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**Pittsburgh Public Schools High School Reform
Task Force to Visit Nationally Recognized High-Performing High Schools**

PITTSBURGH September 19, 2006 –This week a team from the District’s High School Reform Task Force is visiting the first of several high-performing, urban high schools throughout the country. These site visits will give members of the High School Reform Task Force a firsthand perspective of models and programs that are proving successful in advancing the academic performance and preparedness of students for post-secondary education and the workplace. The high school models range from having strong advanced placement and university prep curriculums to international baccalaureate programs. Visits also include single-gender high schools and those where learning takes place in the “real world” of work.

“Reform of our high schools will be this year’s top priority. We are eager to create more choices and rigorous programs for our students, including advanced careers and technical offerings,” said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt.

Members of the High School Reform Task Force will be observing each school and examining what innovative qualities truly impact student achievement. The High School Reform Task Force also will study the challenges and obstacles faced by these schools and the solutions that are meeting with success. The knowledge and insights from these site visits will be used to develop a recommendation on the best practices that should be applied in Pittsburgh to improve the performance of the District’s high schools.

The High School Reform Task Force consists of leaders from both secondary and higher education, foundations and businesses, experts in workforce development, parents, and members of the community. It has been created to evaluate and reinvent Pittsburgh’s high schools as part of the District’s *Excellence for All* reform plan, which provides a roadmap for improving the academic performance of all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

In an effort to make necessary educational reforms and improve the rate of Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates, Superintendent Mark Roosevelt commissioned a recent RAND Corporation study that revealed 64 percent of the district’s high school students graduate. One of key measures in the *Excellence for All* reform plan is to increase the graduation rate by 10 percentage points by the end of the 2008-2009 school year.

The work of the High School Reform Task Force is being funded through a grant of \$255,000 from The Fund for Excellence in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, a new fund established by the local foundation community to support the Superintendent’s district reform agenda.

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High School Reform Task Force School Visit Schedule

September 18 - 19

Dallas, Texas Dallas Independent School District

School for the Talented and Gifted

This school was #1 on Newsweek's list of top 1200 public schools in the U.S. It is known for having the best advanced placement and International Baccalaureate performance in the country.

School of Health Professions

The School of Health Professions seeks to prepare students to function effectively in their community and global society by offering a balanced academic and health career-oriented education.

School of Science and Engineering

This school is #1 school in the U.S. for having their overall number of African American and Hispanic students passing the Advanced Placement Calculus Exam. The school also ranked #8 on Newsweek's top 1200 public schools.

Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School

This school prepares young women in grades 6-10 for the highest level of academic success in college and graduate school and for effective and ethical leadership in our democratic society. Expanding to grade 12 by the 2008-2009 school year.

Early College Program (Mountain View College)

This school is about to launch a unique educational program which provides students the chance to earn high school diplomas and graduate with an associate's degree – or enough college credit hours to transfer to area universities as a college junior.

September 22

Detroit, Michigan

University Preparatory Academy High School

A charter school that offers a bold new model of education that has succeeded in urban areas by graduating 90% of mostly minority students from high school and sending 90% of these graduates on to college.

September 21 - 22

Denver, Colorado Denver Public Schools

CEC Middle College of Denver

This school provides students an opportunity from junior year on, to take up to four courses a year at Community College of Denver in lieu of academic courses at CEC. Upon graduating, students can complete their associate's degree in one year rather than two.

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Denver School of Science and Technology

This charter school was featured in Newsweek’s Magazine article, “What Makes a High School Great” as a technology school in a non-technological part of the U.S. The day begins with a morning meeting where all students gather and get a chance to talk about what is on their minds.

Southwest Early College High School

This charter school offers the opportunity for students to earn both a high school diploma and an associate’s degree from the Community College of Denver.

September 26 – 28

Boston, Massachusetts

Boston Public Schools

Brighton High School

The school is divided into five small learning communities or pathways: the School of Business and Technology, the School of Health Professions, the School of Law, Government and Public Service, the School of Media, Arts and Communication, and the Grade Nine Academy.

Boston Community Leadership Academy

This is a Pilot School, in that it has maximum control over its resources to create an innovative education program. The school is focused on developing future leaders through community service learning and leadership development.

Fenway High School

This school has a national reputation and has won numerous awards for innovation and excellence. The school structure knits together three core aspects: intellectual challenge, personalized relationships and collaborations with outside organizations.

Minuteman Regional High School Lexington, MA

A comprehensive four year public regional high school serving a sixteen town area that combines rigorous academics and preparation for college with carefully designed relevance to career exploration and learning.

University Park Campus School Worcester, MA

This school is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and has gained recognition as a national model by the Education Trust, the Alliance for Excellent Education and Newsweek Magazine. All members of its first three graduating classes have gone onto college; 95% are first generation college attendees.

October 2 - 3

Washington, D.C.

District of Columbia Public Schools

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School

This school is the only D.C. public school authorized to offer students the opportunity to earn the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma.

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Bell High School

This school places students in smaller schools within the school/clusters that work closely with businesses and community partners to expose students to various careers in which they individually show a particular interest.

McKinley Technical High School

Teachers and students engage in project based curriculum that has rigor of a first class liberal arts education and the job skills development of a technical program. Students have the opportunity to pursue an intense focus in bio/medical technology, information technology, and/or broadcast technology.

Schools Without Walls (George Washington University)

This non-traditional high school is for students who desire learning experiences that occur within the context of the “Real World”. Using the community as a classroom, students pursue academic skills through inquiry, experimentation, discussion/debate and field based activities as well as school based classroom experiences.

October 4 - 6

New York, New York

New York City Schools

Urban Academy in the Julia Richman Education Complex

This small school provides its students a rigorous college oriented curriculum. Students display proficiency through projects that demonstrate their ability to use the skills they have developed in their course studies.

Young Women’s Leadership School

Serving young women in grades 7 -12, this college prep public school capitalizes on the intellectual curiosity and creative spirit inherent in all young women. This school provides students a structure of balanced learning infusing and integrating literacy into every course and moving toward making every student an independent, life-long learner.

Eagle Academy for Young Men

One of two all-male schools to open in New York City in 2004, this school aims to ready young men for college, while educating them about obstacles they may face and how to overcome them. All students are partnered with an adult mentor for 4 years of high school. All students must attend the extended day program.

Aviation Career and Technical Education High School

This school provides a rigorous academic and unique Aviation Maintenance and Technology program that prepares students for college and careers in the aerospace industry.

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October 5 - 6

Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Meyers Park

This school was named one of Newsweek Magazine's 100 Best High Schools in America. Work study, Tech Prep and apprenticeship programs assist in providing an increasing number of vocational offerings to students.

Olympic High School

Funded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this school has converted into 5 small, autonomous schools with no more than 400 students in each school. The freshmen class is enrolled in a 9th Grade Academy where each student is assigned to a team with common core teachers who collaborate on planning to meet the academic and social needs of the student team members.

Public Feedback or More Information

The public can obtain further information about the District's High School Reform initiatives by calling the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920**, visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at www.pps.k12.pa.us or stopping by the Division of Communications at Room 204 in the Administrative Building in Oakland. Public feedback can be provided to the Superintendent via email to superintendentoffice@pghboe.net or via mail.

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