

NEWS

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS / WILKINSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT



For Immediate Release

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Wilkinsburg School District and Pittsburgh Public Schools Present Update on Cross-District Partnership Planning

PITTSBURGH September 16, 2015 – The Wilkinsburg School District has announced, that due to low enrollment, it cannot provide the academic, extra-curricular and technology opportunities required to provide its students, in grades seven through twelve, the quality education they need. This evening the Board of Directors of both the Pittsburgh Public Schools and Wilkinsburg School District were updated at coinciding board meetings on planning to create a cost neutral cross-district partnership to meet the needs of Wilkinsburg’s students.

“After learning of the challenges facing the Wilkinsburg School District, and out of care and concern for its students, we felt it was our responsibility as educators to determine if we could create a cross-district partnership that serves both districts well and provides a better educational program for Wilkinsburg’s seventh through twelfth grade students,” said Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Linda Lane. “It was important that we ensured that any agreement brought before our Board does not adversely impact our service to Pittsburgh’s children and at minimum has a cost neutral impact on our budget.”

The update, shared with the Board of Directors of both the Wilkinsburg School District and the Pittsburgh Public Schools separately at each board’s respective meeting, recommends that upon the closure by Wilkinsburg School District of its high school, in accordance with Section 1607 of the Public School Code, Wilkinsburg School District students in grades seven through twelve shall be assigned by the Wilkinsburg School District to attend Pittsburgh Westinghouse 6-12 Academy beginning with the 2016-17 school year.

"All students should have access to educational opportunities regardless of their zip code," said Dan Matsook, Education Consultant, Wilkinsburg. “We are grateful for the willingness of the Pittsburgh Public Schools to work with us to create a plan to serve Wilkinsburg’s students. We feel confident that today’s proposal creates a win-win for both districts.”

Potential to Expand Pittsburgh Westinghouse Offerings

For the 2015-16 school year student in enrollment at Pittsburgh Westinghouse is projected at 435 students. Wilkinsburg enrollment is projected at 217 students. If both enrollments were combined today the total would reach 652 students.

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Combining the enrollment of students from both districts has the potential to increase offerings at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, which already would provide the students of Wilkinsburg access to four advanced placement courses, eight Career and Technical Education (CTE) Offerings including: Engineering Technology, RHVAC, Business of Sports Academy, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Health Careers, Cosmetology, and a new Public Safety CTE Program set to launch at the start of the 2016-17 year. Students would also have access to the school's extracurricular and athletic offerings and student and family supports.

Proposed Terms of Agreement

Last month the districts announced the formation of an internal working group to explore the feasibility of a cross-district partnership. The internal team was charged with developing terms for a potential agreement to share with each districts' Board for review this month.

This evening's recommendations consider financial and academic factors, student transition needs and any legal, financial and technical support required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The proposed terms suggest that Wilkinsburg School District students in grades seven through twelve are accepted by the Pittsburgh Public Schools on a tuition basis paid by the Wilkinsburg School District. Additional terms include that Wilkinsburg students (Grades 7-12) will:

- Be fully eligible for all curriculum, instruction, alternative education services, and activities available to resident students of Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Have the opportunity to enroll in the various Magnet School offerings in the Pittsburgh Public Schools subject to availability and after all Pittsburgh Public Schools resident students, that qualify, have been enrolled;
- Receive preparation for and be administered all mandated and optional standardized tests, with scores of Wilkinsburg students on State assessments separately attributed to Wilkinsburg; and
- Follow the Pittsburgh Public Schools calendar.

The agreement also proposes the Wilkinsburg School District will be responsible for providing transportation for all Wilkinsburg School District students enrolled in Pittsburgh Public Schools. October is the earliest both Boards would vote on any agreement to serve Wilkinsburg students. A community meeting is scheduled to take place at Pittsburgh Westinghouse on Thursday, October 15th from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

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