

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**ADDRESSING THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

Proposal



Pittsburgh Public Schools  
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## **OVERVIEW:**

*Pittsburgh Public Schools is requesting the submission of a proposal to provide student academic support and increase parent involvement at Pittsburgh Perry Traditional Academy. More specifically, the school seeks support assisting school personnel in addressing the academic needs of students; supporting the implementation of a newly designed disciplinary model; improving student attendance; and engaging students, parents of Perry students, and community members and organizations to become active partners in the Perry school community.*

## **HISTORY OF PITTSBURGH PERRY TRADITIONAL ACADEMY:**

Perry Traditional Academy was founded in 1871 when the North End School District was organized from portions of Reserve and McClure Townships that were originally part of old Ross Township. The North End District was annexed to the city of Allegheny in 1875 as the Tenth Ward. The school district was comprised of one schoolhouse in a one-room frame building located on East Street, an extension of Lower Perrysville Road. This building was abandoned in 1880, and the students were transferred to Milroy Avenue School. Ten years later, in 1890, a four-room building was erected at the corner of Perrysville Avenue and Semicir Street, the site of the present building. This school, known as the North End School of the Tenth Ward, was later reorganized and named the Fifteenth Ward School. Eight more rooms were added in 1899.

During the period of 1900 to 1915, the growing North End District was reorganized into the Twenty-sixth Ward. In 1913 the school was renamed the Perry School in honor of Oliver Hazard Perry, a commander of the American Fleet of Lake Erie in the War of 1812. The school quickly became inadequate for the rapidly growing district, and a new elementary school was planned and completed in 1922. Soon the need for a high school became evident, and the newly constructed Perry High School was dedicated on May 4, 1923.

The school was situated on 2.14 acres that were purchased at a cost of \$19,000. Approximately \$590,000 was spent on the building. An addition that included a cafeteria, shops, a gymnasium, and more classrooms was completed in 1923, and the Perry Junior-Senior High School was formally opened in September, 1923.

In 1966 the Pittsburgh Board of Education purchased the Perry Theatre that was located on Semicir Street. The building was remodeled, partitioned into five classrooms, and named the Perry Annex. Classes formally opened in February 1967.

During the 1978-1979 school year, the Pittsburgh Board of Education adopted a magnet program for two of its high schools. Perry High School was to become a traditional academy magnet and be open to students living anywhere in the school district. The school was renamed Perry Traditional Academy.

In 2012, Perry Traditional Academy reverted to a neighborhood school with partial magnet status.

## THE COMMUNITY

The community in which Perry Traditional Academy is located has seen many changes over the past fifteen years. The median income has decreased approximately 35% since 2000 to just over \$24,000, and 23% of residents live below the Federal poverty limit. Over 27% of the community residents are under the age of 20. The official unemployment rate for the Northside as a whole is just over 5%, though 50% of residents over the age of sixteen are actually unemployed. Some reports (specifically travel advisories for tourists) place the North Side community as one of the areas to avoid in Pittsburgh, with specific references to the reported crime rate. According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics Program, the National Average Crime Risk Index is 100. In the North Side community, the numbers are as follows:

- Overall Crime Risk 150
- Murder Risk 129
- Rape Risk 104
- Robbery Risk 275
- Assault Risk 191
- Burglary Risk 103
- Larceny Risk 137
- Motor Vehicle Theft 180

Gang violence is also on the increase, with a reported 13 loosely organized gangs in the immediate community.

## CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

In the 2012-2013, neighboring comprehensive high school, Oliver High School, closed. Those students were assimilated into the Perry Traditional Academy population and changed the full magnet status of the academy to a partial magnet and neighborhood school. The current population stands at approximately 850 students, 75% of whom are African American; 5% multiracial; and 20% white. The population is relatively equal in terms of gender—51% are male; 49% are female. 75.83% of the student population is currently eligible for the Federal free lunch program. The special education population doubled, from 115 to 230, when the Oliver students were enrolled.

