

For Immediate Release

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District Announces Year Two Plans of *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*

Summary:

- ***Four New 6-12 Learning Communities to be Created Over Next Two Years***
- ***Schenley Facility Condition Too Costly to Repair, Slated for Closure***
- ***Reizenstein and Milliones Facilities to Become Innovative Secondary Schools***
- ***Pittsburgh Vann K-8 to Close Due to Low Enrollment and Inadequate Facility***
- ***Rogers CAPA 6-8 to Combine with Pittsburgh CAPA at Downtown Location***
- ***Facility Moves Create Ideal Location for Science & Technology School in 2009***

PITTSBURGH, October 31, 2007 – Superintendent Mark Roosevelt and Chief of High School Reform Derrick Lopez announced today the Year Two plans for *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, a multi-year plan focused on the redesign and restructure of the District’s high schools and improvement of student achievement. Consistent with national best practices for high school reform, *Excel.9-12* is organized around five core principles: Safe and Welcoming Schools, Relationships, Rigor, Student Support and Relevance. This next phase of high school reform includes the creation of the District’s first 6-12 “learning communities,” which will be schools of choice.

“Year One of our plan focused on creating safe and welcoming environments –personalizing our schools and improving discipline,” said Superintendent Roosevelt. “Year Two will align with the District’s reform initiatives by the creation of four new 6-12 environments – creating one transition for our students and deepening relationships between our students and staff.”

For the fall of 2008, Year Two of *Excel.9-12* plan includes the closure of Pittsburgh Schenley High School, combining the school’s International Baccalaureate (IB) Program with a Middle Years Program (MYP) at Pittsburgh Frick 6-8 to create Pittsburgh IB World 6-12 to be housed in the Reizenstein building. At the same time, the District’s first University Partnership 6-12 School will open at Milliones located in the Hill District. While primarily serving the students from the Schenley feeder pattern, this new partnership 6-12 school also will be a school of choice for other District students.

Additionally, the Plan calls for:

- Pittsburgh Vann PreK-8 will close as planned for 2008-09. Pittsburgh Miller PreK-8 will become a PreK-5 school in 2008-09. This will require the relocation of Pittsburgh Vann PreK-5 to either Pittsburgh Weil Pre-K-8 and or to Pittsburgh Miller PreK-5. Additionally, the 6-8 students from Pittsburgh Vann and Pittsburgh Miller will relocate to either or to Pittsburgh Weil or the new University Partnership 6-12.
- The Plan also calls for the consolidation of Rogers CAPA 6-8 and Pittsburgh CAPA High School into one 6-12 thematic learning community to create Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 for the start of the 2009-2010 school year.
- Finally, a carefully designed Science & Technology program will open in close proximity to the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon at the Frick facility for 2009-2010.

These facility moves, in effect, will save the school system more than \$45 million compared to maintaining or repairing all of the facilities. The Year 2 Plan also calls for optimizing the District’s best available facilities for classroom instruction and ultimately creates four new learning environments.

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Pittsburgh Schenley High School

Deteriorating conditions at Pittsburgh Schenley High School facility have accelerated the need for the District to slightly modify its high school reform roadmap.

“Remediating the Schenley facility is too expensive for the District at this time,” said Mark Roosevelt. “We cannot focus our efforts on trying to save a building at the expense of seeking ways to address the deep academic difficulties that our students face district-wide.”

Pittsburgh Schenley High School continues to experience infrastructure deterioration. The following recent incidents prompted District officials to conduct further investigations of the 90-year old structure:

- On July 10th a two-foot-square section of ceiling collapsed in a second-floor stairwell prompting the District to relocate summer school.
- In August, the District paid \$750,000 to have a contractor remediate and re-plaster more than 10,000 spaces of potential asbestos containing material.
- Within three weeks of the initial remediation, a piece of plaster fell in a classroom on a date when no students were present.

For the remainder of this school year, this District has adopted an enhanced monitoring and maintenance program for the facility. The District believes that it is not prudent to keep students in the facility beyond the current school year without pursuing the full remediation necessary. There will be a special hearing for the public to provide feedback on the proposed closing of the Pittsburgh Schenley facility. The hearing will take place on Tuesday, November 27 at 6:00 p.m.

Pittsburgh Robotics Technology Magnet Moves to Pittsburgh Peabody

Approximately 174 students enrolled at the Robotics Technology magnet at Pittsburgh Schenley will relocate to Pittsburgh Peabody where the infrastructure required to support the program currently exists.

