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ADVANCING EQUITY, EXCELLENCE,  
AND EFFICIENCY

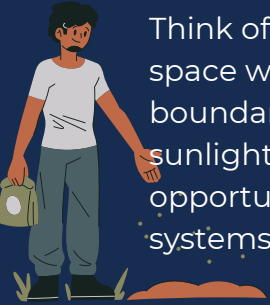
**A PROPOSAL FOR A SCHOOL DISTRICT  
FACILITIES UTILIZATION PLAN**

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*This proposal is designed for exclusive presentation to the Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh for their consideration.*





Think of each school as a garden. The **physical building is like the garden plot** – it's the space where everything happens. But what truly makes a garden thrive are not the boundaries that define it, but the quality of the soil, the variety of plants, the amount of sunlight, and the care it receives. These elements are akin to a school's offerings and opportunities, amenities, quality of instruction, supportive staff, strong culture, and clear systems of support.

When faced with tough decisions about consolidation, it's like gardeners deciding to consolidate their plots. This decision isn't made because the garden isn't loved or valued, but because by combining resources, attention, and care, a more flourishing, productive and vibrant garden can be created. It's about optimizing the environment for the best possible growth.



In this consolidated garden, plants **(or students)** can have access to better soil **(resources)**, more room to grow **(opportunities)**, and more attentive care **(from qualified and supportive staff)**. The focus shifts from the attachment to the physical space **(the original garden plots or school buildings)** to what can be grown and nurtured in this new, improved space.



The hope is that this analogy communicates that while attachment to a physical building is understandable, the priority should be on the improved quality of education and overall experience the students can receive. It's a shift from a mindset of loss to one of gain – gaining better facilities, resources, and opportunities for student success.



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# INTRODUCTION

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## THE PROPOSED FACILITIES UTILIZATION PLAN,

as directed by the Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh, represents a strategic initiative aimed at optimizing the use of educational facilities across the District. This proposed plan is not just an administrative exercise; it is a critical component in enhancing the educational environment for all students. Its purpose extends beyond mere spatial arrangement—it seeks to ensure that every inch of the educational spaces is utilized in a manner that contributes positively to the learning experience, aligns with the financial capabilities, and adheres to the commitment to sustainability and community involvement.

The objectives of this proposed plan are closely aligned with the Board's policies and beliefs regarding Equity, Excellence, and Efficiency, as well as the Superintendent's priorities. **Equity** is at the forefront, ensuring that all students, irrespective of their backgrounds, have equal access to quality educational facilities. **Excellence** is pursued by creating environments that are not only conducive to learning but also inspire and motivate students and staff alike. **Efficiency** involves the prudent and strategic use of resources, ensuring that the District's facilities are used optimally, reducing waste, and making financial sense in both the short and long term.

Community outreach is an indispensable part of this process. The plan is not developed in isolation, but in consultation with those it affects most—students, families, educators, and community members. Through broad community outreach, the plan will encapsulate diverse viewpoints, ensuring that the final recommendations are reflective of the community's needs and aspirations. This inclusive approach not only fosters transparency and trust but also ensures that the plan is grounded in the reality of the community's experiences and expectations. By integrating community insights and feedback, the Facilities Utilization Plan aims to be not just a blueprint for spatial utilization but a reflection of the collective vision for a more effective and inspiring educational future in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

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# GUIDING QUESTIONS

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## THE PROPOSAL RESPONDS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS INSPIRED BY THE RESOLUTION:

- *What is the current utilization rate of each facility within the District?*
- *Are there any facilities that are underused or overused?*
- *What are the conditions of the current facilities in terms of maintenance, safety, and suitability for educational purposes?*
- *What are the priorities of all of the communities for facility usage (e.g., educational programs, extracurricular activities, community events)?*
- *How can the plan ensure that the facilities meets the needs of all communities?*
- *How will the plan address equity in access to and utilization of facilities?*
- *What key performance indicators will be implemented to ensure the plan meets the standards of excellence in education?*
- *How will the plan promote efficiency in the use of resources, including facilities?*
- *How will changes in facilities utilization enhance educational opportunities for all students?*
- *What are the potential impacts of the plan on student outcomes and experiences?*
- *What strategies will be used for effective community outreach and engagement?*
- *How will feedback from public hearings and community input be incorporated into the final plan?*
- *How will the plan impact the District's mid-term and long-term financial viability?*
- *What specific expertise or assistance might be required from consulting services?*
- *How will the use of consultants enhance the development and effectiveness of the plan?*

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# CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS

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## CURRENT UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

The average age of the District's school buildings is 90-years-old, reflecting a vastly different educational landscape. The traditional image of students seated in rows, passively receiving instruction, has evolved into the contemporary classroom that champions student-centered learning, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, cultural competence, inclusivity, technology integration, flexibility in learning environments, personalized learning paths, social emotional learning, project-based or experiential learning and collaboration.

However, a comprehensive facilities analysis has laid bare significant inequities in terms of condition, use, and educational adequacy. These disparities persist due to school configurations and designs that undermine the District's crucial goals of equity, excellence, and efficiency.

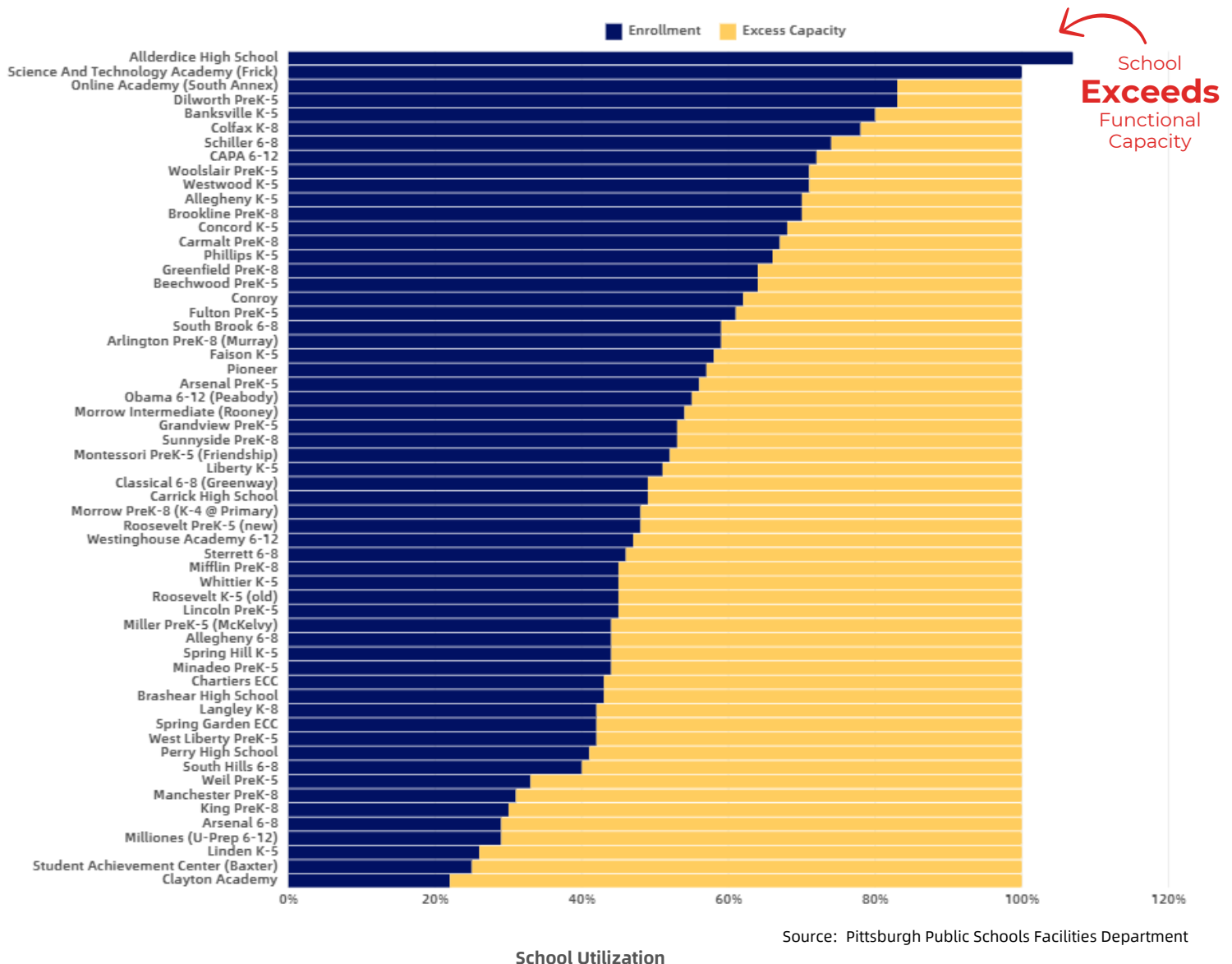
There is a perception that a facilities utilization plan is solely centered on building enrollment numbers. In reality, facilities utilization involves complex analysis to support decision making that highlight inequities, disparities, inefficiencies and access. However, disparities in school utilization exacerbate existing inequalities, hindering access to contemporary, inclusive, and fair learning environments. Inequities in utilization create obstacles for students, dampening the joy of learning by restricting access to essential resources and opportunities across various domains including art, music, athletics, STEM, world languages, student support services, and career exploration. Tackling issues of school utilization through facility enhancements is pivotal for nurturing equitable learning and work environments. This, in turn, fosters opportunities for staff collaboration and promotes successful pedagogy, coaching, and ultimately, optimal student outcomes.





