NEWS

Pittsburgh Public Schools | **EXCELLENCE FOR ALL**

The Pathway to the Promise.™
We are an equal rights and opportunity school district.

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

For Immediate Release   Contact: Ebony Pugh 412- 622-3616
May 16, 2012

Proposed 2012-13 Special Education Core Budget Released
Minimal Restructuring Ensures Students with Disabilities Receive Rigorous Curriculum in Right Classroom Settings

PITTSBURGH, May 16, 2012 –   The proposed 2012-13 Special Education Core Program Budget of $95,281,367 million continues the District's work to improve the effectiveness of special education services and related programs provided to students. The proposed budget is a $3,658,352 million reduction from the 2011-12 budget and is the result of a restructured special education delivery model which increases the utilization of special education teachers.
\
The proposed Special Education Core Budget continues the District's work to efficiently align the service delivery model of the Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE) with the needs of its current student population. To date, 26.6% of District students receive special education and gifted services. While there has been a 3% increase in gifted students, the number of students with disabilities has decreased 6% since 2009. Shared at this evening's Agenda Review Meeting, the proposed budget is expected to be voted on by the Board at its May, 23rd Legislative Meeting. The proposed 2012-13 Special Education Core Program Budget consists of state and local funding and does not include supplemental funding from IDEA, Access or Institutionalized Children's Fund.

"For the past several years, our Program for Students with Exceptionalities staff has worked to make improvements that deliver the District's special education services in a way that best meets the needs of our student population," said Superintendent Linda Lane.

In March 2010, the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) presented its findings and recommendations after a 5-month review of the District's special education programs. The CGCS report, titled "Improving Special Education Services in the Pittsburgh Public Schools", was done at the request of the District and included 59 recommendations for improving the special education programs. According to the CGCS "The current organizational structure of the Program for Students with Exceptionalities does not reflect the core functional units necessary to support schools and their provision of special education and related services."

"When we set out to restructure our special education service delivery model we focused on strategies that would better utilize our teachers in a way that maximizes student achievement, said Mary Jane Conley, Executive Director PSE. By using the findings of CGCS, what we've heard from our consultants and what we've learned from surrounding districts, we began a phased process of change that more effectively and efficiently provides appropriate services to our students."

-more-

As part of the District's new educational delivery model, the new special education delivery model was built into the 2012 budget that the Board adopted in December 2011. PSE leadership began its phased approach to restructuring farthest away from the classroom. From 2009 -2011, PSE has reduced approximately 30 non-school-based positions. The proposed 2012 budget, if approved, will result in the reduction of approximately 75 full time employees, including 48 special education teachers. Since 2009, PSE leadership will have reduced the number of central office administrative position by 21.05%, and the number of teachers by 18.80%.

"Our goal was to continue to provide services to our schools through a team approach that assigns staff efficiently, builds teacher capacity, and accelerates student achievement. We remain committed to meeting the individual needs of our students, while empowering our schools to design successful programs for our students with disabilities," said Conley.

###