



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Candice Grose | Chief of Communications

917-419-4700

Cgrose@pps.net

Portland Public Schools Board Approves Purchase of One North Property to Establish the Michael "Chappie" Grice and Dr. Harriet Adair Center for Black Student Excellence

December 2, 2025 (Portland, OR) — Tonight, the Portland Public Schools (PPS) Board of Education voted to approve the purchase of the One North property, advancing a long-promised, community-driven vision for the Center for Black Student Excellence (CBSE). The dual-building campus, located in the heart of Portland's historic Albina neighborhood, will be renamed the Michael "Chappie" Grice Center (East Building) and the Dr. Harriet Adair Center (West Building), honoring two trailblazing educators whose leadership, advocacy, and brilliance shaped generations of PPS students.

The Board's action follows an extensive 90-day due diligence process, which confirmed the buildings' strong feasibility for educational programming and community-centered use. The One North site offers 75,700 square feet across two buildings, flexible creative space, and deep cultural significance for Portland's Black community, aligning closely with the CBSE vision detailed in the district's feasibility study and community engagement sessions.

The Michael "Chappie" Grice Center (East) and the Dr. Harriet Adair Center (West) together will bring to life PPS's "Birth to Brilliance" framework and anchor a space where Black student joy, identity, creativity, and academic brilliance are nurtured and celebrated. The Grice Center will function as the community's living room, a welcoming space where students, families, elders, and partners gather for services, cultural programming, and collaborative learning rooted in belonging. The Adair Center will serve as a creative studio for academic excellence, offering spaces for technology, multimedia, STEM, storytelling, and entrepreneurship that honor the imagination and innovation of PPS students.

"Tonight's decision reflects our responsibility as a Board and our belief in what's possible when we follow the community's leadership," said Board Chair Edward Wang. "Purchasing the One North property moves us from intention to action in our commitment to Black student excellence. We also need to be honest: this is part of correcting decades of harm. PPS has a long history of not honoring or uplifting Black children and families, especially in Albina. This moment doesn't erase that past, but it signals our commitment to do better, to make it right. Our decision means we are choosing a future grounded in accountability, partnership, and justice. This is how we begin to rebuild a system that has too often failed the very students it should have protected and celebrated."

To underscore the significance of this moment, PPS Board Vice Chair Michele DePass shared the following statement, "Tonight, we made history at Portland Public Schools. This vote honors a promise our Black community can experience for generations, and it's long overdue. I am humbled to serve as a steward of this moment, and I want to thank the community whose courage and persistence brought us here. You pushed, you insisted, you refused to let this vision fade. I'm honored to stand in that truth and help move this work forward for our children and the generations coming behind them."

"This project stands on years of community advocacy, families, students, elders, and partners who refused to let the promise of Black student excellence fade," said Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools. "Tonight's vote says something powerful: Portland is choosing to honor that promise. PPS is choosing to evolve, courageously, transparently, and in partnership with the people who have carried this vision forward. Together, we rise."

For five years, Portland's Black community has consistently and clearly called for a permanent space that honors Black students' histories, elevates their brilliance, and expands their access to opportunity. The Board's approval marks a major step toward fulfilling that commitment.

"This moment belongs to the community that dreamed boldly and pushed relentlessly," said Nichole Watson, Senior Director of Family and Community Engagement. "The Grice and Adair Centers will be a living expression of Beloved Community, places where all students, regardless of race, feel seen, families feel rooted, and educators feel supported. This is the evolution of PPS's footprint in Albina, and it reflects the future our students deserve."

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About Portland Public Schools

Portland Public Schools, founded in 1851, is Oregon's largest PK-12 school district, with more than 43,000 students in 81 schools. PPS aspires to graduate compassionate, critical thinkers who are able to collaborate to solve problems, and lead a more socially-just world. Central to this goal is affirming and operationalizing our deeply held community value of racial equity, social justice and inclusion. Learn more at pps.net.