



# PPS Online School Initiative

Education Committee Presentation  
June 12, 2012

# Agenda

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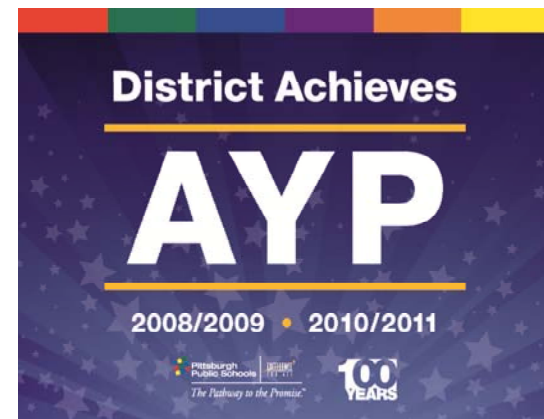
**Part 1 – Why an Online School Now**

**Part 2 – Overview of School Design**

**Part 3 – Timeline and Next Steps**

# District Making Strong Progress

- **Nationally recognized**
- **Largest Promise scholarship program in the nation**
- **3,200 PPS Promise Scholars to date**
- **PSSA scores are on the rise**
- **Made AYP two of past three years**



And . . . We have a serious budget problem that has been compounding for years

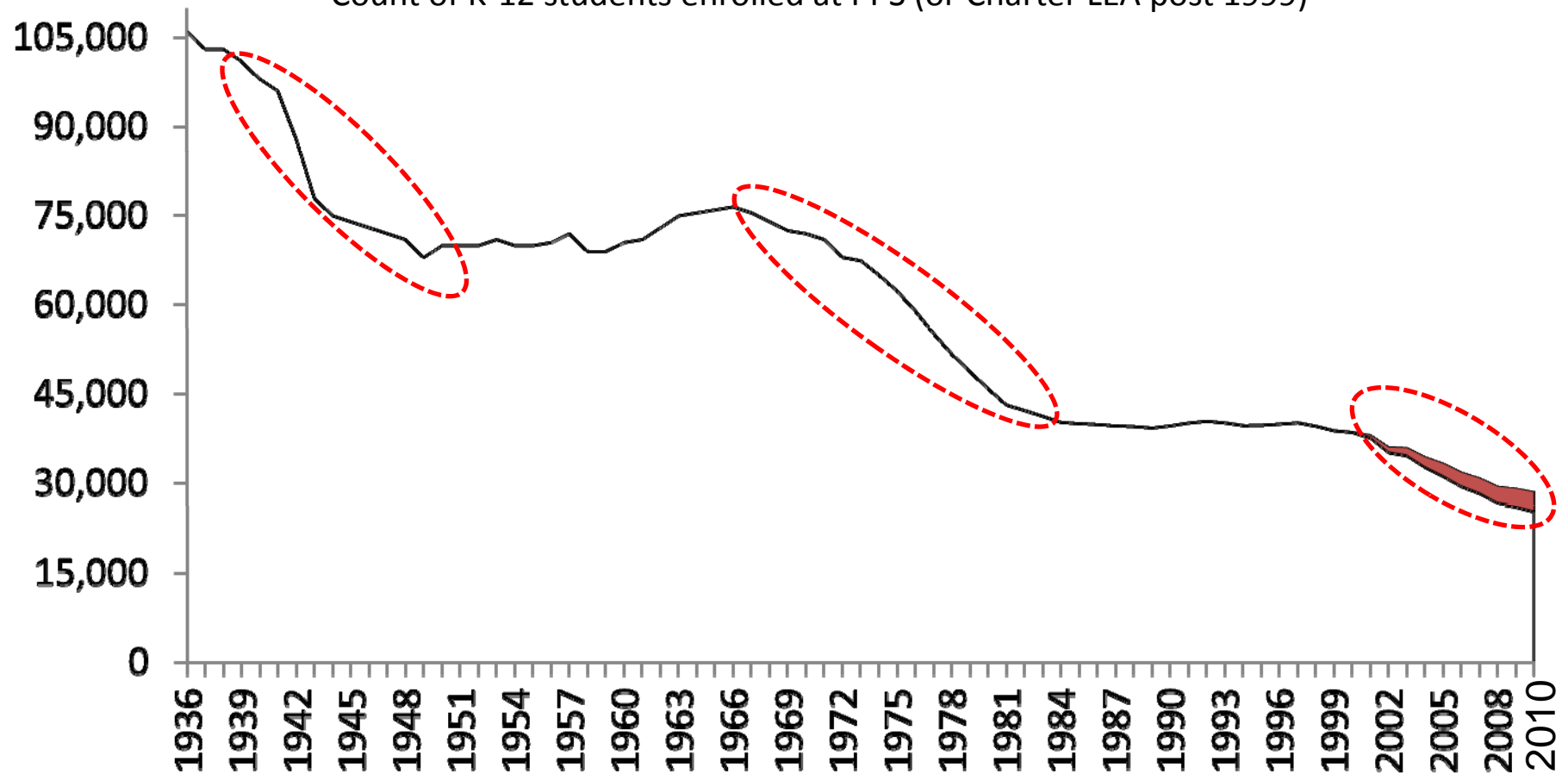
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- **Expenditures have exceeded revenues over past 5 years as student enrollment declined and costs have increased**
- **In the past, the District has relied on what had been a healthy fund balance (reserves) to make up the difference**
- **Charter school expenditures for 2011-2012 will exceed \$45 million for nearly 3,125 students**
  - 25% to cyber charter schools (approximately \$11 million)
  - 75% to brick and mortar charter schools (approximately \$34 million)

# We must actively manage our third wave of enrollment decline

## Average Daily Membership (ADM) 1936 until Present

Count of K-12 students enrolled at PPS (or Charter LEA post 1999)



Source: PPS Historic General Fund Budgets, 1980 through present

# Our Financial Outlook as a result of our reduction efforts to date

	2012 est.	2013 est.	2014 est.	2015 est.
Revenue (Millions)	\$508.07	\$511.68	\$512.13	\$518.43
Operating Expenses	\$522.23	\$514.58	\$525.07	\$538.96
Operating Deficit (Funding Gap)	(\$14.16)	(\$2.90)	(\$12.94)	(\$20.53)
Beginning Fund Balance (Reserves)	\$72.40	\$58.24	\$55.34	\$42.41
Year-end Fund Balance (Reserves)	\$58.24 (meets \$26.11 fund balance requirement)	\$55.34 (meets \$25.73 fund balance requirement)	\$42.41 (meets \$26.25 fund balance requirement)	\$21.87 (below \$26.95 fund balance requirement)
Meets 5% Fund Balance Requirement?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

# Terms related to Online-Virtual Learning

## Brick and Mortar Schools

- Refers to traditional schools or traditional school buildings. PPS currently has only brick and mortar schools.

