

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Superintendent Proposes Next Phase of School Reconfiguration**

PITTSBURGH, PA, June 21, 2010 – At the Board’s Education Committee meeting tonight, Superintendent Mark Roosevelt released a proposal for school reconfiguration in line with the District’s ongoing efforts to improve its high schools.

Introduced in 2006, *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, is a five-year roadmap for improving the academic performance of all high school students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and achieving *Excellence for All*. Over the past three years, many aspects of the *Excel.9-12* plan have been launched including:

- Adoption by the Board in May, 2010 of a new comprehensive plan for Career and Technical Education (CTE),
- Opening of new secondary learning options such as Pittsburgh Millions 6-12 in 2008-09, Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 in 2008-09, Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 in 2009-10 and Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy 6-12 in 2009-10.

“Like other urban areas, we continue to have significant challenges with student achievement at high school. We must continue on our course of change so that all of our students have access to enhanced educational programming and enriched opportunities for learning and achievement,” said Superintendent Roosevelt. “There has been an significant level of public input into the development of this proposal. While the decision to close a school is never easy, we must continue to make the difficult choices necessary to align our District with our available resources.”

“It is also important to note that this plan is directly aligned with the U.S. Department of Education’s framework of accountability and their requirements for action to be eligible for federal allocations,” added Roosevelt.

A vote by the Board on the proposed reconfiguration plan is tentatively scheduled for the Board’s Legislative Meeting on July 21, 2010.

### ***Plan Calls for Closing Pittsburgh Peabody, Permanently Locating Pittsburgh Obama at Peabody Facility***

The District’s school reconfiguration plan recommends the closure of the Pittsburgh Peabody program at the end of the 2010-11 school year, with feeder pattern students attending either Pittsburgh Millions 6-12 or to a newly designed Pittsburgh Westinghouse, and permanently locating Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 at the Peabody facility.

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The plan is based, in part, upon a recommendation from the International Baccalaureate (IB) School Site Selection Committee from 2009, the 2009 DeJong facilities report and the 2010 report of the East Region: Lawrenceville to Homewood Advisory Committee.

The IB School Site Selection Committee consisted of community leaders, parents and District staff tasked with recommending a permanent site for the IB 6-12 school, now called Pittsburgh Obama. The Committee unanimously recommended Peabody as the permanent home for Pittsburgh Obama because the Peabody facility best meets the needs of students, parents and the District. The recommendation highlighted the facility's location and need for less capital expenditures in comparison to the renovations that would be necessary at many other District facilities.

The East Region: Lawrenceville to Homewood Advisory Committee report, released in April 2010, highlighted that the projected enrollment decline in the eastern neighborhoods means that the area cannot continue to support three feeder high schools: Pittsburgh Peabody, Pittsburgh Westinghouse and Pittsburgh Millions. The Committee recommended the Pittsburgh Peabody High School feeder pattern be divided along Negley Avenue. Under this proposal, students residing west of Negley Avenue would attend school at Pittsburgh Millions 6-12; and students east of Negley Avenue would attend Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

The DeJong independent facilities study also recommended the closure of Pittsburgh Peabody because of excess capacity in the District at the high school level and the low enrollment numbers. Pittsburgh Peabody's building capacity is in excess of 1,200 students, but the high school currently has an enrollment under 500 students and is expected to drop to less than 259 students by 2018. Pittsburgh Obama currently houses 750 students in grades 6-10 at the Reizenstein facility. As grades 11 and 12 are added, the total student population will grow to over 1,050 students at the Peabody facility.

Pittsburgh Schenley at the Reizenstein facility is scheduled to close as a school at the end of the 2010-11 school year upon graduation of the last.

### ***Single Gender Academies Proposed for New Pittsburgh Westinghouse 6-12***

Based upon the work and recommendation of the East Region: Lawrenceville to Homewood Advisory Committee, the District is recommending that Pittsburgh Westinghouse High School become a full service 6-12 secondary school with two single gender academies.

Under this new model, each academy would be led by its own administrative team, faculty and staff tailored to meet the needs of both schools and the academic program in both academies will be infused with principles of leadership and social justice. While instruction will be separated by gender, the new school will also promote student interactions among both academies. Training of staff will focus on the individual needs of young women and young men and will be provided through professional development.

“The Pittsburgh community was actively engaged in developing this recommendation, which will help to transform Pittsburgh Westinghouse into a school that advances student achievement while helping us to make the most efficient use of our resources,” said Assistant Superintendent Derrick Lopez.

