

# *The Miller Experience*

2024-2025

Staff Handbook



Dear Pittsburgh Miller Families,



As we embark on the 2024-2025 school year, I am excited to share Pittsburgh Miller's School Handbook with you. This comprehensive guide is designed to provide essential information about our district's policies, procedures, and expectations, ensuring that we create a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment for all students. The school handbook is a valuable resource for understanding Pittsburgh Miller's daily operations, including attendance policies, academic standards, code of conduct, and extracurricular activities. We believe that clear communication and mutual understanding between the school and families are crucial for student success, and this handbook is a key tool in fostering that partnership.

We encourage all families, parents, students, and caregivers to review the handbook thoroughly and discuss its contents with one another. Familiarizing yourselves with these guidelines will help reinforce the values and standards we uphold at Pittsburgh Miller.

An electronic copy of the school handbook is also available on the school's website.

Your involvement and support are vital to our students' success, and we are grateful for your partnership in their education. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any aspect of the handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the main office.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We look forward to a fantastic school year ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wayne N. Walters  
Superintendent

Updated link for [Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Information Technology Acceptable Use Form](#) - This can replace the [PPS Policy 813.1](#) that we originally provided on page 21 of the template.

PSE Child Find added to **ADDITIONAL PPS DISTRICT POLICIES AND INFORMATION** on page 25 of the template:

Please use the link below to find out more about Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Protected Handicapped Students (504), and Services for Gifted Students: [PSE \(Special Education\) / Child Find Annual Notice \(pghschools.org\)](#)

### 2024-2025 Staff Roster

Acting Principal	Mrs. Lisa M. Stewart	lstewart1	Main office ext. 2106
School Clerk	Runnell Jones	rjones2	Main office ext. 2114
Student Data Systems Specialist			Main office ext. 2686
Nurse	Kia Roberson	kroberson1	Room 104 ext. 2107
Counselor	Brendan Duckett	bduckett1	Room 214 ext. 5269
Kindergarten (Homeroom) ITL	Lisa Stewart	lstewart1	Room 13a ext. 2340
Kindergarten (Homeroom)	Prasanthi Reddy	preddy1	Room 12 ext. 2342
PSE Educational Assistant	Terrill Green		Rooms 12 and 13a
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Michael Martini	mmartini1	Room 106 ext. 2357
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Phylicia Swain	pswain1	Room 114 ext.
Learning Support	Laura Steck	lsteck1	Room 13 ext. 2361
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Latisha Holland	lholland1	Room 107 ext. 2348
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Leigh Fox	lfox1	Room 113 ext.
Learning Support	Laura Steck	lsteck1	Room 13 ext. 2361
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Joan Germany (m)	jgermany1	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Jennifer Coligan	jcoligan1	
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Portia Carter-Bishop	pcarter1	Room 210
4 <sup>TH</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Dave Andrews	dandrews1	Room 202
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Homeroom)	Donna Ervin	dervin1	Room 209
Learning Support		j	
Autistic Support (K-2)	Maria Vondas Cidney Christian & Latonda Bey	mvondas1 cchristian2 lbey1	Room 112 ext. 2347
Academic Coach Math Coach	Leslie Walker Nikki MacIsaac	lwalker1 nmacisaac1	Room 205 ext. 2363
Reading Specialist			Room 12a ext. 2343
Physical Education	Mike Murray	mmurray1	Gymnasium ext. 2352
Visual Arts	Gina Lovaglio	glovaglio1	Room 12 ext. 2355
Instrumental Music	Owen Nash	onash1	
Library Services	Melissa Dwyer	mdwyer1	Library ext. 2351
Speech Therapist	Arianne Burnworth Lisa Asbury	aburnworth1 lasbury1	Room 204 ext. 2103
Pre K I	Graham	tgraham	Room 15 ext. 2112
Pre K II	Wilson	mwilson1	Room 16 ext. 2113
Pre K III	Reed and Jackson	kreed3; ajackson1	Room 17 ext. 2109
Head Custodian	George Allem	gallen1	Room 9 ext. 2110
Food Service Manager	Jamar Cosby	jcosby1	Cafeteria ext. 2111
Food Service Worker	Jamal Jones	jjones1	
PSE Program Officer	Kellan Thompson	kthompson1	

### Staff Hours

<b>Instructional Staff Sign in/out (Teachers and Assistants)</b>	<b>Staff members are expected to be in their assigned areas no later than 7:45 a.m.</b>	<b>7:45 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.</b>
	<b>All staff members should use the contactless sign-in upon arrival each morning.</b>	
<b>Secretarial Staff</b>	<b>Runnell Jones</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.</b>
<b>School Data Support Specialist- SDSS</b>		<b>7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Head Custodian</b>	<b>George Allen</b>	<b>Room 9</b>
<b>Cafeteria Supervisor</b>		<b>Cafeteria</b>

<b>Breakfast/Transition</b>	<b>8:10: a.m. - 8:25 a.m.</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>Umoja Celebration/Cafeteria</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> period</b>	<b>8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> period</b>	<b>9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> period</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> period</b>	<b>10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>Interventions</b>	<b>11:30-12:00 p.m</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>Pre K LUNCH</b>	<b>11:30a.m. – 11:55 a.m.</b> <b>(Pre-K lunch)</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> period-LUNCH</b>	<b>12:00 a.m.– 12:45 p.m.</b> <b>(K-2 lunch</b> <b>12:00-12:25 /3-5 recess)</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> period</b>	<b>12:45 p.m.- 1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> period</b>	<b>1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> period</b>	<b>2:15 p.m. –3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
<b>Homeroom/Dismissal</b>	<b>3:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>

# DAY ONE EXPECTATIONS

Please read completely before breakfast, lunch and dismissal to ensure proper procedures are being followed.

Students arrive at the building at 8:10 a.m. where they are greeted at a table on the sidewalk by Ms. Jones, SDSS and Nurse Kia. At this time, they will ensure the student's enrollment and place a lanyard with the student's name, grade and transportation info, if available. All parents present will sign in, leave their completed emergency contact form, and receive a backpack, if requested and a welcome back folder with pertinent school information enclosed. Once the student hits the red carpet, The School Team will lead them up the steps so that staff can welcome them, knowing that they have been successfully registered. Students are greeted by all available staff as they enter and pass through the metal detectors. All students will enter the cafeteria and sit at their grade level table after receiving their breakfast. Students will remain in the cafeteria until 8:25 when they will be escorted to their homeroom by their appropriate teacher.

## **BREAKFAST PROCEDURES:**

The Student Escorts are:

Cafeteria/Umoja Monitors: AS: Bey, Christian, Vondas (student led), (K) Green, (1) Lovaglio and (2) Steck, (3) Bishop, (4) Murray (5)

Ground floor-Lovaglio, Green and Murray

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Stairwell escorts: Steck

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Monitors: Bishop

All above-mentioned staff will assist in the cafeteria with getting their grade level to their table for breakfast and Unity Celebration. As Unity Celebration concludes each grade level teacher will escort their students to their homeroom to be received by their teacher.

**Transitions/Hallway**

Students will travel in one straight, quiet line at all times on the right-hand side of the hallways. We MUST always adhere to this. The teacher must always monitor students.

### **Student Arrival/ Breakfast**

In the morning when the door is open, all students will enter the main entrance and enter the cafeteria for breakfast and Umoja Celebration where they will remain until they are escorted to homeroom at 8:25.

### **Lunch/Recess (Snacks TBD)**

Grades K,1 and 2 will be escorted to the cafeteria by their homeroom teacher. Students are to be escorted **on time** to ensure smooth hallway transitions. They are to go and report to their assigned tables **Mr. Duckett will review the 3 BE's** and call the students up by table number. If Mr. Duckett is absent, Mr. Murray will take the lead.

At 12:20 grades 3 through 5 will be escorted to the cafeteria.

### **Lunch Duty Assignments (Will change based on need)**

**K-2 – Kindergarten: Green, Dwyer, First: Lovaglio, Second: Steck: Indoor Facilitator Duckett**

**3-5 - Grade 3: Bishop, Grade Four: Murray Grade Five: Outdoor Facilitator: Murray**

At 12:20 the Lunch/Recess transition is underway. Grades 1 and 2 already have their tables cleaned. Grades 1 and 2 walk in a line outside the front of the building, make a right and up the steps to reach the playground behind the playground. Students are to always stop at the parking lot first to see if there is any car movement. Kindergarten transitions to the side playground. During this time, grades 3-5 have already been called and lined up outside. They enter, in line, to the back entrance of the building. Once they get down to the cafeteria, they are to sit down similar to breakfast. Mr. Duckett will take the lead in the cafeteria calling students by table and lining homerooms up at the end of the lunch period.

