

June 18, 2025

Word Count: 282

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Jefferson High School’s Dual-Enrollment Dilemma

By Naomi Inman

Last week, Portland Public Schools Superintendent Kimberlee Armstrong announced her plan to end Jefferson High School’s “dual-enrollment policy”—which allows families in its boundaries to choose between Jefferson or nearby Grant, Roosevelt, or McDaniel high schools instead. Translation? No more school choice for families in North Portland, choices they have enjoyed since 2011. As Willamette Week’s [reporter](#) put it directly, “PPS Considers Requiring Students in Jefferson Catchment to Attend the School.”

It seems, now that Jefferson has a half-billion dollars to build a “[world-class](#) school” with capacity for 1,700 students, fewer than 400 students will cut the ribbon on opening day, according to Portland State University’s Population Research Center Enrollment [Forecast](#) for 2033-34.

Ms. Armstrong’s May 29 [Memo](#) proposes tackling the problem by ending these options for nearly 2,000 students who currently attend neighboring high schools. The School Board will study and decide on this required attendance at Jefferson by the fall of 2026.

Until now, Jefferson area families have enjoyed the most progressive policy in the city regarding school choice. Now that the \$2 billion school [bond](#) has passed, they are proposing to take that choice away. This strategy is backwards, and it is bound to fail. A better option would be to research opportunities to expand school assignments throughout the district and let parents sort out which district school best serves the individual needs of their child.

Armstrong says she wants Portland to be a model for the nation. To date, 35 states, plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, have enacted some form of school choice [legislation](#). Letting parents choose among district schools would be an excellent path for the future of Jefferson High School and Portland Public Schools.

Naomi Inman is External Relations Manager at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization. As a staff journalist and writer, Naomi helps Cascade make the case for free-market policies through media affairs and publications.

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author’s own.

