

For Immediate Release

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District Details Plans for Expansion of Downtown CAPA Facility

PITTSBURGH July 8, 2008 – The District reviewed plans to consolidate Rogers CAPA 6-8 and Pittsburgh CAPA High School at this evening’s Education Committee Meeting. The merger of the two existing schools into one 6-12 thematic learning community is a part of the District’s Year Two Plans for *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence. Excel.9-12* provides a five-year, sequenced roadmap which will enhance academic programs and redesign the District’s educational delivery at the secondary level.

With Board approval to open Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 for the 2009-10 school year, the District makes available four new 6-12 thematic school options for students and families. In February, the Board approved the opening of a University Prep 6-12 school at the Milliones facility for this school year. Last month the Board took action to open two new 6-12 schools, the Science and Technology Academy and an International Baccalaureate school, for the start of the 2009-10 school year. The Board will vote on the opening of Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 at its July 23rd Legislative Meeting.

In its effort to improve student achievement and increase options for students and families, the District is moving to an educational delivery system that provides several school configurations from which parents can choose. They include PreK-5, PreK-8, 6-8, 6-12 and 9-12 schools. Minimal transitions, continuity of program, greater accountability and long-term caring relationships are all benefits of both the PreK-8 and the new 6-12 models. The 6-12 model particularly lends itself to thematic schools, where resource sharing between middle and high schools supports the remediation and advancement of students through more flexible scheduling.

“Learning is an intensely personal experience for each student,” said Derrick Lopez, Chief of High School Reform. “In the proposed CAPA 6-12 model, the advanced 7th grade violinist or a student who possesses higher math ability has access to higher level classes in the same building, meeting his/her individual needs without disrupting classmates and peers. A 6-12 school will provide the cohesive learning community needed to support both the accelerated students and students who may need additional help.”

Pittsburgh Public Schools would not become the first school district to create an arts magnet that serves middle and high school students. The model is used at the nationally distinguished school, Waterbury Arts 6-12, Waterbury, Connecticut. It is also found at the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts 6-12, and Emerson 6-12 in Gary, Indiana. Moreover, The School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati serves grades 4-12.

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Downtown CAPA Facility

In December 2007, the Board took advantage of the opportunity to purchase and renovate three additional floors at the downtown CAPA facility to accommodate all of its 6-12 CAPA students, thus creating a cohesive learning community to be completed for the 2009-10 school year. The downtown CAPA facility has continued to expand as the opportunity to purchase additional floors became available. A timeline of the school’s growth is detailed in the chart below.

Year	Location	Floors	Enrollment	Capacity	Additions
2002	CAPA at the Baxter Building in Homewood		329	739	
2003	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6	429	483	
2004	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6	498	483	
2005	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	532	713	Added 10 classrooms
2006	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	530	713	
2007	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	558	713	
2008	CAPA Downtown	Floors 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	560	713	
2009	Proposed CAPA 6-12	Floors 1-9	915	1104	Proposed Adding 17 classrooms

Currently 560 students are scheduled to attend Pittsburgh CAPA High School for the start of the 2008-09 school year. While only using floors 3-8, the facility’s Academic Side contains 26 classrooms, three computer labs, four science labs, four specialty studios and two TV studios. While some of the classrooms and computer labs serve as art spaces in the afternoon, the Art Side of CAPA contains 4 dance studios, one orchestra room, one choral room and two visual arts rooms. In addition to space designated for academic and art class work, the school is equipped with a main office suite, five teacher workrooms, nine ancillary offices, a health offices, cafeteria, library, gymnasium, the school’s main auditorium, the Black Box Theater and art gallery.

Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 Facility

“We are confident that the expanded CAPA facility can accommodate the consolidation of the two schools into a 6-12 learning community,” assured Mr. Lopez. “We are equally confident that students and families will receive the quality education expected from an arts magnet school.”

To tailor the expansion to a 6-12 model and house the school’s projected 915 students, the Office of High School Reform recommend that that middle years cohort, which consists of grades 6-8, primarily occupy floors 7-9. Grades 9-12 will primarily occupy floors 2-6 on the academic side, resulting in minimal disruption of the existing high school program.

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Within the space designated for each cohort, each school will have access to the necessary space to meet their academic needs, including classrooms, laboratories, computer labs, special education rooms, and counseling and student services spaces. New plans for the space also include two office suites for the school's administrative staff and counseling offices, as well as, several teacher workrooms, a health office and 11 ancillary offices.

Although the middle and upper schools will maintain their own cultures, interaction will take place in the appropriate circumstances. Scheduling will be adjusted to allow shared usage of the facility's tech shop, piano lab, dance studios, gymnasium, orchestra room and choral room. In addition to the Main Auditorium and Black Box Theater, the facility will gain an additional performance space with the inclusion of the new Cabaret Theater.

All students in grades 6-8 will be transported to school via yellow school buses. Morning drop off and pick up will take place on 9th street in front of the CAPA facility.

To view the comprehensive plan for Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 please visit the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at www.pps.k12.pa.us. A copy also can be obtained by calling the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920** or visiting the Division of Communications, Room 204, Pittsburgh Board of Education, 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

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