

Pittsburgh Public Schools

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The Plan for High School Excellence

Presented to the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education | April 10, 2007



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Board Goals

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1. Maximum academic achievement of all students
2. A safe and orderly environment for all students and employees
3. Efficient and effective support operations for all students, families, teachers and administrators
4. Efficient and equitable distribution of resources to address the needs of all students, to the maximum extent feasible
5. Improved public confidence and strong parent/community engagement



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Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Education adopted goals – March 2006

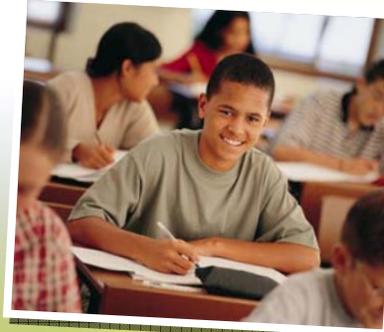
Excellence for All:

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A Roadmap for Improving Student Achievement

District Vision

Pittsburgh Public Schools will be one of America's premier school districts, student-focused, well-managed, and innovative. We will hold ourselves accountable for preparing **all children** to achieve **academic excellence** and **strength of character**, so they have the **opportunity to succeed** in all aspects of life.



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The Problem

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Our Current High Schools **excel9-12** Are Not Meeting The Needs of *All* of Our Students



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The Data Are Irrefutable... **excel9-12**

Too many students are:

Opting-out:

- Over 27% of the city's high school students choose to attend non-PPS schools

Dropping-out:

- Over 35% drop-out

Zoning-out:

- Of the remaining 11th graders, 49% are not proficient in reading and 60% are not proficient in math

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We have a plan:

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We Convened a Task Force

Jan Ripper, Principal on Special Assignment
Nancy Kodman, Lead Principal on Special Assignment
Jennifer Leighty, Assistant to Chief of Staff

Executive Committee:

Susan Brownlee,	Grable Foundation
Joseph Dominic,	Heinz Endowments
George Gensure,	Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers
Dr. Alan Lesgold,	University of Pittsburgh
Nina Sacco,	Pittsburgh Administrators Association
Linda Serody,	Parent
John Young,	Former Acting Deputy Superintendent
Dara Ware Allen,	YouthWorks
Mark Roosevelt,	Superintendent
Dr. Linda Lane,	Deputy Superintendent
Lisa Fischetti,	Chief of Staff
Howard Bullard,	Executive Director of Middle/Secondary Schools
Dr. Paulette Poncelet,	Chief of Research, Assessment and Accountability



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Excel 9-12 Task Force

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Seppy Basili, Kaplan K12 Learning Services
Dr. Charles Blocksidge, Community College of Allegheny County
Honorable Kevin Cooper, District Judge
Ruth Howze, Parent
Rufus Jordan, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers
Jeffrey Laurensen, Teacher
David Malone, Gateway Financial
Dr. Indira Nair, Carnegie Mellon University
Ronald Painter, Three Rivers Workforce
Jeanne Pearlman, Pittsburgh Foundation
Gregory Peaslee, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Christine Seppi, Parent, Special Education Representative
Douglas Silinski, Parent
Gregory Spencer, Randall Enterprises
Michael Thorsen, Former Principal
Dr. Olga Welch, Duquesne University
Yolanda Wilkins, Teacher
Doris Carson Williams, African American Chamber of Commerce

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The Task Force Created a Vision

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The entire Pittsburgh Community, parents, teachers, leadership and the Board of the Pittsburgh Public Schools will provide resources and support so that every Pittsburgh Public High School student will:

- Feel welcome and safe
- Engage in relevant learning experiences
- Develop strong and respectful relationships with adults and peers
- Take ownership for learning
- Achieve high academic standards
- Graduate with a plan for the future

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We Agreed on Core Principles

- SAFE & WELCOMING SCHOOL** *School is a physically and emotionally safe place that supports learning*
- RELATIONSHIPS** *Personalized learning environment and connections to teachers, peers, and the school*
- RIGOR** *High academic expectations for all students; engaging and demanding content and teaching*
- STUDENT SUPPORT** *Special help to keep students on track*
- RELEVANCE** *Prepare and connect students to the real world*



And We Listened...



