

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Lisa Fischetti (412) 622-3603 or
Lynne Turnquist (412-622-3620)

Board of Education Approves the Superintendent's Right-Sizing Plan

Provides Critical Impetus for District's Reform Agenda

PITTSBURGH, February 28, 2006 – At its Legislative Meeting this evening, the Board of Education for the Pittsburgh Public Schools approved the Right-Sizing Plan, which eliminates 10,117 of the District's 13,706 empty seats and reduces the District from 86 schools in 80 buildings to 65 schools in 63 buildings. Additionally, one administrative building will be closed (Boggs) and staff will move into available space at Westinghouse High School.

The Right-Sizing Plan is projected to save \$14.7 million each year in operating costs. Net operating savings are \$10.3 million with the reinvestment of \$4.4 million annually to support the creation and operation of eight new Accelerated Learning Academies. The Plan also increases the percent of schools that are racially diverse from 55% currently to 66% once implemented for the 2006-07 school year.

22 Schools Close	18 Buildings Close	1 School Created
		Arsenal K-5
Bon Air K-5	Bon Air	
Burgwin K-7	Burgwin	
Chatham K-5	Chatham	
Clayton K-5	Clayton	
Columbus 6-8	Columbus	
Crescent K-5		
East Hills K-5	East Hills	
Friendship K-5		
Greenway 6-8	GREENWAY*	
Knoxville K-5	Knoxville	
Knoxville 6-8		
Lemington K-5	LEMINGTON*	
Madison K-5	Madison	
Mann K-5	Mann	
McCleary K-5	McCleary	
	Miller	
MILLIONES 6-8	MILLIONES*	
Morningside K-8	Morningside	
Prospect K-5	Prospect	
Prospect 6-8		
Reizenstein 6-8	REIZENSTEIN*	
Sheraden K-5		
Washington 6-8	WASHINGTON*	

*Buildings proposed to close, which are subject to future Board action three months after the Special Public Hearing of March 20, 2006.

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Beginning with a Special Public Hearing to be held on March 20th, the District is required to have a new three-month period of public commentary on the proposed closing of five facilities which were not on the original list of building closings. The additional buildings recommended to close are as follows: Greenway, Lemington, Milliones, Reizenstein and Washington.

"I'm pleased that so much of the energy that has been expended on this Plan now can be refocused on implementing the changes that will have our students attending more positive learning environments in September," said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt about the Board's approval tonight.

Three Schools and One Program Will Be Relocated

The following moves will be made:

- Miller African-Centered Academy from Miller to the McKelvy building;
- Montessori School from Belmar to the Friendship building;
- Pittsburgh Classical Academy from Greenway to the Langley building; and,
- The gifted program from McKelvy to its former home at the Ridge Avenue facility.

Ten Schools Expand to K-8 Model

The following schools will expand to K-8: Brookline, Faison, Lincoln, Manchester, Schaeffer, Stevens, Vann, Weil and Westwood. Miller's K-8 expansion will be housed at McKelvy.

Faced with facilities that were either too small or too big to house a K-8 in certain neighborhoods, the Board approved the recommendation to create three innovative "pairings" of facilities to support one K-8 school. The three new facility "pairs" created are as follows:

- **Faison K-8:** K-4 students will attend classes at the Faison facility and grades 5-8 will go to the intermediate campus located at the Crescent building;
- **Lincoln K-8:** K-4 students will attend classes at the Lincoln facility and grades 5-8 will go to the intermediate campus located at the Belmar building; and,
- **Schaeffer K-8:** K-3 students will attend classes at the Schaeffer facility and grades 4-8 will go to the intermediate campus located at the Sheraden building.

The concept of facility "pairs" has been implemented successfully in several Pittsburgh suburbs and other areas of the country. According to Superintendent Roosevelt, a single principal will serve as the instructional leader for the entire K-8 school and an assistant principal would be located at each campus to more closely manage staff and day-to-day activities.

Eight Schools Reconstituted as Accelerated Learning Academies

Eight schools will become Accelerated Learning Academies: Arlington K-8, Colfax K-8, Fort Pitt K-5, King K-8, Murray K-8, Northview K-5, Rooney 6-8 and Weil K-8. The Accelerated Learning Academies will help all students achieve to higher academic levels by extending time on learning for core subjects and stretching the school day by 45 minutes. The District will partner with a school design model called America's Choice to ensure strong accountability, proven teaching strategies and professional development that is aligned appropriately to the curriculum.

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"These are not remedial schools," stressed Superintendent Roosevelt. "All children will benefit from the increased rigor, the emphasis on character development and the rituals and routines that will be characteristic of every Accelerated Learning Academy."

All Pittsburgh schools that received the lowest rating according to the new School Performance Index (SPI) created by RAND will have either been closed or have an enhanced educational program under the Plan. The SPI uses a one to four rating to describe how well schools are demonstrating achievement gains over time for their student populations. In assessing the performance of schools, the District looks at both the SPI and a second new metric created by RAND called Average Student Achievement (ASA). The ASA provides a richer snapshot of student proficiency since it looks at the Terra Nova and New Standards test scores along with the PSSA.

Early Childhood Education Expanded

The Board's adoption of the Right-Sizing Plan includes the expansion of the early childhood education program. In addition to its school-based classrooms, the District will be creating five new early childhood education centers in former facilities at Arlington Middle, Chartiers Elementary, Homewood Elementary, McCleary Elementary and Spring Garden Elementary schools.

