

QuickPoint! - A Failure to Launch at PPS

By John A. Charles, Jr.

At its [March 4th meeting](#), Portland Public School board will hear an update on the Center for Black Student Excellence (CBSE). The \$60 million CBSE was included in the bond measure approved by voters in 2020, without any prior due diligence. None of the money has been spent.

It hasn't been spent because no one at PPS can explain what the Center is supposed to be or how it will improve academic performance. Nor has the Board clarified how a center focusing solely on Black students complies with Title VI of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race.

None of those problems are solved in the [Power Point](#) being distributed for tonight's meeting. The handout is a 9-page word salad of phrases like "Pages of Possibility" and "Bridges to Brilliance." It does propose reading campaigns, parent partnerships, and mentoring programs that could benefit students of all races, but those activities do not require a dedicated building.

The Board will be asking voters in May to approve another construction bond in the amount of \$1.8 billion. Before demanding more money, PPS should apologize for its failure with the CBSE, and ask voters for permission to reallocate the \$60 million to actual construction needs within the District.

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