

Jeff Closure on Table

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of white students, and since then the school has struggled to keep attendance from dipping.

According to numbers on the district's website, only 23 percent of students in the surrounding neighborhoods attend Jefferson. It also has the smallest number of students at 617.

At the school board meeting on Monday, Regan reasoned that the small number of students there made it a good candidate to become a magnet school, as well as its proximity to Portland Community College's Cascade Campus, where a partnership could be formed.

Hopson supported Smith's original proposal, arguing that the superintendent's initiative would equalize funding for the city's high schools by requiring students to attend their neighborhood school. He said that the proposal would build on the positives Jefferson already has go-

ing for it and enhance the image of the school overall.

Hopson has also pointed out an aspect of the redesign that has received sparse mention: "academic priority zones."

One of the driving forces behind the redesign is to close in on the Portland's sobering achievement gap. These zones would direct successful and experienced teachers and principals to schools including Bridger Elementary, George Middle School, Jefferson High School, Kelly Elementary, King Elementary, Roosevelt High School and Sitton Elementary.

The zones would also allocate greater support for students and families with more intervention, case management, and extended learning opportunities after the school day.

The plans for Benson remain in controversy because Smith estimates a reduction in attendance to 400 students with some cuts to its technical offerings.

"It was kind of a win-lose thing," said John Slaughter, Benson alum who runs the schools mentoring program.

The redesign was supposed to convert Benson into a two-year program, but Smith altered the proposal after Slaughter lead a boisterous group of students that pleaded with school board members not to take away its status as a four-year school at a meeting last month.

There are 1,100 students at Benson, according to 2009 numbers found on the district's website. Slaughter said that having such a drastic reduction in students will affect the overall experience at the school.

The school board will consider the High School System Design proposals again Thursday when a meeting is held at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N. Dixon. The session will begin with a public hearing at 4 p.m. followed by a 5 p.m. work session.

No Sign of 2nd Grader

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Sheriff's deputies and FBI agents posted about 40 yards from the school stopped cars Monday morning and asked passengers whether they were at the school Friday.

Gates said Monday that investigators need more tips. "Every tip, no matter how insignificant you think it is, could be the one we need."

Gates said the last known sighting of Kyron was about 9

a.m. Friday, shortly after the boy and his stepmother attended a science fair at the school. She last saw him walking down a hallway toward his second-grade classroom, wearing a "CSI" T-shirt and dark cargo pants.

A search began after classes let out and Kyron didn't come home on the bus. His stepmother called 911 about 3:45 p.m., and sheriff's deputies and K-9 units began a search of the school and the two-mile route to his home.

Searchers spent Monday continuing to comb the forest around the school, located in hilly countryside west of downtown Portland.

It was unclear whether Kyron was in class Friday or when anyone noticed he was missing because police have been reluctant to disclose public details of the search.

Authorities have not yet determined whether Kyron was kidnapped or just wandered off, but they're describing him as a "missing endangered child."

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