**Please contact Dr. Starkes at 412.277.5600, by text if you are running late so that your duty can be covered.**

### **Dismissal**



At 2:55 PM, students will start transitioning with their assigned adult (busser escort, or walker escort). Walkers go down Stairwell B to exit out the front building where the crossing guard is. Bussers walk down to Stairwell A to the cafeteria to wait for their bus.

**Glossary:**

**Busser** – Busser students walk down **stairwell A** for dismissal. Any child who is not a walker is considered a “busser”. Not to be confused with a student who is a walker who catches the city bus. This includes the Sugar top Bus, Grace, Higher Achievement, Oakland Sunshine Day Care, Robotics, Bright Side, Squash, Wesley Center, YMCA, Intramurals and any other after-school activity. The purpose of having bussers report to the cafeteria is to eliminate confusion and prevent students from wandering the halls during dismissal.

**Walker:** A student who walks home, gets picked-up or takes public transit. Some students are walkers on some days and not on others depending on their schedule.

Homeroom	Busser Escort	Walker Escort	YMCA	Wesley	Sugartop	Bright side	A-step
	Duckett CAFE	Gardner					
KA							
KB							
1A	Tedesco/Steck	Martini					
1B							
2A	Holland	Fox					
2B							
3A	Bishop	Germany					
4A	Coligan						
4B							
5A							
AS K-2	Vondas, Christian, Bey Therapist						

**Miller African Center Academy: THE HISTORY**

“We must tell the story with continually accruing detail from the cradle to the grave.” From the mother’s knee...through the nursery, the kindergarten...grade school, high school, college and university,-through the technical journals, studies, and bulletins of the association –through newspaper, storybook, and pictures, we must tell the thrilling story...It is our task to make plain to ourselves the great story of our rise in America from “less than dust” to the heights of sound achievement...Then, armed with the pride and courage of his glorious tradition, conscious of his positive contribution to American life, the Negro may gird his loins and go forth to battle to return “with their shields on or on them.”~Mary McLeod Bethune

Like the Sankofa bird The forerunners to MACA were on a journey. They had a story to tell and a history of education to bring forth. They stepped into the future while retaining the history of excellence in education that had been passed on from the ancestors of Ancient Kemet, to Timbuktu, and later in the hearts of the men, women and children who were shipped to the Americas in the bottom of ships. In the land that enslaved them they were legally denied education but persisted with determination to learn to read, write and articulate their thoughts. The Bible was one of the first books that was assessable to them, and they read it secretly to be able to “teach the word and to learn the words.” Discarded books by the enslavers were also confiscated and utilized to learn to read and write as well. With purpose of mind and courage of conviction less than two generations after the Emancipation Proclamation, the tradition of education manifested itself in the basement of Bethel Church in Pittsburgh PA. This independent school was encouraged and promoted by the courageous fore founders of the African Education society. Later the school transitioned to become a Pittsburgh Public School and finally there was a proposal to restore the former emphasis of African Centered education for African children at Miller.

African Centered Education would arrive in the 20th century with a renewed emphasis and desire to regain the best of Africa, to promote academic excellence, social awareness, and moral stability for the future leaders at MACA.

The history of Miller Elementary School goes back to Jan. 16, 1832, when the Pittsburgh African Education Society was formally constituted under the leadership of John B. Vashon and The African Church (Bethel A.M. E.) The sole purpose of the society, as stated in its preamble and constitution, was to address the problem of ignorance, which was believed to be “The sole cause of the present degradation and bondage of the people of color in these United States.” Their constitution directed the Society to purchase property or a suitable building for the education of youth. The school started in the basement of the African church and the Society was its sole sponsor for four years.

In 1836 Pennsylvania held a “Constitutional Revision Convention that included the adoption of two important clauses. One clause established a residency and tax-paying requirement designed to eliminate Black voting. This clause removed “every freeman” possessing the qualifications to vote, by adding “White.” The intent, was to stop free Blacks from exercising their voting rights. The second clause known as the “pauper clause.” Had an unintended effect. The pauper clause guaranteed” free education to the poor” which read “the Poor to be taught gratis.” The law did not make a race distinction implying that “all children were entitled to a free education.

Learning of this news the African Society approached the Pittsburgh Board of Education through a letter stating that as taxpayers “for the schools” Colored citizens” received no benefits. The letter continued, arguing that the African Education Society had its own school and teachers to educate children of color but needed money to pay for this service. The society was requesting Board tuition for the children who could not pay.

After a year passed with no response from the Central Board a second letter went out on January 30, 1837, reminding the board under the “pauper clause” that poor children are entitled to be educated at eh public expense, with no distinction between white and coloured children. The letter resulted in the Central Board meeting on February 2, 1837, in which a resolution was passed to get a census of the “People of Color’ living in

one of three wards. Under the law each ward and its Director were required to provide for the education of its own children.

In February 6, 1837 Blacks met at their church to appoint a committee to ascertain the information requested. The president of the Pittsburgh Public Schools called a meeting February 10, 1837, to take up the question of “Establishing an African School” and by early 1838 the school was established as a Pittsburgh Public School under what was known as the “ward system.” The board hired John M. Templeton as the schools first teacher and principal of what was simply called the “African school”. For ten years the school was housed in the basement of Bethel Church and flourished with a student enrollment of 104. Conditions were crowded and unsanitary; The school was poorly equipped and “only bare necessities were provided and these in a meager fashion.”

By 1852, Dr. Delany was serving as the principal and student enrollment doubled to over 204 students. In 1855, because of the ongoing poor conditions, the Central Board of Education took control of the school. Overcrowding conditions caused the board to build a new school on Miller St. in 1867. The school was renamed Miller School because of its location on Miller Street in 1867. In 1881, Pennsylvania outlawed segregation by legislative enactment.

The Miller School underwent several renovations until 1905 when construction began on a new building to accommodate the influx of immigrants. By the time construction ended in 1838, Miller had lost its distinction as a “Colored school.”

For the next thirty years the school existed as a public school catering to the educational needs of the changing population.

By the late 1960’s Miller was mostly serving Black students. In 1998 a group of citizen approached the Pittsburgh Board to revert back to an African school in name and practice. In 1999 the school board approved the African centered school. Its name was changed to Miller African Center School and later to African Centered Academy now housed in the McKelvy school building. This information continued in this history was

obtained from the charter of Pittsburgh African Education Society dated January 16, 1832, minutes from the 7th and 6th Ward Committee on Colored School, Helen Halls' notes on Miller School history, teachers at Miller African Centered Academy and elder community members. July 10, 2017.

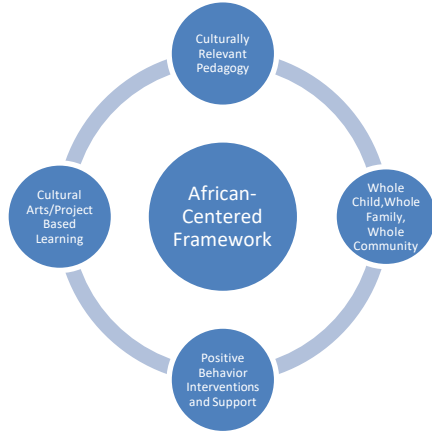
Compiled by the African Centered History Committee

**Vision Statement:** We exist to educate, empower and enlighten our students, welcoming their brilliance and higher level thinking. We aspire to create a culture of scholars who acquire self-actualization through the Principles of Nguzo Saba and virtues of Ma'at, placing African Centered education at the center of learning.

**Mission Statement:** Our mission is to ensure that children at Miller receive a values-based education grounded in a foundation of Afrocentricity that will prepare them to be competent, confident, and conscious members of society. We will hold ourselves, and one another, accountable for uplifting all children and being an extension of the home as students achieve academic excellence and strength of character. We commit to showing mutual respect, cultural equity and balance, empowering our children to make productive contributions to their immediate community and world. Miller African Centered Academy will place people of African origin at the center of our learning and we will give honor and respect to our ancestors, community and selves.

## **MILLER AFRICAN-CENTERED FRAMEWORK**

Vision: *We exist to educate, empower and enlighten our students, welcoming their brilliance and higher level thinking. We aspire to create a culture of scholars who acquire self-actualization through the Principles of Nguzo Saba, Sankofa and virtues of Ma'at, placing African Centered education at the center of learning.*



### Tenets of African Centered Learning at Pgh Miller

- **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**
- **Whole Child, Whole Family, Whole Community**
- **Cultural Arts and Project Based Learning**
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: How we operationalize equity in the classroom?

In PPS, CRP is a framework for teaching that empowers learners by using cultural referents to support construction of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Essentially, teachers use learners' lived experiences, backgrounds, and knowledge to authentically engage students in rigorous learning that develops academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994). (Academic/pillars of success)

Cultural Arts programming serves as a critical component of African Centered Education. The aim of the program is to engage students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in diverse developmental processes that will positively impact growth in the areas of cultural awareness, positive racial identity, artistic skill development, social-emotional health, and holistic wellness.