## Online School

- Offers comprehensive full-time education delivered primarily over the Internet. Used interchangeably with “virtual school”, “eSchool”, or “cyber school.” However, the term cyber is largely obsolete and losing favor in the national online community.

## Charter School

- Self managed public schools that are approved by local school districts (or the Charter Appeals Board). Funding is provided by the district of residence for each student. In PPS, we currently pay \$13,047 for each non-special education student and \$28,555 for each special education student.

## Cyber Charter School

- A specific type of charter school open to students across the state. Cyber Charters are approved by the PA Department of Education. Funding for cyber schools and brick and mortar charter schools is currently the same.

## Turnkey Solution

- Common term used in Online Learning where schools (or other entities) contract with a partner that provides a comprehensive bundle of services (including Content, Technology, and Instruction).

# Why an Online School Now

- We want to shape the future on our terms, not have it dictated to us
- This is an aggressive step to attract back students that have left to pursue online learning opportunities in cyber charter schools
- Creating an Online School is a logical step in making Pittsburgh Public Schools more Competitive and Sustainable
- Our goal is to make Pittsburgh Public Schools *First Choice* by offering a portfolio of quality school options that promote high student achievement in the most equitable and cost effective manner.

## An Online School operated by Pittsburgh Public Schools will:

- *Deliver a Quality Online Education that operates effectively and efficiently*
- *Decrease Cyber Charter Expenditures*
- *Will be a Promise Eligible School Option*
- *Provide an Innovative and Alternative Path for Students to be Promise-Ready*



# Current Financial Impact

**As of June, 2012**

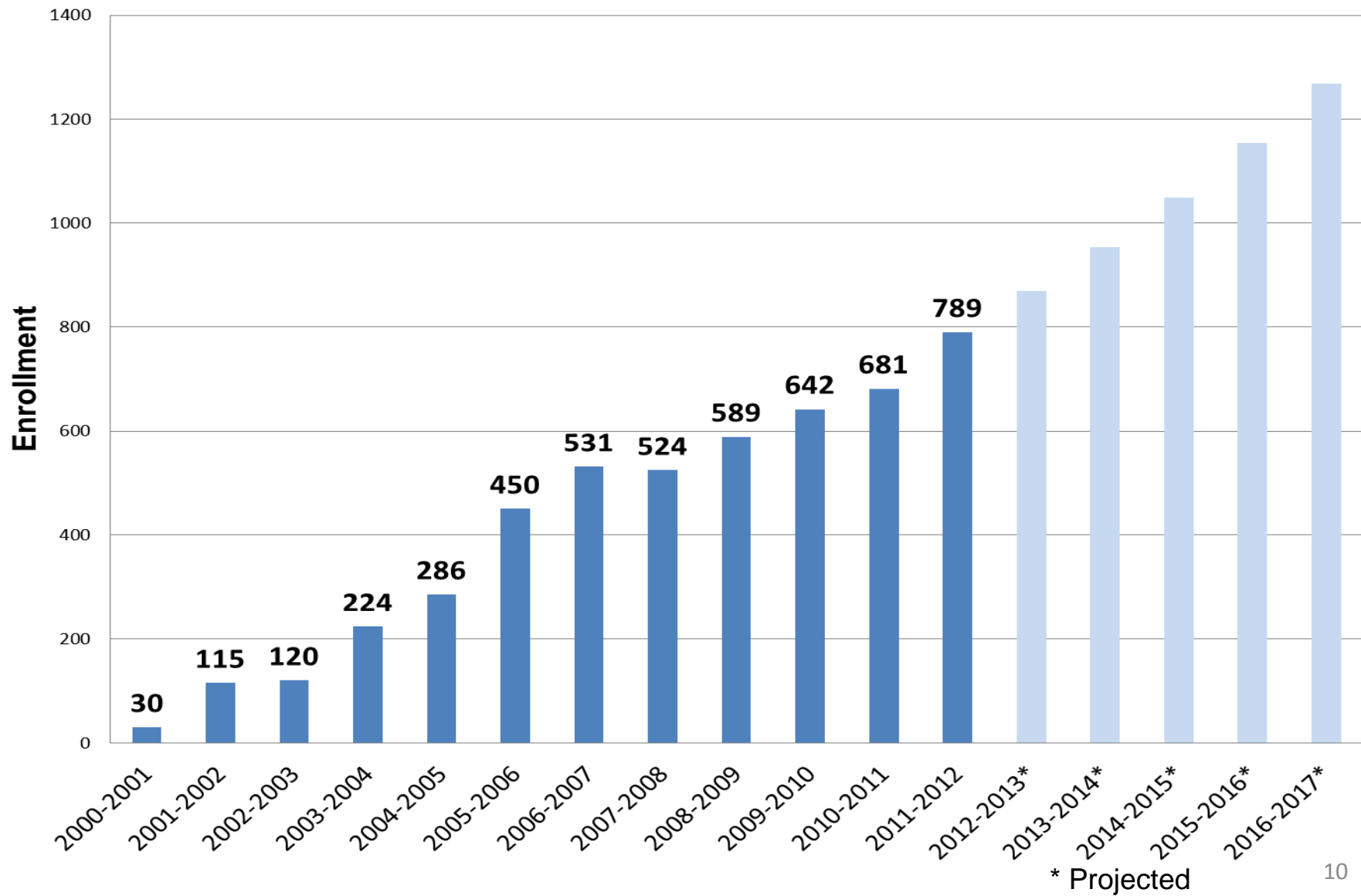
789 PPS students attending cyber-charter schools

