

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Pat Kennedy  
412-622-3922

**Meeting Establishes Input Process To Explore Secondary Learning Options**  
***Discussions Begin With A Focus On The Homewood Community***

PITTSBURGH, October 6, 2008---A community meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 8, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Pittsburgh Westinghouse will explore secondary learning options for the Homewood Community.

Slated in the District's Five-Year Road Map for High School Excellence is a discussion of potential options and alternatives for the Homewood community. While the conversation will focus on Pittsburgh Westinghouse, it will also include the schools that feed into the high school, such as Pittsburgh Faison, and Pittsburgh Lincoln.

"We are beginning with the Homewood community because we have a number of factors that taken together make it a logical place to start," said Derrick Lopez, Chief of High School Excellence and chair of the meeting. These factors include a building that is underutilized, an inability to offer a range of classes, electives and sports programs to a dwindling student population, the lack of Career and Technology Education programs to meet the demands of new jobs and the need to accelerate student achievement.

The process for community input will begin with an informational meeting on October 8. Meetings that follow will explore the needs of students, establish a committee that proposes and evaluates solutions and inform the community of possible options and solicit further input. The most suitable option will be refined and presented by the District.

Community discussions are expected to touch on populations and capacities of the current schools, transition plans for students, cultures within schools, facilities implications, achievement data and transportation implications.

Viable options must be aligned with the District's Strategic Plan to address the needs of the whole child and with the core principals of Excel 9-12. These principles, presented by the District in April 2007, encompass the following:

- Safe and welcoming schools—School is a physically and emotionally safe place that supports learning.
- Relationships—Personalized learning environment and connections to teachers, peers and the school.
- High academic expectations for all students; engaging and demanding content and teaching.
- Student Supports—Special help to keep students on track.
- Relevance—Prepare and connect students to the real world.

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The initial meeting will have a presentation from members of the Homewood Community Partnership. Over the past year, the Homewood Community Partnership has explored the viability of replicating the Harlem Children's Zone, a model that addresses housing, schools, crime and health problems in the context of the community. The group has dubbed their plan, The Homewood Children's Village. The plan's school component includes the creation of a 6-12 program that focuses on sports, science and career and technology education. Members presented their proposed plan at the District's Public Hearing in December 2007 and again to the Superintendent and the Chief of High School Excellence in May 2008.

In an effort to be responsive to the community's proposal and vet this and other possible options, all proposed plans will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Is the plan grounded in educational research and supported by facts and data?
- Does it align with the long range vision of the Pittsburgh Public Schools *Excellence for All* Agenda?
- Is the plan fiscally responsible? Does it include a timeline and budget? If additional funding is needed, does the plan include potential resources for securing it?
- Does it provide evidence of the support of the community and affected stakeholders?
- Does it demonstrate that any organization involved in its implementation has the capacity to do so?
- Does it have a work-readiness component?
- Does it have the commitment of the community to work through any potential barriers to implementation that may be encountered throughout the process?

"We recognize that it is important to have a common understanding of our community input process from the beginning. We want to hear all ideas so the District can carefully examine options and arrive at a plan that is in the best interests of the students and District overall." said Lopez.

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