

Resolution on School Design and Utilization (adopted September 28, 2016)

The Portland Association of Teachers believes new and remodeled school buildings should be designed with the intention for all full-time teachers to have full-time classrooms. We believe that all students benefit from educators having a dedicated classroom space.

The PAT believes that the so-called “100% utilization model,” or any plan intended to increase the enrollment capacity of a school, that requires teachers to move between and teach in different rooms throughout the day, and limits their access to those rooms during planning times or before or after school, is harmful to teaching and learning for the following reasons:

- It wastes valuable teacher time to have to set up, and then pack up, in order to travel to different rooms during the instructional day
- It limits teacher’s ability to be available to students during passing times and other times outside of class during the day
- It makes it difficult for students to find their teachers when they need support
- It creates a more stressful building climate for students and teachers
- It limits teacher’s ability to create a welcoming physical environment and build classroom community
- It limits teacher’s ability to support learning through the display of visual aids and student work
- It limits physical access to resources such as textbooks, classroom libraries, or any supplies teachers cannot carry with them between classrooms, thus reducing their ability to provide robust instruction
- It has a greater adverse impact on the academic achievement of the most vulnerable students
- It creates safety issues when building emergency protocols are implemented while teachers are in transit
- It forces substitute educators to navigate between locked classrooms while hauling sets of instructional materials around in a building that may not be familiar

The PAT believes that other cost-efficient options exist to address enrollment issues that will not impede teachers’ ability to deliver a high-quality, effective academic program for all students.

Furthermore, the number of classrooms in redesigned schools should be based on projected student enrollment, rather than current enrollment, so predictable classroom shortages do not develop over time. As Portland Public Schools looks at modernizing buildings, redrawing boundary lines, and redefining programmatic offerings it should be done with intentionality to provide a dedicated classroom space for every educator.