

For Immediate Release

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Board Provided Full Report of District-Wide 2009 PSSA and AYP Performance

PITTSBURGH, August 11, 2009 –The Pittsburgh Public Schools has become the largest school district in Pennsylvania to have ever achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and tonight the Board learned that more than half of the District’s schools also made AYP. The Board was presented a full report at its Education Committee Meeting.

“We are very proud that the District made AYP and that students are making substantial progress in grades 3-8,”said Roosevelt. “As we celebrate our progress, we remain fully aware of how much work we have to do particularly at the high school level.”

By achieving AYP the District has met state and federal targets set under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores are used to determine a district’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB. PSSA measures individual student growth and determines the level to which school programs enable students to reach Pennsylvania proficiency standards in Reading and Mathematics.

District Makes AYP as Students Continue to Make Academic Progress on PSSA Exams

Achieving AYP

Achieving AYP for 2008-09 means that the District has met all of its targets on each of three standards—high school graduation/attendance rates, test participation and academic performance. To meet the targets for the third component of AYP—academic performance—a district must have at least 63% of its students score *proficient* or *advanced* in Reading (compared with 54% in 2007) and at least 56% score *proficient* or *advanced* in Mathematics (compared with 45% in 2007) on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams. Additionally, in order to meet the performance targets, a district must meet these Reading and Mathematics targets for all students and all student subgroups in at least one grade band. Grade bands consist of grades 3-5, 6-8 and 11.

For 2008-09, the District did meet all targets for the grade span 3-5 for both Reading and Mathematics across all of its eight student subgroups: White, African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial/Ethnic, Limited English Proficiency, Economically Disadvantaged and Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Special Education. Since it made AYP for 2009, the District’s NCLB status will improve from Corrective Action II to Making Progress. The District must meet federal and state targets for a second consecutive year and achieve AYP in 2010 in order to be considered on track to meet the NCLB goal.

“These results are particularly impressive since as an urban district with multiple diverse populations, the number of AYP targets we must meet are substantially higher than many of the State’s suburban and rural districts,” explained Roosevelt.

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In 2005, when the only grades tested in Pennsylvania were 5, 8 and 11, the District met 50 of 70 AYP targets, or 71.4%. The addition of testing in grades 3, 4, 6 and 7 has increased the number of AYP targets the District must meet. The number of targets is based on the number of student subgroups. Urban districts have diverse student populations, resulting in a higher number of student subgroups. A subgroup is identified once there are 40 or more students that meet the definition of a subgroup.

In 2007, the District met 78 of 96 targets as testing occurred across all grades 3-8 and 11. In 2009, the District met 86 of 98 AYP targets. State standards will continue to increase yearly so that districts and schools will continue to have to meet higher expectations over time in order to meet the federal requirement of 100% proficiency by the 2013-14 school year.

Summary of 2008-09 PSSA Results

Building on last year's substantial gains, students made gains in Reading and Mathematics *proficiency* on 11 of 14 PSSA exams for 2008-09. District students additionally exceeded No Child Left Behind (NCLB) expectations, which focus on students reaching the *proficient* level, as they showed progress moving to *advanced* in Reading and Mathematics on 10 of 14 exams. In 2008-09, 45.2% of 8th graders scored at the *advanced* level, indicating that District 8th graders are increasingly prepared to meet the challenges of transitioning to high school.

More District Schools Make AYP Than Previous Year

This year, of the 60 schools that have an AYP status, 32 schools (53.3%) have made AYP. That is up from 25 schools (42.4%) in 2008.

Roosevelt noted, "A school can have a great year and not make AYP. Some of our schools just missed making AYP based on their performance on only one of their multiple targets."

The number of targets individual schools need to make AYP vary from 13 to 21 based on the number of subgroups in that particular school. For example, Pittsburgh Murray K-8 students showed strong progress in their academic performance however, the school did not make AYP. The school's 3rd grade students improved 15.1 points in Reading *proficiency* and 14 points in Mathematics *proficiency*. In Grade 5, Murray students improved 17.3 points in Reading *proficiency* and 15.1 points in Mathematics *proficiency*, while the school's 8th graders improved 30.5 points in *advance* Reading and 18.1 points in Mathematics *proficiency*. Pittsburgh Murray has an IEP subgroup and did not make AYP as the school missed academic performance targets in Reading and Mathematics for its IEP subgroup.

Of the District's 28 schools that did not make AYP, six are in *Warning* status, three in *School Improvement I*, 10 in *School Improvement II*, and three in *Corrective Action I*. Six of the District's 11 high schools are in *Corrective Action II* status.

Superintendent Roosevelt said, "We are not meeting the needs of far too many of our high school students and must focus to a greater extent on changing our high school cultures."

For a complete listing of school-level AYP status please visit the District's website at www.pps.k12.pa.us.

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Continuing to Build Upon Core Initiatives

Over the past three years, the District has put into place the core elements for improving student achievement, including:

- Implementing a new, rigorous PreK-12 curriculum;
- Launching The Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System of Excellence (PULSE), a comprehensive system to recruit, train, support, evaluate, improve and compensate principals in order to ensure strong school leadership;
- Providing ongoing training for instructional staff so that they continually enhance the engagement of students and teach the curriculum at a high level;
- Using diagnostic assessments to improve student learning
- Providing instructional coaches in every school to deepen the work;
- Introducing the Positive Behavior Intervention Support program to establish common expectations for good behavior; and,
- Expanding early childhood offerings so a child’s school experience gets off to a better start when transitioning to Kindergarten.

Although the District made AYP, District officials acknowledge there is still work to be done so that all District students are achieving at high levels. In addition to focusing a lot of its work at the high school level, Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane emphasized the need for additional improvements, particularly among two student subgroups.

“While a number of our African American students are high-achieving, a disproportionate number of our African American students are not achieving at high levels,” stated Lane. “Additionally we need to ensure that the District’s core curriculum is accessible to our students with exceptionalities.”

For More Information

To view today’s presentation and for a complete listing of school-level AYP results visit the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at www.pps.k12.pa.us. You may also call the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920** or visit the Division of Communications, Room 204, Pittsburgh Public Schools Administration Building, 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 1521

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