Whole Child, Whole Family, Whole Community Our goal is to develop holistic wellness within our school community, providing social, emotional and mental health supports for children, families and staff.

#### Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

By utilizing the Principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma'at, we will establish a standard for conduct that is consistent with excellence inside of African culture.

**Nguzo Saba Foundation**

The foundation of our instruction is a value system known as the Nguzo Saba. Kiswahili for (Seven Principles), Founded in 1965 by Dr. Maulena Karenga, Ph.D., the Nguzo Saba was developed and proposed during the Black Cultural Revolution in the Sixties as a necessary minimum set of principles by which Black people must live in order to begin to rescue and reconstruct our history and lives.

1. UMOJA-UNITY
2. KUJICHAGULIA-SELF DETERMINATION
3. UJIMA-COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY
4. UJAMAA-COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS
5. NIA-PURPOSE
6. KUUMBA-CREATIVITY
7. IMANI-FAITH

## **NGUZO SABA PRINCIPLES**

The foundation of our instruction is a value system is Nguzo Saba, Kiswahili for (Seven Principles). Founded in 1965 by Dr. Maulena Karenga, Ph.D. the

Nguzo Saba was developed and proposed during the Black Cultural Revolution in the Sixties as a necessary minimum set of principles by which Black people must live in order to begin to rescue and reconstruct our history and lives. The Nguzo Saba, at the core of the annual Kwanzaa celebration, are social principles dealing with ways for us to relate to each other and rebuild our lives in our own image.

1.UMOJA-UNITY: To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

2.KUJICHAGULIA-SELF DETERMINATION: To define ourselves, name ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined and spoken for by others.

3. UJIMA-COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY: To build and maintain our community together: to make our brothers and sisters problems, our problems and to solve them together.

4. UJAMAA-COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS: To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit together from them.

5. NIA-PURPOSE: To make as our collective vocation the building and development of our communitiy in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. KUUMBA-CREATIVITY: To do always as much as we can in the way that we can in order to leave our communtiy more beatiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

7. IMANI-FAITH: To believe with all our hearts in our parents, our teachers, our leaders, our people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

### **VIRTUES OF Ma'at**

Ma'at (PRONOUNCED Mu-aht) was the Ancient Egytian concept of order-law, morality and justice. In addition to the Principles of Nguzo Saba, Pgh Miller encourages our students, staff, teachers and parents to demonstrate the



general RULES OF Ma'at as another way to improve the conditions of our community.

These rules include:

- **TRUTH:** I will always seek to know what is correct and I will not lie or speak falsely of my family or my race.
- **JUSTICE:** I will always be fair in what I do and I will not cheat myself, my family or my race.
- **RIGHTEOUSNESS:** I will always be correct in what I do and I will not allow others to influence me to do wrong to myself, my family or my race.
- **ORDER:** I will respect the natural order of the universe and I will not separate myself from that which gives order to myself from that which gives order to myself, my family or my race.
- **BALANCE:** I will strive to understand and respect the need to be complimentary and I will not be in conflict with myself, my family or my race.
- **HARMONY:** I will always be in rhythm with what is good and I will never be in opposition to what is good for me, my family or my race.
- **RECIPROCITY:** I will always strive to do the proper thing at the right time and I will not bring shame to myself, my family, or my race.

**The Power of Sankofa: Know History**



*Sankofa* is an African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is “*it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.*”

The word is derived from the words:

SAN (return),

KO (go),

FA (look, seek and take).

The Sankofa symbolizes the Akan people’s quest for knowledge among the Akan with the implication that the quest is based on critical examination, and intelligent and patient investigation.

The symbol is based on a mythical bird with its feet firmly planted forward with its head turned backwards. Thus, the Akan believe the past serves as a guide for planning the future. To the Akan, it is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future.

The Akans believe that there must be movement and new learning as time passes. As this forward march proceeds, the knowledge of the past must never be forgotten.

## **CEREMONIES/RITUALS**

## UMOJA CELEBRATION

Leader: Umoja Circle (Unity) is the foundation that begins each instructional day at Pgh Miller. The Umoja Circle reinforces positive values and principles and is also where all students and staff come together as one. The Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles (Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Purpose, Cooperative Economics, Creativity and Faith) are the basic concepts taught during Umoja Circle time.

Leader: Hotep Miller School Family

HOTEP (general body responds)

Leader: Please join us in singing the Negro National Anthem...

Leader: **Now please join us in reciting the**

### **MILLER AFRICAN CENTERED EDUCATION PLEDGE**

I **WILL** respect myself and others

by the way that I **Speak** and **Behave**.

I **PLEDGE** to learn so that I can teach and share my knowledge to make a better world.

I **PLEDGE** to show the 3Be's: I'll **Be safe, Be respectful and responsible.** (2claps)

I **PLEDGE** to be on time and present everyday.

I **PLEDGE** myself to learning by building my mind **and not allowing anyone to steal my joy!**

I **Owe** my skills and values to my ancestors, parents, community and self

I come to school to **LEARN**

And I will **LEARN**

I **Will** have a Good Day and always remember that my literacy is my liberation!

**Leader: What is Your Heritage?**

My heritage is one of greatness,

But I know I can do more

I must never do less, than those who came before.

What my mind can conceive

And my heart can believe

I can achieve!

**Leader:** We make our Umoja Circle to: Set the tone for our learning day. To remember the greatness of Africa. To remind ourselves that the potential for greatness is deep within each of us,

And to recall the deeds of our ancestors, who have helped us along the way and to get to where we are.

We've got (Nguzo Saba principle) and that means \_\_\_\_\_.  
(General body repeats). We've got (Virtue of Ma'at) and that means \_\_\_\_\_.  
(General body repeats).

Please listen to information about an ancestor that had \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her life and then say "Ashay" (ASHAY is commonly used in African American cultural ceremonies, like KWANZAA, to express positive acceptance to a statement. Much like AMEN meaning "And So It is so. This portion of the circle can be about an ancestor, an event, a school example, etc. It must tie into the principle of the month)

**Leader:** Today remind yourselves and each other that the potential for greatness is already within us. Let us all pull together today and everyday!  
Harambee (7x)

**Prepare to Dismiss**

## **CLASSROOM PROTOCOLS/ AFRICAN-CENTERED TEACHING**

The African Centered Academy will offer a core curriculum that every student will be expected to successfully complete at each grade level. It will be based on the current PPS Curriculum with supplementation of the Principles of Nguzo Saba, the virtues of Ma'at, and other African Centered values, beliefs and content throughout. Formative and summative data will be used to measure student growth. Students will complete a culminating project as an additional indicator of understanding. This project-based learning experience will provide students with a tangible product that demonstrates evidence of learning and understanding of the topic.

Teacher buy in and commitment to supplementing the curriculum for a more African Centered experience is essential to its impact on student learning. All teachers are expected to contribute to this work in a meaningful way, positioning themselves as both learners and leaders to ensure that this work takes place.

Daily Classroom Just Write Ritual-As students arrive each to homeroom morning, students will engage in a Just Write prompt to note/write their thoughts about where they're showing up on the compass and the supports, virtues or principles needed to have a productive learning day.

Social Studies will be the primary vehicle used to launch our African-Centered infusion. However, it is expected that all content areas will reflect the African Centered learning experience.



- ELA: Use African (folklore, proverbs, myths, etc) to connect all content areas to communication. Therefore, facilitating self-identity and development.




- Math: identify and apply mathematical concepts to self, community and the world.
- Science, Physical Education: Identify and connect self to the universe and all living things. Promote personal and community wellness and fitness.
- Arts: (Performance arts, visual arts, music) Identify creative, harmonious relationships between the arts and all content areas: explore the creative connections between self and the universe.
- Technology: To acquire skills and project future applications that will enhance the functional capacity in all content areas.
- Community Building: to develop and experience a vision of service and production; organizational skills and community projects that connect the student to self, family, community and the world for the betterment of mankind.

## AFRICAN NATIONS

Grade level and special subject teachers Nation and Country

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Nation</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Location</b>
Kindergarten	Maasai	Kenya	East Africa

			
First Grade	Hausa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nigeria:</li> </ul> 	Central Africa
Second Grade	Yoruba	<p>Ghana</p> 	West Africa
Third Grade	Wolof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senegal:</li> </ul> 	West Africa
Fourth Grade	Berbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cameroon:</li> </ul> 	Northern Africa
Fifth Grade	Zulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Africa</li> </ul> 	South Africa
Vondas	Mbuti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Democratic Republic of the Congo:</li> </ul> 	Central Africa
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Nation</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Location</b>
Art	Berbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morocco: Lovaglio</li> </ul>	North Africa

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>  </li> </ul>	
Gym	Bemba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Zambia: Murray</b> </li> <li>  </li> </ul>	East Africa
Music	Chaga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Tanzania:</b> </li> <li>  </li> </ul>	East Africa



## **OBSERVANCES AND HOLIDAYS**

The celebration of rituals and ceremonies are salient features of African culture, encompassing the spirituality of an ancestor by defining and identifying ourselves as one with all creation.

