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For Immediate Release

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## **District's Charter Review Teams Present Findings for Three Charter Renewal Applications**

### ***City Charter High Recommended for Renewal***

PITTSBURGH, November 8, 2006 – At the Board's Education Committee meeting this evening, the District's Charter review teams presented their findings regarding the renewal applications for the following charter schools:

- **Career Connections Charter High School** (Charter approved for three years in February 1999; opened in September 1999; renewed in April 2002);
- **City Charter High** (Charter approved for five years in February 2002; opened in September 2002);
- **Renaissance Academy of Pittsburgh Alternative of Hope (RAPAH)** (Charter denied in February 2001; approved for five years by Charter Appeals Board in October 2001; opened in September 2003).

As the authorizing agency, the District is obligated to ensure that each of its charters lives up to the promises made when the charter was initially granted. Additionally, each charter must demonstrate compliance with all appropriate regulations and laws.

A multi-disciplinary team from the District is established to conduct the review process for each renewal of a charter. The review teams conduct site visits, examine financial and student performance data, and assess compliance with all code requirements for charter facilities. The review teams summarize their findings and make recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Directors based on the use of a consistent format, including predefined criteria, a rating system and a compliance checklist.

"We must hold all of our schools, including charters, to the same standards of health, safety and educational achievement," said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. "If the data shows that charters are not meeting their objectives, the District must be prepared to act decisively if improvements are not made by the time renewals come due."

### **The Review Teams' Finding and Recommendations**

This evening, the Board was presented with the recommendation to renew City Charter High School for five years. However, the review teams recommended against the renewal of Career Connections Charter High School and RAPAH based on material breaches between the charters as granted and the charters as executed.

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At a Special Legislative meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. on November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Board will vote to accept the recommendations of the charter review teams. If the Board's action indicates its intention not to renew a charter, the District will need to schedule a public hearing within a reasonable timeframe and provide for a 30-day public commentary period before taking a final vote to not renew a charter.

### **Career Connections Charter High School**

Chairperson and Schenley Principal Sophia Facaros, who presented the review team's recommendation not to renew Career Connections Charter High School, said, "This charter has consistently failed to live up to the obligations made in its charter application eight years ago." The review team cited substantial violations of the law and consistent low performance except for one aberrational year. In particular, the team noted the charter's failure to provide a curriculum and failure to meet Pennsylvania requirements for awarding of a high school diploma. "Students are being allowed to graduate even if they have not met the credit standards established by this charter," said Facaros. "Some are receiving class credits for classes in which they have received a failing grade."

### **City Charter High**

Chairperson and Westinghouse Principal Shemeca Crenshaw presented the review team's recommendation to renew City Charter High from 2007 to 2012 because it is in compliance with its charter application, appropriate laws and previous recommendations from the District. "This charter is showing gains in student achievement for all students and performing at a level that we are comfortable with," said Crenshaw. In fact, the District recently sent a team from its High School Reform Task Force to assess best practices at City Charter High and determine which should be emulated.

### **Renaissance Academy of Pittsburgh Alternative of Hope (RAPAH)**

Chairperson and Dilworth Principal Monica Lamar presented the review team's recommendation not to renew RAPAH because of failure to meet key components of its charter obligations including its five point model. In particular, the charter has not delivered on two of its model components – technology integration and offering a second language to all students beginning kindergarten. Additionally, the charter has not met its promise to provide special after-school programs, exposure to athletic programs, quarterly learning contracts, partnerships with local colleges, universities and corporations to provide internships in many varied walks of life.

### **The Public Can Obtain More Information**

The findings and the recommendations of the District's Charter Review teams for the three charter renewal applications can be viewed at [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us). A copy also can be obtained by calling the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920** or visiting the Division of Communications, Room 204, Pittsburgh Board of Education, 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

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