**Functional Capacity**, representing the number of students a building can accommodate based on classroom designations, excludes full lab classrooms (science, art, music, and CTE) that have the potential to be repurposed as classrooms. It is important to note that a full lab entails more than a sink and/or a demonstration table.

Alarming is the revelation that utilization (enrollment / functional capacity) in 28 out of the 57 school buildings stands at or below 50%. This signifies that the ideal student numbers required to sustain the necessary resources for efficient building operation are not currently met.





The **Facility Condition Index (FCI)** provides a structured method for evaluating the cost implications of maintenance, repairs, and replacement of various building systems. Currently, 50 schools operate with an FCI exceeding 20%, indicating an urgent need for major systems repair.

FCI Range	Category	Description
0-15%	General Maintenance	Is the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of a building extending its useful life
16-30%	Minor Renovations	Includes selective upgrades of some systems or building components. It may also include some minor configuration of interior spaces
31-60%	Moderate Renovations	This could include replacement or upgrade to building components and some interior reconfiguration of space to support educational programs
61-80%	Major Renovations	This would include replacement or upgrades to building components and interior reconfiguration of space to support educational programs. Having undergone a major renovation, an existing building would be comparable to a new building.
81-100%	Replace Building	Entails building a new facility either on the same site or at a new location

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Facilities Department

The **Educational Adequacy Index (EAI)** is instrumental in identifying a school building's capability to meet the demands of the current instructional curriculum. It gauges how well modern educational needs are accommodated within the provided physical space. Notably, some of the schools lack dedicated academic spaces for music, art, science, as well as auxiliary spaces such as dedicated cafeterias, full-sized gyms, and auditoriums. Using the current model with input from PPS school principals, forty-four (44) of the schools fall below 60% educational adequacy.

EAI Range	Grade	Grade Description
EAI > 90%	<b>A</b>	The school building has the necessary spaces; the spaces are well equipped
90% > EAI >= 80%	<b>B</b>	The school building has most the necessary spaces; the spaces are adequate
80% > EAI >= 70%	<b>C</b>	The school building has most of the necessary spaces; a few of the spaces may not be adequate
70% > EAI >= 60%	<b>D</b>	The school building lacks some of the necessary spaces; some of the spaces may not be adequate
60% > EAI >= 50%	<b>E</b>	The school building lacks some of the necessary spaces; many of the spaces may not be adequate
50% > EAI >= 0%	<b>F</b>	The school building lacks many of the necessary spaces; many spaces are inadequate

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Facilities Department

 **44 schools**  
with at least an E

Consider a school lacking key facilities like a full-sized gym, pool, and adequate science labs. Such a school would naturally score lower on the Educational Adequacy Index (EAI) compared to one fully equipped with these amenities. The transformation seen in one of the recently renovated schools serves as an exemplary case. By adding a library, music and art rooms, additional cafeteria space, and enhancing the original structure with a new HVAC system, lighting, secure entryway, and fresh paint, the project markedly improved both the Facility Condition Index (FCI) and EAI ratings, elevating it from one of the lowest rated buildings in both categories.



## ORGANIZATIONAL TRENDS

In the pursuit of optimizing educational environments through a Facilities Utilization Plan, a comprehensive current state analysis transcends mere spatial considerations, delving into aspects crucial for fostering equity, excellence, and efficiency. This enriched perspective encompasses a broad spectrum of components including enrollment trends, transportation logistics, technology infrastructure, and the provision of robust student support services. Critical to this analysis is a focus on specialized educational services, notably for special education and English language learners, as well as addressing disparities in access to advanced course offerings.

Furthermore, dedicated spaces for professional learning, along with strategies for human resource recruitment, staffing, and retention, are integral in providing deep insights into the operational dynamics of the District. Such an expansive data-driven approach is vital in revealing hidden challenges and opportunities, guiding the allocation of resources, and informing targeted interventions. Ultimately, this approach aims to elevate decision-making processes, ensuring they are profoundly informed and aligned with the District's commitment to student success, organizational efficiency, and the overarching goal of delivering high-quality education to all students.



DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY, AND THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION TO ALL STUDENTS.



## ENROLLMENT

The District continues to experience annual decreases in enrollment which, when paired with population shifts, pose significant challenges to the ability to provide equitable, excellent, and efficient educational opportunities. The 2012-2013 school year was the last time Pittsburgh Public Schools made any changes to its portfolio of school buildings. As shown in Figure 1, K-12 enrollment has decreased from 24,843 students in 2012-2013 to 18,380 in 2023-2024. Further examination of enrollment from 2012-2013 to 2023-2024 reveals an average decline of 2.7 percent per year. This represents an overall decline of 26 percent in enrollment over the last eleven years. This has exacerbated financial challenges and disparities in the District’s ability to provide equitable opportunities for many of the most vulnerable students.

To address these challenges, the District needs bold and proactive strategies that prioritize equity, excellence, and efficiency to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education regardless of enrollment trends or demographic shifts.

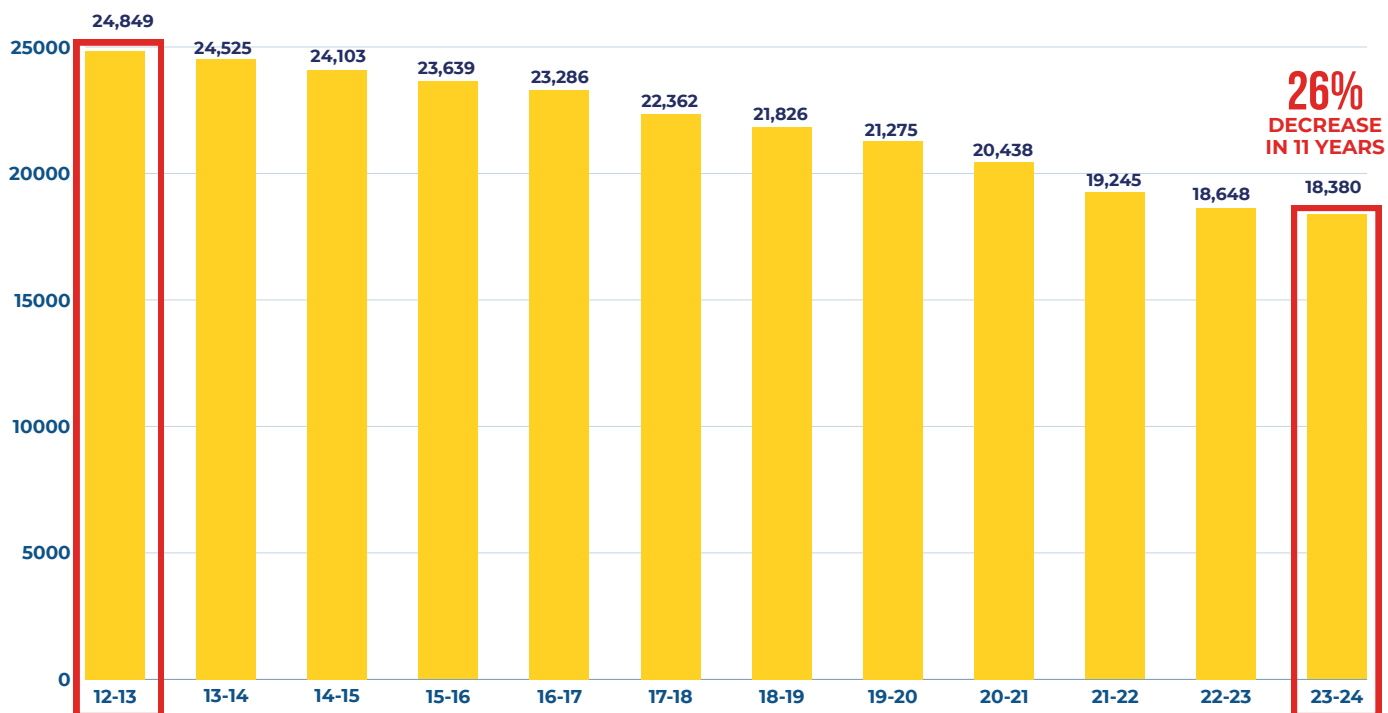


Figure 1 - K-12 Enrollment

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of DREA



## TRANSPORTATION

One of the primary facets of the nationwide bus driver shortage lies in the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified individuals for these crucial roles. The nationwide school bus driver shortage, extended walk zones, and heightened reliance on public transportation for students in grades 6-12, presented added difficulties for PPS families. The shortage of bus drivers directly impacts the transportation of students to and from schools. Reduced driver availability can lead to longer routes, delayed pick-ups, and increased travel times for students. In some cases, school districts are compelled to consolidate or alter bus routes, affecting the convenience and efficiency of transportation services. This, in turn, places additional stress on students, parents, and school staff.

