

**For Immediate Release**

Contacts: Ebony R. Pugh (412) 622-3616

## **District Outlines Process for School Closures and Realignment**

PITTSBURGH June 7, 2011 – At the Board's Education Committee meeting tonight, Superintendent Linda S. Lane outlined the process that will be used to determine school closure and realignment recommendations for the 2012-13 school year.

"We know that our enrollment as a District has continued to decline. The District's budget simply cannot afford to pay for empty seats. Every dollar we spend on underutilized bricks and mortar is one less dollar we have available to spend towards improving the life prospects of our students," said Dr. Lane.

"We must now combine the comprehensive facilities report with an academic and budgetary analysis to develop a plan for further downsizing our physical footprint," added Lane. "Our commitment is to have an open dialogue with the community about the need to close schools."

In order to determine schools to be recommended for closure, the District has begun an internal process that reviews the District's current schools and school facilities based upon four equally weighted measures:

- 1) Student Achievement- AYP; Student Growth
- 2) Student Enrollment- Enrollment vs. Capacity
- 3) Facility Condition- DeJong study rating
- 4) Operations Costs- Utilities, custodial, etc...

All schools across the District will be reviewed relative to this set of criteria. Schools recommended for closure for the 2012-13 school year will be brought forward to the Board later this year, followed by a public input process.

Currently the District has an estimated 11,165 seats of excess capacity, with a total student enrollment of 25,046. In 2006, the District closed 22 under-utilized and low-achieving schools. Since 2007, the District has closed an additional five schools.

### **More Information**

In November of 2009, DeJong, a nationally known, independent consulting firm, provided the District a long-term facilities report that envisioned a leaner Pittsburgh Public Schools in 10 years.

The DeJong report outlined a phased plan for effectively utilizing the District's school buildings over the next 10 years. The report provides the District with current data showing the conditions of its facilities overlaid against a sophisticated modeling of expected student enrollment over the next 10 years.

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The public can learn more about the District's fiscal challenges, including the projected deficit for 2012 between \$68 and \$100 million, and potential solutions by visiting the District's website at <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/CitySchoolsFiscalChallenges>. The public can provide input on solutions by completing a quick online form located on the City Schools Fiscal Challenges web page or via email at [cityschooolsfiscalchallenges@pghboe.net](mailto:cityschooolsfiscalchallenges@pghboe.net).

Since becoming Superintendent earlier this year, Dr. Lane has implemented a 75% reduction of the 2011 Capital Budget spending plan and created an internal team to examine all opportunities for further spending reductions. Further, Lane announced a 10% reduction in the Central Office budget, which may be revised to as much as a 50% reduction. Dr. Lane has committed the District to a path that will enable the District to attain fiscal health and sustainability while preserving core programs and the reform agenda, and working to accelerate academic achievement.

### Next Steps

The public is invited to review the District's criteria for determining school closure recommendations and to submit written comments about any aspects of the District's school reconfiguration efforts by clicking the **2012-13 School Reconfiguration** button on the District's homepage at [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us) or contact the Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920.

Later this year, District staff will bring forward a set of recommendations for school closures for consideration by the Board. District staff will then establish a series of community meetings to solicit public and community feedback and input on the plan.

Public commentary can also be submitted through the Board's regular monthly public hearing. Anyone wishing to speak at a public hearing must register with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools by calling 412-622-3600. Board public hearings are generally held the Monday between the Board's Agenda Review and Legislative Session and begin at 6:00 PM in Conference Room A first floor of the Board of Educations' Administration Building located at 341 S. Bellefield Avenue in Oakland.

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