information about Advisory Group meetings can be found on the ACCESS Academy website.

I also want to take this opportunity to clear up any confusion or concern about a variety of aspects of this process.

- We will have a home for ACCESS Academy students in the fall with the ability to meet the level of service currently provided at Rose City Park.
- I am confident that we can provide the learning environment necessary for ACCESS students to thrive with the facility options we are considering.
- The district values this program and is meeting its legal obligation to provide TAG services. We will continue to do so.
- ACCESS Academy will not be placed in more than two locations in the fall and while we do not see a likely option to keep ACCESS together in one location, I understand the value and benefits of a single-site location. This will be part of discussion to find a long-term solution.

- The goal for using two locations will be to co-locate ACCESS middle school grades with another middle school and 1-5 with a K-5 school. We will do our best to have options in close proximity to one another, however we are not sure if this option exists.
- The placement for the 2018-19 school year is intended to be a short-term option while district leaders continue to work with the Advisory Group to confirm the program vision and best options for a home. We define short-term as no longer than three years.
- The deadline for applications for the 2018-19 school year has been removed until further notice while we confirm a location. I will continue to monitor the applications weekly.
- Principals and senior directors throughout the district have been informed that we are looking for sites and expect all staff to work collaboratively and engage in creative problem-solving.
- The district's Communications and Public Engagement department will provide support and will communicate about decisions to other potentially impacted communities to ensure ACCESS families are not shouldering this burden.

We are touring schools this week. So far, the schools we are considering include Irvington, daVinci, Lane and Boise-Eliot. Additionally, I will visit ACCESS during the school day on Friday.

If we haven't found suitable sites, we will look at more schools next week. My goal is to present a proposal to the Superintendent as soon as possible.

I appreciate this opportunity to learn about ACCESS and the needs of our students in this program while developing relationships with the ACCESS parents and staff. I want to also acknowledge the Advisory Group's time and attention to assisting me in this process. This level of engagement and advocacy with a school community is a great asset.

Sincerely,
Dr. Yvonne Curtis
Deputy Superintendent