Input From Many Stakeholders

High School Reform Task Force

- Weekly meetings of internal team and of executive committee
- Two major task force sessions
- National and local high school visits
- *Student for a Day*

Administrators

- 12 meetings with principals, assistant principals, and executive directors

Students

- 13 meetings with students
- *Student for a Day*
- Student video interviews

Input From Many Stakeholders

Teachers and Counselors

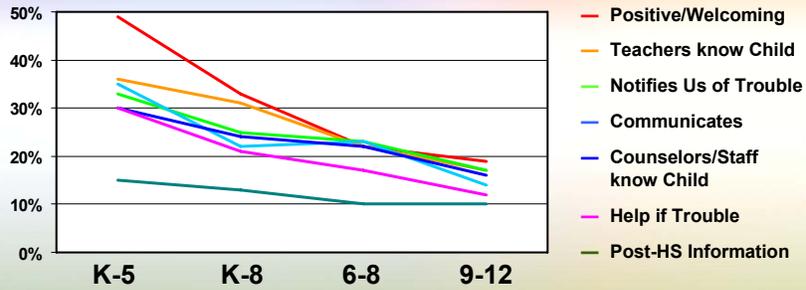
- More than 10 meetings with teachers, PFT leadership and counselors

Parent and Community Input

- Parent Focus Group
- Parent Telephone Surveys
- Parent Mailed Surveys
- *Excellence for All* (EFA) Parents Meetings
- *Student for a Day*
- Community Forum: A+ Schools

Parents Want More For Their Children

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Percentage of parents with positive feelings about a child's school decreases markedly as the child gets older.

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Another City's Perspective

Dr. Bonnie Copeland
Former CEO, Baltimore City Schools

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High School Reform in Baltimore

- **Three guiding principles:**
 - Academic Rigor
 - Effective Leadership and Instruction
 - Small Supportive Structures
- **Received \$21+ million from Gates and 9 other national and local foundations**
- **Reform phased-in over five-years**
- **Created six new innovation high schools**
- **Reduced average size of comprehensive high schools from 1500 to 600 students**

Lessons Learned in Baltimore

- It takes time and money
- It's important to start with 9th grade
- Choice matters
- It's much easier to create a new high school than to restructure an existing one
- Culture and rigor are more important than school structures

The Pittsburgh Advantage

- A Board committed to district reform and improved student achievement
- A committed community task force and a strong Academic Leadership Team
- A district-wide core curriculum
- Literacy and math coaches in every school
- Extensive professional development for our school leaders, coaches and teachers in content and pedagogy

The Pittsburgh Advantage

- Significant financial resources per pupil compared to other districts
- Low teacher to student ratio
- Manageably sized schools
- You're moving in the right direction

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The Plan for High School Excellence

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A Five-Year Plan

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- We have exciting new initiatives for Years Two through Five, including university partnerships and theme-based schools
- In Year One, we focus on the core unmet needs of our students
- This work is complex and will require a significant shift in district and school culture

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Remember the data...

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Too many students and families are:

- **Opting-out**
- **Dropping-out**
- **Zoning-out**

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*“We must have more
passion for change than
resistance to change.”*

Dr. Willard Daggett
Pittsburgh Presentation, August 17, 2006
“Remaking Our Schools: The Future Perfect”

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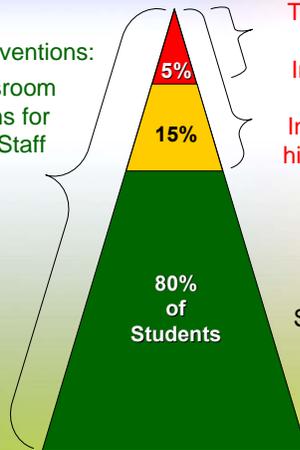
*Over the next five years,
we will move from
pockets of excellence
to a System of Excellence*

*Safe and Welcoming
Schools*

Providing a Continuum of Positive Behavior Support

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Primary Interventions:
School Classroom
Wide Systems for
All Students Staff
and Settings



