

For Immediate Release

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Committee Recommends Peabody Facility As Permanent Home for District's International Baccalaureate 6-12 School for the Start of the 2012-13 School Year

PITTSBURGH December 5, 2008 – The Pittsburgh Peabody facility is the best permanent home for the District's International Baccalaureate (IB) 6-12 School, according to the unanimous recommendation of the IB Site Selection Committee. After several months of research, a dozen meetings, and many site visits, the 30 member Committee presented its recommendation to the Superintendent this week.

At the direction of the Board, the Committee was created to evaluate District facilities that would accommodate the IB program and be ready in time for the 2012-13 school year. Members of the Committee include parents from across the City with students at Pittsburgh Dilworth, Frick, Liberty, Linden, Phillips, Schenley and Allderdice. In addition to parents, the Committee was comprised of students, representatives from the URA, alumni of Pittsburgh Schenley and Pittsburgh Frick, IB Diploma Programme teachers and community members.

"I thank the Committee for their work, time and thoughtful deliberation," said Superintendent Roosevelt. "Their recommendation will inform the work we are currently doing to restructure our high schools."

As part of its work on *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, the District has been grappling with the underutilization of its high schools and student enrollment projections that show continuing decline. In the next five years, the District's two East End high schools are projected to lose two-thirds of their student population, leaving Pittsburgh Peabody with a student population of fewer than 200 and Pittsburgh Westinghouse hovering around 100 students.

Selection Process and Criteria

Keeping in mind the District's available facilities, fiscal constraints and projected enrollment decline, the Committee developed the following selection criteria for determining the best permanent home for the IB school. The facilities reviewed by the Committee were either closed schools or those schools that currently have an excess capacity greater than 50%. Based on this parameter the IB Site Selection Committee deeply explored six District facilities: Connelly, Langley, Oliver, Peabody, Reizenstein, and Westinghouse.

- **Building Program/ Facility Amenities** – The facility must provide the following: more than 50 classrooms, 4 or more computer labs, high school ready science labs, a gymnasium and a pool. Additional facility amenities identified by the Committee as necessary to accommodate the IB 6-12 school include: an auditorium, natural light, computer labs for every 200 children, separate entrances for lower and upper grades, some outdoor athletic facilities, and three or more IB exam rooms.
- **Location** – The site must be located near community resources and provide easy access to local universities. Access to Port Authority transportation was important as a majority of the students would need the service to travel back and forth to school.
- **Financial** – The site must minimize capital expenditure and have per pupil renovation costs that do not exceed that of recent construction projects.

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Peabody Facility Recommendation

After thorough review, the Committee collectively viewed the Peabody facility as the District's best option. The recommendation highlighted the facility's location and need for less capital expenditures in comparison to the renovations that would be necessary at many other District facilities.

Currently most of the District's IB/IS students live in the East End of the City. Located in the developing East Liberty Area, the Peabody facility's proximity to home and public transportation provides students access to local universities and community amenities, in a bicycle friendly East End location.

Although the Committee noted that Peabody provides the major amenities necessary to accommodate the IB program, it did ask the District to consider increasing the natural light by restoring windows that had been covered by bricks during renovation in the 1970's.

Background On Creation of New IB 6-12 School

In June, the Board authorized the opening of the new 6-12 International Baccalaureate (IB) school at the Reizenstein facility for the start of the 2009-10 school year. Pittsburgh Frick IB/IS (International Studies) students will become part of the new school, which will open with grades 6-10 and have a capacity for 750 students. As grades 11 and 12 are added over time, the total student population will grow to 1,050.

To provide certainty and stability for students, the Superintendent proposed that the Reizenstein facility house the new IB school for three years, during which time a permanent home would be identified and prepared. With the presentation by the IB Site Selection Committee to the Superintendent this week, Mr. Roosevelt and his staff will be reviewing the recommendation of the Peabody facility in greater detail and provide a recommendation to the Board in the next few months.

Public Feedback or More Information

Public feedback can be provided to the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920** or to the Superintendent via email superintendentoffice@pghboe.net .

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