The District also will convert its eleven half day Head Start programs to full day, expanding services to 187 current preschoolers and its ability to serve 66 more children. Currently the District operates 71 full day and 11 half day programs for a total of 1,743 children. In addition, the District supports 55 childcare classrooms or 507 preschoolers through partnerships with other community providers.

"The District is committed to serving 3-year-old and 4-year-old children at a critical stage in their learning," commented Board President Bill Isler. "I am gratified to see our early childhood services expanding under the Superintendent's agenda for educational reform."

Current Assignments for Student Transfers/Open Enrollment Preserved

After reviewing the capacity available at all the schools that are not slated for closing, the District has determined that student transfers and open enrollments will not be rescinded based on the reassignment of students in the Right-Sizing Plan. For all schools that are not slated to close, students at schools based on transfers and open enrollments can remain in their current schools. Students at closed schools who are there on student transfers or open enrollments will be reassigned to their home feeder school.

Relocation of Special Education Classrooms Planned

With the Plan's adoption this evening, the District will need to relocate about half of its *regional* special education classrooms. *Regional* classrooms include, but are not limited to, Life Skills Support, Autistic Support, Multiple Disabilities Support and Blind/Visually Impaired Support. Once placement decisions for students are made in the Spring, the District will announce new homes for 17 of 49 elementary and 17 of 23 middle school *regional* classrooms.

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Five Building Additions Approved

The following capital improvements were approved as part of the Right-Sizing Plan:

- **Colfax K-8:** Equity additions for gym and cafeteria; 9 more classrooms to meet increasing enrollment; estimated completion for 2007-08;
- **Concord K-5:** Equity addition for gym; 6 more classrooms to meet increasing enrollment; estimated completion for 2009-10;
- **McKelvy:** (Houses Miller K-8): Equity for gym, estimated completion for 2008-09
- **Sterrett 6-8 Magnet:** Addition for equity purposes – gym, cafeteria and science labs; estimated completion for 2008-09; and,
- **Vann K-8:** Equity addition for gym; estimated completion for 2008-09.

School Naming Issues Will be Considered

The District will be assessing the impact of the school closings and facility moves on school names. For example, several schools that are either closing or proposed to close bear the names of distinguished persons such as the Horace Mann Elementary School, the Margaret Millions Middle School and the Florence Reizenstein Middle School. The District already has received a request from the Millions family to consider preserving the legacy of Margaret Millions by renaming another school in her honor. The Superintendent will be developing an action plan based on the Board's Policy and Procedures for Naming School District Properties.

Consistent Criteria Used for Right-Sizing Plan Decisions

Since announcing the Right-Sizing Plan early in November, the Superintendent has participated in more than 50 meetings and community forums. Public input was considered and decisions for closing schools and/or buildings were made according to the following criteria:

- High-performing schools able to operate with a fair share of resources will remain open;
- Students who must move as a result of school closings will be assigned to either a higher performing school or to one that will have a greatly enhanced educational program, such as an Accelerated Learning Academy;
- Promote socio-economic, racial, educational programs and facilities equity;
- Look at buildings that have space and facility conditions to support the moves;
- Convert excess capacity to funds available for enhanced educational programs;
- Preserve the diversity across the District;
- Consider number of students moving;
- Assess impact and opportunity on attracting and holding students;
- Reduce future capital investments; and,
- Consider the impact of transportation.

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More Information Available on the Approved Plan and Updated Feeder Patterns

The public can review the Right-Sizing Plan, which was approved by the Board on February 28th, by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools Website at www.pps.k12.pa.us or the Division of Communications at Room 117 in the Administrative Building in Oakland.

Updated feeder pattern information can be viewed online at www.pps.k12.pa.us by clicking on the Right-Sizing Plan link on the Home Page and clicking on "**Find My School.**"

Further assistance also can be obtained by calling the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920.**

Special Public Hearing on Five Facilities Scheduled for March 20

The special public hearing is for public commentary only on the proposed closing of five buildings: Greenway, Lemington, Milliones, Reizenstein and Washington. It is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 2006 in two sessions – the first from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and the second session that same day beginning at 6:00 p.m. Both sessions will be held in Conference Room A, first floor of the Board of Education's Administration Building located at 341 S. Bellefield Avenue in Oakland.

Anyone wishing to speak at the special public hearing must register with the Office of Superintendent of Schools by calling 412-622-3600 from Monday, March 13 until Noon on Friday, March 17, 2006. Persons wishing to submit written testimony in lieu of appearing at the special hearing may send it via email to publichearing@pghboe.net or by faxing comments to 412-622-3624 no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, March 17, 2006. The final vote on the closing of these five buildings is scheduled for the Board's Legislative Meeting of June 21, 2006.

Other Legislative Approvals by the Board

The Board approved a contract with America's Choice, which will serve as the design model partner for the eight new Accelerated Learning Academies. In addition, Patricia Fisher, Executive Director of School Management, was named Executive Director of Accelerated Learning Academies and K-8 Schools.

The recommendation for the eight Accelerated Learning Academy principals was approved by the Board. Assignments for the new Accelerated Learning Academy principals are as follows:

- Arlington K-8: Cindi Muehlbauer, currently principal of Burgwin
- Colfax K-8: David May-Stein, currently principal of Colfax
- Fort Pitt K-5: Verna Arnold, currently principal of Fort Pitt
- M.L. King K-8: Michele Holly, currently principal of Morningside
- Murray K-8: James Nath, currently principal of Horace Mann
- Northview K-5: David May, currently principal of Arlington Elementary
- Rooney 6-8: Rhonda Taliaferro, acting principal for the past month at Rooney
- Weil K-8: Carolyn Davis, currently principal at East Hills

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