

For Immediate Release

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District Plan Addresses Gender Equity While Improving Athletic Program for All Students

PITTSBURGH May 10, 2011 – After a year of preparation with community input, a plan to enhance the District’s athletic program was revealed at this evening’s Education Committee Meeting. The plan addresses gender inequities in a Title IX audit that the District requested in order to ensure the equitable distribution of resources. The plan also calls for the creation of a more competitive athletic program tied to academic success and sportsmanship.

“We know that students who compete in athletics make good grades and come to school. Which is why it is important to us that we create an athletic system that supports and encourages all students to participate,” said Superintendent Linda S. Lane. “Tonight we present a plan that includes the things we can do now to create a better athletic program that meets Title IX requirements. We are also sharing those things we want to do but may have to wait in light of the District’s financial constraints.”

Athletic Committee

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits schools that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of gender and requires equivalent opportunities for members of each sex in all areas of education, including athletics. The audit was conducted by High School Title IX Consulting Services and was publically presented at the Board Education Committee Meeting in April 2010. The Title IX audit identified six recurring major areas of concerns:

- Athletic Equipment and Supplies;
- Scheduling Games and Practice Times;
- Coaches;
- Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities;
- Medical and Training Facilities and Services; and
- Publicity.

The District formed an Athletic Committee to address gender equity concerns, as well as problems with the athletics system noted in the audit. The committee, made up of parents, Board Members, community members, and District staff, presented recommendations to the Superintendent in eight key areas: League Structure, Coaching, Facilities & Equipment, Participation, Connection to Academics, Transportation & Scheduling, Sportsmanship and Wellness. Based on these recommendations, this evening’s plan prioritizes changes based on one of the Board’s shared goals “efficient and equitable distribution of resources to address the needs of all students, to the maximum extent feasible.”

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The chart below identifies strategies the Administration would like to move forward immediately to address the recommendations of the Athletic Committee and the concerns raised by the Title IX Self Audit.

Program Areas	District Strategies
Facilities and Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to centralized purchasing of uniforms. - Explore the development of a centralized online permitting process. - Explore alternative revenue sources for athletics.
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create new policy on eligibility. - Track all athletic participation centrally. - Develop and administer a Title IX survey to all students. - Engage community organizations in female outreach based on survey results. - Create and implement an athlete ambassador program. - Pilot emerging sports programs, such as Rugby. - Create new policy on booster clubs.
Sportsmanship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create sportsmanship code for players.
Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify hiring guidelines for coaches. - Revise evaluation for all coaches.
Connections to Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a “Promise Report Card” and track Promise readiness at the team/school level. - Implement academic/athletic integration period into practices.
Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form partnerships with organizations capable of promoting physical activity and wellness. - Issue recommended practice guidelines. - Facilitate the physical examination process for athletes

The Administration additionally presented a wish list for future consideration based on the financial state of the District. Those items include, ending the City League and becoming a part of W.P.I.A.L., the creation of a full-time Athletic Director positions at high schools and feeder middle schools, improvements to athletic facilities, and the creation of district-wide sportsmanship celebrations.

The public can review tonight’s presentation by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at www.pps.k12.pa.us, visiting the Division of Communications and Marketing, Room 203. Public feedback can be provided to the Superintendent via email to superintendentoffice@pghboe.net.