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Public Schools



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DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For Immediate Release

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Board Votes to Renew City Charter High and Not to Renew the Charter of Career Connections Charter High School

PITTSBURGH, March 21, 2012 – Obligated to ensure that each of its charters are living up to their charter agreement, the Board voted to renew the charter of City Charter High and not to renew the charter of Career Connections Charter High School. The Board took action on both charters at this evening’s Legislative Meeting. Since the Board’s action indicates its intention not to renew Career Connections Charter High School, 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 the school’s charter.

“We are charged with ensuring charters are meeting the terms of their charter agreements and are in compliance with all appropriate regulations and laws.” said Superintendent Linda Lane. “With this responsibility we will continue to recommend the renewal of those charters that continue to positively impact student achievement and the revocation of those that do not.”

The Board based its decisions on both charters at the recommendations of the District’s Charter Review teams. The District’s Charter Review Team is a multi-disciplinary team 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.

City Charter High

Because it is in compliance with its charter application and appropriate laws the District Charter Review team recommended 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.

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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. The number of students scoring proficient in Mathematics decreased 32.5 percentage points, from 46.2% in 2010 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.

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. 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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