Transportation challenges extend to day-to-day operational disruptions causing school staff to juggle limited resources and adapt to fluctuating driver availability. These challenges can disrupt the overall flow of daily school operations, affecting not only transportation but also leading to logistical challenges in scheduling, extracurricular activities, and dismissals.

**Magnet Programs and Transportation:** The inclusion of magnet programs in Pittsburgh Public Schools offerings contributes to a more diverse and dynamic educational landscape. However, it also places additional demands on the overall transportation system. Coordinating routes for students attending magnet programs alongside regular school routes requires strategic planning and additional resources to avoid disruptions and ensure that all students have timely and reliable transportation. The transportation challenges associated with magnet programs also have implications for the students involved, as it can create longer travel times and impact students' daily routines and schedules.

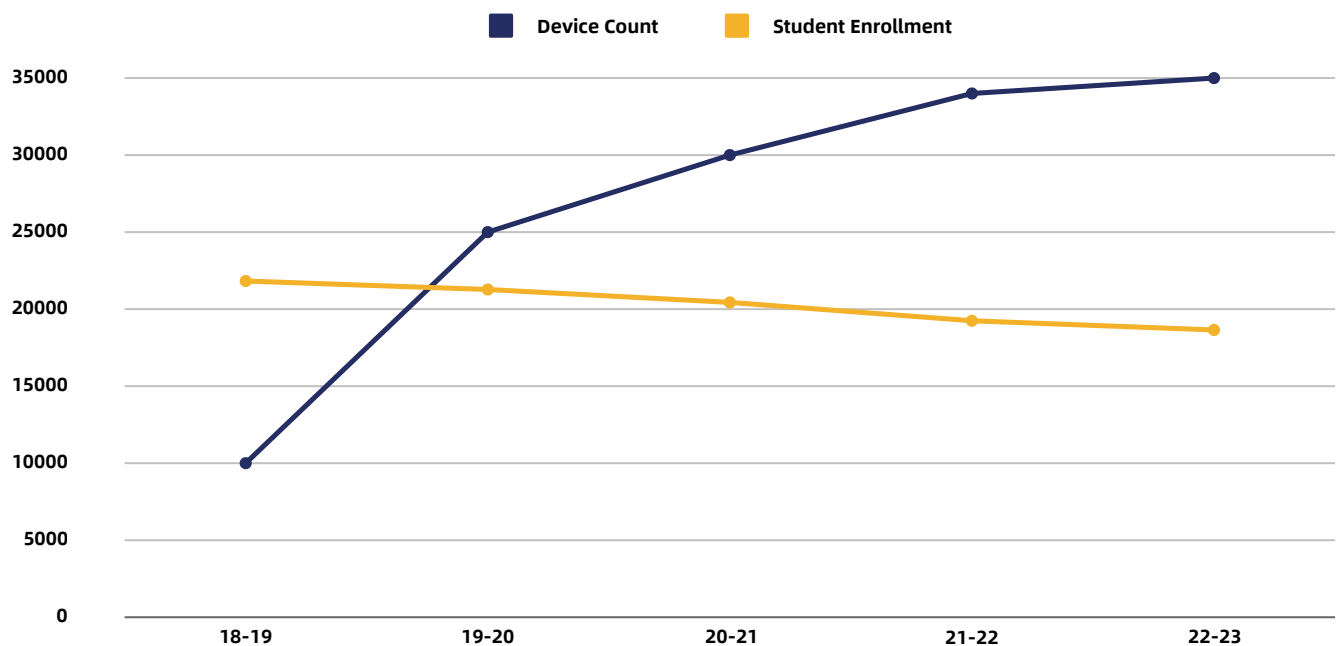
To minimize the impact on transportation, strategic planning in the location of magnet programs is essential. Increasing these programs throughout the District to provide more access for students in various school communities throughout the District can help optimize transportation routes, reduce travel times, and enhance overall efficiency.



## TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

As the District braces for yet another year of declining student enrollment, the demand for technology support shows no signs of declining. With instructional technology tools now universal in every classroom, the necessity for maintenance and support has surged. Moreover, the upkeep of District-wide devices, encompassing software updates, repair warranties, and swift replacement procedures for malfunctioning equipment, remains paramount. Concurrently, the need for reliable electrical power sources has become more pronounced. Many areas of the existing infrastructure are grappling with insufficient outlet access to accommodate the growing array of instructional technology tools.

In addition to the increased device footprint throughout the District, there is an added need for an expansive instructional technology component for PPS schools. Instructional technology plays a crucial role in preparing students for careers, college, and life by providing them with the necessary skills and competencies to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Pittsburgh Public Schools has the responsibility to put students in a position to be successful. By integrating instructional technology effectively into the classroom, educators can empower students to succeed in an ever-changing world.



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Technology



## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### Counselor-to-Student Ratio

Both the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) and the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) recommend a 250:1 ratio of school counselors/social workers to students. The current delivery model in the Pittsburgh Public Schools allocates each school counselor or social worker to serve no more than 350 students. This means that in many of PPS schools they are operating well beyond the recommended ratio. The impact of this inflated ratio is that in many cases it impedes the school counselors and social workers to effectively lead the school's Student Assistance Programs (SAP) and coordinate mental health services. School SAP teams are state mandated to meet bi-monthly (at minimum) to discuss students who are identified as being in need of consideration for additional supports and services, based on their current progress as identified by staff, parent referrals, self-referrals, and others. The wide range of services that can be offered to students and families in need are coordinated at the school level by school counselors and social workers. An intentional shift toward meeting the ASCA/SSWAA recommended ratio of counselors/social workers to students would allow a more proactive approach to working with students, rather than the current model of using more reactive interventions.



**ASCA/SSWAA Recommended Caseload**  
(250 students per one Counselor/Social Worker)



**Pittsburgh Public Schools Caseload**  
(350 students per one Counselor/Social Worker)  
100 more students per Counselor

**Note:** Each icon represents 10 students.

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Student Services Department

### Access to Mental Health Services

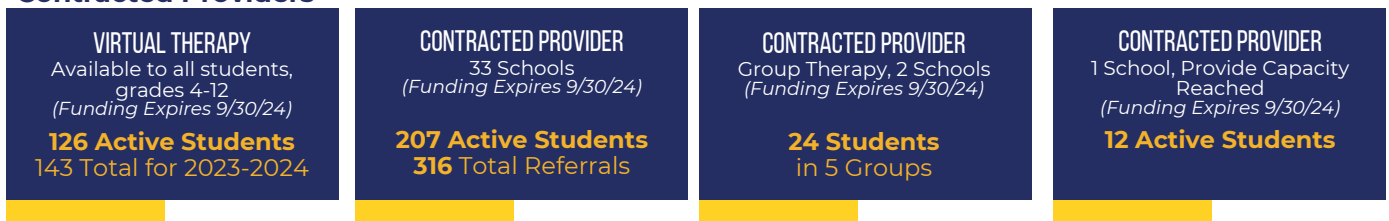
One of the biggest challenges facing the District through the pandemic has been the ability to keep pace with a rising number of students in need of therapy. Traditionally, PPS has utilized the agreements currently in place with community providers to ensure that schools had access to needed mental health services that were beyond their purview. These partnerships are of no charge to the District because the providers work with parents to obtain insurance information to pay for the services. As the pandemic grew, some could shift to a virtual model, while others could not keep up with the demand. In addition, as remote work became more prevalent, many of PPS providers reported that



they were experiencing drastic numbers of therapists who were leaving their jobs because they could engage in remote work elsewhere. This workforce reduction has resulted in gaps in services in several places across the District. PPS has worked to fill those gaps by utilizing grant funding to contract with additional organizations who could provide therapy (virtual therapy, individual therapy, group therapy, art/play therapy). See the chart below. When Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds expire in September 2024, PPS will not be able to continue these additional contracted services, meaning 372 students will no longer have access to therapy unless the District can identify an alternate funding source.

Another important factor in the District's ability to provide therapy is access to confidential office space required for therapists to meet with students. For many PPS schools, this can be challenging.

### Contracted Providers



### Agreements with Community Providers



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Student Services Department





## SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND ENGLISH LEARNERS SUPPORT

As the District faces changing demographics and declining enrollment, it is essential to adapt and evolve our approach to education to meet the needs of all students. Demographic shifts have resulted in diverse student populations with unique learning needs and preferences, requiring flexibility and innovation in our educational offerings.

