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Public Schools



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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Linda Lane Announces Her Intention Not to Seek Contract Renewal in June 2016

Commits to Advancing Major Goals for Equity, Teaching Effectiveness, Curriculum Improvement and Innovation, and Sustainability of Key Programs

PITTSBURGH, September 4, 2015 – Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Linda Lane today announced that she has decided not to pursue an extension of her current contract after it expires in June 2016.

Explaining her decision, Dr. Lane said, “By next year I will have served this District for nearly a decade, the last five years as Superintendent and first four as Deputy Superintendent. This is a bittersweet decision for me as there is so much about this job that I truly love and will definitely miss. After 44 years in public education, I believe I have more chapters left in me where I hope to utilize my experience in education and my passion for promoting learning for Pittsburgh’s children that might include college-level teaching, writing, and work in support and development of school leaders.”

Linda Lane, 65, was recruited by former Superintendent Mark Roosevelt and joined the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) in 2007 as Deputy Superintendent. In December 2010, she was appointed Superintendent by the PPS Board of Directors.

Previously, she served the Des Moines, Iowa public school system starting as a first grade teacher, then becoming an administrator in Human Resources where she rose to the rank of executive director of HR, then taking over the role of Chief Operating Officer where she supervised what was the largest school construction project in the state of Iowa. She later became Des Moines Public Schools’ Deputy Superintendent prior to accepting the same role in Pittsburgh.

Commenting on the timing of her decision, Dr. Lane stated, “I’m announcing this now because I’ve been asked by a number of community members about my intentions and thought it most appropriate to put that question to rest well in advance of the expiration of my current contract. Most importantly, I want to support our Board with the ample time and opportunity necessary to seek the next leader for this District who will continue the hard work of education reform with our students at the forefront.”

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“We are most grateful to Dr. Linda Lane for her service to the School District of Pittsburgh and community, said Board President Thomas Sumpter. “She has been at the forefront of many new initiatives and programs that have taken place in our Pittsburgh Public Schools during her tenure as superintendent for nearly five years. Some of her initiatives have gained recognition from other school districts in the country.”

“We appreciate Dr. Lane’s advance announcement, which affords us the opportunity to conduct a thorough search for her successor in a timely manner,” continued Sumpter. We will continue to work closely with Dr. Lane throughout this school year and look forward to her leadership and support. Only the very best is wished for Dr. Lane as she moves on to the next chapter of her life.”

Priorities

With 11 months remaining in Dr. Lane’s current term, she is committed to focusing on the following priorities during the next year, including:

- Ensuring that cultural relevancy is integrated in all areas of school curriculum;
- Ensuring the District’s early reading program is strengthened in order to support all children in reaching the District’s milestone of reading on grade-level by 3rd grade;
- Determining the most effective ways to support teacher professional growth by utilizing the lessons learned from the District’s teacher professional growth model;
- Supporting a high level of execution of the plans to improve teaching and learning environments, including the roll out of new STEAM programs, a collective impact pilot at Pittsburgh Millions and the launch of restorative practices at 22 schools, all beginning this school year;
- Making sure that equity permeates every aspect of academic and operational work; and
- Solidifying the District’s promise-readiness programs, with a special focus on providing direct support to help African American male students improve their rate of eligibility for a Promise scholarship.

Accomplishments

Under her leadership, Linda Lane is credited for leading the effort to improve graduation rates from 68.5 to 77.4 percent from 2011 through 2013. During her tenure, Dr. Lane has dealt with serious fiscal issues which required taking necessary and difficult steps to avoid District insolvency. At the same time, the District achieved its highest success ever in attracting private funding for reform and innovation initiatives that are still underway and some just beginning.

In spite of extreme budget reductions during her tenure, she was able to obtain significant program grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other regional foundations, attracting more than \$80 million in grant funding to support reform initiatives such as the District’s ‘Empowering Effective Teachers’ work, and state approval for use of Pittsburgh’s model of teacher evaluation and, for her focus on accelerating reform in Pittsburgh’s urban public education system.

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She is proud of the fact that District was able to achieve AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) status twice from Pennsylvania's Department of Education. She strongly advocates for and supports a PPS summer learning program (Summer Dreamers Academy) to help close the gap on racial disparities in student achievement even after funds to support it became harder to come by. She also serves on the board of The Pittsburgh Promise and has been a 'Reading Buddy' in the 'Reading is Fundamental' program for five years.

Perhaps most importantly, Linda Lane is known for her focus on doing what's best for children academically, along with addressing priorities on safety and snow days or dealing with student homelessness or hunger.

"For me it has always been about students and the continuity about what we are accomplishing is critical," said Linda Lane. "I am so appreciative that Mark Roosevelt convinced me to come here in the beginning of 2007 to serve as his deputy. He told me how wonderful Pittsburgh was and of the strong community support to reform the District. The move was not easy for me and my husband, Coleman, as we both moved away from our families, but, like the book says, 'Pittsburgh Will Steal Your Heart,' and it truly has."

"I am thankful for so many supportive Board members, past and present, and leaders in the community, too numerous to name, who welcomed us to Pittsburgh and have been so supportive of our children and the work we've accomplished in the District. I'm so grateful to my leadership team and staff of the Pittsburgh Public Schools who are the hardest working and most passionate group with whom I've ever worked, and to the many parents who I have come to know as they work not just to support their own child or children, but all of the children. For me, it has always been about staying focused on the needs of our students and we've got a lot more to do before my work is completed. We are PPS!" she concluded.

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