

## Public Comments - Facilities Improvement & Oversight Committee - 12-9-2025

### *Dr. Greathouse comments:*

Good afternoon everyone in this room working so hard on Dr. Armstrong's priority to bring safe buildings to PPS students and staff.

I am Dr. Effie Greathouse, with Safe Indoor Air For Oregon Schools.

If you are familiar with SIAFOS, you may be expecting me to talk today – in the middle of flu season – about the many kids who were absent today, because we still have lots of work to do on clean classroom air.

But we are actually here to talk about the fall heat wave and the temporary cooling measures. Bringing in major equipment to 15 schools – on short notice – was a big step forward. It showed initiative, creativity, and a commitment to action.

To help the district learn from this effort, we've completed a report on our survey of teachers in the fifteen schools.

Teacher feedback indicates that the temporary cooling measures still need significant improvement. I'm going to be straight with you all and share that a lot of teacher feedback, not all, but a lot, was extremely negative.

Only 7% said that the hallway fans were effective at cooling their classrooms. Teachers described extreme noise, safety concerns, and student distraction. At the same time, a much higher proportion of teachers who got portable air conditioners in their actual classroom reported that they were helpful and effective.

Teachers' top priorities for heat waves this coming spring are air conditioners in the hottest classrooms, upper floor windows being allowed to stay open overnight, and far more thoughtful placement of temporary equipment.

I have copies of this report today to share.

*Sasha Pollack comments:*

My name is Sasha Pollack, I am a Robert Gray parent, and have worked in the area of climate and clean energy policy for nearly 15 years.

I was very impressed when I first read the PPS climate policy - it is thorough and thoughtful and not only addresses facilities issues but also the challenging topic of engaging young people on Climate Change. I appreciate the fact that this leadership team continues to show commitment to it, particularly in the design of new schools.

We are already feeling the initial impacts of the changing climate. Locally this is manifesting as more extreme weather - colder cold snaps, resulting in more snow days that can lengthen the school year, and especially more hot days, requiring regular cooling during the school year for the first time.

It is clear we need to explore new solutions to high temperatures in our buildings, both to increase effectiveness, reduce proximate health impacts of diesel, to which children are more susceptible (teachers in the say-fos survey whose classrooms were near the diesel generators could smell diesel exhaust in their classrooms) and also to align with PPS's climate goals.

Of course the primary focus of emergency heat response is regulating temperatures to ensure the safety of students and staff, but it is important to also remain true to PPS's commitment to "Increase energy efficiency, maximize the use of renewable energy sources, and minimize the use of fossil fuels." - part of goal 1.1 of the Climate policy.

We are asking this new creative operations team to explore less fossil fuel intensive options to address extreme heat including plug in portable heat pumps which are capable of effectively cooling large spaces, are less than \$300 each and would address many concerns expressed in the say-fos survey. If supplemental power is needed, explore using electric batteries instead of diesel generators. Burning diesel causes significant localized health impacts, and also emits greenhouse gasses including black carbon, which has a much higher impact on the climate than CO2.

Unfortunately, going forward, extreme temperatures are going to be more and more commonplace and rather than being treated as a one-off crisis where all other policies can be ignored, they should be planned for and thought about well in advance to ensure that responses are aligned with the district's policies and practices, including minimization of the use of fossil fuels. Thank you.