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For Immediate Release

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Board Affirms Decision to Revoke Charter for Career Connections Charter Middle School

Decision to Renew Career Connections Charter High School Postponed

PITTSBURGH, November 15, 2006 – Tonight at a Special Legislative Meeting, the Board of Public Education affirmed their earlier vote to revoke the charter of Career Connections Charter Middle School (CCCMS) following the recommendations and findings of fact made by Attorney Donald Palmer. Palmer served as the Hearing Officer at an October 17th hearing that was held in accordance with Charter School law subsequent to the Board's initial revocation of the charter at its September 27th Legislative Meeting.

According to the findings, CCCMS was not operating in the Catalyst Building, which was the site described in its charter application. CCCMS was holding classes in the Campbell Center in Lawrenceville, the headquarters of its sponsor, the Boys and Girls Club. The Hearing Officer determined that there were health and safety violations based upon numerous factors including:

- the Catalyst Building described in the application was not available and there was no indication when all zoning and occupancy permits would be obtained, and
- the existence of safety issues within the Campbell Center relating to its use as school without appropriate approvals and permits having been obtained.

The Board initially denied the charter January 25, 2006 and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Charter Appeals Board reversed this action early in September 2006 and awarded the charter.

Charter Renewals

The Board postponed action on the renewal application of Career Connections Charter High School (CCCHS). The School and its sponsor, the Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, sent a written request to the Superintendent waiving the requirements that the Board take action on its renewal by November 17, 2006, the deadline according to the Charter School Law. Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the matter was pulled from the Special Legislative Meeting Agenda until no later than March 31, 2007 based on the mutual agreement of the District and CCCHS. The District and CCCHS will attempt to address the differences in the factual elements of the report submitted by the District's review teams and the CCCHS responses to that report.

The Board did vote to accept the recommendations of the District's Charter Review Teams' findings regarding the renewal applications for two charter schools.

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The Board voted to renew the charter of City Charter High School from 2007 to 2012 because it is in compliance with its charter application, appropriate laws and previous recommendations from the District.

The Board voted to revoke the charter for Renaissance Academy of Pittsburgh Alternative of Hope (RAPAH) because of failure to meet key components of its charter obligations including its five point model. Since the RAPAH charter was revoked the District will 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 the charter.

Other Business

In other Business, the Board voted to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to change the status of Dr. Lynn Spampinato. Dr. Spampinato will relinquish her full-time role as Deputy Superintendent to become an outside consultant with the District on the much needed academic initiatives she launched as the District's Deputy Superintendent. Dr. Spampinato has been on paid leave of absence since October 16, 2006 while a new arrangement for maintaining her availability to assist with academic initiatives was being completed. The consulting agreement will be effective November 16, 2006 through April 15, 2008, for an amount not to exceed \$213,333.00. The District will be recruiting and hiring a full time Chief Academic Officer.

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. 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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