Although there has been an overall decrease in the total number of students, the 2.6 times increase in English Learners (ELs) from 557 students in 2011-2012 to 1,427 students in 2023-2024 underscores a significant demographic shift. This trend of increased enrollment has continued with ELs currently representing 7.76% of the total District population during the 2023-2024 school year. This growing group of EL students demands specialized attention and resources for effective language acquisition (Figure 2). Additional resources include but are not limited to: translation services, instructional materials at the appropriate English proficiency and grade levels, and additional EL staff.

Similarly, students with disabilities have increased and now represent almost 23% of the total student population. Increases in the number of students with disabilities and ELs create challenges with our current model of delivering services and course offerings. The regional service delivery model for both students with disabilities and ELs often results in transitions between multiple schools in grades K-8.

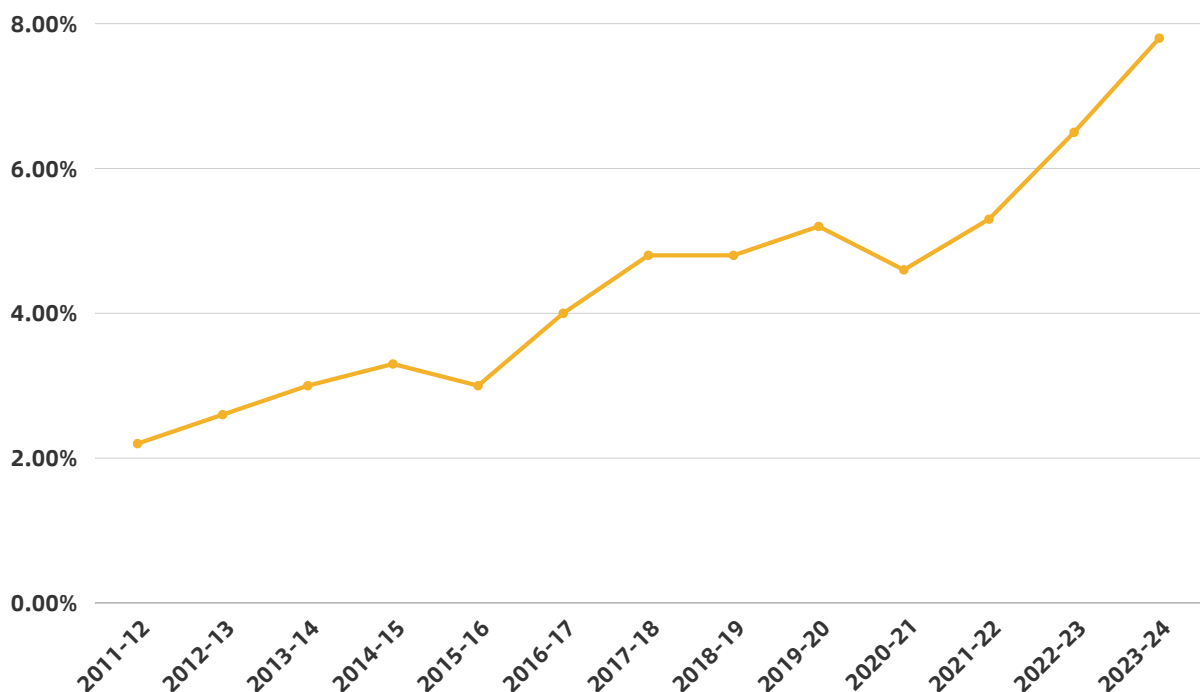


Figure 2 - English Learners (EL) Students

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of DREA



### DISPARITIES IN ADVANCED COURSE OFFERINGS

Further challenges revolve around inequities in course offerings across schools based on grade configuration, enrollment, location, and demographics. For example, Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings vary across schools. AP courses offer advanced curriculum, challenging students to excel academically and should be offered at all schools. These courses provide college-level work, fostering critical thinking and better preparing students for post-secondary experiences.

Currently the percent of students enrolled in at least one AP course ranges across each school from 7.3% to 60.7%. Schools with lower enrollments are unable to offer a robust listing of AP courses. The range of courses spans from 3- 30 courses as illustrated below in Figure 3.

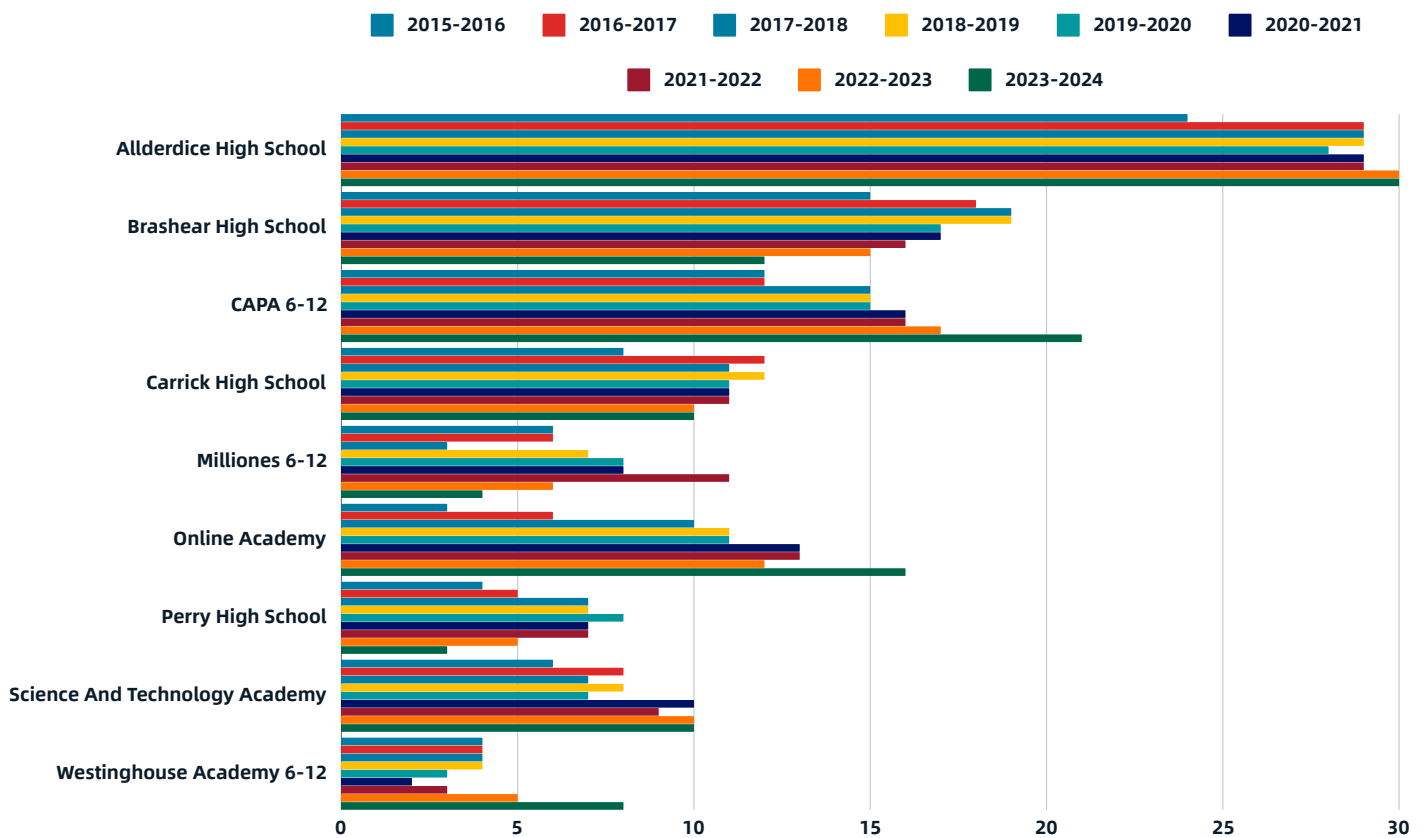


Figure 3 - Number of AP Courses Offered by School

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of DREA

Furthermore, the District is grappling with a staffing shortage across various crucial roles, including paraprofessionals, clerical staff, custodians, and teachers. Notably, teacher preparation programs are witnessing a decline in enrollment, foreshadowing persistent challenges in recruiting educators for the foreseeable future.



## DEDICATED SPACES FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning is a dynamic process that often involves varying group sizes and interactive learning activities. Currently, within each building PPS does not have dedicated spaces for professional learning designed to accommodate educators' diverse needs. Whether it's a large group workshop, a smaller team-building session, or interactive hands-on activities, learning spaces for educators must be configured to adapt to different learning contexts.

