Radical Alignment

How Early Literacy COHERENCE Becomes the Antidote to Diminishing Resources



PORTLAND
Public Schools



Introduction

Dr. Emily Glasgow
eglasgow@pps.net

Senior Director, PK-12 Core Academics

PPS Graduate, Parent, Former Principal, System Leader



Learning Targets

I can define **coherence**.

I can understand the possible **inverse relationship** between resources and coherence--in service of student outcomes.



Success Criteria

I can identify **opportunities for increased coherence** and alignment in my own system.

DISTRICT INFORMATION



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

45 ELEMENTARY		10 HIGH
10 K-8	15 MIDDLE	1 K-12

SUPERINTENDENT + BOARD MEMBERS

Superintendent
Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong

Zone 1
Christy Splitt

Zone 2
Michelle DePass (Vice-Chair)

Zone 3
Patte Sullivan

Zone 4
Rashelle Chase-Miller

Zone 5
Virginia La Forte

Zone 6
Stephanie Engelsman

Zone 7
Edward (Eddie) Wang (Chair)

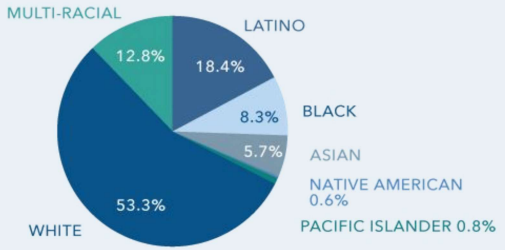
Student Representative
Ian Ritorto

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

43,479 TOTAL

41,094 STUDENTS IN DISTRICT SCHOOLS	740 STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS	342 STUDENTS IN SPECIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS	1,303 STUDENTS IN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

STUDENT INFORMATION



RECEIVE ESL SERVICES
9.8%

ELIGIBLE FOR FREE MEALS via direct certification
31.5%

RECEIVE SPED SERVICES
17.1%

District Continuous Improvement Plan GOAL AREAS

- ATTENDANCE
- LITERACY
- MATH
- 9th Grade SUCCESS

*Numbers are approximate

Declining Resources: The Challenges We Face



Rising Costs

Inflation has resulted in higher costs of goods and services.

We have invested in our employees' compensation and teacher planning time. PERS costs are also rising.

Our student needs continue.



Limited Revenue

Our state dollars continue to fall short of the costs to operate our schools.

We have less special revenue, including the end of federal pandemic aid.



Declining Enrollment

We have fewer students and the same number of buildings.

Our funding is dependent upon number of students.

Since 2020, PPS's student enrollment has declined 9.5%, faster than Oregon's (6%), and is projected to continue to decline.

Fist to Five:

How familiar does this context feel?



Budget & Enrollment vs Implementation & Outcomes (an inverse relationship)

Fiscal & Enrollment Pressures

↓ **->6,000**

Student Enrollment Decline

Fewer students enrolled in district schools since 2018.

↓ **->$70M**

General Fund Budget Decrease

Reduction in our primary operating resource base.

Academic & Literacy Progress

↑ **56% to 60%**

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency Increase

Key metric gains achieved since the 2023-24 school year.

- **Professional Learning:** 100% of elementary educators trained in the Science of Reading.
- **HQIM Implementation:** Adoption and implementation of Science of Reading-aligned core High-Quality Instructional Materials.
- **Aligned Intervention:** Targeted academic intervention & high impact tutoring aligned to core.

Instructional Coherence

Aligning instruction, content, and goals across all learning spaces—from core instruction to intervention and other academic supports—to ensure all students engage in, and are actively prepared for, grade-level learning.

Coherence by Design, 2026



Systems coherence ensures that the policies, structures, and practices across a district or state make instructional coherence possible. That includes aligned guidance from states, district investments in high-quality materials, common assessments, and opportunities for teachers, specialists, and tutors to plan together. When systems are not aligned, even well-designed instructional efforts can become fragmented.

The two forms of coherence are interconnected: coherent instruction better engages young people in grade-level learning; aligned systems create the conditions for sustained coherent instruction at scale.

Key Steps Toward Systems Coherence

How have we done more with less?

Strategic Reorganization

- **2024:** Shifted Learning Acceleration & Academic Intervention onto PK-5 Core Academics Team.
- **2026:** Collapsed grade-band teams to create a PK-12 Core Academics & Intervention Team.

District Continuous Improvement Plan

- **2025:** Launched a DCIP, aligned with school continuous improvement plans with a central focus on Literacy.
- **2026:** Revised DCIP process and content; connected Literacy as core across all goal areas.

Strategic Use of Funds & Partnerships

- State Investment Account
- Early Literacy Success
- CLSD
- Title Budgets
- TNTP
- Reading Results

"Stitching"

- Teacher Clarity & HQIM
- Instructional Leadership, Feedback, & HQIM
- Integrated ELD & SIOP
- Academic Intervention, Tutoring, and Academic Support

Key Steps Toward Instructional Coherence

How have we done more with less?

Investment in HQIM

- Heggerty
- Fundations
- Geodes
- Wit & Wisdom

Aligned Interventions

- MTSS Matrix
- WIN Block guidance
- Wilson intervention tools (aligned with Fundations)
- High Impact Tutoring (aligned with Fundations)

Professional Learning

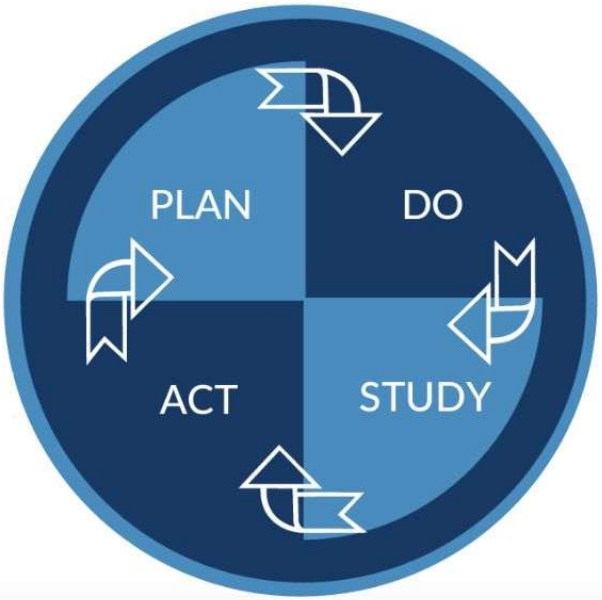
- Science of Reading Cohorts (3 year plan)
- Instructional Coaches
- PLC Protocols
- Intervention & HIT ongoing PL

Instructional Leadership

- Instructional Walk Routines & Look Fors
- Leader Learning, Calibration & Coaching

Opportunities & Next Steps

- Continued **instructional leadership capacity-building** of principals and principal supervisor;
- Continued alignment between **District Continuous Improvement Plan, School Continuous Improvement Plans**, and monitoring of Literacy inputs and outputs.
- Increased coherence and implementation of **assessment and data systems** *(participation in Education First/ANet Coherent Assessment Cohort);*
- System analysis and cross-department redesign of **6th-12th grade Academic Interventions & Supports** *(focus on Special Education and Multilingual learners);*
- Ongoing cross-office ideation in support of embedded **professional learning and coaching**;
- Next steps for **Science of Reading** professional learning.





*Where are there opportunities in your system to increase **system or instructional coherence** in service of literacy outcomes??*