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341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For Immediate Release

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Superintendent Pauses Modifications to 2023-2024 School Year Calendar

District to Leverage Strategic Planning Process to Partner with Stakeholders to Explore Opportunities for Continuous Staff Professional Learning and Other Pertinent Opportunities Within the 2024-2025 School Year Calendar

PITTSBURGH, March 15, 2023 – Hearing the concerns and challenges raised by stakeholders about proposed changes to the 2023-2024 school year calendar, Superintendent Wayne N. Walters, Ed.D., has paused all modifications. The 2023-2024 calendar will mirror the structure of the District's current calendar to maintain one week of Spring Vacation and eight professional development half days. The District will not implement the plan for one-hour delayed start Wednesdays or the second-semester parent-teacher conference half-day for the upcoming school year. Instead, the District will partner with stakeholders to explore opportunities for future continuous staff professional learning and other pertinent opportunities within the 2024-2025 school year calendar as part of the District's strategic planning process. The Superintendent notified students, staff and families of the pause via the letter below today.

Letter from Superintendent Wayne N. Walters to Students, Staff and Families

March 15, 2023

Greetings Students, Staff, and Families,

I hope all are well. I am writing to provide important information regarding proposed changes to our 2023-2024 calendar. I have heard the voices of concern and potential challenges. In response, the 2023-2024 calendar will mirror the structure of our current calendar, including one week of Spring Vacation and eight professional development half days. For the upcoming school year, we will not institute the weekly late arrival on Wednesdays or the second-semester parent-teacher conference half-day. In partnership and communication with stakeholders, we plan to explore opportunities for future continuous staff professional learning and other pertinent opportunities within the 2024-2025 school year calendar.

Like many school districts nationwide, Pittsburgh Public Schools is challenged to fully meet the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of our students. The pandemic has revealed the need for added layers of learning to improve student outcomes and experiences. While I carefully listened to and heard your concerns and challenges, we must understand that change is necessary to positively elevate our students' outcomes and experiences. If change is to happen for our students, we must invest in those who deliver education to our students.

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Professional learning is a core value and an urgent need in our District. We must be innovative within our defined constructs to increase opportunities for teacher, principal, and school-based staff collaboration and development.

As your Superintendent, I firmly believe where there is challenge, there is opportunity. As a District, we are preparing to embark on a strategic planning process inclusive of stakeholder engagement to develop a comprehensive five-year strategic plan soon. This process creates an opportunity to engage stakeholders collaboratively in task force work regarding multiple items, including consistent job-embedded professional learning for staff and school start times. I look forward to your voice and engagement when these topics are explored.

While at times you may disagree with my decisions, please know that I remain invested in doing what is necessary to create safe, inclusive, supportive, robust, and equitable learning environments for our students. A part of creating these learning environments is an investment in our teachers, principals, and school-based staff via continuous high-quality professional learning, so they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and habits to best serve our students. I remain unapologetically student first and your proud Superintendent!

Respectfully,

Dr. Wayne N. Walters, Superintendent

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