Tertiary Systems
for Students
Interventions for
specialized
Individualized for
high-risk behavior

Secondary
Interventions:
Specialized Group with
At-risk Behavior

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Making It Happen

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Train all school-based staff on:

- Positive Behavior Intervention Support Model (PBIS)
- Cultural Competency - Diversity
- Trust and Team Building
- Differentiated Instruction
- **Consistent** enforcement of Code of Student Conduct
- Active Student Engagement
- Customer-service

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Making It Happen

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Teach students to act appropriately by:

- Modeling acceptable behavior
- Implementing the PBIS model
- Utilizing the expertise of the PBIS model, including Behavior Specialists

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Intervening Effectively

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- Increase opportunities for school social workers to assist students and families through the support of district-wide Attendance/Truancy Officers
- Modify long-term suspension policy to keep students in a school environment
 - Establish alternative learning settings outside the home school
 - Assign 4-10 day suspensions to the alternative learning settings
 - Provide opportunity for learning rather than sending students home

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Providing Intensive Intervention

CEP Partnership – a new Alternative Education Center

- Establish four gender-separate learning communities within the Clayton facility
- Serve the needs of 432 chronically-behaviorally challenged students in grades 6-12
- Provide intensive behavior and mental health interventions as a part of student's academic day

Implementing CEP

- Create criteria and process for entry into the program
- Identify students grades 6-12 with chronic behavioral needs who will benefit from this level of support
- Plan and conduct community meetings to inform all stakeholders of the mission of this partnership
- Monitor the rigor and implementation of the district's curriculum in all academic areas
- Review behavior plans of students and assist CEP in securing community mental health partnerships
- Design a transition plan for a safe and welcoming return to a PPS school

Ensuring Consistency and Equity

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- Create a system for ongoing review of discipline data
- Reorganize administrative support in Student Services to provide technical assistance to schools and ensure consistent implementation
- Provide professional development to central staff and hearing officers to ensure consistent implementation of the Code of Student Conduct
- Institute an internal review process for Hearing Officer recommendations that differ from school administrator recommendations

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Student Support

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High School Readiness: It Starts in Pre-K

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- Identify student needs early, intervene immediately and ensure appropriate follow-up
 - Flexible grouping, tutoring, extended day, Saturday and extended year programs
- Implement an enhanced Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) model
- Work with the Harvard Family Research Project to develop strategies to increase family involvement
- Conduct full-day Regional Extended Learning Summer Camps for grades K-8

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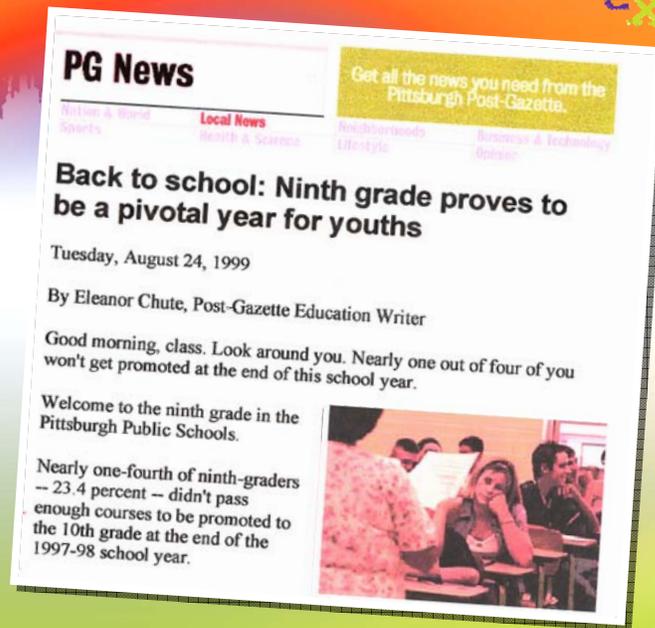
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Relationships

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Building the Bridge to 9th Grade

