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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA CONTENT

341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

State Approves District's Future Ready Special Education Plan *Sets in Motion Satellite Structure to Support Recovery of Oliver Citywide Academy School Community and Decrease Students in Other Placements*

PITTSBURGH PA August 16, 2023 – Today, Superintendent Wayne N. Walters announced the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education's approval of the District's Future Ready Special Education Plan. The state-required plan incorporates changes in programming that move the Pittsburgh Public Schools out of corrective action, as well as strategies to increase the number of students educated within the least restrictive environment. The approval also advances a plan that supports Pittsburgh Oliver Citywide Academy (OCA) students in four satellite sites for the start of the 2023-2024 school year. The District adjusted its initial plan to include the relocation of all students upon hearing the voices of students, staff, and families.

"We have heard from the Pittsburgh Oliver school community the deep pain associated with its current facility following the tragic loss of two of its students," said Dr. Wayne N. Walters. "As a result, we will serve Pittsburgh Oliver students in four satellite sites instead of one location, allowing all students to receive full-time emotional support within buildings that also host conventional education classrooms."

Currently, 54.4 percent of the District's special education students spend 80 percent or more of their time in general education classrooms. The District's plan creates strategies to increase this participation to 61.8, including training all teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators on inclusive practices and increasing school-based behavioral health. In addition, students from OCA will be relocated into four satellite sites within current school buildings. Although in the same buildings with other schools and programs, OCA will remain separate with different administrators, teachers, and support staff within each location. OCA will have separate teaching and learning spaces and support services. Satellite sites were selected based on building capacity and each OCA site has limited capacity:

- A maximum of 40 students, in grades 6-12, will attend the OCA satellite located in the Greenway Building.
- A maximum of 12 students will attend the OCA satellite within the Perry facility.
- An OCA satellite at the Milliones building can serve a maximum of 12 students; and
- Students in grades 3-8 will attend an OCA satellite within the King facility with a maximum of 18 students.

"When we talk about the need to create equity in access for our students, we must include opportunities for full-time emotional support in comprehensive school buildings," said Assistant Superintendent of the Program for Students with Exceptionalities, Patti Camper. "This plan ensures we are providing the level of support for our most vulnerable students based on each student's need. For some students that will be within a full-time separate program, while others will be supported in a comprehensive school."



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Page 2 - State Approves District's Future Ready Special Education Plan

The District shared its initial Future Ready Special Education Plan for the school years 2023-2026 at the Board's June 6th Education Committee Meeting. The Board approved submission of the plan to the state at its July 26th Legislative Meeting. Today, the District notified staff and families at all impacted schools and programs, including OCA, of the state's approval and plans for the start of the school year. OCA and special education staff are currently meeting with OCA families to review Individualized Education Plans for each student. To view the full Future Ready Special Education Plan visit www.pghschools.org/pse.

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