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For Immediate Release

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**Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy Awarded
\$2.5 Million from DSF Charitable Foundation**

Gift Supports Start-Up and Innovations for District's New Academy Opening in 2009-10

Pittsburgh, PA, December 17, 2008 – In its second largest gift ever, the DSF Charitable Foundation awarded \$2.5 million to support the opening of the Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy. The Board voted to accept the grant to support the Academy, which will open next fall in Oakland at the Frick facility. The Science & Technology Academy is an example of a traditional school district embracing a new school design model to better meet the needs of this generation of students and the regional and national economy.

The grant, to be allocated over five years, supports critical elements of school start-up, ranging from curriculum development to facilities enhancement. Superintendent Mark Roosevelt explained that the grant reduces initial costs for the District while also financing elements of the program that are beyond the District's capacity. "The grant guarantees that resources will be available to support this unique program, and we are hugely grateful to DSF for their incredible level of support," said Superintendent Roosevelt.

Once the Academy reaches its 550-student capacity for grades six through 12, it will operate at the same per-pupil allocation as any other District school, a standard that is critical to the District's ongoing financial stability. Until that point, the grant helps provide the additional resources necessary to implement the Academy's vision.

The Science & Technology Academy is the second District initiative supported by the DSF Charitable Foundation. In 2006, the Foundation awarded a \$1 million grant for the Macmillan/McGraw Hill *Treasures* program, a high-priority initiative to improve reading proficiency for students in grades Pre-K through 5.

"When the Superintendent unveiled the District's *Excellence for All* reform agenda, we saw a great opportunity for Foundation support," said David Scaife, Chairman of the DSF Charitable Foundation. "We have high confidence in what the Science & Technology Academy will do for children in Pittsburgh and think it could serve as a model for innovation in public education."

The design brings together features of highly successful schools nationwide, and introduces important innovations of its own. DSF Charitable Foundation Executive Director Nick Beldecos said of the new school, "This project holds extraordinary promise. The school was designed with exceptional thoughtfulness and rigor. It brings together the best of the best in terms of ideas and practices and builds from there."

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Founded on the belief that any student can succeed in advanced coursework with the right amount of time and support, the Science & Technology Academy introduces several innovations. A specialized curriculum allows students to select a focus area after ninth grade, pursuing their passion for Life Science, Environmental Science, Computer Science, or Engineering. Custom-designed advanced courses simulate real-world experience in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). At all levels of the program, project-based courses cultivate curiosity and stoke enthusiasm.

Like districts nationwide, Pittsburgh Public Schools has recognized the pressing need to strengthen STEM education in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Academy is the product of almost three years of expert planning and research. Starting with a vision of the Board of Directors and Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, original research and planning was conducted by a team of graduate students at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College starting in August of 2006.

Research drew from more than 200 books, reports, and journal articles and also included numerous site visits, benchmarking of dozens of successful schools, and primary research including interviews, community forums, and parent focus groups. Seven advisory committees and more than 250 individuals contributed to the creation of the Academy's philosophy and vision, captured in the school's motto: *Dream. Discover. Design.*

DSF Charitable Foundation is the second individual foundation to contribute to the development of the Academy. The Buhl Foundation supported the planning of the Academy with a gift to the District in September 2007. The Fund for Excellence, established by a consortium of several leading Pittsburgh foundations, provided additional support for the design process.

The Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy will open next fall with 250 students in grades six through nine. Located in Oakland, the Academy is surrounded by Pittsburgh's renowned universities and is accessible from all Pittsburgh communities. The enrollment deadline is Friday, December 19, 2008. Applications and detailed information about the program are available at www.pghscitech.net.

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