

For Immediate Release

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New Transportation Contract Saves District More Than \$1.8 Million

Board of Education Approves Agreement With Rate Freezes

PITTSBURGH-- This evening, the Board of Education approved a transportation contract that saves Pittsburgh Public Schools more than \$1.8 Million over the next two school years. The District worked collaboratively with 19 transportation companies to come up with the agreement.

“The new contract not only assists the District in being financially sustainable, it also avoids a service reduction to our students,” said Chief Financial and Operations Officer Peter Camarda. “Pittsburgh Public Schools strives to put kids first, so this agreement helps us to do just that.”

The original transportation contract was approved back in May 2009 and had a contract period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014. It included a 3% rate hike for 2012/13 and 2013/14. The new deal froze that rate increase, which represents a savings of \$606,992 each year. The new contract will run until 2016.

As part of the agreement, the transportation carriers will now maintain the radios and cameras installed on yellow school busses.

“The District will save a large amount on the upkeep of radio and camera technology,” said Director of Pupil Transportation Ted Vasser. “That equipment allows us to transport our students in a safe and expeditious way. The surveillance video gives our drivers eyes in the back of their heads in a sense. The cameras increase our monitoring abilities.”

In addition, the replacement life for buses will be extended from 10 years to 12 years. In all, the two-year savings from the contract extension is over \$1.8 million.

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In Other News – Board Votes Not to Renew Career Connections Charter High School

The Board voted not to renew the charter of Career Connections Charter High School (CCCH). 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.

The Board based its decision on the conclusions of Hearing Officer, John S. Toohey, Esquire,

“The charter for the Career Connections Charter High School should not be renewed for another five year term, in that the school district has produced substantial evidence of compelling reasons for terminating the Career Connections Charter High School charter in the sense that the violations of the terms of its charter and the Charter School law are significant, material, and fundamental,” concluded Toohey.

This past March, the District’s Charter Review Team recommended the Board not renew the school’s charter based on the failure of the school to meet the conditions, standards and procedures contained in the original charter agreement. The team found that a majority of the students were not participating in authentic internships, a key component of the charter’s mission.

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 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.

Career Connections Charter High School has 30 days to file an appeal on the Board’s decision.

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