### **African Days Calendar**

January 16th Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday

January 24th: Martin Delaney Day of Passing

February (last school day): Umoja/Unity Dinner

February: Black History Month

February: Living Museum

May 19: Malcolm X Day

May 18: Bring Your Father to School Day

May 25: African Liberation Day

June: Pittsburgh Miller PreK-5's Carnival

June 16: Demark Vessey Day

June 19: Juneteenth

July 17: Maafa Commemoration

August 11: Marcus Garvey Day

September: Black Reading Month

October 16: The Million Man Day of Atonement

October 31: Ancestors Day

December 26: Kwanzaa

## **AFRICAN-CENTERED TERMS**

*Female Staff: All are referred to as Mama (first name) i.e. Mama Margaret*

*Male Staff: All are referred to as Baba (first name) i.e. Baba Will*

Female students: sisters

Male students: brothers

Jambo: Hello

Si Jambo: Hello in return

Habari gani? What's the news?

Njema Asante Habari Gani: No worries. Thank you

Asante Sana: Thank you very much

Tafadhali: Please

Karibu: Welcome

Una fahamo: Do you understand?

Nina fahamo: Yes, I understand

Ago: Are you listening?

Amay: Yes, I am listening

Choo: Bathroom

Heshima: Respect

Mtoto: child

Veggie Back: To continue or support the thought provided by another:  
Alternative to piggy back

Mtoto: child

Watoto: children

Mwalimu: teacher

Walimu: Teachers

Wazami: Parents

Kuzaliwa: Birthday

Kuzaliwa Furaha: Happy Birthday

Jina Langu: My name is...

Nisamehe: Pardon me

Tutaonana: Until we meet again

Lala: A round of applause (as in, “Please give them a lala”)

Ase’: Let it be so (stated after libation is poured to the ancestors, or when correct words are spoken: as in affirming the true words)

Wanafunzi: student

Asili: Seed or “Word of Wisdom”

Moja: 1 (one)

Mnili: 2 (two)

Tatu: 3 (three)

Ritual: a cultural practice done during ceremonies and special events

## **Teacher Profile – Commitment to Service**

Between

Miller African-Centered Academy

And

Teacher/Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

This commitment to service sets for the terms and understanding between the Miller African-Centered Academy and

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**African Centered Education Definition:** Dr. Molefi Asante, the founding father of Afrocentric Education defines Afrocentric education as giving the African child ownership of knowledge in the classroom, not made to feel like a renter of information. Dr. Asante states “Afrocentric education locates the child in his or her own intellectual and historical space and radiates to other spheres of knowledge.” It validates the child’s experiences and builds new knowledge linking the two together. African-Centered education places people of African origin in control and at the center of their lives and their study. The child is placed and grounded at the center and all cultural groups are respected. African-centered education prepares students from conception to ancestry to live and serve the community, transmitting knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for the betterment of humanity.

**Philosophy:** African Centered Education’s philosophy is to foster an understanding and willingness to be guided by those principles that characterize a righteous and just person. Moral wisdom is the service of social and human good. The object is to restore and enrich righteousness through the practice of unity, self-determination, purpose, truth, justice, harmony, righteousness, reciprocity, order and balance. The trouble of one is the trouble of all.

**Vision Statement:** We exist to educate, empower and enlighten our students, welcoming their brilliance and higher level thinking. We aspire to create a culture of scholars who acquire self-actualization through the Principles of Nguzo Saba and virtues of Ma’at, placing African Centered education at the center of learning.

**Mission Statement:** Our mission is to ensure that children at Miller receive a values based education grounded in a foundation of Afrocentricity that will prepare them to be competent, confident, and conscious members of society. We will hold ourselves, and one another, accountable for uplifting all children and being an extension of the home as students achieve academic excellence and strength of character. We commit to showing mutual respect, cultural equity and balance, empowering our children to make productive contributions to their immediate community and world. Miller African Centered Academy will place people of African origin at the center of our learning and we will give honor and respect to our ancestors, community and selves.

**Staff Expectation:** It is the expectation that all teaching staff employed at Pittsburgh Miller be open-minded and willing to implement the rituals and ceremonies outlined in the African-Centered model. This includes:

- A belief in the vision and mission statement of the school and the need to provide Miller scholars with academically rigorous instruction, every day from bell to bell ensuring that ALL students show growth in all content areas from September to June.
- Must find strategies and best practices that allow you to demonstrate Kuumba within the core curriculum to ensure that that African culture and perspective is evidenced within lessons
- An openness to personal and professional development understanding culture and heritage of self and that of your students
- A willingness to be living examples of Nguzo Saba and Ma'at
- Must be willing to facilitate Umoja celebration at least one per school year-This occurs each morning.

The entire school community will gather in the gymnasium at the conclusion of breakfast and one grade level team along with our Umoja Celebration Leader will facilitate Umoja Celebration. This consists of daily pledges, affirmations, birthday recognitions, staff/student announcements, ancestor recognition, review of Nguzo

Saba Principle and virtue of Ma'at to be highlighted during that particular month.

- Daily Classroom R.Circle/Just Write/reflection time-At conclusion of Umoja Celebration, students return to their homeroom classes for a brief classroom meeting (5-7 minutes in length), that reflects on the students' culture, interest, values. This may include a check in on the courageous conversations compass, the reading of a proverb, affirmation etc...
- A commitment to communicating with families about their child's progress and finding creative and innovative ways to include the school/community into your classroom environment. Attendance at afterschool parent/school/community events.
- Weekly recognition of your Sankofa Scholars; Quarterly recognition and a hall display of your honor, high honor and citizenship honor students.
- Implementation of the Supplementary African-Centered Social Studies curriculum, with a priority on displaying project based student work both in and outside of your classroom.
- All classroom and hallway displays and themes will be decorated to reflect the culture, history and values of Africa (your African country should be highlighted)
- Every classroom should maintain live plants ( In African culture, live plants symbolize life, and positive energy)
- Every classroom will have a classroom library and a designated family meeting space.
- Every classroom will post the Nia for the day (Common Board Configuration)
- Every classroom should have African artifacts present (See Ms. Young if you need assistance with this).
- Research on and culminating activities for at least one African country per school year
- Consistent Attendance at Personal and Professional Staff Development sessions

**Leader Profile – Commitment to Service Between**

Miller African-Centered Academy And

Dr. Margaret J. Starkes

This commitment to service sets for the terms and understanding  
between the Miller African-Centered Academy and

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- An embodiment of the vision and mission statement of the school.
- To lead from a place of centeredness and balance ensuring that traditional disciplines (e.g. math, science, language arts, writing), as well as morals and values (e.g. Ma'at and Nguzo Saba) are taught in order to provide children with a holistic educational experience
- An unwavering commitment to recruiting, hiring and supporting staff who can support the Academy's vision and will provide Miller scholars with academically rigorous instruction, every day from bell to bell ensuring that ALL students show growth in all content areas from September to June.
- An obligation to personal and professional transformation to ensure self-actualization and that of your students and staff.
- A willingness to be a living examples of the Principles of Nguzo Saba and Virtues of Ma'at
- A commitment to ongoing research and scholarship to address the question of what constitutes an African-Centered academy and the learning styles of African children
- A commitment to developing partnerships with parents, families and community partners to advance the work of the academy
- To ensure that all stakeholders exercise their agency, Umoja and Kujichagulia to address problems within the school and community.



**Student Profile – Commitment to Service**

Between

Miller African-Centered Academy

You can develop this with your students

## **Staff Related**

### **Administrative Meetings**

All staff is encouraged to schedule meetings with the Principal based on need. However, during the school year a time will be set aside by the Principal to meet with each individual staff member. The purpose of these meetings will be to foster understanding of the school's academic focus, provide encouragement in the work done for students' academic success, and discuss individual issues and concerns. In addition to these scheduled meetings, the Principal will strive to be accessible and open to all staff needs and in urgent matters will confer with staff without a scheduled meeting.

### **Administrative Requests, Reports and Records**

All documents, records and reports requested by the administrator, must be submitted on time. Consolidated reports required by Central Administration and completed in our office, require a great deal of time. Often these reports are based on information that requires a response from teachers and staff members. Tardiness in returning requested information delays the consolidation and/or scheduling of meetings which negatively impacts our school.

### **Administrative Rounds (classroom daily visits)**

The Principal is expected to be in classrooms 2-3 hours daily. Visibility is crucial to supporting student achievement and setting a tone for a positive and productive Community of Learning. When visiting classrooms, teaching should not be interrupted and teachers should continue to facilitate learning. Please inform your students that we are in their classrooms to observe student engagement in learning. Students will get used to our presence in class. Visits will not be a distraction.