## 2011-2012 Annual cost per Student:

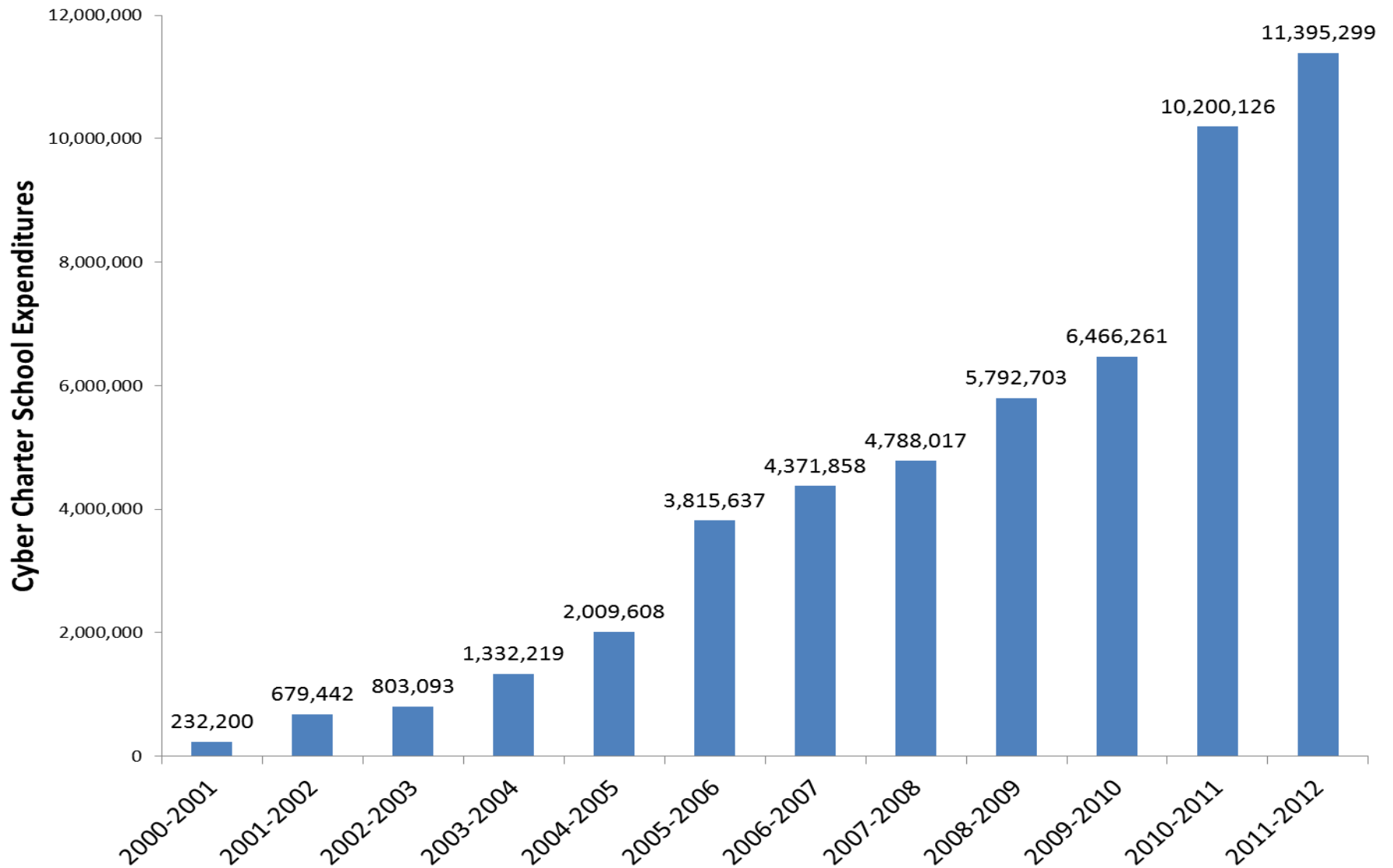
718	Regular-ed. students @ \$13,047.17	=	\$ 9,367,868.06
<u>71</u>	Special-ed. students @ \$28,555.37	=	<u>\$ 2,027,431.27</u>
789			\$11,395,299.33

*Beginning with the 2010-11 School Year, state reimbursements for Charter School tuition have been **eliminated**.*

