

For Immediate Release

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Graduate Students of CMU John Heinz III School Present Plans for a Pittsburgh Science and Technology High School

PITTSBURGH February 6, 2007 –Board of Education Members heard the proposed plans for the Pittsburgh Science and Technology High School (PSTHS) at tonight’s Education Committee Meeting. A Systems Synthesis team, comprised of graduate students of the Carnegie Mellon John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, presented their design for a comprehensive plan for a science and technology high school for the District.

Superintendent Mark Roosevelt stated, “I want to thank the students of the John Heinz III School for Public Policy and Management for the time and effort taken by all to provide us with this plan. A science and technology high school would be an asset to the District.”

As a part of the District’s High School Reform efforts and at the request of Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, the Systems team spent 13 weeks researching education policy and best practices in education before presenting the District with its research-driven design for PSTHS. The Systems Team reviewed literature, successful urban high schools and science and technology high schools. Superintendent Roosevelt also charged the team to create a high school that will serve as a “laboratory school” which systems and methods can be “scaled up” and implemented throughout Pittsburgh’s high schools. The Systems Team received frequent input from local educators and the Pittsburgh community to create a realistic starting point for a science and technology high school.

Students at PSTHS will receive a more personalized education. PSTHS will not have an academic requirement for admissions and will accept a diverse group of students, many of whom will be entering below grade level.

PSTHS highlights include:

- Technology infused wireless campus.
- A three-level structure that allows students to advance and graduate in three, four or five years.
- Unique courses aligned with 21st century university and employer expectations.
- A Professional Development System, eight-hour teacher day, extended school year and 80-minute course periods to provide time for enrichment for teachers and staff.

Technology

The infusion of technology into all aspects of PSTHS is essential to this science and technology high school. Students, faculty and staff are connected through technology used as both a curriculum and an administrative tool. PSTHS will be a wireless campus where students have constant access to information through a 1-to-1 laptop distribution system. The high school will include high-tech science labs and facilities. Students of PSTHS will use technology as a tool to enhance communication, problem-solving and team work.

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Three Level Graduation Structure

PSTHS will have a three-level structure which allows some students to graduate in three years but also gives some students an additional year to prepare for advanced courses. Associate, Manager and Executive Levels replace traditional grades 9-12. All students enter at an Associate Level, where students are introduced to a rigorous academic year that serves as a bridge from middle to high school.

Upon completion of year one, students will elevate to the Manager Level where they choose to enter one of the three academic concentrations: Natural and Physical Sciences, Social and Decision Sciences or Business and Information Sciences. Depending on their academic progress rate, students may advance to the Executive Level within two to six semesters. Executive Level students apply what they know to real world situations through a Capstone course and the Executive Experience.

Professional Development System

Teachers at PHTHS are contracted for eight-hour days and will have 149 minutes per day for professional development without students. This time includes an 80-minute planning period, 30-minute lunch and 39 minutes of contracted time before or after students arrive at school.

The Professional Development System provides intensive time-on-task and systems of collaboration and support, supports technology integration and 21st century skills instruction.

In Other Business

District's Charter Review Teams Present Recommendations for Three Charter Applications

The Board also heard recommendations from the District's Charter Review Teams to deny the charter applications for the following proposed charter schools:

- **Educations InnovationsLAB**
- **Polaris Academy**
- **Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy**

Education InnovationsLAB Charter School

The Charter Review team recommended the Board deny the charter application for Education Innovations LAB Charter School. The Applicant failed to provide a comprehensive plan of instruction to support the delivery of curriculum, a school improvement plan or any evidence of comprehensive professional development. The Charter Review Team cited the charter lacked a core reading program, support from the community where it wishes to be located and was not able to demonstrate its capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students. The Charter Review Team also cited the charter applicant did not provide expanded choice and cannot serve as a model for Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Polaris Academy Charter School

A lack of a curriculum, striking inadequacies within the education plans and failure to provide high school graduation requirements as required by State law, led the Charter Review Team to recommend that the Board deny the application of Polaris Academy Charter School. The Applicant also failed to demonstrate sustained support from the parents, teachers and the community and provide an expanded choice. The Charter Review Team also found the charter applicant does not have a plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities and bilingual or at-risk.

Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School

The Charter Review Team found that the Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School failed to demonstrate the basic education requirements for a charter school as required by Public School Code. The Review Team also reported the charter applicant failed to address how it has considered the needs of all students. The Charter applicant failed to provide a curriculum and measurable goals. Although proposed as a leadership school the applicant failed to mention leadership in any of its course descriptions.

District Charter Review Team – Education InnovationsLAB Charter School

- Cheryl Kennedy- Chair - Special Education Supervisor, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Frances Doyle - Curriculum Supervisor – Writing, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- John Garrow - Director of Child Accounting, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Lisa Gonzalez - Parent of a Pittsburgh Public Schools Student
- Regina Holley - Principal, Lincoln Technology Academy
- Craig Jackson - Principal, Student Achievement Center
- Reverend Darnell Leonard - East End Cooperative Ministries
- Rudley Mrvos - Principal, Conroy Education Center
- Susan Sauer - Curriculum Supervisor – Reading PreK-5, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Damen Taylor - Senior Accountant, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Vidya Patil - Chief of Construction, Pittsburgh Public School

District Charter Review Team – Polaris Academy Charter School

- Rhonda Taliaferro-Chair - Principal, CAPA High School
- Tracey Burke - Parent of a Pittsburgh Public Schools Student
- John Garrow - Director of Child Accounting, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Tracey Gilliard - Budget Development Supervisor, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Noel Hustwit - Special Education Specialist, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Robin Ittigson - Math Supervisor: Early Childhood – Grade 5, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Vidya Patil - Chief of Construction, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Gina Reichert - Principal, South Brook Middle School

District Charter Review Team – Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School

- Dalhart Dobbs –Chair - Principal, Student Achievement Center
- John Garrow - Director of Child Accounting, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Tracey Gilliard - Budget Development Supervisor, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Melvin Hubbard El - Parent of a Pittsburgh Public Schools Student
- Toni Kendrick - Principal, Allegheny Traditional Academy Middle School
- Vidya Patil - Chief of Construction, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Susan Wiegand - Special Education Specialist, Pittsburgh Public Schools

The findings and recommendations of the District’s Charter Review Teams are available by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at www.pps.k12.pa.us. A copy also can be obtained by calling the **Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920** or visiting the Division of Communications, Room 204, Pittsburgh Board of Education, 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

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