## **Assessment Data**

Data will drive instruction at Miller ACA. Teachers are reminded that data comes in all forms, i.e. formal and informal tests, quizzes, completed activities sheets, conferences with students, observations, etc. Using a variety of data collection methods, allows the teacher to know the instructional needs of each student and plan appropriate lessons. It is expected that all teachers become expert at analyzing assessment data and utilize the information to effectively drive instruction that will meet the instructional needs of students.

Each grade level team teacher will meet with the Principal/Assistant Principal for monthly progress monitoring meetings. At that time, we will review data and discuss the strategies for differentiating instruction based on what the data tells us that each student needs.

## **Attendance – Staff**

Staff attendance at school is directly tied to the success of our school and student achievement. All absences (sick day, personal leave, travel, etc.) must be called into the AESOP System. If you need instructions on how to use the system, direct all questions to your designated ITL, not to clerical staff. If there is the possibility of being absent and there is a substitute in the building, please notify the school secretary and she will retain the substitute to cover the pending absence. This action will allow for continuity and lower the risk of not being assigned a substitute for the day.

Staff must apply for personal days at least two weeks in advance and travel days, at least four weeks. When administrative approval is received, call for a substitute. This will increase the chance of securing a substitute for the absence.

It is a school-wide procedure that staff calls our main office by 2:00 on the day of the absence to report whether or not they will be returning to work the next school day.

If a call is not received, the substitute will be retained. Staff members may lose a sick day if they return after a substitute is retained and there is not another placement for the substitute.

## **Audio Visual Equipment**

Copier, poster and laminating equipment is available to prepare teaching and learning materials. Repair of all AV equipment is costly. Teachers should make every effort to maintain the equipment and report any malfunctions immediately to the coordinator or the main office. Please notify the Asst. Principal if you are in need of any AV equipment to support your practice.

## **Auditorium**

Auditorium programs will usually be presented to the K-5 students together. When applicable we will separate students together for Pre-K, primary or intermediate programs. Student attendance at any auditorium program is a privilege!

Familiarize yourself with the auditorium seating chart (see Appendix) and review the seat assignments with your class. It is expected that teachers will supervise students at all times. Teachers should sit/stand “strategically” so that you are able to view/monitor your entire class. Since the auditorium is a special place for cultural programming, limit teacher talk and use signaling whenever possible. It is expected that we all model the expected auditorium behaviors in which our students will follow.

Students must be taught how to be an appropriate audience. At no time should they carry on conversations, slouch, put their feet on the furniture, “play” with distracting items or have food or beverage.

There will be no coats, hooded jackets (unless school dismissal is to be conducted from the auditorium) or chewing gum. We want our students to be engaged in the program presented, acting and interacting appropriately

The principal or designees will conduct dismissal from the auditorium. When entering or exiting, students will remain silent and orderly. Upon

the conclusion of the program, all teachers and students will wait to be dismissed.

Staff not assigned to a particular class should seat themselves in appropriate areas where they can adequately assist in monitoring students. Teachers should not cluster, but arrange themselves randomly throughout the space.

## **Bell Schedule**

The day will be divided into an 8 period schedule. The length of each period will be 45 minutes. Students will receive 7 instructional periods and a lunch period. Teachers' schedules include 6 traditional periods, a preparation period and a lunch period daily. We will be continuing the implementation of 30 minutes daily for interventions.

The change of class bell for students will ring after the 43 minute class time. Teachers and students must be prompt for every bell.

All receiving teachers are expected to greet students at their door each day with a smile and kind word. Seek out classes who fail to arrive within five minutes of the bell. Teachers are also encouraged to synchronize their watches/classroom clocks with the bell to eliminate confusion.

## **Calendars**

A school activity calendar will be generated monthly. The calendar will have input from teachers, administration, clerical staff, school staff and parent/community members. A large blank calendar will be hung prominently in the faculty lounge so that all persons can contribute. All staff should enter important dates (e.g. class field trips, programs, etc.) so that events conflicts do not occur and that all students, staff and parents are kept up-to-date.

In addition to the activity calendar teachers will receive either a yearly or monthly instructional calendar. This calendar will include dates of faculty/staff meetings, professional development trainings and other information relevant to creating an effective teaching and learning

community. These tools are central to adequate communication and we must all share in the responsibility of their effectiveness.

### **Cell Phones**

Do not make or accept personal calls during class. Please honor our school norms by being engaged with your students at all times. I recognize that we are professionals. Get brief coverage in the event of personal emergencies.

### **Change of Venue**

If for any reason, a teacher decides to conduct his/her class in another space other than the assigned classroom, i.e. computer lab, outside space, another colleague's room, that teacher must notify the office prior to the change. A note on your classroom door is not adequate. Administrators are responsible for all children and must be aware of their whereabouts in the event of an emergency, parent/guardian request for early dismissal, etc.

### **Classroom Conditions**

Besides nightly sweeping, emptying trash, and weekly vacuuming, our custodial staff is not expected to do specific kinds of daily cleanup in your classrooms. Students must be taught to straighten their desks, chairs and work areas, pick-up reasonable trash, pencils, crayons and put books and instructional materials away. Keep in mind that leaving materials such as pencils, crayons and erasers to be swept away as trash has a definite effect on decreased amounts of teaching supplies. All classrooms are expected to be kept neat, clean, uncluttered and conducive to student learning. Please ensure that your classroom is orderly and clean at the end of each school day.

### **Clerical Interruptions**

Just as we shall try to limit classroom interruptions, we would expect the staff to extend the same courtesy to our secretary. Our main office clerical staff is essential to the smooth running of Miller.

The secretary cannot be used to take or make personal calls for teachers, call students' homes (except in the case of student illness), supervise or discipline students. Her total time must be dedicated to the organization of Miller.

### **Committee Memberships**

In order to operate an effective school, all members of Miller ACA staff must participate on appropriate committees that will generate ideas, create programs/activities for professional growth and plan/implement student extracurricular activities. All content teachers at Miller will serve on either the PLC/Instructional Cabinet or PBIS/Discipline Committees.

In addition, teachers are encouraged to sign up for any additional committee to serve on. There are other committees important to the operation of the school for which staff members are expected to volunteer, i.e. Discipline, EAP, PSCC, etc. Full participation of the entire Miller staff membership insures the work of the many school committees will be distributed in manner that is fair and equitable for all.

### **Communication**

Miller wishes to keep open as many avenues as possible for consistent parent/teacher communication. This includes Parent/Student Handbook, Home-School Notebooks, Facebook, Instagram, Class DOJO, Talking Points, Blackboard Connect Phone system, monthly calendars, letters hand-carried or mailed, progress reports, conferences, telephone calls, grade level parent meetings and report cards.

Each teacher is expected to develop a system for motivating students and effectively communicating with parents on a regular basis.

### **Computers in the Classrooms**

All classrooms have student computers and student use of computers is expected. Teachers should plan lessons that include computer use on an ongoing basis. Intermediate and primary grade students should have research experiences using a variety of software and the Internet. Due to

the confidential programs and information on teacher's computers, students are not permitted at any time to use the designated Teacher's Computer.

The School District has designed an agreement form that all students and parents must sign to ensure integrity when using the Internet.

These forms are included in the Back-to-School information distributed by the School District. Each teacher is responsible for consistently monitoring all students using the Internet within their classroom.

Teachers should not use computers during instructional time except for demonstration purposes. Use of any computer during the regular school day should be limited to prep and lunch times.

### **Copiers**

The Copy machine is available for use by the entire staff in the faculty lounge as well as on the second floor.

“Down time” on copiers is frequent and the result of overuse or misuse. Report all copier problems to the office or designated monitor immediately for service. Please do not walk away and leave a bad situation waiting to get worse. Clear the copier, get help or leave a note that the machine is out-of-order. Remember, repairs are costly and taken out of the school-based budget. Please handle copiers with extreme care.

*Suggestion:* Avoid making copies on the run. Take time to make copies for your lessons and be certain that they are aligned to the district-approved curriculum.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Board Rule 740 – Corporal punishment in school is forbidden. Please do not put your hands on children.

### **Correspondence**



All teacher-written correspondence directed to parents and community members must be pre-approved by the Principal. In most cases this will be the Principal. It is imperative that our leadership team is aware of all that goes on in our building.

All correspondences must be legible and neat, brief and clear, with no spelling or grammatical errors. Please solicit help from colleagues for editing assistance. Written communication should reflect our own education and professionalism.