# Cyber Charter Enrollment



# Annual Cyber Charter Expenditures



# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – Demographics

## Gender

Male	48%
Female	52%

## Poverty

Regular Lunch	56%
Free or Reduced	44%

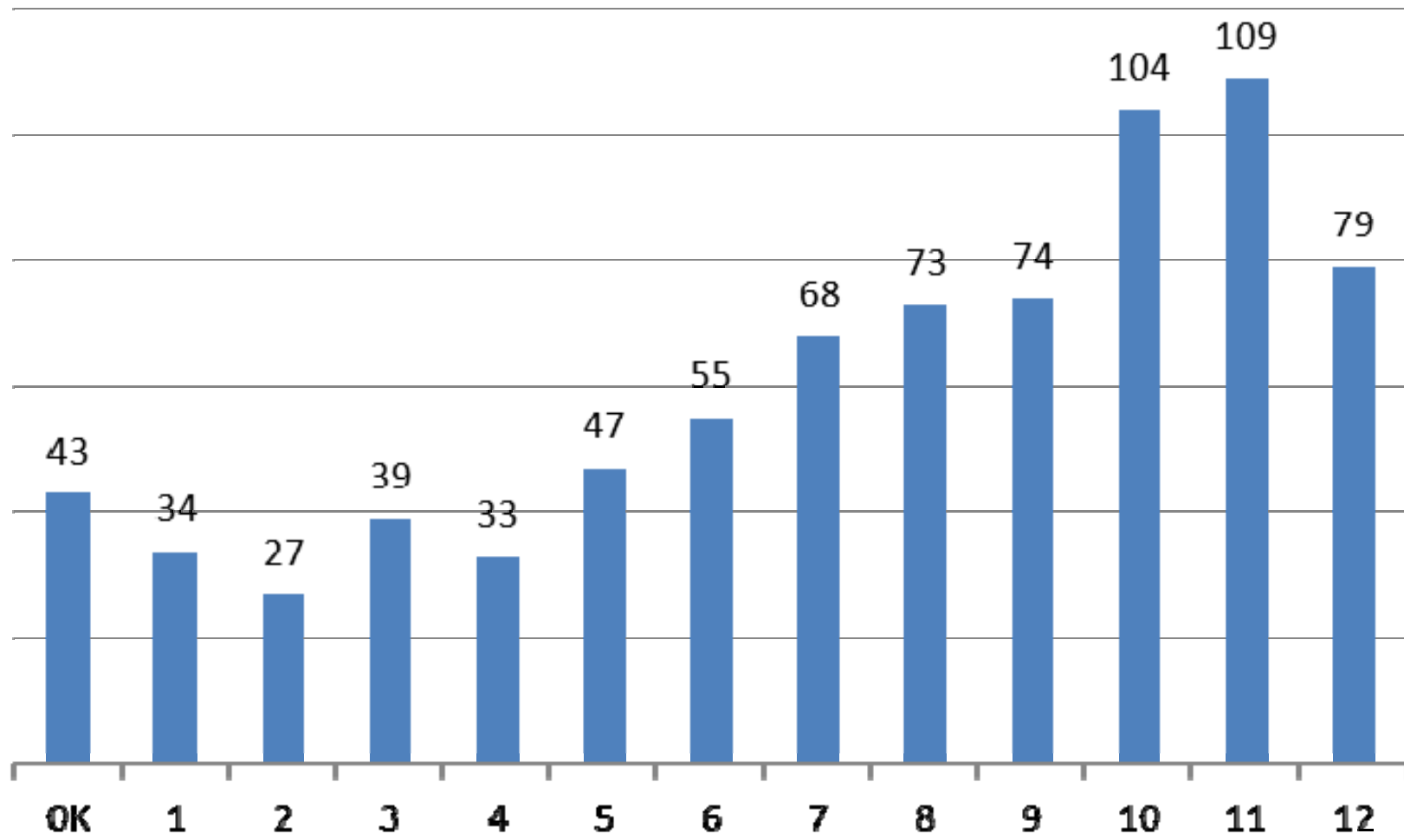
## Race

Black	32%
White	60%
Other	8%

## Special Education

Non Special Ed	84%
Special Ed	13%
Gifted Ed	3%

# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – by Grade



# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – by School

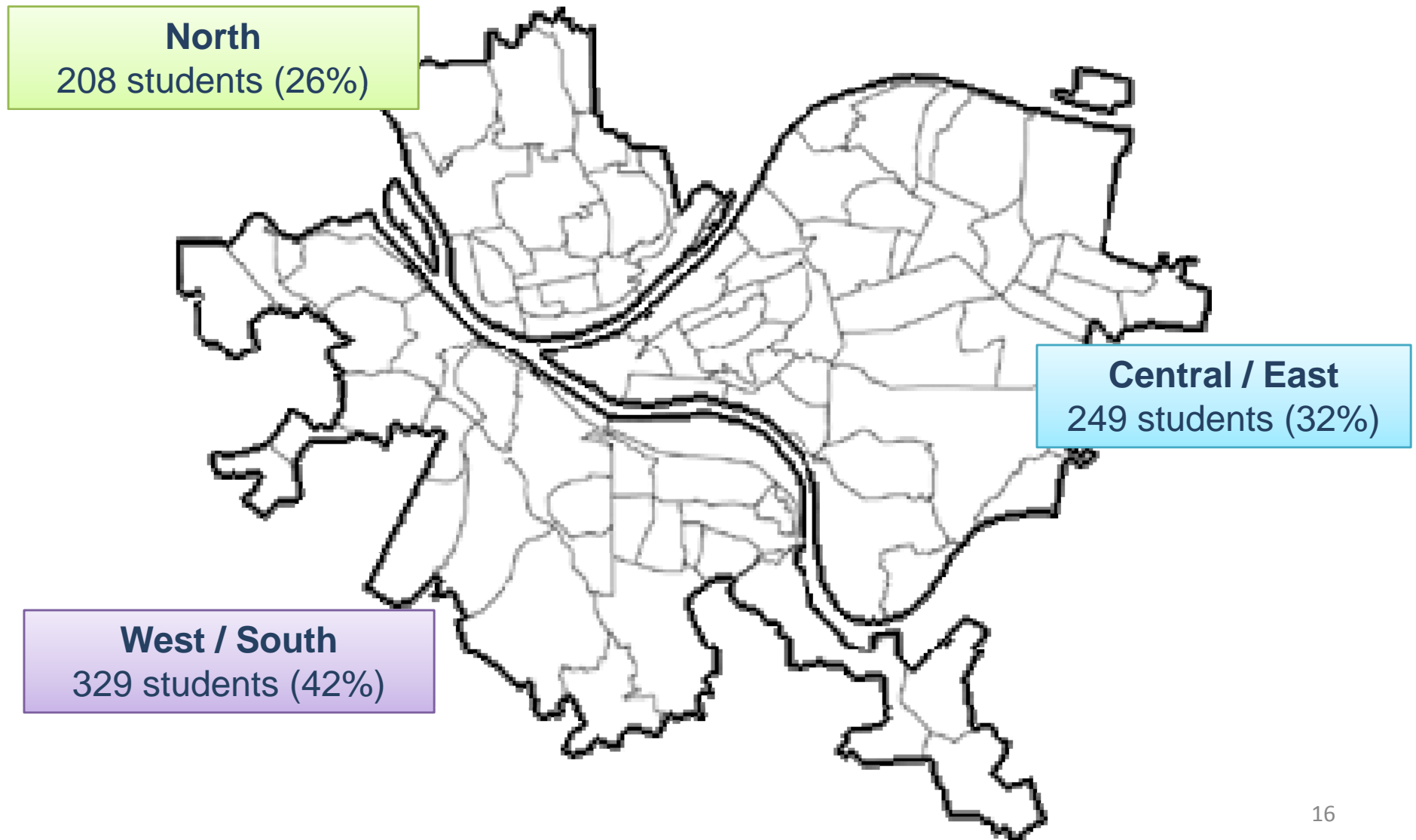
Cyber Charter Enrollment	Number of Students	Percent of Overall Cyber Enrollment
PA Cyber	344	44%
Agora Cyber	151	19%
PA Learners Online	83	11%
Commonwealth Connections	81	10%
PA Virtual School	54	7%
PA Distance Learning	29	4%
PA Leadership	25	3%
Achievement House	14	2%
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Cyber	8	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>100%</b>

# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – Enrollment History

Previously Attended for a Portion of their K-12 History	Percent
Private School	24%
Brick and Mortar Charter School	8%
Homeschool	6%
Cyber Charter (separate from current enrollment)	13%
Attended a Pittsburgh Public School	66%
Never Attended a Pittsburgh Public School	34%

Fast Facts	Percent
Enrolled at Current Cyber School less than 1 full year	51%
Initial Enrollment Began after the 1 <sup>st</sup> Month of School	40%
Repeated at Least One Grade Level during their K-12 History	21%

# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – by Region





# PPS Residents Currently Enrolled in Cyber Charter – Parent Outreach

**We made contact with 15 families that have children currently enrolled in a Cyber Charter School. Here are some of our findings:**

Expressed overall satisfaction with their current cyber charter school	71 %
Expressed interest in returning to PPS for an online school	80 %

## What we heard:

*If my son would be eligible for the Pittsburgh Promise, then I definitely would be interested.*

*-- Parent of 7<sup>th</sup> Grade student*

*I didn't want to leave Pittsburgh Public Schools, but I did not have any other option. Cyber is the best thing that has happened to my child. If Pittsburgh Public offered this type of school, I would definitely be interested.*

*-- Parent of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade student*

# What is Online Learning

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## Online Learning is the Fastest Growing segment of K-12 Education

### Online Programs

1. **Supplemental programs** - single course enrollments typically for credit recovery or Advanced Placement
2. **Full-time schools** – students take a full course load often from home

### Delivery Options

1. **Asynchronous** – student-centered, student controls the pace and time; learning takes place over elapsed time
2. **Synchronous** – teacher-facilitated, instruction delivered ‘live’ often through video conferencing; learning takes place during defined time period

## At the National level

- Online Courses - 2001 – 50,000 enrollments; 2010 – over 3,000,000 enrollments
- Single district programs are outpacing the growth of all other segments

## At the State level

- Over 30,000 students enrolled in full-time cyber charter schools
- Enrollment continues to increase by 10% - 15% each year

## At the Local level

- Over half of the school districts in Allegheny County have launched (or will launch) online learning initiatives in the past few years

# Who Utilizes Online Schools?

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**Research (validated by our parent outreach) states there are numerous factors why a parent might choose an Online School:**

- Social interaction concerns
- Safety concerns
- Time restraints
- Disciplinary issues
- Need for extra credits
- Medical issues
- Individualized instruction
- Self paced
- Access to higher level course work
- Alternative or supplement to home-schooling
- Greater parent participation

# Agenda

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**Part 1 – Why an Online School Now**

**Part 2 – Overview of School Design**

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# Launching a PPS Online School

## Cyber Strategic Planning Committee formed in 2010-2011 SY

- Includes members of the Chief Academic Officer's Office, Finance, Human Resources, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), Program for Students with Exceptionalities, Solicitor's Office, Student Services, and Technology

## Basic Implementation Questions:

- *Where will we get our Content – build, buy, or license?*
- *How will we recruit, hire, train, and support the Teachers?*
- *What Technology will be used – End-user devices, Internet access, Learning management system (LMS) and alignment with Student Information System (SIS)?*
- *What are the typical areas of any school's Operations that need addressed – student support, recruitment/enrollment, budget, and program evaluation?*

## Research of Cyber Solutions that best meet needs of PPS

- Without the experience and budget to build a program from the 'bottom up' the recommendation was to pursue a **turnkey solution**.
- Most turnkey solutions provide Content, Instruction, and Hardware.
- Steering Committee reviewed throughout the 2010-2011 school year online providers and made the recommendation of Waterfront Learning, a service of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

# Creating Pittsburgh Online Academy 6-12

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## Stand Alone School

- Student data for AYP attributed to the new school
- Adds to the Portfolio of school options in PPS

## Serving Grades 6-12

- Nearly 75% of cyber charter enrollment from PPS is in grades 6-12
- The feasibility of expanding our online school to include elementary grades will be researched

## Location

- Space Needed for Registration, Equipment Sign Out, Orientation, Intervention, and Testing
- **Greenway Professional Development Center**
- **Board of Education** as a Satellite location

## School Naming

- Standard PPS naming policies and procedures to be followed

# Collaboration with PFT

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- **Representatives from the PFT have been instrumental in collaborating on the PPS Online Initiative**
- **We are currently finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding between the District and PFT on the basic operation of the online school. Highlights include:**
  1. Staffing Model and School Operation
    - Year 1 – full turnkey solution with mutually a agreement to partner
    - Year 2 – transition and training year to build our teacher's capacity to deliver quality online instruction
    - Year 3 – instruction provided by PPS teachers
  2. Decreases in Cyber Charter School Expenditures
    - Supporting operational costs of our online school
    - Sustaining school district initiatives
  3. PPS-PFT Working Committee
    - Six-member committee established to continue to collaborate and make design decisions informing Pittsburgh Online Academy 6-12 including curriculum, training and protocols for addressing internal student transfers and student services

# Our Online Partner Waterfront Learning

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## Benefits of Waterfront Learning (WFL)

- WFL is a service of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a trusted educational provider with a decade of cyber experience.
- WFL provides us with a full turnkey model solution with a commitment to training and preparing PPS teachers
- WFL provides flexibility in **service options** as we transition through year 2 and 3
- There are 10 local districts that contracted with WFL to operate full-time online programming. Site visits have been made to three of the programs that have been identified as the most successful (Gateway, Penn Hills, and Deer Lakes).
- At \$3,500 per Student, WFL is a cost effective solution which includes:
  - Access to 300+ Courses (Core, AP, and Electives)
  - Each course can be aligned to PPS curriculum
  - Full Turnkey Solution in Year 1 and 2 providing instructors, software, hardware and connectivity

