



NEWS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Change First Day of School to September 8th

PITTSBURGH August 8, 2021 – In order to prepare for the arrival of all students on the first day and to lessen the strain of wearing masks during the hot days of summer, the District will change the start of the school year for all students to September 8, 2021. The shift will additionally change the first day for District teachers to August 30. The District will share further details about its back-to-school readiness at the Board Education Committee Meeting schedule for 5:30 today, Tuesday, August 10. The meeting will stream live on the District’s website.

“The shift of our start date will provide the time necessary for the transportation strategies we have put in place to take hold as we welcome students back for five days of in-person instruction,” said Superintendent Anthony Hamlet. “We are also listening to the concerns raised by our staff related to the impact traditionally high temperatures in August have on our facilities now coupled with the use of masks. It is our hope this challenge would be lessened in September, allowing everyone a positive start in the new school year.”

Currently, transportation carriers are short-handed 426 drivers (229 CDL and 207 non-CDL), resulting in a seat gap for approximately 10,996 City of Pittsburgh students. Expanded walk zones, increased use of Port Authority with the proposed changes to school start and end times will reduce the seat gap by more than half. Additional time will allow the Transportation Department to address the remaining seat gap and prioritize yellow bus and van carrier service for the District’s youngest students in grades K-5 and those that receive specialized transportation, using the strategies below:

- Support newly added transportation carriers as they complete onboarding of new drivers;
- Transition additional middle school students to Port Authority where feasible;
- Finalize new partnerships with community stakeholders for other transportation channels;
- Launch a new release your seat campaign that will reimburse families who can transport their students to school. Families who are able to transport their child to and from school are asked to sign up at www.pghschools.org/releaseyourseat.

The Board will vote on the adjusted school year calendar at a Special Legislative Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 18. The revised calendar will change the start of school from August 25th to September 8 for all students PreK-12. The new start date will change the last day of school for students to June 22, making the last day for teachers June 24.

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