All letters, memos, etc. must contain the following statement: “We are an equal rights and opportunities school district.” All magazines, handbooks, pamphlets, etc, must contain the following: “The Pittsburgh School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by Title II of ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

The Miller ACA office will endeavor to keep all staff informed of correspondence to parents by providing a copy of all letters, memos, etc. Teachers should read all such correspondence so that they too are aware of all information distributed.

### **Custodial Requests**

All requests for the custodial staff should be written up using the attached form and submitted to the Principal for approval. In case of a health or safety emergency (e.g. student illness, bathroom problems, broken glass, etc.), call the main office immediately.

If you are aware of any graffiti, shattered glass, large spills on floor, dog deposits, a stray animal, potentially dangerous situations, etc., please report it immediately and directly to the office. Notes or pictures of graffiti should be taken before any graffiti removal. This will assist in finding the person(s) responsible for this act of vandalism.

### **Discipline Committee**

The Discipline Committees is a school governance committee established to design and monitor programs to assure a welcoming, safe and orderly learning environment here at Miller. The standing members of this committee will be the administrator(s), ITL, Social Worker, and representative from each grade level. This committee may discuss instructional issues as they relate to disciplinary behavior of students.

### **Dress Code (Staff)**

Article 1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement states the following as a “mutual” objective of the Board and the Federation. “The parties agree that appropriate teacher dress is a positive example to students and a constructive influence on the general comportment of students and on the overall learning atmosphere in the schools.”

Staff dress is extremely important for setting and maintaining a professional school wide tone. We must, through role modeling, teach our students what is appropriate to wear in the school/workplace. “Business casual” is acceptable wear but does not include jeans; overalls; spandex type attire; excessively short skirts, jumpers and dresses; non-school sweatshirts (except for special occasions) and short shorts. Basically if you have to ask yourself when dressing, “I wonder if this is long enough” or, “Do you think this is Okay to wear?”, don’t wear it.

Staff members may choose to wear school or uniform colors of dark blue/light blue or blue and gold on any workday. Dockers-type pants and polo shirts are appropriate attire. All staff members are encouraged to project an image of professionalism to students, parents and the community everyday.

### **Emergency One-day and Three-day Plans**

Invariably teachers are absent at times when not expected. To that end, every teacher will complete a Substitute Folder and a set of Emergency One-day and Three-day lesson plans to be used in the event of absence. The folder (see Substitute Lesson Plan) will contain relevant and basic information that a substitute will need to have a successful day of work here at Miller. The class list (each class for departmentalized grades), homeroom list and lesson plans, including all duplicated sheets, text, etc,

prepared in the order of expected use must be stored in an obvious place, such as on top of the teacher desk or work area (which must be identified in the Sub Folder). These materials will be due by the first Friday in September. They will be reviewed by an administrator or designee and returned for placement in the classroom. The emergency plans must be updated and replenished as necessary. The ITL is to be made aware of this location and will check the packets monthly.

### **Faculty and Staff Meetings**

Monthly Faculty Meetings will be held on the last Thursday once a month. The start time will be 7:45 AM. While it is only required that faculty be notified two days in advance of this monthly meeting, every effort will be made to have all meetings scheduled for each semester on a consistent day via the Instructional Calendar. In the event of urgent school business, it may be necessary to call a meeting. In that case, every effort will be made to give a two-day notice.

On occasion other staff meetings may be held throughout the month for specific school business. These meetings will be short in nature and be held during the Essential Staff Educational Practice time (ESEP). ESEP times at Miller ACA are 7:45 AM – 8:20 AM each Wednesday. This ESEP time is an arrangement with the PFT to foster professional collaboration.

It is understood that meetings may include the entire staff or they may be for certain teachers according to grade, content or class assignment. Attendance is mandatory. All staff is expected to be prompt, sign-in and follow established meeting norms.

### **Fax Machine**

A fax machine is located in the main school office and is available to all staff members for school business only (all exceptions must be cleared with an administrator). The Fax number is 412-338-3834. Due to the delicate nature of the machine, permission must be obtained from the secretary prior to sending a fax.

### **Field Trips**

Staff planning a field trip must seek prior approval from the principal. Please refer to Field Trip form in the Appendix section of this document for more information. The planner is responsible for arranging all aspects of field trips (e.g., transportation, lunches, volunteers, etc.). All information, including copies of letters sent to parents (after approval), must be shared with the office within a reasonable time period so that the office staff can answer parent inquiries.

Prior to any out-of-school activities, our students must be taught “HOW” to behave and specifically what is required of them. The impressions our students make during field trips reflect upon our entire school. Uniforms should be worn during “cultural” experiences (e.g., theaters, museums, symphonies, etc.). Few exceptions will be made where appropriate clothing may be worn during more active or outdoor events.

Check with the Administration before planning uniform deviations. A field trip is a privilege that students must earn.

No students will attend field trips without written parental permission or a generic permission form on file. A list of students attending must be submitted to the office prior to the trip.

You must clear your parent chaperones with a building administrator prior to the trip. They must all have volunteer clearances on file.

### **Fund-raisers**

Fundraisers will only be conducted with the prior approval of the Principal. Requesting teaching teams/parents should draft a memo to the principal stating the following; name of group and advisor(s) conducting the fundraiser, the exact nature of the fundraiser, the benefits to be gained from the fundraiser, cost and the anticipated time frame of the fundraiser i.e. beginning time and end time including delivery of product.

Reminder, this information must be in writing. Every effort will be made to respond to request in a timely manner. No staff member may sell anything to students for personal gain.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills involving our entire school will be conducted once each month. They will be unannounced after we have sufficiently learned and practiced all procedures. Complete your individual Fire Exit poster and display it in your classroom. Follow the directions to your Fire Exit as posted and proceed to your assigned wait area. Teachers must take their roll book to account for all students. All children are expected to walk briskly in a silent, orderly and single-file line and remain as such for the duration of the drill. Teachers must see that all classroom doors are closed.

The security and custodial staff must make complete rounds of the building, check for students and close all doors, etc. prior to their own exit. During the drill, adults should maintain discipline by “signaling” and refrain from talking themselves as well. A count of students must be taken once you reach your outside destination. Students with an itinerant teacher are to be noted. The drill will end with an “all clear” whistle once all count sheets are received. (These procedures will be revised as needed)

## **Food**

It is the expectation that all food snacks be healthy and given only within the context of a lesson i.e. using celery, raisins and peanut butter to engage in a math activity. If snacks are provided, please ensure that they are healthful and that the area is cleaned when finished.

Food treats must be eaten in the classroom and not given at the end-of-the-day because of the problem created by litter on school grounds, the communities and on parked vehicles. Treats are to be consumed completely and trash thrown away in the classroom in which they are given. Do not create a problem for a receiving teacher. Also, refrain from giving gum as a treat; gum chewing is PROHIBITED at Miller ACA (exception, during major testing).

## **Grading (Report Cards)**

A minimum of 7 evaluations must be given each report period for academic areas and 4 for related arts areas. Children falling below 70%

must be re-assessed within in two weeks. Parents must be notified when a child falls below 70%. Parents are to be informed via the actual assessment (maintain a copy for your records). Send progress reports, phone calls, or mail when students fail an evaluation. Any child receiving a grade of “D” or “E” for the report period must be discussed with the principal prior to the grade appearing on the progress report or report card. Spreadsheets must indicate a student’s reason for failure.

### **Home-School Compact**

All staff members should familiarize themselves with the terms of the Miller Title I Home-School Compact. Use the compact expectations when conducting all conferences with parents. This will help our parents to learn and internalize these expectations. The students, homeroom teacher, parent and administrator will sign the compacts.

Prior to duplicating the compact for distribution to students to take home, the teacher should sign and date one copy, write the grade and homeroom number in the upper right-hand corner. Encourage and motivate students to return the compacts by the second Friday in September. When the compacts are returned they should be alphabetized and sent to the Secretary for filing. A copy should be kept in the classroom for conferencing with parents. Teachers are expected to review the terms of the Home-School compact with their students periodically throughout the school year.

### **Homework Policy**

Homework is a daily independent practice activity reflecting what is being taught in the classroom. Homework should be assigned Monday thru Thursday. As much as possible, mixed drill format and reviewing past competencies should be used.

### **Keys**

Keys are to remain in school. If you have a field trip out of the building, please drop keys off in the office before you leave. **ALL KEYS MUST BE TURNED IN AND DOORS REMAIN UNLOCKED. WHEN THE OFFICE IS CLOSED FOR THE DAY.** If you remain in your room after

the office is closed, you are responsible to see that the custodian locks your classroom door.

### **Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans are crucial to the organization for teaching and learning. Without proper planning, effective instruction cannot take place. Lesson Plans are to be dropped into your folders in your Miller Onedrive folder by Friday, before leaving the building. Instructions for completing this will be emailed to you. Completed plans should include the objective, unit, book and homework that you are working on; group or direct instruction and the big idea. It is also recommended that you include the standard, eligible content and mathematical practice from which you are working as well as the differentiated instruction groups that you will support. Failure to consistently submit lesson plans may result in disciplinary action.