*(see Appendix C and Appendix D Vendor Comparison)*



# Waterfront Learning Support Services

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## **Administrative Support**

- Provides assistance in creating and executing policies and procedures, including a Student Handbook and other documents relevant to registration
- Provides assistance with marketing strategies
- Collaborates with district special education staff
- Collects and communicates data needed for progress monitoring purposes
- Provides monthly meetings and professional development opportunities for District Liaisons

## **Student Support**

- Reviews all new student information to confirm placement
- Provides a Special Education caseworker to assist teachers and students in meeting IEP goals and objectives
- Assists school districts in designing and delivering New Student Orientation

## **Hardware and Technology Support**

- Students will receive a laptop, mouse, headset, printer, and an aircard to get online.
- Hardware or Software difficulties can be reported directly to WFL. Arrangements for repair and/or exchange are typically handled within 24 hours.

# Waterfront Learning Support Services (cont)

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## Teacher Support:

- Teachers are employed by Waterfront Learning as adjunct staff. 100% of their teachers are highly qualified and PA certified. Most (not all) teachers for WFL are local full time brick and mortar teachers, and teach online on a part time basis.
- Typically, teachers have a load of approximately 50 students per course.
- Teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance, performance, and progress. They initiate communication with students via email or phone to assist and support their course work (and maintain a communication log). Students are able to ask questions and solicit feedback. Teachers employ important intervention strategies and supplemental activities to increase knowledge and facilitate skill acquisition.
- Teachers receive extensive training and professional development to be successful in an online environment. Teachers also receive support in assisting students with special needs.

# Anticipated Enrollment & Promise Eligibility

- Focused recruitment on grades 6-9 in Year 1 (243 students out of 789)
- Anticipated enrollment of 100-125 students in Year 1
- Predicting 50% enrollment increase each year
- Target students NOT currently enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, with special emphasis on current Cyber Charter students

Continuous Residency and Enrollment Since:	Scholarship Percentage:	Annual cash award is UP TO a maximum of:
Kindergarten	100%	\$10,000
1 <sup>st</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	95%	\$9,500
6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	85%	\$8,500
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	75%	\$7,500
10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0%	\$0

# Marketing Plan

- Recruiting will focus on four separate groups of students NOT currently attending PPS. Highest priority is Group A.

Group	Grades	PPS Residents Currently Attending			Promise Eligible if Enroll in PPS	Approx. Number of Students
		Cyber Charter	Brick and Mortar Charter	Private or Home-schooled		
A	6-9	X			Yes	250
B	6-9			X	Yes	2,500
C	6-11		X		Yes	1,000
D	10-11	X		X	No	1,500

- Recruiting methods under consideration include direct one on one outreach through phone calls and/or home visits, direct mail of print materials, school website, and school information sessions.
- Communications Plan to reach all PPS staff is being developed.

# Recruitment and Enrollment Process

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Recruitment-Enrollment Non-PPS Student	Retention-Internal Transfer PPS Student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive Marketing and Outreach</li> <li>• Follows District established enrollment procedures</li> <li>• Comprehensive Student Orientation and Transition Module</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Not</u> targeted recruitment</li> <li>• PPS-PFT Online Academy Working Committee will establish internal transfer procedures and safe guards</li> </ul>

# Procedures for Student with an IEP

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## **Current PPS Student**

- Requires a Re-Evaluation
- IEP Team reviews and determines appropriate placement
- Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) issued

## **Current NON-PPS Student**

- Cyber IEP Team (with support from WFL) reviews and determines appropriate placement
- Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) issued
- Team may complete Re-Evaluation and revise IEP accordingly

# Advantages of PPS Online Academy 6-12 compared to other Cyber Options

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## **New School backed by Experience**

- Allegheny Intermediate Unit brings more than ten years of Online Learning experience to students locally and throughout the state

## **Alternative Path to the Promise**

- Eligible students can financially support their post-secondary education upon earning a Pittsburgh Public School diploma

## **High Touch Relationships**

- Students will not just be a 'body' on the other end of an internet connection
- Orientation process will develop relational engagement between students to staff and students to students.
- Intervention Plan makes sure that no student falls through the cracks.
  - Tier 1 – Monitor and Adjust At-Home Performance
  - Tier 2 – Assigned to School Computer Lab for 6 hours per day
  - Tier 3 – Return to Home School

# Ensuring Academic Success

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## **Promise-Ready Focus**

- GPA 2.5 and attendance/truancy closely monitored
- Teachers and Administration review daily and weekly progress reports. Reports include grades to date and adjusted grades based on progress toward course completion. Regular reporting to parents.

## **Student Orientation**

- Support and assistance provided to ease transition to online learning environment

## **Graduation Requirements**

- Requirements for Core Subjects and Electives remain the same (26.5 credits)
- Online curriculum alignment with PPS Core Curriculum

## **Parent Engagement**

- Online learning environment affords parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their child
- Parents have access to daily and weekly attendance and academic reports
- Use online tools for communication, PSCC and other school related activities



# School Policies and Mandates

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## Attendance

- Daily Attendance requirement following the regular District calendar for 6-12 schools. A minimum of 990 hours of instruction is required.
- Board Policy 204, including truancy procedures, will be followed for all students

## Report Cards and Transcripts

- Students will receive a PPS Interim Report, Report Cards, and Transcripts by integrating the data from Waterfront into Pinnacle

## Extra Curricular Activities and Sports

- Students may participate in sports and activities at their neighborhood feeder school (same as procedure with CAPA students)

## Transportation

- Students will be offered drop tickets for any school day they are required to report to Greenway (Orientation, Intervention, and Testing).