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Westinghouse is currently only serving 335 students as a traditional 9-12 high school. Reconfiguring Westinghouse to a 6-12 school will eventually increase enrollment at the school to approximately 550 students at each academy.

***Two Schools to be Reconfigured***

The District's plan proposes to reconfigure two schools for the start of the 2011-12 school year, Pittsburgh Lincoln and Pittsburgh Faison. Pittsburgh Lincoln and Pittsburgh Faison are currently K-8 schools, but each school is housed in two separate facilities. Under the District proposal, each school would be reconfigured as a K-5 school. The students in grades 6-8 at Pittsburgh Lincoln and Pittsburgh Faison would be moved into the new single gender academies at the Pittsburgh Westinghouse 6-12 school in order to provide better academic opportunities for these students.

To enable the current Pittsburgh Faison primary facility to house K-5 students, the District proposes opening a new Early Childhood center at the Crescent facility in Homewood, which currently houses students at Pittsburgh Faison in grades 5-8. Preschool classrooms now in the Pittsburgh Faison Primary building will move to the new Early Childhood Center. The new Homewood Early Childhood Center at the Faison Crescent building is anticipated to open for the 2011-12 school year and will replace the current Homewood Early Childhood Center facility which will be closed.

The independent DeJong facilities report also recommended the closure of the Faison and Lincoln Intermediate (upper) campuses, although the report differed on the location of the future Early Childhood Center.

***New Gateway to the Promise Center at Oliver***

Under the District's proposal, Pittsburgh Oliver High School will be reconstituted as the *Gateway to the Promise Center* program with an extended day and year model. In addition to the location of a robust CTE offering, including Building Trades, Health Careers, Consumer Sciences and IT, Business and Finance, the school will also offer students rigorous academic courses and a credit recovery program.

With the extended school year, students would also be able to complete their graduation requirements in three years and could enter college courses early.

Planning for the reconstituted Pittsburgh Oliver will occur in 2010-11 and the center will open for the 2011-12 school year. The District is also in the early exploratory phase of a permanent location for Pittsburgh Oliver at the former Ridge Avenue School adjacent to the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC).

***Empowering Effective Teachers Work to Transform Secondary Schools***

In addition to the program changes at Pittsburgh Oliver and Pittsburgh Westinghouse, the District and Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan will enable the District to address challenges facing high schools.

The District will launch the Promise Readiness Corps (PRC) in 2010-11 in eight District high schools. The PRC is a team of highly-effective teachers collectively responsible for supporting students as they transition into high school to ensure they arrive at 11th grade Promise-Ready.

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The eight District high schools are Pittsburgh Allderdice, Pittsburgh Brashear, Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Langley, Pittsburgh Oliver, Pittsburgh Peabody, Pittsburgh Perry and Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

Additionally, the District is developing a site for a K-8 and 9-12 Teacher Academy as part of the **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan. The teaching academies will be in existing District schools and will be sites where some of the District's best teachers will coach new and experienced teachers resulting in improved teacher and student performance. The District will bring forward a recommendation for the site of the Teacher Academy schools later this year.

### *Next Steps*

The public is invited to submit written comments about any aspects of the District's school reconfiguration plan by clicking the *School Reconfigurations* button on the homepage at [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us) and submitting comments via the Public Input link.

The Board's regular monthly public hearing also provides an opportunity for public commentary to the Board of Directors on the proposed plan. The next regular Public Hearing will be held at 7:00 PM on July 12, 2010 in Conference Room A, first floor of the Board of Education's Administration Building located at 341 S. Bellefield Avenue in Oakland. Anyone wishing to speak at the public hearing must register with the Office of Superintendent of Schools by calling 412-622-3600 from July 5 until July 12 at 12:00 PM. .

In addition to this school reconfiguration plan, the District will embark on a series of community conversations over the next 6-12 months to ensure that the District is utilizing its facilities in the most efficient and effective manner, and that students have access to rich learning environments. The District will seek to have conversations with parents and families, community and neighborhood leaders in the North, South and West communities, similar to with the community dialogue the East Region, to discuss school configurations and feeder pattern adjustments.

### *More Information*

To view a copy of the DeJong Facilities Report, the East Region Advisory Committee recommendations, the IB Site Selection Committee report, the Pittsburgh Peabody Committee report or other documents related to the District's school reconfiguration plan, please visit the District's website at [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us) and click the *School Reconfigurations* button on the homepage or contact the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920**. To learn more about the District and PFT's **Empowering Effective Teachers** work, please visit [www.empoweringpittsburghteachers.net](http://www.empoweringpittsburghteachers.net).

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