- Build a system-wide structure between middle grades and high school
 - Arrange meetings between middle grade and high school staff members
 - Schedule exchange visits between middle grades and high school students and staff
 - Coordinate high school staff discussions with 8th graders
 - Conduct parent meetings at middle grade and high schools
 - Share information about students' extracurricular activities, honors, awards and interests
 - Plan a high school fair for students and families

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Introducing the New 9's to High School

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- Provide a week-long summer orientation program
 - Teach students the District and school wide rules
 - Conduct team-building and trust activities
 - Connect students to school athletics, extracurricular and community activities and service learning
- Provide families with information about high school curriculum, graduation requirements and program offerings
- Inform families of the ways that they can become actively involved with the school and their child's education

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Creating a 9th Grade Nation

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- Establish a 9th grade leadership team led by the Assistant Principal
- Create a separate identity
- Design a mentoring program that reaches each student
- Provide schools options to implement proven programs:
 - 9th grade Academy/Teaming, Student Advisory class, AVID and Talent Development

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Increasing Academic Rigor

- Schedule double periods of accelerated instruction for 9th grade students who are not proficient in reading and math
- Provide timely interventions for students who are not proficient
 - Flexible grouping, tutoring, extended day, Saturday and extended year programs
- Organize instruction around the idea that effort produces results

Providing Extra Supports

- Expand the High School Summer Success Program to full day in each high school for over-age and 8th grade students who are not proficient
- Offer a Credit Recovery Program to 9th grade repeaters at their high school

Introducing CIVICS: Be The Change

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This is a new 9th grade course about young people beginning a journey of civic awareness, empowerment, and engagement.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

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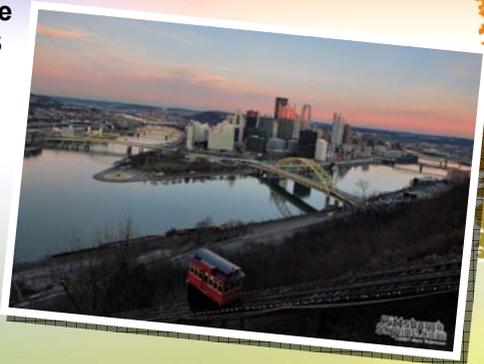
CIVICS: Be The Change

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The city of Pittsburgh will be the lens through which PPS students will examine civic values, as well as be a laboratory for investigating enduring civic issues.

Institutions involved:

- Heinz History Center
- August Wilson Center for African American Culture
- Andy Warhol Museum;
- Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild
- Jewish Community Center
- WQED



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A Rigorous Project-based Activity-oriented Course

Examples of Projects:

- Research and present a project on voting, a campaign issue, or a candidate for the Civics Fair at the Heinz History Center.
- Investigate a challenge faced by the City of Pittsburgh and present possible solutions at a city-wide PPS Youth Roundtable event.
- Engage in service-learning by researching a youth-related community or school issue and addressing that issue through the development of a hands-on project.
- Design a report for the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and/or local government officials on ways that Pittsburgh can thrive in the global economy.



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Student Voices

Through this nationally recognized program, students will investigate:

- Local government
- Policy Issues
- Political Campaigns





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“Nobody stays in school because of Algebra 2. What are adolescents all about?”

They are about connections, relationships. They stay in school because someone is showing they care, or because this is where they feel a sense of belonging... High achievement requires high support.”

- Rachel Poliner, Author of *The Advisory Guide*

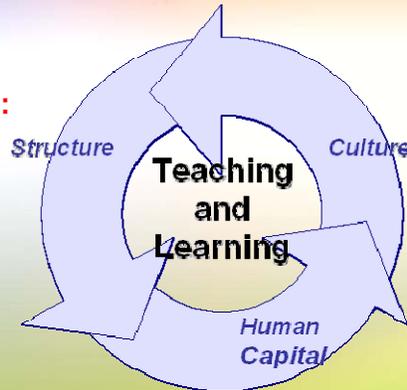
Rigor

Teaching and Learning at the Core

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Successful improvement plans are built around improving teaching and learning. They must include:

- A more effective structure or delivery model
- Comprehensive professional development to build human capital
- School cultures that support student learning



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Benefits of a Core Curriculum