### **Mailboxes and Office Counter**

Each staff member is provided a mailbox located in the main office. All staff members should check their mailboxes in the morning, at noon (lunch) and at the end of each school day. E-mail and the daily bulletin should also be read daily, before and after school and during prep and lunchtime. Teachers are not permitted behind the office counter without approval from the office clerk. Please keep mailboxes clean and uncluttered due to limited space. Students are not permitted near or in mailboxes. Do not send students for your mail or to deliver messages.

Staff is also responsible to read daily bulletin via e-mail, check all notices on the counter and office bulletin board daily.

### **Meeting Norms**

In our effort to have efficient and effective meetings, we will begin the school year with the following meeting norms. These norms will be in effect for all meetings and/or professional development sessions and may be modified throughout the year as we develop in our equity work. Our norms are as follows:

Stay Engaged

Speak Your Truth

Expect and Accept Nonclosure

Experience Discomfort

What is said here stays here; what is learned here, leaves here

## **Monitoring Student Progress**

It is a building expectation that teachers differentiate instruction to meet students' individual needs. In order to plan that instruction, teachers need to utilize both formative assessments (to inform instruction during the unit) and summative assessments (check understanding after a period of instruction). Some of these assessments will be provided in instructional materials and by the school district, while others will be developed by teachers or teams. Assessment data will be analyzed on an ongoing basis at professional development meetings and at grade level progress monitoring meetings.

## **Medicine**



1. No teacher will dispense medicine (including over-the-counter medication) or permit students to take medicine when under their supervision. Children must report to the nurse's office where their medicine will be closely monitored, distributed and recorded. On the days that the nurse is not in the building the student should be sent to the office where an administrator or assigned designee will distribute medicine.

In order for a child to receive any medication at school, we must have a written note from the parent/guardian and a special form completed by the doctor. Prescriptions must include the child's name, current date and specific dosage instructions.

### **Observations**

Observations will be made by the Administrator, I.T.L, and District officials. The observations may be informal and formal, and some of the observations will be announced while others are unannounced.

The purpose of the feedback is to provide written and verbal feedback to you about the instruction delivered to students as well as next steps designed to move your practice to the next level.

### **Organization of Students**

Students are to clean their lockers once per week. Students should clean their desks once a week. Papers and projects should be sent home. Students are to be given a communication folder to be sent home and returned by parents.

### **Parent Classroom Observations**

In our efforts to create a safe, welcoming and transparent school environment, parents are always welcome to Pittsburgh Miller. However, parents may only sit in on a class when accompanied by the Social Worker or the Principal after signing in and receiving a Visitor's Pass. All parent visitation must first be cleared with the administrator.

## **Parent Contacts**

The most successful teachers are the ones who communicate early in the year with parents. All teachers will write an introductory letter of expectations in August. Telephone calls are especially important during the first weeks to establish this relationship and to build trust.

After initial contact, on-going periodic calls garner additional support and assistance of the home. “Good news” contacts are beneficial for building rapport and fostering our effort to create a welcoming, safe and orderly environment.

When parents telephone or write to teachers, it is expected that teachers return the contact as soon as possible, no later than the end-of-work the following day.

Many parents (and most often our most difficult ones) feel extremely offended and ignored when calls are not returned.

They often do not voice their complaints with the building administrators, but immediately contact Central Office supervisors. Calls of this nature are totally unacceptable if we have, by our own neglect, caused the situation.

District-wide School Conferences and Open House days are scheduled in October. During all parent conferences, teachers should maintain high levels of professionalism and limit their discussions to the issues at hand.

Never discuss administrative policies, class scheduling, homeroom organizational patterns, potential Special Education referrals, etc. with parents. These matters may be broached with Administrative and Counseling staff.

Keep a log of your telephone calls and contacts. All teachers will be trained on how to enter parent calls into a Google Docs drive to allow you to monitor all calls made to the home. Every teacher will need a Google Account in order to do this.

## **Parent-School-Community Council (PSCC)**

The PSCC is an “advisory council” dedicated to the efficient operation of the school. The membership is made-up of administrators, teachers, support specialist, community/business partners, students and parents. Meetings are informational in nature or are working meetings to design programs, plans of action, etc. Meetings are always “open” and we strongly encourage any interested parties to attend.

## **Personal Leave Days**

A request for personal leave time should be submitted at least a week in advance. Personal Leave Days will not be approved: during the first week of school or during the final two weeks of school. When requesting an emergency personal day, please indicate the reason for request.

## **Preparation Periods**

Preparation periods are included everyday in the schedule of professional teaching staff for the purpose of planning, organizing and/or engaging in work related activity that supports successful academic achievement for students. Prep periods are not for the purpose of conducting personal business (excluding extreme emergencies). At no time are staff members permitted to leave school ground during the preparation period.

## **Progress Reports**

Interim progress reports are generated by all teachers midway through each grading report period. The homes of students who are failing with a “D” or “E” grade receive interim reports through the mail. It is our goal

to communicate and work cooperatively, with our parents, to insure the academic success of each of Miller students. While these reports are our way of keeping parents abreast of their children's academic progress, they should not be the initial or only way that contacts are made. Teachers are encouraged to use various methods i.e. Home-School Notebooks, letters, certificates, telephone calls, throughout the year, to keep parents informed of their children's academic progress.

### **Public Address System (PA)**

The PA system will be used for emergencies and special student/staff announcements. NO announcements are to be made without first receiving approval from the Principal. We shall make every effort to keep the announcements to a minimum (do keep in mind that there are certain times of the year when announcements will naturally increase). We will page individual rooms when at all possible however, that too, shall be kept to a minimum. It is critical that the noise level in classrooms is kept manageable and the students are orderly so that easy communication is possible. Telephones and call boxes in the classrooms must be operable at all times. Report any malfunctions immediately.

### **Safety**

Our first and foremost goal is to create a safe place for effective teaching and learning to take place. Staff is the first line in the maintenance of safety and order. Contact the office or an administrator immediately if assistance is necessary.

They will contact the Division of School Security immediately for assistance if needed for serious safety matters.

At no time is a child to be put in the hallway, out-of-sight of an adult staff member or sent out of the classroom without a behavior referral, for discipline. This is a safety liability.

Secured doors are another step taken to preserve our safety. All staff must be certain that all doors are closed tightly. Do not prop doors open. Request that visitors use buzzer to gain entry into the building.

## **School Delays**

In an effort to ensure the safety of all Pittsburgh Public School students, the District has implemented a School Delay System. This system will be in effect when there is severe inclement weather on school day mornings and when there are emergency situations. During winter months or a time when other severe weather is predicted, a routine should be established to tune-in to the local radio and TV news channels for appropriate information.

In the event of a citywide school delay, teachers and staff will report at the regular scheduled time. Field trips and travel to the Gifted Center will be cancelled. When there is a delay enforced, the school day is scheduled with a two-hour delay.

This means students will arrive at the school two hours later than the regular start time i.e. 10:00 a.m. instead of 8:00 a.m. Teachers will be made aware of the adjusted daily schedule upon arrival.

## **School Nurse**

Given our total school population and student need, we have the services of a Nurse/Nurse Practitioner five days per week. Her office is located in

Room # 104, on the first floor. Every student who visits the nurse's office must have written permission from an adult staff member. No child, except for visible emergencies, will be admitted without a note and hall pass. Please use sound judgment when referring students to the nurse. On days when the nurse is not present, students who are ill will be seen in the main office. Please screen request carefully.

### **Smoking**

The board has adopted a policy, which establishes the School District of Pittsburgh as tobacco-free, including all buildings and grounds. Please adhere to the code. There are fines attached to violation of the policy.

### **Special Education Referrals**

School referrals can be made for students "thought to be" exceptional and in need of special education programming (i.e. special needs and gifted.) Individual teachers should first make recommendations to the IST for special needs programming. When the process advances to the completion of a CER (Comprehensive Educational Report), our Social Worker will coordinate the effort. Recommendations for the Gifted Program are also directed to the Social Worker.

Please maintain professional reticence at all times. Do not discuss any "thought to exceptional" students with parents unless they have approached you or you are directed to do so. Please respect student confidentiality when referring to students who receive outpatient services and/or are in need of medication. It is each teacher's professional responsibility to refer students for appropriate educational programming, based on sound observations and assessments.

### **Staff Check-In**

All staff members, including clerks, administrators, itinerants, volunteers and Central Office visitors, must sign-in daily using the QR Code. This is done so that we are aware of who is present on our grounds at all times.

Please sign-in when entering the building and before proceeding to any other area of the building.

In this way we know if a person is available to take phone calls, meet with a parent, other staff members, etc. If it appears that a late arrival is likely, please notify the school ASAP. Attendance and punctuality are critical to the successful operation and “smooth flow” of the school.