## PSSA and Keystone Testing

- Students will take all Mandatory State and Local assessments at Greenway
- Student participation and performance will be attributed to the Online School

## Special Education

- Full compliance with Chapters 14 and 15 of the PA School Code
- Full compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

# Tentative Budget

	100 students	200 students
<b>Tuition Savings</b>	<b>\$1,382,258</b>	<b>\$2,764,516</b>
Personnel Costs*	\$123,464	\$123,464
Student Tuition (WFL \$3,500/student)	\$350,000	\$700,000
Transportation (5 day orientation, 10 days of testing)	\$7,500	\$15,000
Marketing	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$490,964</b>	<b>\$848,464</b>
<b>Net Savings</b>	<b>\$891,294</b>	<b>\$1,916,052</b>

\*Personnel Costs include only the cost of the Coordinator of Virtual Learning. This is subject to change as enrollment grows. As PPS teachers are utilized, tuition costs will be adjusted downward. This will be offset by increasing personnel costs.

# Agenda

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**Part 1 – Why an Online School Now**

**Part 2 – Overview of School Design**

**Part 3 – Next Steps**

# Next Steps

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## June 2012

- Board Approval to open Pittsburgh Online 6-12 School and Service Agreement with WFL

## July 2012

- PPS-PFT Online Academy 6-12 Working Committee begins
  - Internal transfer procedures, student orientation, progress monitoring & interventions
- Recruit Students from Cyber Charter Schools

## August 2012

- Implement Communication Plan
- District staff professional development
- *Ongoing...*market research, recruitment, planning transition year and year 3

# Future Plans for Pittsburgh Online Academy 6-12

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## **Expand Reach**

- Recruit city residents currently attending brick and mortar charter schools and private schools
- Explore K-5 elementary enrollment
- Explore dual enrollment possibilities for potential to earn college credits

## **Diversify Delivery**

- Current course offerings will be asynchronous. Future course offerings might include synchronous or live instruction through video conferencing.
- Rapidly changing marketplace will require constant monitoring of our options for Content, Teaching, and Hardware/Software.

## **Commitment to Grow and Reward Effective Teaching**

- Online teaching requires a complex skill set, but PPS is uniquely positioned to support and recognize effective teaching in any learning environment.

