

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Board Hears Recommendations on Two Charter Renewal Applications**

### *District Charter Review Teams Recommends Renewal for City Charter High*

PITTSBURGH, March 6, 2012 – 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 2002 and 2007);
- **City Charter High** (Charter approved for five years in February 2002; opened in September 2002; renewed in 2007).

As the authorizing agency, the District is obligated to ensure that each of its charters lives up to the terms of their charter agreement. 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.

“I want to thank the team for their work and due diligence to bring forward these recommendations,” said Superintendent Linda Lane. We know charter schools can provide quality options for families and acknowledge those that produce strong student achievement. We also know we are obligated to hold charter schools to their promises. This means acting with certainty to not renew those that do not live up to the terms of their charter agreement when the time comes.”

### **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 team recommended against the renewal of Career Connections Charter High School on material breaches between the charter as granted and the charter as executed.

The Board is expected to vote on the recommendations of the charter review teams March 21, 2012. 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.

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**Career Connections Charter High School**

A failure of the school to meet the conditions, standards and procedures contained in the original charter agreement prompted the District's charter review team to recommend the Board not renew the charter of Career Connections Charter High School. The team found very few students were participating in authentic internships, a key component of the charter's mission. In many cases student internships were achieved by students continuing to work at previously held jobs. A majority of students were not in internships at all, but instead pursuing dual enrollment.

The team additionally noted that student performance on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) showed the school has not improved student learning. In 2011 the number of students scoring proficient in Mathematics decreased 32.5 percentage points, from 46.2% in 2012 to 16.7% in 2011. The number of students scoring below basic in Mathematics increased 19.4 percentage points from 2009-10. The lack of a true internship program, academic rigor, and any evidence of innovative teaching led the team to conclude the charter did not provide the District with expanded choices or educational opportunities.

This is the second time a District charter review recommended the Board not renew the charter for Career Connections Charter High School. In 2007, the team recommended the Board not renew the school's charter due to substantial violations of the law and consistent low performance. As a result of the recommendation, the charter remedied two of four violations and developed action plans to remedy remaining concerns prompting the District to approve its renewal.

**City Charter High**

Because it is in compliance with its charter application and appropriate laws the District Charter Review team recommends the renewal of City Charter High from 2012 to 2017. As part of its recommendation for renewal the charter review team noted the student gains the charter has seen in Reading and the strategies it has initiated to improve the school's Mathematic results. The team additionally acknowledged the expanded choice the charter provides the District with its senior internship component, extensive list of business partners, and innovative instructional strategies.

**The Public Can Obtain More Information**

The findings and the recommendations of the District's Charter Review teams for both 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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