### **Staff Lounge**

One lounge is available for school staff at the end of the first floor hallway. Individuals who use this area are expected to keep it neat and clean.

The custodial staff does daily general cleaning but is not required to pickup and discard foodstuff, wash dishes, clean the refrigerator or microwave.

As a rule the refrigerator should be cleaned of old food and containers the day before Winter Break and at the end-of-the school year. Please remember, “If it is not yours do not touch it”. The refrigerator is a shared space. The microwave should be wiped out after each use as a common courtesy to the next user. Keep in mind that this is a public area and professionalism is expected from all staff members using this space for break times or completing work tasks.

### **Staff Attendance**

All staff must indicate on the sign-in sheet his/her arrival and departure time. Please call Dr. Starkes as soon as you know you will be unable to report to work at (412) 277-5600. This is a professional courtesy call only. It is preferred that you call before 6:30 a.m. All absences must be reported by 6:30a.m. Please e-mail substitute services to report your absence. In accordance with board policy, staff members will be used in a rotational coverage when substitute teachers are not available. Absent staff members are required to report before 2:00 p.m. of their intention of returning to work the next day. If such a notice is not given, the substitute

will be held and the teacher will not be permitted to work. This rule will be strictly adhered to. On Fridays, we will assume you will return to work on Monday. You must e-mail/call FRONTLINE Substitute Services again prior to Monday if you cannot return to work and a sub is needed.

#### Absence Requiring Physician Certificate:

- ♥ The absence is three days or more.
- ♥ An employee is absent both on a Friday and the following Monday.
- ♥ An employee is absent both the day before and the day after a holiday or holiday period.
- Absence requiring reinstatement through Health Services:
  - ♥ Loss of 30 cumulative workdays within a period of one year
  - ♥ Overnight hospital stay
  - ♥ Accident resulting in lost time
  - ♥ Any surgery (in-patient or out-patient)
- Upon return of any day out of the building, please sign (initial) the sign in sheet in the appropriate column verifying the reason for the absence. This procedure will replace the Absence Certificates that were used last year.

#### **Supplies**

You will receive your requisition form at the beginning of each month. Complete your requisition within 2 days and return it to Ms. Jones. Ms. Jones will assist you with supply needs. DO NOT, under any circumstances, open any boxes that come in. Everything must be inventoried by the main office prior to being distributed.

#### **Substitute Teacher Concerns**

The lack of substitute teachers is a major issue in most urban schools. If a substitute is not assigned, students may be “split” among same grade level classes. Receiving teachers can utilize the absent teacher’s daily lesson plan, if necessary. Lists for splitting students should be included with emergency lesson plans (substitute folder).



Teacher absence reflects negatively on instruction therefore, it is imperative that if students are added to your class for the day or coverage is assigned, students are expected to be engaged in relevant learning for the required daily instructional time.

### **Tardiness – Staff**

The school day for staff begins at 7:45 a.m. The expectation is that all staff is punctual to the workplace each day. Occasionally a delay is unavoidable. However, tardiness on three or more occasions will result in a conference with the administrator.

### **Teacher’s Desk**

Please keep the following on top of the desk or work area at all times: lesson plans, roll book or attendance sheets, staff handbook, emergency substitute folders (with whereabouts of 1 and 3 day activities specified), class “split list.”

All the items listed are to be available at all times for a substitute or a colleague who may have to cover your class or homeroom and make daily assignments. The items must also be accessible to administrators during formal and informal classroom observations.

### **Teacher Records**

**Roll Book** – All homeroom teachers are required to record student attendance. Attendance must be entered by 10 am daily. A hard copy of your attendance record is required at the end of the year. It is suggested that teachers print out attendance at the end of each month for the end of year report.

**Grade Book** –As we move forward, a hard copy of the record book is still required for the end of the year accountability.

Follow the guidelines taught and print out all class rosters, attendance reports, tasks and grade list, end-of-quarter reports and final grades.

For the year-end summary, you must have subject, grade and citizenship marks printed out for all report periods in addition to the final averages.

### **Teacher Requests**

All requests, concerns, and questions for the principal, office staff, social worker

and custodian need to be written. This will help with the matter being addressed

efficiently. You may use the form or e-mail the individual. The e-mail for the principal

is [mstarkes1@pghschools.org](mailto:mstarkes1@pghschools.org)

### **Visitors**

At this time, there will be no in person visits from parents, guardians and other visitors to Miller ACA at this time. Any guests in the workplace must be cleared in advance by an administrator.

## **African Centered Education**

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Question 1. What does African Centered Mean?

African centeredness is the placement of African American people and students at the center of human process.

#### Question 2. What is African Centered Education?

African Centered Education places the African American student at the center of the educational experience as a subject rather than an object. This placement of the student at the center allows for an inclusionary process which gives equal representation of all groups rather than one group over or below any other group.

#### Question 3. How does African Centered Education differ from Euro-centric Education?

With African Centered Education, the African American child is culturally placed at the center of the learning process, whereas with Euro-centric Education, they are culturally outside of the educational experience.

#### Question 4. What will my child/students learn?

African Centered Education is holistic, meaning that the student will be involved in cross discipline learning, meeting state core curriculum goals

and guidelines, critical and creative thinking, self-concept development, character development and moral education.

Question 5. How will parents be involved?

Parents will be essential to the success of the African Centered Schools. There is an African proverb that states: "It takes an entire village to raise just one child."

Parents will be partners of the village and will work closely in the planning, decision-making, development and evaluation of the African Centered Education model. The parents will help to develop a Culture of Excellence with the community and instructional staff.

Question 6. Why are some people against African Centered Education?

Because of misinformation and misunderstanding about, "What African Centered Education really is and what it is not."

Question 7. Will children learn more at an African Centered School?

Yes. The African American student will be exposed to a world-view experience that relates to all people, cultures, and traditions from the context of their reality which will enhance their own self-esteem, positive self imaging and higher standard of educational excellence. They will be exposed to a Daily Unity Celebration which through the recognition of the 7 Kwanzaa Principles of Nguzo Saba, students will be taught character traits that will contribute to their growth and development.

Question 8. Does African Centered Education teach racism?

No! Racism is a power relation where one group is able to deny other groups equity of power, based on the criteria of a superior race. African Centered Education is an inclusionary multicultural educational process with emphasis on the African American experience that teaches all people are equal.

Question 9. Why is African Centered Education needed?

Looking at the school system in America, Euro-centric education has failed to meet the needs of African American students. There is a disparity that exists between the academic achievement of African American children and their White peers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Contributing to this gap are low expectations for African American students, the over-identification of African American boys in special education and behavior disorder classes which places the students in an at-risk environment. Additionally, the high drop-out and the School to Prison Pipeline research pinpoints the need for a more culturally appropriate education thrust.

Question 10. What is Nguzo Saba?

The Nguzo Saba is a term popularized by Dr. Maulana Karenga. As part of Karenga's Kawaiida philosophy, the Nguzo Saba are seven principles (Umoja, Unity; Kujichagulia, Self-determination; Ujima, Cooperative Work and Responsibility; Ujamaa, Collective Economics; Nia, Purpose; Kuumba, Creativity; and Imani, Faith). The Nguzo Saba is most widely recognized in relation to the seven days of Kwanzaa.





**Bulletin Announcement-Must be submitted by 3:00 day prior**

**Please place the following announcement/recognition in the Daily Bulletin and/or read at Umoja Celebration:**

**Staff**

**Name:**

**Date:**

September 2023 checklist to be posted by the close of the school day  
September 15, 2023.



I expect to see all of the following in your classroom:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Nia Corner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Welcome Signage with student names in classrooms and on Lockers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Promise Door-All classroom doors should promote Promise Readiness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Drill Exit Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Schedule
- \_\_\_\_\_ Labeled Classroom Library
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8 Mathematical Practices (kid friendly)/ELA literacy shifts
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Common Board Configuration (date, objective, standard, essential question, warm up, exit slip, hw) –POST DAILY**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Behavior expectation chart for the classroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ Miller Vision Statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Name and Flag of African Country representing room
- \_\_\_\_\_ African proverb for African Country
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nguzo Saba
- \_\_\_\_\_ Virtues of Ma'at
- \_\_\_\_\_ Miller African Centered Pledge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bully Free Zone Poster

**ADDITIONAL PPS DISTRICT POLICIES**

- Please click on the link below to learn more about our District's Code of Conduct
  - [Code of Conduct](#)
  - Please click on the link below to learn more about our District's Non-Discrimination Policy
  - [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
  - Please click on the link below for information about Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
  - [Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- 
- Please use the link below to find out more about Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Protected Handicapped Students (504), and Services for Gifted Students:[PSE \(Special Education\) / Child Find Annual Notice \(pghschools.org\)](#)