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- **Comprehensive**
 - Includes all elements and materials that effect student learning
- **Uniform**
 - Students who transfer do not fall behind as every teacher receives same material and is held to same standard
- **Research-Based**
 - Aligns with nationally-recognized best practices and reform recommendations
- **Standards-Based and Rigorous**
 - All materials customized to meet state standards for proficiency, tested through regular benchmarking
- **Coherent**
 - All elements fit together vertically and horizontally

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The Core Curriculum Development Plan

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Subject	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
ENGLISH	<u>Grades</u> 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 CAS 9, 10	<u>Grades</u> 11, 12	
MATH	<u>Grades 9, 10</u> Algebra I/Algebra LAB/Geometry	<u>Grade 11</u> Algebra 2	<u>Grades</u> 6,7,8
SCIENCE		<u>Grades</u> 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	
SOCIAL STUDIES		<u>Grades</u> 9 (Civics), 10, 11	<u>Grades</u> 6, 7, 8

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Everything Depends on Quality Teaching & Learning

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- **Leadership Academy**
 - Principals, Assistant Principals, Support Administrators, and New Administrators
 - Monthly trainings focused on *Excellence for All* academic achievement strategies
- **Curriculum Coaching (Our District's P.D. Model)**
 - Institute for Learning (IFL) Content Focused Coaching
 - Extensive monthly training in all academic initiatives
- **Teacher training**
 - Delivered through four district in-service days
 - Monthly evening, Saturday, and summer workshops supporting all academic initiatives

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How Our Initiatives Help All Students Achieve

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Build student resilience through effective schools:

- Provide rigorous core academic programs to ensure equity
- Curriculum that is challenging, engaging and culturally inclusive
- Support for students who need it
- Climate that is welcoming and personalized
- Connectedness to school

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*Pushing from the bottom and
pulling from the top...
moving all learners to
higher levels of achievement*

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Excellence For All Goals for AP/IB/SAT

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By 2008-2009:

- Percentage of graduating seniors taking SAT will increase to 80%
- Increase participation and performance in AP and IB courses:
 - Number of African-American students that take AP courses will quadruple, and those taking IB courses will double
 - Number of students that take AP exams and IB diploma exams will double
 - Number of AP exam scores of 3-5 will increase 50%
 - Number of IB diplomas will double

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Increasing Student Participation in Advanced Courses & Exams

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More students to take AP/IB Coursework

- Require AP course selections in all secondary schools
- Require all schools to identify 15 to 25 students for AP and IB programs
- Meet with African American families to promote greater participation in the AP and IB Programs
- Principal will hold AP and IB Information Nights
- Provide mentors for AP and IB students

More students to take AP/IB Exams

- Require students enrolled in AP courses to take exam
- Supplement the cost of the AP exams
- Continue funding students to take IB Diploma exam

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Enhancing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program

Strengthen the IB Program

- Phase out upper-level International Studies courses to encourage students to take rigorous IB classes for their junior/senior year
- Pilot the A/B Block Schedule for the IB Program at Schenley High School

Why Block Scheduling?

- Provides more instructional time
- Successful block schedule at CAPA could be expanded to more PPS high schools

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Expanding Advanced Placement (AP) Offerings

AP Distance Learning:

- Pilot Distance Learning to increase the number of students who can select AP courses
- Create a mentoring program for new AP teachers
- Provide professional development for teachers to teach distance learning AP classes

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Preparing All Students for the SAT

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Offer SAT Prep Classes:

- Offer on-line SAT prep classes in all schools
- Increase the number of SAT preparatory classes
- Provide after-school SAT tutoring

Conduct Outreach to Students:

- Publish SAT dates and application procedures in school newsletters on ongoing basis
- Conduct grade level assemblies to promote SAT

Direct Students to Take PSAT and SAT

- Continue to centrally fund the PSAT
- Increase the number of student waivers and/or offer funding to pay for the SAT

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Relevance

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Personalized Counseling

- High School Counselors' roles will be enhanced to support students, families and teachers
- Counselors will receive professional development to:
 - Increase their ability to personalize career-counseling
 - Help them determine scholarship opportunities that best match student needs
 - Facilitate outreach with more students who do not seek out counselors on their own
 - Promote The Pittsburgh Promise to every student

Providing Choices

- Our high schools are not sufficiently aligned with student aspirations or with the changing Pittsburgh and world economy
- Over the next five years, we will re-design our high schools to offer high-quality choices for students and families
- This work will require careful planning and deep partnerships
- In Year One, we will inaugurate a community-partnership model at Westinghouse

Why Westinghouse?

