

For Immediate Release

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## District Launches 100 Year Anniversary with Unveiling of Special Poster Panel to Commemorate First Decade

PITTSBURGH November 15, 2011 – In November 1911, 61 separate and independent school districts came together under the direction of one newly formed 15 member board to form the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This evening the District will mark its 100 year anniversary with the unveiling of a poster panel that captures its first decade 1911 to 1921. As part of its year-long celebration, the District will unveil a new panel each month commemorating each decade of the past 100 years. The first panel will be unveiled prior to the start of this evening's, November 15<sup>th</sup> Board Education Committee Meeting, 5:30pm in the Board Room, located at 231 South Bellefield on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.



The Pittsburgh Public Schools' first Board of Education (1911) included Marcus Aaron, Taylor Allderdice, James I. Buchanan, Alice M. Carmalt, Clifford B. Connelley, Mary J. Cowley, N. R. Criss, Frank E. Freese, Julia Morgan Harding, Dr. A. L. Lewin, William Loeffler, William McConway, President David B. Oliver, Robert Voegtly, and John Williams.

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**Construction of Schenley. Photo provided courtesy of James Hill**

The past has shown the District has had a history of modifying its system of school facilities and programs based on the needs of the population growth or decline over its 100 year history. The new board worked to advance the school district appropriating funds for the refurbishing, demolition and construction of several school buildings including Schenley high school, built in 1916 at a cost of \$1,500,000 and accommodating 2,000 students.

During this time 12,000 students were attending school half-time because of lack of classrooms and teachers were carrying loads of over 90 students. The board formed the Building Department, which immediately began construction of five new elementary schools and two new high schools. From 1911 to 1920 annexation added more buildings desperately in need of repair. The board oversaw 65 major building projects at a cost to the district of over \$41 million. This building boom was necessary to make the education experience of 60,000 students safe, secure and comfortable.

By 1920, there were 2,015 teachers. The enrollment of students in grade schools was 74,654 and in high schools 12,169. Today, the District employs close to 2,500 teachers with an enrollment of approximately 25,000 students. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, a District Realignment Plan was introduced that proposes the reduction of the District from 59 to 53 schools.

Over the past 100 years, a lot has transpired. With the success of students at the center of the work, school board members have had to make tough decision and act courageously. This includes the ongoing ebb and flow of school building openings and closings. What stands unique 100 years later is the availability of the Pittsburgh Promise<sup>®</sup>, obtainable to any child that attends the Pittsburgh Public Schools and meets the scholarship's reasonable requirements. Education has been the great equalizer for citizens, and a century later Pittsburgh children no longer have a financial barrier in their pursuit of post-secondary education. Pittsburgh has always been a city that has "Dreamed Big, and Worked Hard," and the Promise is evidence of the community's commitment to public education and the dreams of Pittsburgh Public Schools students.

**Photo Opportunities Available:** *Media is invited to attend tonight's panel unveiling, which will include a photo with Superintendent Lane at 5:15 and the District's current Board Members beginning promptly at 5:30.*

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