Additionally, recognizing the importance of technology in effective professional learning, dedicated spaces with state-of-the-art technology, audio-visual equipment, including interactive displays, is not currently integrated throughout Pittsburgh Public Schools facilities to support engaging presentations and collaborative learning experiences. Attention must be given to ensuring that all buildings have spaces that are easily accessible to all staff, including those with mobility challenges or special needs. These areas should be strategically located to encourage educators to collaborate, share ideas and discuss changes to instructional practices that lead to improved student outcomes. These learning spaces will help to foster a culture of collaboration and community among educators.

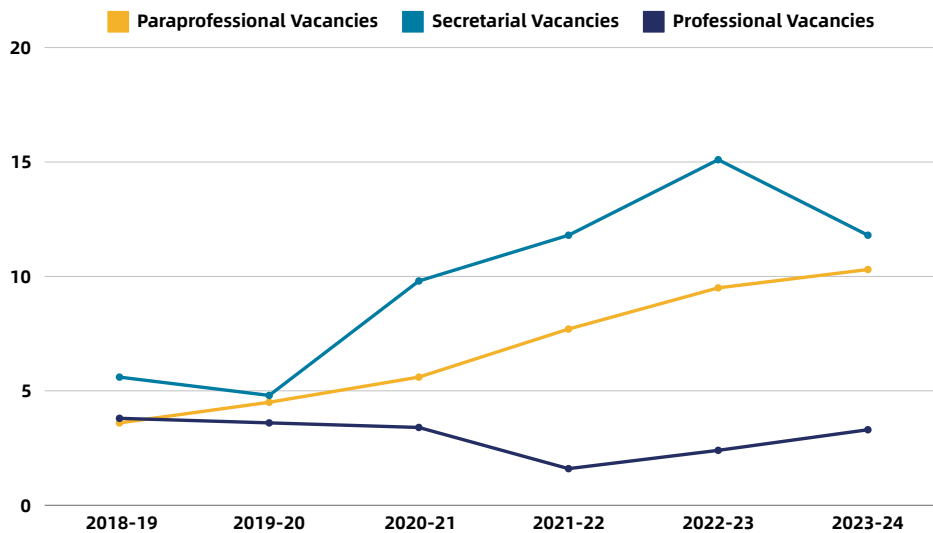


LEARNING SPACES WILL HELP TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY AMONG EDUCATORS



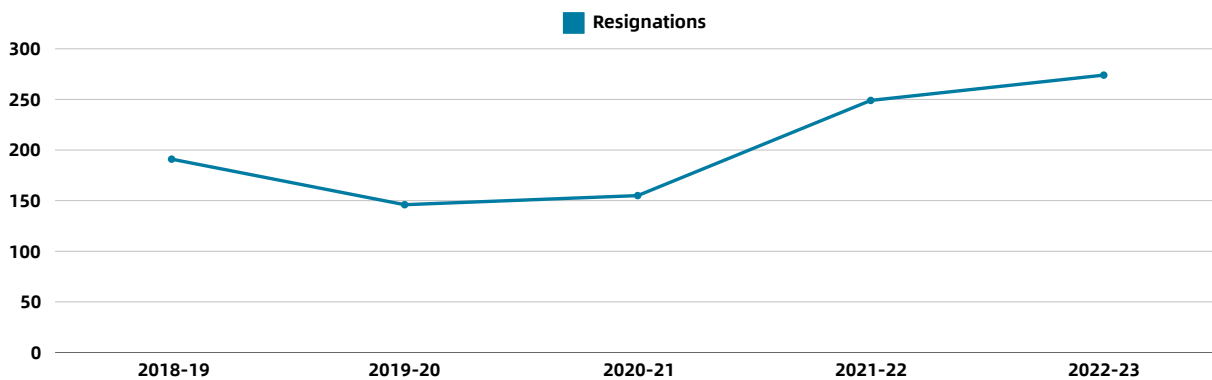
HUMAN RESOURCES: RECRUITMENT, STAFFING AND RETENTION

In May 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor reported 9.8 million job openings for 6.1 million job seekers, with the educational services industry seeing the largest increase in openings (+45,000). In an environment where there are more jobs than there are job seekers, employers are in fierce competition for talent. For the education industry generally and for PPS specifically, the pandemic only exacerbated the staffing challenges that already existed, particularly for school and student support positions.



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Human Resources

As mentioned previously, the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity for the workforce at large to assess whether the value their employers were offering aligned with their expectations for working conditions and career goals. Where employees felt misalignment, they also felt empowered to resign. Beginning in spring 2021, the Great Resignation describes the economic trend in which employees are resigning from employment at unprecedented rates.

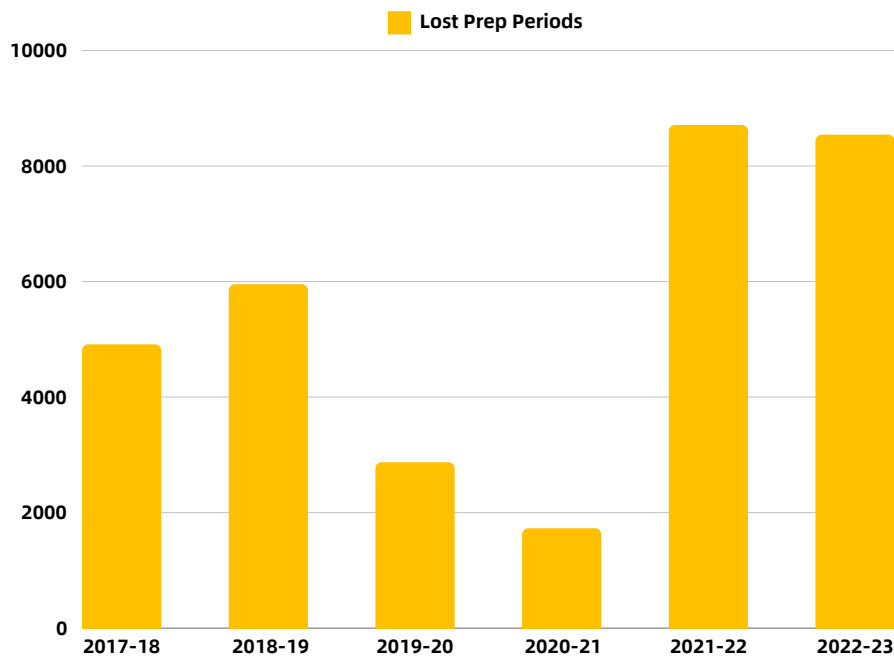


Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Human Resources



As a result of the increase in resignations and challenges in recruitment noted earlier, as well as other factors that contribute to day-to-day staffing shortages, gaps in classroom support and services are widening. Combined with an ongoing substitute shortage, teachers, coaches, and even principals have anecdotally shared that they are providing coverage for support positions to ensure students can continue accessing the supports they need.

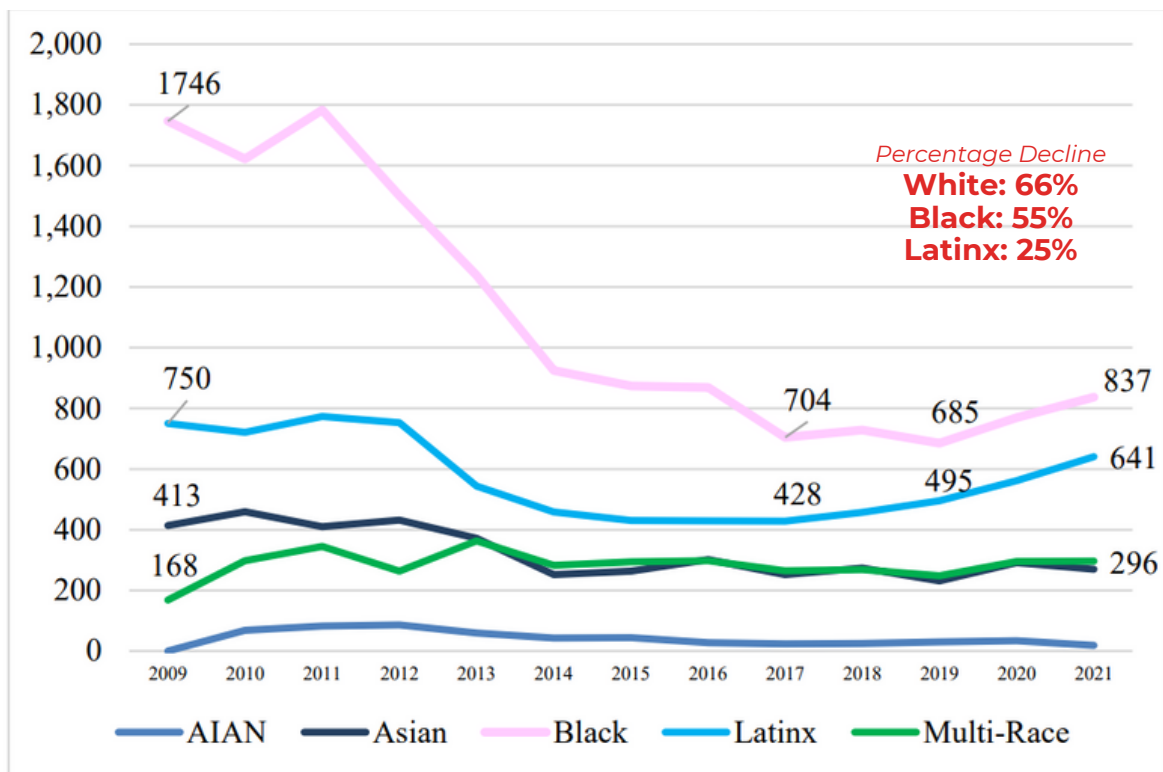
One way to quantitatively measure the increase in support coverage needed is to look at data on the loss of preparation periods experienced by teachers. When teachers surrender their preparation periods in order to provide support elsewhere in the school they lose their time to plan lessons, develop activities to support learning, and miss critical time in the day to reset and recharge. The loss of preparation periods over time has a significant impact on stress, mental and physical fatigue, and overall satisfaction with the District as an employer. The chart below highlights an increase over time in the number of lost preparation periods.



