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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Pittsburgh Schenley IB Students to Travel to Germany as part of the District's First-ever International Exchange Program**

PITTSBURGH May 26, 2009 – Eight Pittsburgh Schenley International Baccalaureate students will have the experience of a lifetime when they participate in Pittsburgh Public Schools first-ever international exchange program. From June 10 – July 1, 2009, the students will travel to Pforzheim, Germany and attend the Hilda Gymnasium, a German College Preparatory School. The primary goals of the program are to foster German-American friendships and to improve the language skills of both the German and American students.

All eight of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently, or in the fall will be, enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. Each student went through a rigorous selection process and was chosen on the basis of their character, commitment to German language study and a teacher recommendation. The participating students are Sara Rosenblum, Lavota Carter, Ashley Calvimontes, Sophia Klancher, Murphy Yawn, James Moore, Isaac Foster-Friedman and Sheradan Pyles.

While abroad, the Pittsburgh Schenley students will stay with the families of their new German peers and will have the chance to visit the European Union headquarters in Strasbourg, France as well as Berlin, the capital of Germany. At the Hilda Gymnasium, the students will follow a regular schedule of classes for their grade. In addition to German and English classes they may elect to take an art, music or history course. Some students may also choose to shadow their exchange partner.

The reciprocating portion of the exchange program will occur this coming fall when 11 students from the Hilda Gymnasium visit Pittsburgh from October 18-November 2, 2009. The German students will stay with host families from Pittsburgh Schenley and in addition to attending classes at the school they will visit local sites and spend several days in Washington D.C.

The program is sponsored by the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) which works in coordination with the U.S. State Department and the German Foreign Office. GAPP is one of the most successful non-profit organizations in the country that is solely dedicated to fostering international exchange between the United States and Germany. However, since GAPP does not actually provide funding for the exchange, the IB students have raised much of the money themselves through raffles and flower sales at Pittsburgh Schenley. Also, the District's exchange program received a grant from the Carnegie Mellon Modern Language Department to help with the cost of the trip and the Carnegie Bosch Institute has supported the group by donating a backpack to each student.

Similar international exchange programs exist in local schools such as Upper Saint Clair, Fox Chapel and Sewickley Academy. In March, Pittsburgh Schenley hosted IB students from Upper Saint Clair for a day of IB related discussions and activities. IB students in French, German and Spanish had the chance to discuss the upcoming IB exams and pointers and perspectives from other teachers. The students also participated in language-specific activities such as "Speed Dating."

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