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For Immediate Release

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Superintendent and District Leaders Present Proposed Facilities Utilization Plan Aimed at Advancing Equity, Excellence and Efficiency

Future-Oriented Plan Provides Blueprint for Leveraging Educational Spaces within PPS to Enhance the Educational Environment for All Students

PITTSBURGH, PA April 3, 2024- Shifting the focus beyond mere facility arrangements, Superintendent Wayne N. Walters, EdD, alongside District leaders, presented a comprehensive vision for leveraging the District's footprint to enhance the entire educational landscape in Pittsburgh. Shared at this evening's Board Education Committee Meeting, the proposed facilities utilization plan, crafted under the directive of the Board of Directors, sets out to foster equity, excellence, and efficiency across the District. It outlines strategic measures to optimize facility usage, aiming to enrich the learning environment while addressing financial inefficiencies within the District. Recognizing the pivotal role of community input, the plan emphasizes outreach and collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure effectiveness and buy-in.

"Central to the success and refinement of a final facilities utilization plan is our steadfast commitment to community engagement. Through this collaborative effort, we aim to not only enhance our facility landscape but also strengthen our ties with the communities we serve," said Dr. Walters. "While no list of school closures is presented tonight, we are at a crossroads where some hard and uncomfortable decisions must be made to secure the viability of our public schools, ensuring that every student receives the educational experience they deserve."

Twelve Recommendations for Optimizing the Use of District Facilities

The 50-page proposal moves beyond an administrative exercise of compliance to present a future-oriented blueprint for leveraging the educational spaces within PPS to bolster the learning experience. As part of tonight's presentation, the District shared an overview of the current state analysis detailed in the plan, highlighting challenges related to facilities, staffing, finances and more. To address these challenges, leaders outlined **12 recommendations**, aligned to the recently approved strategic plan framework, for optimizing the use of the District's facilities, with an average age of 90 years, to enhance the educational environment for all students, including:

1. Creating safe, modern, and effective learning environments to ensure equitable access to high-quality education for all students.
2. Transitioning to a streamlined structure of foundational K-5 schools and developmentally responsive 6-8 middle schools to provide scalable pathways leading to high schools where students can make informed choices.



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3. Transforming schools into vibrant community hubs to accommodate a broad range of activities and services beyond the traditional school day.
4. Conducting a comprehensive review of existing feeder patterns to enhance equity and resource efficiency.
5. Implementing a facilities utilization protocol to strategically evaluate school spaces for modern learning and working environments.
6. Introducing a comprehensive educational enhancement plan tailored to address the diverse needs of educators and students.
7. Incorporating Gholdy Muhammad's five pursuits into the facilities utilization plan with a focus on cultivating joy.
8. Developing scheduling and time allocation models prioritizing literacy, math, STEM, art, music, world language, physical education, and career exploration opportunities.
9. Implementing a unified safety plan covering both physical and academic aspects.
10. Developing a holistic strategy to eliminate racial and disability disparities in education.
11. Revitalizing and updating all magnet programs to ensure equitable access and standardized admissions.
12. Establishing a financial management protocol to identify areas for cost reduction without compromising educational quality.

RFP for Facilities Utilization Plan Consultant Services Closes April 15th

To assist with the development of a final plan, the District will use consultant expertise. A Request for Proposals is currently active until April 15th at www.pghschools.org/rfp. The selected consultant(s) will conduct a comprehensive analysis of current facilities data and implement a community engagement strategy to gather input. Based on the proposed plan, data analysis, and community feedback, they will develop final recommendations for the Superintendent's consideration, with an earliest completion by August 2024. A Board vote on any changes to the District's footprint could occur as early as December 2024.

"While this plan fulfills the Board's mandate via resolution, we approached this work as an opportunity to enhance the educational environment for every single student, whom we always place at the forefront of every decision we make," continued Dr. Walters. "Our proposed plan is not the final chapter, but rather the opening pages of a longer, more inclusive story. We extend an invitation to the entire Pittsburgh community to collaborate with us on the difficult but necessary decisions we must make together to ensure equity, excellence, and efficiency across PPS."

To view the full plan, visit www.pghschools.org/facilitiesuplan.

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