Frequently Asked Questions Related to Proposed School Closures & Consolidations

October 28th, 2026

Will the proposed closures and consolidations lead to layoffs?

The short answer is: We do not yet know. Your union has asked this question to PPS multiple times, but has yet to receive any definitive answer. PPS plans to share its staffing plan sometime in November. We do know that PPS shared with press outlets that it may need to cut 223 total positions next year, but does not yet know if this will be achieved through attrition and which employees would be most affected.

We suspect that any closures or consolidations of the magnitude that PPS is proposing may lead to layoffs, which is part of why we've joined with parents, families, and residents across the city to ask PPS to pause the closure process. Our community deserves to know what the plan is is beyond closures in order to evaluate these plans.

What's the difference between a merger and closure in terms of my job security?

According to the contract there are some slight variations depending on the categorization:

Merger: In a merger situation, Article 18.6.8 states that the "follow the student" concept shall prevail. What this means, generally, is that educators will follow their students to their new school. However, it is unclear how this concept will work in practice with educators at K-8 schools, specialists, core enrichment educators, and other school-based staff. It is also unclear how PPS will determine which school educators will be placed in if their current school is split into multiple schools. These aspects of any merger will need to be negotiated once the plan is finalized.

Closure: Article 18.6.9 states that the educators in the school that is open will keep their position and the educators from the closed school will be offered remaining open positions based on licensure and seniority. Once all open positions are filled, any remaining professional educators will be unassigned.

In either situation, a change of the magnitude that PPS is proposing will create many situations that our contract does not currently have clear language about. We will need to negotiate with PPS about these situations, which will begin once PPS has adopted a plan. Your union is committed to protecting and fighting for your job and related job protections.

What school am I assigned to if my school is split into two other schools?

Our contract does not have clear language for this scenario. If this is part of the final plan that PPS adopts, your union will negotiate new language to address this.

What about the seniority lists? Can I see where I am on the seniority list?

Typically, PPS provides PAT with an updated seniority list during the annual staffing and budgeting process, sometime in early to mid-Spring. If PPS adopts a plan that may lead to layoffs and assignments, your union will immediately request an up to date seniority list to ensure your rights are protected.

Do educators lose seniority rights with a school closure?

No. Educators do not lose seniority rights if their school is closed. Educators will be offered open positions based on their licensure and seniority. If there are no open positions, educators not placed may be unassigned.

How is seniority determined?

Seniority is calculated from the first day of actual service within PPS, including approved leaves of service. In the case of a tie, PPS assigns random tie-breaking numbers to educators who started on the first day of actual service.

There are some exceptions to seniority, outlined in Article 18.6.2 , including for:

- Unique licensure for specific existing assignments
- Gender presentation/gender identity balance
- Racial balance
- Bilingual or multilingual ability relevant to assignment
- Extended responsibilities assignments that is an extension of a class assignment or other extended responsibility duties

What can educators do who are feeling worried, anxious, or fearful of their jobs under PPS's proposed scenarios?

We know the uncertainty, the fear, the division sown throughout Portland is weighing heavily on educators. The best antidote to fear is to link arms with students, parents, caregivers, neighbors, and educators from across Portland to demand that PPS put the brakes on their proposed plans. There continue to be too many critical unanswered questions that deserve clarity and deeper collaboration between PPS administrators, educators, and families.

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