# Appendix

# Appendix A – Online Learning Options

## The Defining Dimensions of Online Programs

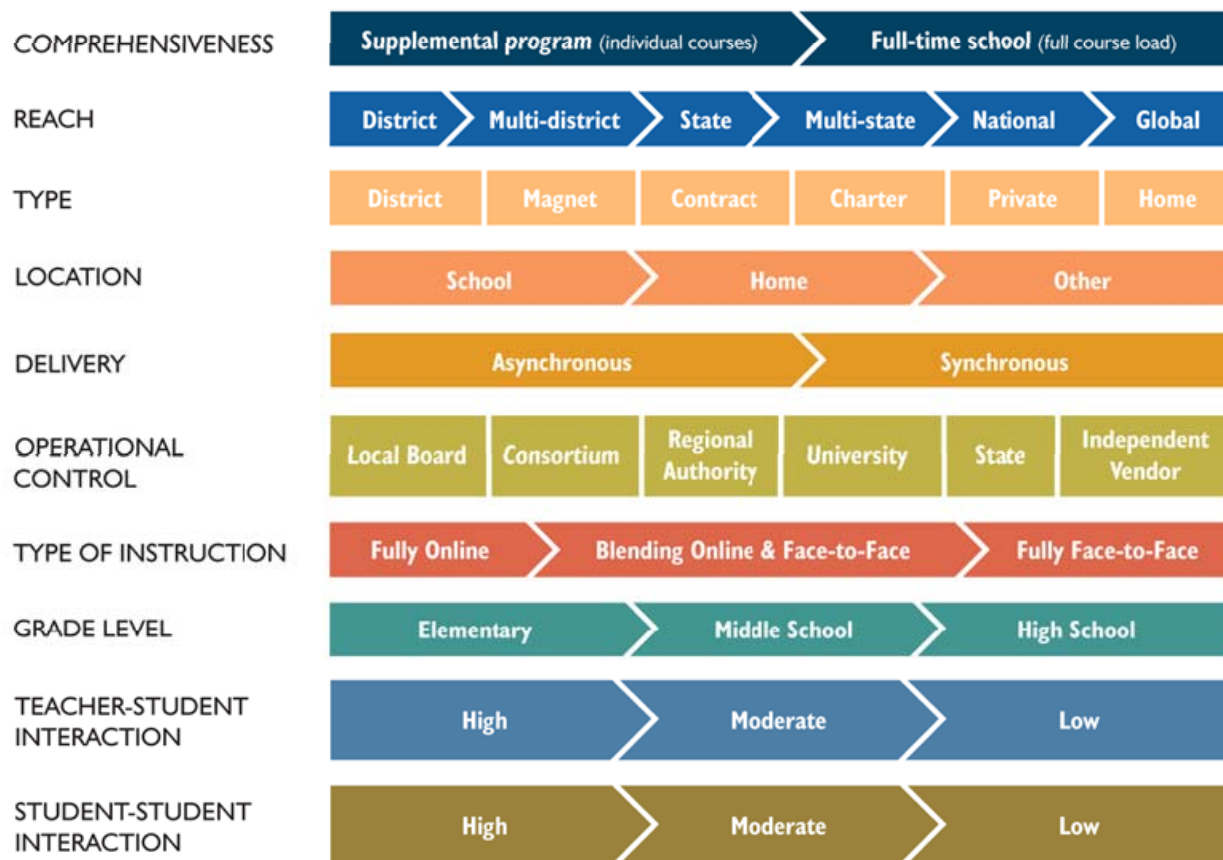
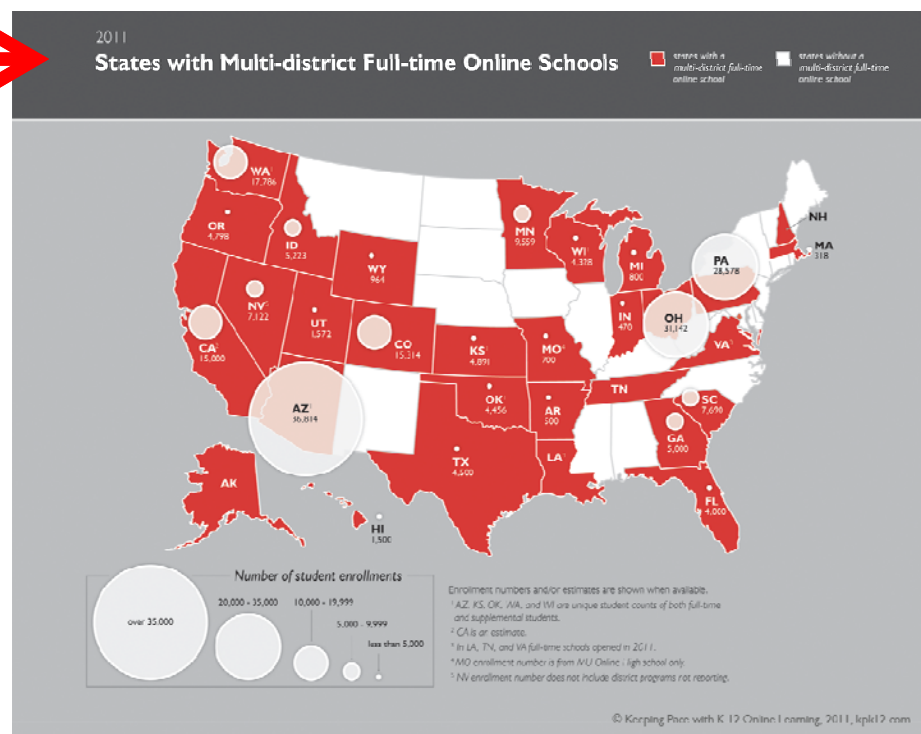
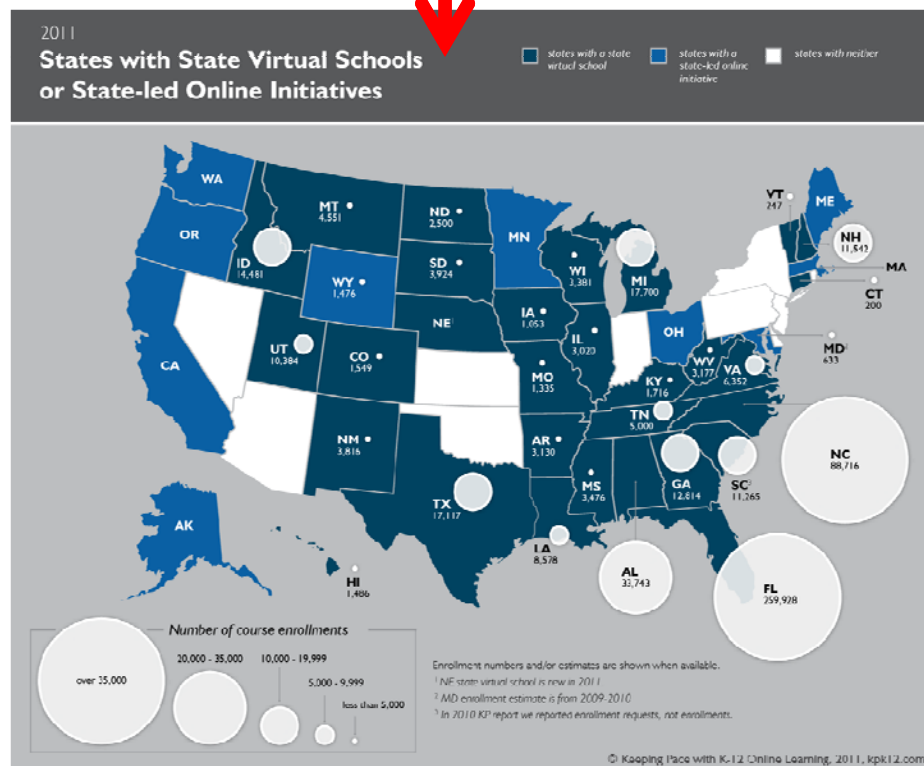


Figure adapted from Gregg Vanourek, A Primer on Virtual Charter Schools: Mapping the Electronic Frontier, Issue Brief for National Association of Charter School Authorizers, August 2006.

# Appendix B – Online Learning Landscape

**Pennsylvania continues to be a national leader in Full-time Online Schools. PA has 13 cyber charter schools that enroll close to 30,000 students (increasing 10-15% per year).**

**Pennsylvania is one of only 10 states that does NOT have a State-led Online Initiative.**



**A growing number of PA districts, intermediate units, and consortia are providing online courses and full time options. A 2011 study by PA General Assembly estimated at least 158 of 501 school districts are under contract with a vendor for online courses.**



## Appendix C – Turnkey Vendor Cost Comparison

Provider	Content (per full-time student)	Instructional Services	Hardware/ Connectivity	Total Cost per Student
Waterfront Learning	\$3,500	Included	Included	\$3,500
APEX Learning	\$4,200	Included	\$1,550	\$5,750
Florida Virtual (Pearson)	\$4,500	Included	\$1,550	\$6,050
K-12	\$2,500	\$1,500	\$1,550	\$5,550

## Appendix D –Comparison of Content Provider Features

**Results of internal research conducted by the Cyber Steering Committee during the 2010-2011 SY**

Vendor	APEX	Florida Virtual	E2020	K-12	Ed Options	Waterfront Learning
Customize for Special Ed	3	2	3	2	2	Includes E2020 and Ed Options
Honors and AP Options	4	4	4	4	1	
Robust Assessments	4	4	4	3	4	
Reporting Quality	4	4	4	3	3	
Student Interface	4	4	4	3	3	
Teacher Interface	4	4	4	3	3	
Administrative Interface	4	4	4	3	3	
Full Range of Course Offerings	4	3	4	2	4	
Academic Rigor	4	4	3	3	2	
Potential for Engagement	3	3	3	2	3	
Professional Development	4	3	4	2	2	
Inter-operability w/ PPS	4	4	4	2	3	4
Total Score	46	43	45	32	33	N/A

**4 = Excellent    3 = Good    2 = Fair    1 = Poor**