It's the only high school with all of the following conditions:

- **Substantial under-capacity:** 45% of capacity
- **Substantial student loss:** 16% of students opted out through school choice in 2006-07
- School is in **corrective action**
- Recent **\$27,026,128 building renovation**
- **Cannot sustain comprehensive offerings**, sports and extracurricular programs due to small population



Partnering With The YMCA

- To increase academic achievement and enrollment of students in the Westinghouse feeder pattern
- To create a safe haven for students and provide positive activities and that utilize resources and agencies
- To expand connections between the community and Westinghouse HS and reshape the negative perception that exists in the community

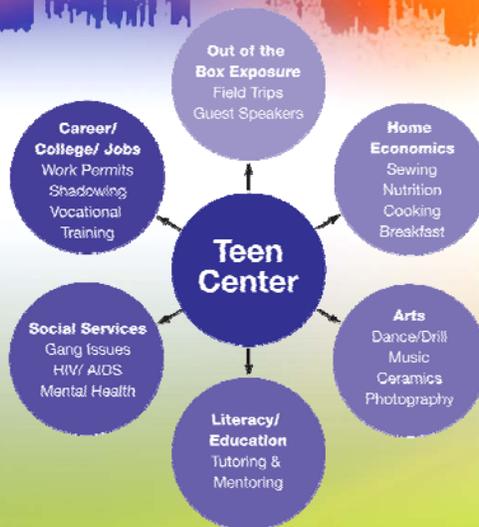


How Will This Work?

- **YMCA:**
 - Program Director will oversee the site during non-school hours; coordinate the schedule of daily activities
 - Ensure communication between Principal and collaborative agencies
- **Community Partners:**
 - Will provide needed services for Teen Center
 - Potential partnership with University of Pittsburgh
 - RFP Process: required to sign a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) clearly outlining their involvement in WHS
- **Westinghouse Leadership and Staff:**
 - Engage parents, faculty, alumni and community stakeholders
- **District:**
 - Funding for custodians, equipment, supplies, events and marketing to maintain the project

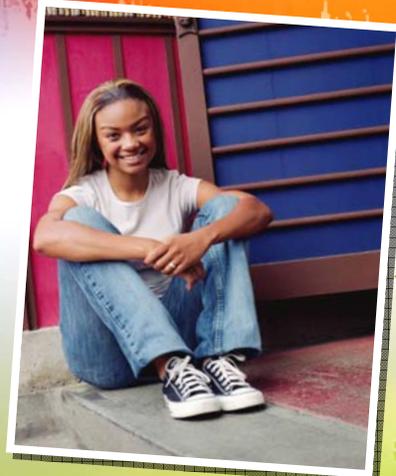


Teen Center – September 2007



Program Evaluation

- Program effectiveness will be formally evaluated twice each year.
- Monthly statistical reports will be submitted by service providers.
- Students that participate in these programs will be compared to their peers that do not attend to further assess impact and effectiveness.



Preparing for More Choices Years Two-Five

- **University Partnerships**
 - Contracted with Donna Rodrigues, founding principal of University Park Campus School in Worcester, and Sue Goldberger from Jobs for the Future
 - Meeting scheduled with all local university and college presidents on May 15, 2007
- **Science and Technology School**
 - Establish steering committee
 - Funding has been secured to pay for full-time staff to refine preliminary school model and plan implementation for 2008-2009 school opening
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**
 - Conducted CTE Audit
 - Appoint a Blue Ribbon Steering Committee
 - Schedule national and local site visits

