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**For Immediate Release**

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**Statements from Superintendent Dr. Anthony Hamlet and Board President Dr. Regina Holley Regarding Board Adoption of The Pa Labor Relations Board Fact-Finding Report**

(PITTSBURGH, PA) Nov. 8, 2017 - This evening, the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Directors approved an objective third-party Fact-Finding Report issued by a neutral fact-finder appointed by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. The report is part of Act 88 fact-finding and mediation process triggered by the ongoing contract negotiations between the PPS administration and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers. The administration and PFT did not reach agreement on negotiations after the interim two-year agreement expired in June 2017. Negotiations continued through June 30, 2017, still with no agreement made, which prompted the fact-finding process that took place in October. Following the Board vote, Dr. Anthony Hamlet and Dr. Regina Holley released the following statements:

**Dr. Anthony Hamlet:**

“At a time when public school education is under a microscope, we must continue to advance the work we have begun together – teachers, staff, administration, and school leaders - to transform PPS for all students. We know our teachers and staff are key to reaching our goals for students, which is why we made improving the standards of supports they receive an immediate top priority. Now teachers have more time for job-embedded professional development, a multi-tiered system of support that includes tools to improve school culture, and an updated data system so teachers can access student data. All students have greater access to nurses and librarians and next level technology and CTE education to bridge the digital and trade job gaps. But there were some practices in place that that we know are negatively impacting our most vulnerable students and those practices needed to be addressed in this contract negotiation. I presented my views to the fact-finding committee and communicated that there were two main issues on which I could not, as the District’s leader, compromise.

- First, we are one of the only urban school districts in the nation that gives teachers the power to override their principal with regard to their class schedule and teaching assignments. From day one, I’ve said that we have to hold our principals accountable. They have to be more than just building managers. But to do that, they must have reasonable, practical management tools necessary to lead. The fact-finder adopted our stance on this issue, but it’s been made clear to me that the teacher’s union is squarely opposed to this point.
- Secondly, an odd loophole in the human resources process that caused too much teacher movement in our most challenged schools absolutely needed to change. Today, if a teacher is hired after August 1, the personnel system considers the job vacant and is posted for application for others, causing widespread movement throughout the district. This loophole is negatively affecting our most high-needs schools – where poverty rates are up to 90% and the staff turnover ratio is nearly 30%. In the 2016-17 school year, nearly 100 staff were displaced as a result of this obscure Aug. 1 rule. If we are to improve outcomes among our most vulnerable children, we cannot continue exposing them to a revolving door of teachers who exit before they’ve even learned the students’ names. We must create a framework of consistency and mentorship; of investment and dedication.

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For me, this bargaining process is about how we can work together to become a better school district for the children we serve. I believe that the fact finders kept their focus squarely where it must be when determining what items to adopt: it's about the children. At the same time, our teachers have some of the hardest jobs in the world and we do greatly value them and the work that they do. This report, if accepted by the PFT, gives teachers significant increases in their wages. A teacher making \$60,000 today will make more than \$70,000 at the end of the three-year agreement. Our teachers still have one of the shortest workdays in the commonwealth, an extremely high median compensation and excellent pension and healthcare benefits. In addition, new teachers will get a starting salary increase of more than \$4,000, ensuring we stay competitive when attracting new teachers.

I will continue to direct our bargaining team to work closely with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers to achieve as much consensus as possible on a fair and equitable collective bargaining agreement. The Fact-Finding Report more than fairly compensates teachers and gives the District the management tools that leaders need in order to advance educational outcomes from students. I want to thank all parties involved for their efforts and remind everyone to keep students' needs top of mind."

### **Dr. Regina Holley**

This has been a long bargaining process, and I'm pleased that we've reached this point where the Board and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers are acting on a Fact-Finder's Report. This agreement, though perhaps not our first choice for resolution, is the result of a thorough mediation process with a truly objective third party.

First, I want to offer a sincere thank you on behalf of the Board to everyone involved – and especially to Board member Cindy Falls, who chaired our negotiations committee and worked diligently, as always, to champion the District's cause while remaining cognizant of the needs of our teachers and, most importantly, our students.

As you know, a number of us on the Board have had careers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and each of us cares deeply about the future of this District. We care about the employees, the students and their families. Though we do not always agree on everything, I believe we can all agree that our bottom line is to keep the District on track to continue the positive work we've begun under Dr. Hamlet's leadership. Our goal is to enable the administration and PPS instructors to provide the best possible education, one that leads to positive outcomes for *all* of our children, from advanced learners to those who struggle to learn.

Like Dr. Hamlet, I believe we need to hold not only our teachers but also our principals accountable. As a former principal, I had hoped that we would give the principals power to set class schedules and teaching assignments, something that the fact-finder report recommends.

I'm pleased that we compensate our teachers fairly and provide them with a schedule that gives them flexibility for the professional development they desire and need. But I also want to ensure that the District can maintain stable staffing in every school, so that our most vulnerable students do not suffer from insufficient resources or instruction.

I know that our teachers work hard, at a difficult job, and we ask them to always do their best. So, we also ask that anyone who reaches our children, from the Central Office on down into the schools, commits to a genuine investment in their future.

As we end this bargaining process, it is my hope that we can all come together to advance Dr. Hamlet's strategic plan in the many ways that build a positive school culture to honestly improve student outcomes.

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