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**For Immediate Release**

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**High School Futures Chooses Pittsburgh Public Schools For Pilot  
*Partnership Compliments District Initiatives***

PITTSBURGH, October 23, 2008--- At the legislative meeting on October 22, 2008, the Board approved a partnership with High School Futures, Inc for work that will begin in the district around January 2009.

As their pilot project, High School Futures, Inc, (HSF) based in Philadelphia, will work with three to five city high schools each year over a three-year period to raise test scores, the graduation rate, and the college matriculation rate.

HSF was created when a group of educators, with track records of success in turnaround situations, decided to pool their collective skills and experiences to create a model for meaningful school improvement. The program places a tremendous emphasis on creating strategies that distribute leadership to teachers as well as administrators. The program supports teachers in enhancing their craft, and in creating a culture of high achievement for all.

HSF received initial seed funding from two family foundations, one in New York that requested to remain anonymous and the H. Chase Lenfest Foundation from the Philadelphia area.

Pittsburgh was selected from a total of eight urban school districts nationwide based on site visits to the District and intensive discussions with the Superintendent, members of the administrative staff and the teachers' union. "The student performance gains that Pittsburgh Public Schools has already achieved suggest that the District is serious about school reform. Every single discussion that we had in Pittsburgh underscored the strong potential for meaningful collaboration around accelerating that reform at the high school level," said Eva Ostrum, from HSF in her presentation to the Board in their October 7, Education Committee Meeting. "Pittsburgh stood out as an ideal partner for our pilot launch and we are excited to work as part of a three-way partnership with both the District and the union."

HSF will work with a cohort of three to five schools annually, in partnership with Pittsburgh Public Schools and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers. Each cohort will receive intensive professional development from HSF for three years. School selection will be voluntary, based on input from the faculty and the school administration. Professional development will focus on deepening the work on which the District has already embarked in leadership development, instructional practice, and family and community engagement. HSF's theory of change focuses heavily on investing in teachers, the backbone of any school. Teachers will take on key leadership roles in this school improvement initiative. HSF has agreed to work exclusively with Pittsburgh Public Schools for two years before taking on work with perhaps two other urban school districts in year three while work in Pittsburgh continues.

“This comes at a good time because it complements the work that we are doing,” said Mark Roosevelt, superintendent. “Our partnership with High School Futures will deepen our work by increasing our focus on classroom instruction, making it more powerful.”

Beginning in year two, Ostrum said she expects HSF schools to raise test scores, graduation rate, and the college matriculation rate by 10 percentage points each year.

HSF expects to raise all of the funds needed for their initiative with plans to spend \$1.8 million in the 2009-10 school year and \$2.5 million in the 2010-11 school year. Spending for the 2011-12 school year is being finalized.

*Eva Ostrum from High School Futures, Inc. can be reached at (212) 369-1567.*

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