Reizenstein to Become Pittsburgh IB World 6-12

The District will open a fully accredited International Baccalaureate (IB) Program in the Reizenstein building to create Pittsburgh IB World 6-12 for the start of the 2008-09 school year. Currently, the District has an IB Diploma Program at Schenley High School for 11th and 12th grade students and is currently in the application process to institute a Middle Years Program (MYP) combining Pittsburgh Frick 6-8 and Pittsburgh Schenley 9-10. These two programs will merge to create one of the first comprehensive international baccalaureate middle years and diploma programs in a U.S. urban district. The current Pittsburgh Frick 6-8 students will relocate to Pittsburgh IB World 6-12 beginning in the 2008-09 school year. The Frick facility will re-open in 2009 as Pittsburgh Science & Technology 6-12.

Reizenstein, due to its size, condition and availability, is a perfect match for the proposed International Baccalaureate program. Currently, 75% of Pittsburgh IB World’s future students live within a four mile radius of the Reizenstein building.

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Pittsburgh's First University Partnership School 6-12

The District is currently formalizing plans with the University of Pittsburgh to create Pittsburgh's First University Partnership School 6-12 at the Milliones building. Upon completion, this school will become a national center for excellence in public education, and a model for school district/university partnerships. Also, this school will provide an opportunity for the University of Pittsburgh's faculty to have a meaningful and substantive impact for PPS students.

"We want to maintain a high school site in the Hill District and its neighboring communities and want to offer Schenley students whose academic needs have not been met a better opportunity," said Derrick Lopez, Chief of High School Reform. "While the magnet programs at Schenley have been among the best in the District, non-magnet students at Schenley have been historically underserved. This is why the focal point of our high school reform efforts in Year Two is the University Partnership School 6-12," added Lopez.

To demonstrate its commitment to the new partnership, the District plans to move its High School Reform Office to this location. Additionally, the University of Pittsburgh is considering housing its new Helen Faison Chair for Urban Education there as well.

Pittsburgh Rogers CAPA 6-8 to Combine With Pittsburgh CAPA High School

Combining the District's total Creative and Performing Arts curricula will optimize the state-of-the-art resources currently deployed at Pittsburgh CAPA's downtown location. The District will recommend to the Board that it purchase and renovate three additional floors at the downtown facility to house all of its 6-12 CAPA students in one location, thus creating a cohesive learning community to be completed for the 2009-10 school year.

Public Participation in the Process

Special Public Hearing – Closing of Pittsburgh Schenley High School

A special public hearing will be held specifically for the closing of Pittsburgh Schenley High School. It is scheduled for Tuesday, November 27, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A, first floor of the Board of Education's Administration Building located at 341 S. Bellefield Avenue in Oakland.

Anyone wishing to speak at the special public hearing on the topic of Pittsburgh Schenley must register with the Office of Superintendent of Schools by calling (412)622-3600 from November 13 until Noon on November 23, 2007. Persons wishing to submit written testimony in lieu of appearing at the special hearing may send it via e-mail to publichearing@pghboe.net or by faxing comments to (412)622-3624 no later than 5 p.m. on November 27, 2007.

There are several other ways for the community to share their comments regarding the Year Two plan for high school reform:

- Write to the Division of Communications, Pittsburgh Public Schools, 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; or,
- Phone the Parent Hotline at (412)622-7920; or,
- Send an e-mail by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools web site at www.pps.k12pa.us.

Regular Public Hearing

A regular public hearing for citizens' comments on November agenda items and other school matters is scheduled for Tuesday, November 13, 7:00 p.m. This hearing will be held in Conference Room A, first floor of the Board of Education's Administration Building located at 341 S. Bellefield Ave. in Oakland.

Anyone wishing to speak at the regular public hearing must register with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools by calling (412) 622-3600 starting Tuesday, November 6 through Noon the day of the hearing.

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Public Hearing Procedures

The public hearings will be conducted under the following procedures:

- 1) Each speaker on agenda or non-agenda items will be limited to three minutes of testimony. All speakers should submit, if possible, 11 copies of their testimony at the time they are called to speak.
- 2) A speaker may not relinquish his or her allotted time to another.
- 3) All speakers, regardless of their viewpoint, are entitled to the courtesy of speaking without interruption from those who might disagree. Failure to extend this courtesy could result in the adjournment of the meeting.
- 4) Speakers must call personally to be placed on the agenda. They will be scheduled in the order the calls are received.

Additional Information

The public can also review plans for Year Two of *Excel.9-12: The Plan for High School Excellence* by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools web site at www.pps.k12pa.us, visiting the Division of Communications, Room 201, or by requesting a copy by calling the Parent Hotline at (412)622-7920.

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