

For Immediate Release

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Board Accepts \$300,000 from The Heinz Endowments To Support Summer Dreamers Academy

District Adopts 2015 General Fund Budget of \$556.8 Million

PITTSBURGH, December 17, 2014– One day after a new RAND Corporation study showed students attending the voluntary, district-led Summer Dreamers Academy entered school in the fall with stronger mathematics skills than their peers, the School Board accepted a grant to fund the program. This evening the Board voted to accept a \$300,000 grant from The Heinz Endowments to support staffing, materials and student activities for the 2015 Summer Dreamers Academy. The grant comes on the heels of research showing Summer Dreamers Academy can attract low-income students and help them in math. Pittsburgh Public Schools is one of five urban districts participating in the study conducted by RAND Education.

“We are grateful for the continued support we have received from the Heinz Endowments for the Summer Dreamers Academy, our program to stem summer learning loss for students,” said Superintendent Lane. This support is especially nice after receiving news yesterday that students in the program entered fall with a meaningful advantage in math after just one summer.”

While students who attended summer learning programs performed better in math, they did not experience near-term benefits in reading or see significant improvement in social and emotional outcomes compared to their peers. However, the study identified key factors linked to reading achievement.

The new RAND findings provide the first student outcome data in a six-year study of summer learning programs in five urban areas, which is the most comprehensive research on summer learning to date. It is part of a \$50 million project funded by The Wallace Foundation to examine whether and how two consecutive summers of voluntary, district-led summer programs – offering academic instruction and enrichment activities like arts and field trips – help boost low-income students’ success in school.

Students in the study were in the third grade as of spring 2013 and enrolled in a District school. Researchers used a randomized controlled trial to assess the effects of district-run voluntary summer programs on student achievement and social and emotional skills in the fall after the students participated in the summer program.

Students who took part in the summer learning program gained the equivalent to more than one-fifth of the amount of growth in math skills achieved by the typical student between the spring of 3rd grade and the spring of 4th grade.

The Wallace Foundation has announced plans to make an additional investment to extend support for two more summers in Pittsburgh Public Schools and the four other school districts.

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Over the next two years, more about the full impact of summer learning programs will be released. The next report will describe the effect of one summer of programming on achievement, attendance and behavior during the 2013-2014 school year. Subsequent reports will assess the impact of two consecutive years and the cost of such programs. The full report is available at www.rand.org and at www.wallacefoundation.org.

District Adopts 2015 General Fund Budget

On November 12, 2014, Superintendent Lane released the District's Preliminary 2015 Budget to the Board and public. This evening the Board adopted the 2015 General Fund Budget of \$556.8 million, representing an increase of \$27.7 million, or 5.2 percent, from the adopted 2014 General Fund Budget. The preliminary budget includes an operating deficit of \$27.0 million. The 2015 General Fund Budget does not include a tax increase.

“Although we have seen improvement in the District's financial picture over the past three years, it will still be very important for the District to practice strong fiscal hygiene,” said Superintendent Linda Lane. “We still face a number of increasing expenditures that are beyond our control, such as employee health care, pension costs and rising utilities.”

The budget includes an operating deficit of \$27.0 million, requiring the District to spend resources from its fund balance. This \$84.54 million fund balance for the end of 2015 is expected to decline to \$48.1 million at the end of 2016, with the District out of fund balance compliance in 2017. Below is a summary of the District's General Fund Budget that illustrates the Fund Balance compliance through 2018.

	2014 est.	2015 est.	2016 est.	2017 est.	2018 est.
Revenue (Millions) (a) (b)	\$526.91	\$529.81	\$534.94	\$539.61	\$543.08
Operating Expenditures (c)	\$525.87	\$556.78	\$571.37	\$587.34	\$599.45
Operating Deficit	\$1.04	(\$26.97)	(\$36.44)	(\$47.73)	(\$56.37)
Beginning Fund Balance	\$110.47	\$111.51	\$84.54	\$48.11	\$0.38
Budgeted Year-end Fund Balance	\$111.51	\$84.54	\$48.11	\$0.38	(\$56.00)
Fund Balance Compliance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Minimum Fund Balance per Board Policy #721 (d)	\$26.29	\$27.84	\$28.57	\$29.37	\$29.97

Funds required to comply with Fund Balance Policy (e) - Overage/ (Shortage)	\$85.22	\$56.71	\$19.54	(\$28.99)	(\$85.97)
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Notes:

- (a) Revenues from Basic Education Subsidy and Real Estate are projected to be flat
- (b) Revenue increases can be attributed to Retirement reimbursement from the State and Earned Income Tax
- (c) Increasing costs - retirement, health care, salaries
- (d) Requires 5% of current year's budgeted operating expenditures
- (e) Assumes previous year fund balance is not restored to 5%

In Other Business

Tonight the Board passed a resolution commending Superintendent Linda Lane's "tremendous efforts to improve student achievement while simultaneously meeting the performance priorities for 2014" at its legislative meeting. The Superintendent's annual salary, in accordance with her contract, will increase by \$10,000 to \$235,000 this January.

The Superintendent's contract provides the opportunity for her to receive a \$10,000 yearly merit increase, which is tied to meeting yearly performance goals, in addition to a \$5,000 automatic yearly increase. Superintendent contract expires in June 2016.

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