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Human Resources



Applicant pools for PPS positions have dramatically decreased in number post-pandemic. As an example, a posting for Classroom Assistant (paraprofessionals) at Conroy yielded 118 applicants in 2014-2015 compared to 21 applicants in 2022-2023. Similarly, a posting for the position of School Nurse received 62 applicants for a 2017-2018 posting compared to 2 for a similar 2022-2023 posting. For teaching positions, PPS is experiencing the same result from declining numbers of enrollments in teacher preparation programs throughout the United States – fewer student teachers and fewer applicants for District teaching positions. PPS has experienced significant challenges with staffing teaching positions in world languages, special education, and advanced science and math. Fewer students are entering teacher preparation programs and even fewer are completing their program. According to Education Week, between academic years 2008-2009 and 2018-2019, the number of people completing a teacher preparation program decreased by almost one-third. As PPS strives to recruit, hire, and retain teachers of color, the impact of enrollment decline in teacher preparation programs is even more staggering.



Declining Number of Teachers of Color Enrolled in PA Teacher Preparation Programs

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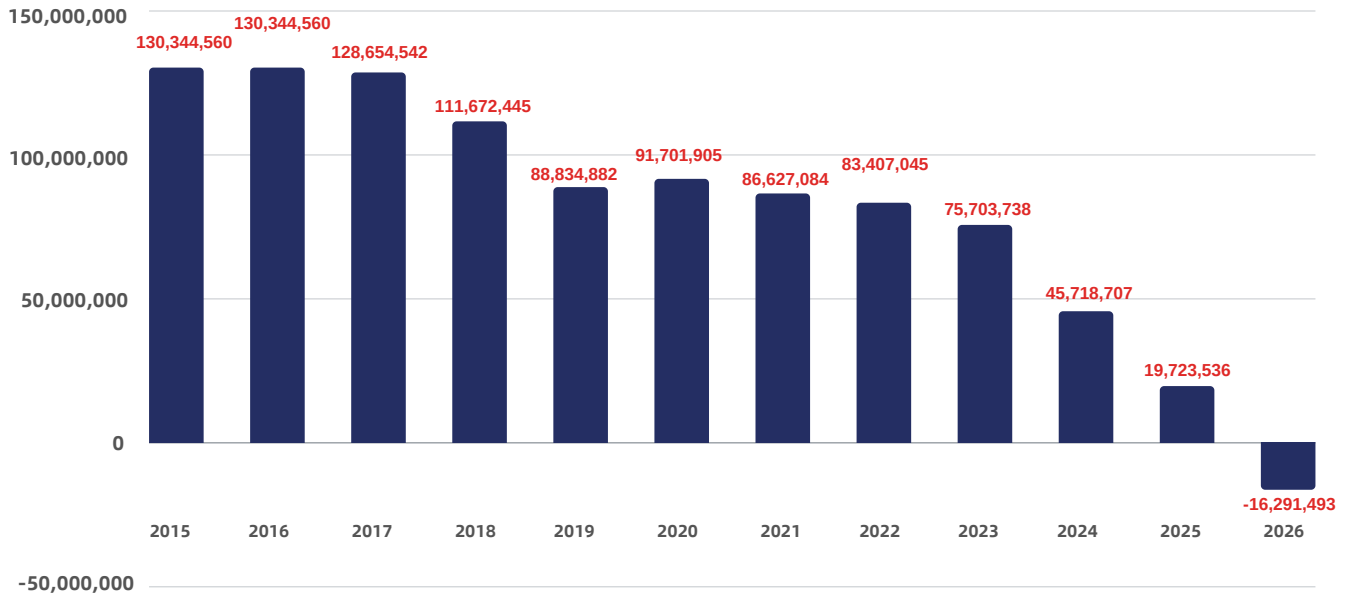
# FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND VIABILITY

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## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Pittsburgh Public Schools faces significant financial constraints that directly impact their ability to provide equitable, excellent, and efficient learning environments for all students. The forecast is grim. In December of 2025, the District will not be able to pass a balanced budget for 2026 based on current projections. These projections will exhaust the fund balance during 2026, leaving an inability to meet payroll, retirement and benefit expenses, charter school payments, and debt service obligations (Fig. 4). The fund balances serve a dual role: firstly, as a source of cash flow during months with lower revenue intake, and secondly, as a contingency reserve for unforeseen one.

— “ ————— **THE FORECAST IS GRIM**  
IN DECEMBER OF 2025, THE DISTRICT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO  
PASS A BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2026 ————— ” —



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Finance

Figure 4 - District Fund Balance, 2015 through 2026

Fund balances serve two purposes – cash flow during the months in which less revenue is received and as a contingency for unanticipated one-time expenditures.







There are additional challenges at the local, state, and federal levels that impact the District's financial outlook.

### LOCAL FUNDING OUTLOOK

Presently, expenditures are surpassing revenues, with a 4.7 percent increase in expenditures compared to a 2.8 percent increase in revenues in 2024. The District is anticipated to face a deficit of \$30 million this year. Apart from the pandemic-affected year, the District has consistently operated with a deficit since 2017 (fig. 5).