Year One Initiatives Align with Our Core Principles

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	Safe & Welcoming	Relationships	Rigor	Student Support	Relevance
Safe & Welcoming	✓	✓		✓	
High School Readiness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9 th Grade	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Core Curriculum, Civics, AP/IB			✓	✓	✓
Choice, Westinghouse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Planning for Years Two-Five

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Also under consideration:

- Creating small, theme-based schools
- Establishing small learning communities and schools-within-schools
- Considering a later high school start time
- Increasing rigor of African-American History course
- Expanding distance learning
- Establishing student advisory programs
- Increasing mentorship/internship partnerships
- Exploring pilot schools and gender-separate schools
- Creating special leadership programs for high school administrators

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Getting Everyone on the Same Page

“...when everybody is on the same page and everybody has the same understanding of what the left and right hand is doing, then you have a better chance of success.”



“I think a contract of commitment would be great between all the stakeholders. In that way we’re pushing our students to do well and get them to the point of where they’re going to graduate.”

Getting Everyone on the Same Page

Launch the Pittsburgh Pledge

- A common shared commitment to clear expectations and high standards on the part of everyone involved
- We need everyone to step up for children and their futures
- If we don’t work harder at establishing safe and welcoming schools, the other initiatives that we are working on will be compromised

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The Pittsburgh Pledge

We know that education is the key to our future.

All of us – students, teachers, administrators, families, community, board members and other civic leaders – will take an active role in helping all students.

We pledge to:

- Have high expectations,
- Work hard,
- Achieve academic excellence,
- Keep our schools safe,
- Set a positive example,
- Be respectful and considerate of one another,
- Listen and be open to new ideas.

Together, we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving "Excellence for All."

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The Community's Pledge to Our Students

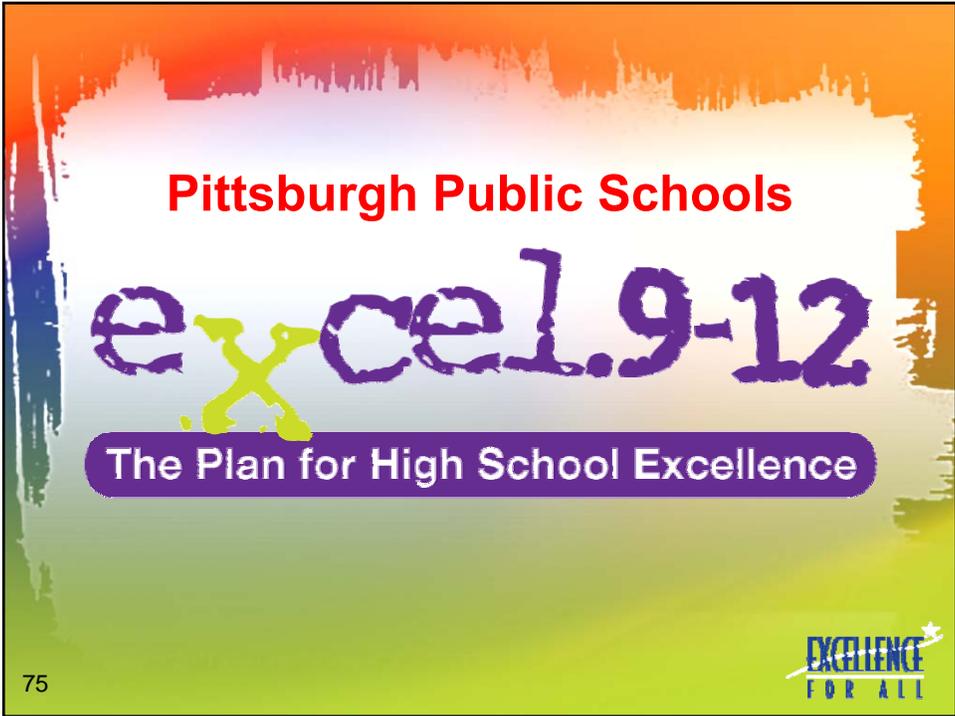
the Pittsburgh
PROMISE

CREATING A FUTURE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

The Pittsburgh Promise is the *community's pledge* to help all students to plan, prepare, and pay for education beyond high school

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