## ACADEMICS

Perry Traditional Academy saw modest success in the results of the 2010-2011 state test results in literacy and math. Since that time, however, scores have steadily decreased. While the 2010-2011 results revealed that 53% of students scored at or above proficient on the Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) in literacy, by 2012-2013, that number dropped to 36%. Math scores on the PSSA reflected a similar pattern—34% of students scored at or above proficient in 2010, decreasing to 28% for the 2012-2013 administration.

Academically, students are categorized into four groups as follows:

- College Ready ( $\geq 3.0$  GPA and  $\geq 95\%$  attendance)
- Graduation Ready ( $\geq 2.5$  GPA and  $\geq 90\%$  attendance)
- At Risk ( $\geq 2.0$  GPA and  $\geq 80\%$  attendance)

- Critical (<2.0 GPA OR <80% attendance)

In the first report period of the 2013-2014 school year, incoming ninth grade student data reflects that of those entering the building at the College Ready level, 69% lost that status and moved into the Graduation Ready, At Risk and Critical categories. Additionally, the overall number of ninth graders in the critical category increased from 27% at the beginning of the school year to 35% at the end of the first report period.

This trend was repeated at the tenth grade level, with 26% of those entering tenth grade as “College Ready” moving into the Graduation Ready, At Risk and Critical Categories. The overall percentage of students in the Critical category itself moved from 48% in September to 52% by the end of the first report period.

The eleventh grade students fared better, with only 16% dropping from the College Ready category, while others moved up into this top tier. 8% of Perry students were College Ready in September. By the end of the first report, the number had increased to 23%. The increase in the number of Critical students, however, again increased from 40% to 45%.

Movement between tiers at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level was minimal and resulted in few overall percentage points in change.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Student attendance remains an issue of primary concern. Students missing more than 5% of the school year are categorized into three distinct groups: those missing 5-10% of the year are considered to be “at-risk”; those who miss 10-20% of the school year are considered to be “chronic”; those who miss more than 20% are considered “severe”. In the 2012-2013 school year, overall attendance numbers reflected the following:

- 21.7% of students were considered to be at risk.
- 33% of students were considered to be chronic
- 23.7% of students were considered to be severe

The number of those students in the area of “severe” has increased in the current school year (2013-2014). Data to date is as follows:

- 17.7% of students are now considered to be at risk.
- 23.8% of students are now considered to be chronic
- 35.6% of students are now considered to be severe.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Pittsburgh Public Schools and Perry Traditional Academy seek to address the following, in direct relation to District goals:

- Accelerate Student Achievement
- Eliminate Racial Disparities
- Become a District of First Choice
- Develop a Student-focused Culture

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

1. Develop and lead the implementation of an alternative plan to provide support to and engage the students who are persistently under-performing academically and demonstrating non-cooperative behaviors during instructional time and in the school's common areas.
2. Implement building-wide protocols for classroom instruction and classroom management to improve school culture.
3. Revise and overhaul the current on-site intervention program and facilitate implementation of the revised intervention program.
4. Facilitate development of and Implement a student engagement plan that will enlist the active support and involvement of students at Perry HS.
5. Facilitate development of and Implement a parent/community engagement plan.

## **PROPOSAL DETAILS**

All submitted proposals must include the following:

- A brief profile with general information about the firm/consultants.
- A concise written statement to demonstrate the firm's understanding of the project and scope of services.
- A list of project deliverables to be created with a detailed timeline and overall project completion.
- A proposed budget for the project.
- Credentials and qualifications of key personnel who will take responsibility for working directly on this project and the key contact person.

## **PROJECT SUPPORT**

Pittsburgh Public Schools will provide support to the consulting firm by providing existing plans and data and assisting with all initiatives.

## **TIME FRAME**

Electronic submissions should be sent to Mr. David May-Stein at [dmaystein1@pghboe.net](mailto:dmaystein1@pghboe.net) and are due no later than 5PM on December 30, 2013.

The selected applicant must be prepared to commence work on January 23, 2014 with completion to be scheduled for no later than June 30, 2013.