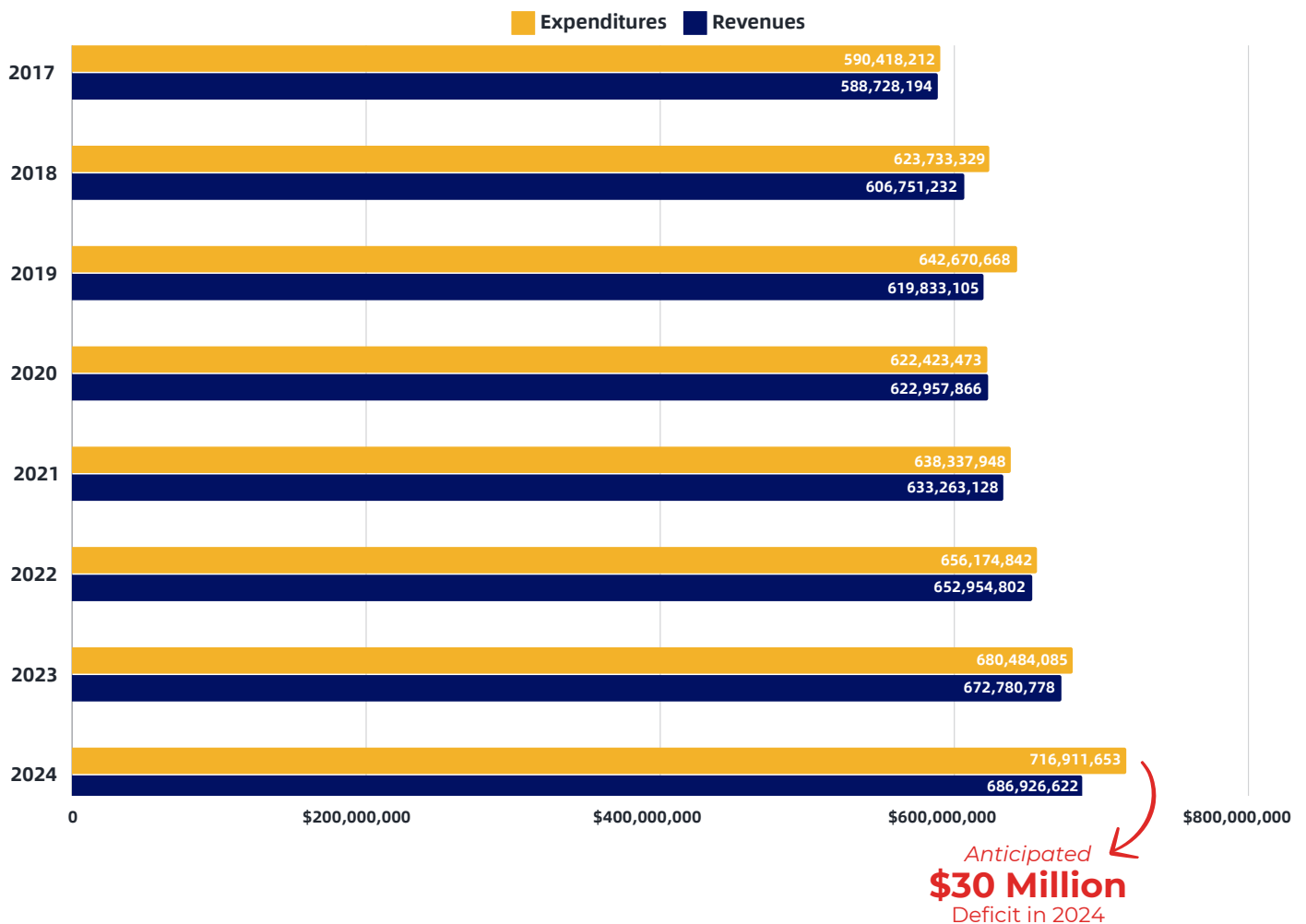
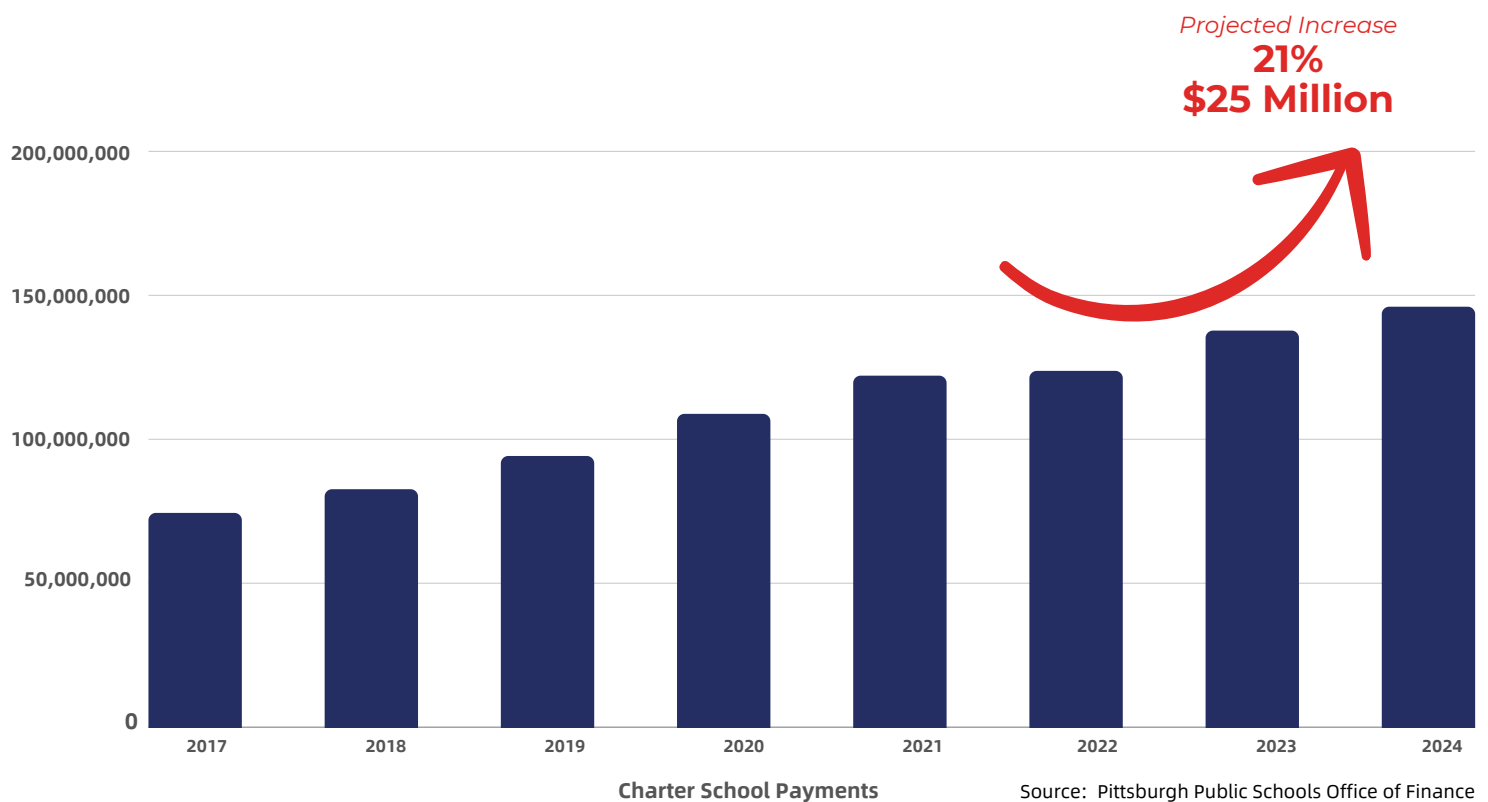


Figure 5 - Expenditures and Revenues, 2017 to 2024

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Finance

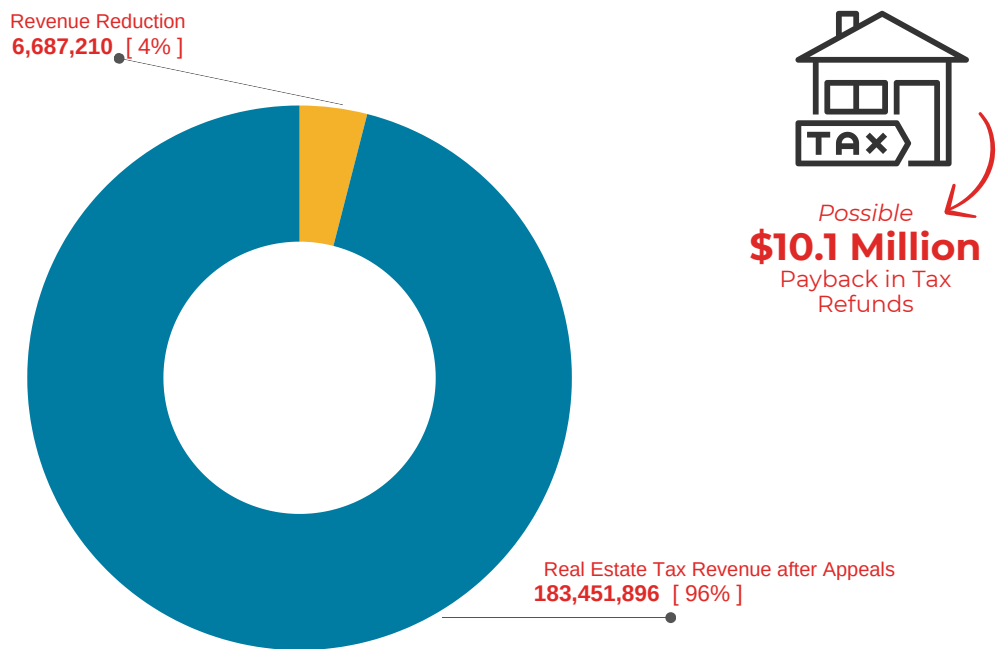


The rising costs associated with charter schools represent the District's most substantial growing expenditure, expanding year after year. Projections indicate a substantial 21% increase, amounting to an additional \$25 million beyond the approved budgeted amount for the year 2023. In comparison, in 2017 projections indicated a 11% increase, amounting to an additional eight million dollars beyond the approved budget for the year 2016.





The District's ability to boost revenue is limited, primarily relying on a possible 5.4 percent increase in real estate taxes, which could generate up to ten million dollars. It's crucial to note that this revenue source is decreasing. Ongoing property assessment appeals have already cut real estate tax revenue by \$3.1 million, with the potential for an annual reduction of up to \$5.4 million dollars. Additionally, the District may bear the responsibility of repaying \$10.1 million in real estate tax refunds for the 2022 and 2023 tax years. While data for 2024 is unavailable, if all tax refunds are disbursed, the District would face challenges in achieving a balanced budget for 2025.



