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# LOCAL NEWS



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Home to Portland's historic African American community, Jefferson High School, will be completely modernized if voters approve a new bond levy in November for its reconstruction as part of a proposed new bond that the Portland School Board last week referred to voters.

## Jefferson Rebuild Proposed

### School next in line for bond financing

Jefferson High School, home for generations of families from Portland's African American community, will get a complete renovation, and schools surrounding Jefferson will start a process to open a new Center for Black Student Excellence, as part of a proposed construction bond referred to voters by the Portland School Board last week.

Scheduled for the November General Election, the \$1.1 billion property tax measure would

renew the last school construction bond at the same tax rate that has provided monies for rebuilding or replacing other aging Portland schools in recent years, district officials said. It would also continue other investments in Portland schools, including funding for critical educational, health and safety priorities.

"I'm excited we are investing in the modernization of Jefferson and focusing on the Center for Black Student Excellence," Board Director Michelle DePass said. "It tells our Black students, your education matters. It tells them we care and are listening to your voice. I can't wait to witness the students we are investing in today."

Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero said the decision to remodel Jefferson and improve educational supports for black students keeps with past promises by the district and listens to the priorities of the district's community partners.

"If we're going to succeed in serving Black students and youth, we'll have to do it together," said Guerrero.

The proposed bond would also complete the modernization of Benson Polytechnic High School; build a facility for Multiple Pathways to Graduation programs; plan for additional capacity at Roosevelt High School;

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## School Classes to Start Online

Portland Public Schools Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero has outlined plans for holding classes online at the beginning of the school year, until at least Nov. 5 when local health guidelines for social distancing under the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) will be re-evaluated.

In a letter Guerrero sent to school parents and staff last week, he said the district will start the fall semester on Sept. 2 by utilizing a new, comprehensive distance learning model, based on the best available guidance to promote public safety from state and county health officials and Gov. Kate Brown.

"Our goal is to be prepared to engage students and provide them with a robust learning experience this fall," Guerrero said.



Guadalupe Guerrero

The online instruction will be different from the learning experience of this past spring when schools adopted online learning from home when classroom instruction suddenly ended because of the stay-at-home order by the governor to prevent the spread

of coronavirus amid a worldwide health crisis.

It is possible that unless COVID-19 conditions improve significantly, online learning will extend past Nov. 5. The decision will be made by Oct. 10 after considering new health information and county health metrics, Guerrero said.

"We believe it is both responsible and critical to base our decisions on what will best ensure the health and wellness of our students and staff. For those of us who serve in public education, we will always prefer to have our students engaged in classroom-based learning, but given current conditions, it would be unsafe to have significant numbers of students and adults back on campus at this time," Guerrero said.

The Portland Observer  
Established 1970 USPS 959 680  
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,  
Portland, OR 97211

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