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Finance

**Impact of 2022 and 2023 Assessment Appeal Reductions**

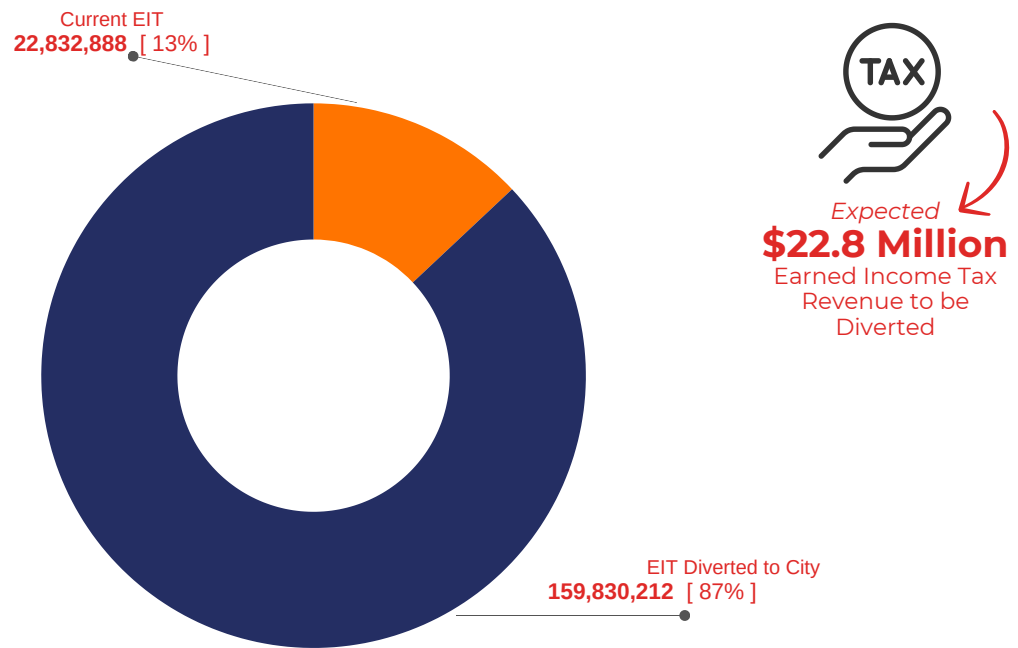
This represents the impact of property assessment appeals for 2022 and 2023 on projected 2024 real estate.

Earned income tax revenue is the second largest local revenue source behind real estate tax revenue. This rate is set by state law and are PPS is unable to increase the District's earned income tax rate. However, the District does not receive the amount of earned income tax that it levies.

The provisions of Act 187 (2004) of the Public School Code state that in 2007, a first-class school district within a second-class city is required to share 0.10% of earned income tax to the City of Pittsburgh, followed by an increase to 0.20% in 2008. From 2009 onwards, the mandated sharing is set at one quarter of one percent (0.25%) with the city.



Since 2007, \$265.9 million in earned income tax (EIT) revenue has been redirected from Pittsburgh Public Schools. To help counter this loss, the District received Commonwealth Partnership funding, totaling \$122 million over this period. In 2023, it is expected that \$22.8 million in earned income tax revenue will be diverted, while the built-in Commonwealth Partnership funding in the basic education funding base is \$8 million. This leaves a gap of \$14.8 million that needs to be addressed.



Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools Office of Finance

**Impact of EIT Diversion to the City of Pittsburgh**

This represents the amount of earned income revenue, levied by the District, that is diverted to the City of Pittsburgh.

**STATE FUNDING OUTLOOK**

In February 2024, Governor Shapiro proposed a new budget that seeks to amend the Basic Education Funding Formula following the Commonwealth Court’s ruling declared Pennsylvania’s funding system as underfunding school districts and violating the state constitution. Among the proposed changes is the introduction of an Adequacy Investment component, which compares school district expenditures to a state-established spending target.



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While the proposed changes ensure the District will not receive less funding than it received during the 2023-24 school year, PPS cannot expect later increases in the future barring a substantial increase in basic education funding. For example, \$872 million of the proposed \$1.07 billion increase in basic education funding will be distributed via the Adequacy Investment. Based on current spending, the District is **not** projected to receive any additional funding through the Adequacy Investment.

## FEDERAL FUNDING OUTLOOK

For the past three years, PPS has utilized Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) to sustain current investments and support innovative planning to address the unfinished learning of students. This funding source will end in September 2024, leaving Pittsburgh Public Schools with less financial resources. Since 2020, the District has used ESSER funds to support: Social Emotional Learning (SEL), physical plant and capital improvements, COVID mitigation supplies, continuity of services and programming to address learning loss.

## IMPACT OF FUNDING OUTLOOK

**The District's inability to meet its financial obligations may result in the transition into financial watch status and potential state receivership. In such a scenario, the state would assume control over decision-making processes, including the removal of the school board and local leadership, thereby eliminating community input and representation.** Proactively addressing the financial challenges in collaboration with the community is crucial for Pittsburgh to spearhead the necessary changes that will best serve its school communities.

These financial challenges hinder efforts to create optimal student outcomes and opportunities, as students may lack access to updated technology, adequate facilities for extracurricular activities, and safe and modern learning environments. Addressing these financial challenges is essential to ensuring that every student can thrive and experience the joy of learning in an environment that fosters their growth and success.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A plan for community engagement is paramount to ensure the success of the Facilities Utilization Plan. This comprehensive approach necessitates a multi-faceted strategy to involve various stakeholders, including students, families, educators, and community members.

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The community engagement plan will focus on inclusivity and transparency. The aim is to create a platform where all voices are heard and considered. This will be achieved through a series of structured yet open forums, surveys, and interactive sessions. The approach will be twofold: first, to disseminate information regarding the proposed Facilities Utilization Plan and its implications, and second, to gather feedback, concerns, and suggestions from the community.





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## METHODS FOR COLLECTING FEEDBACK

**Surveys and Questionnaires:** Distributed both online and in paper format, these tools will be designed to gather structured feedback from a broad audience. They will be made available in multiple languages to ensure inclusivity.

**Focus Groups:** Small, diverse groups of stakeholders will be formed to discuss specific aspects of the Facilities Utilization Plan. These focus groups will provide in-depth insights and facilitate detailed discussions.

**Community Workshops:** Interactive workshops will be organized where community members can engage in direct dialogues with the planners and provide their input. These workshops will be geared towards understanding the community's needs and expectations from the facilities.

**Online Platforms:** A dedicated section on the District's website, along with social media channels, will be used to provide information, receive comments, and answer queries. This will ensure continuous engagement with the community, especially with those who are unable to attend in-person meetings.

**Targeted Mailings and Communications:** Targeted mailings and communications (Talking Points, Constant Contact, Peachjar and Robocalls) to ensure community awareness and ways to provide input throughout the development of a final facilities utilization plan.

**Board Public Hearings:** Board public hearings will continue to serve as a vital mechanism for community input. These hearings are critical as they provide a formal platform for public input and are an essential element of the democratic process. The hearings will be well-publicized in advance through various channels such as the District's website, social media and local newspapers to ensure maximum participation.

By employing these methods, the Administration aims to ensure that the development of the Facilities Utilization Plan is a collaborative effort that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the community it serves. This broad-based engagement is not only a directive from the Board but a fundamental component in creating a plan that is equitable, excellent, and efficient, and which enhances educational opportunities for all students in the District.

# CONSULTING SERVICES INTEGRATION

## ROLE OF CONSULTING SERVICES IN PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The integration of consulting services into the development of the Facilities Utilization Plan is a strategic decision taken by the Superintendent and Administration of the School District of Pittsburgh, as highlighted in the resolution. The role of these consultants is multifaceted and crucial for enhancing the plan's effectiveness. They bring specialized knowledge and experience, having worked on similar projects in other districts or contexts. Their objective perspective is invaluable in identifying areas that internal stakeholders might overlook.

Consultants will be instrumental in conducting comprehensive analyses of the current state of facilities, offering insights into best practices in space utilization, and providing innovative solutions for maximizing the use of resources. They will also help with the financial analysis of the proposed changes, ensuring that the recommendations are educationally sound and fiscally responsible. Moreover, consultants can play a pivotal role in facilitating community outreach and engagement, helping to facilitate engagement in a way that effectively gathers meaningful feedback from various stakeholders.



DISCREPANCIES UNDERMINE THE EFFORTS TO CREATE EQUITABLE, EXCELLENT, AND EFFICIENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.







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## UTILIZATION OF CONSULTANT EXPERTISE

Consultant expertise will be utilized in various stages of the plan development. Initially, they will undertake a detailed review of the current facilities, comparing them against best practices and standards in education facility management. This assessment will consider factors such as space efficiency, technological integration, and sustainability.

Furthermore, in the realm of community engagement, consultant(s) will employ their expertise in public relations and communication to design and implement effective outreach strategies. This could include organizing focus groups, designing surveys, and facilitating targeted community engagements to ensure comprehensive community involvement.

## CONSULTANT EXPECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the consultant(s) assessments and community feedback, several key recommendations are expected to be proposed. These might include reconfiguring existing spaces to better meet current educational needs, investing in technology to create more dynamic learning environments, and possibly consolidating underutilized facilities to optimize resource allocation.

The recommendations will also address the need for equitable access to facilities across the District, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location or background, have access to high-quality educational spaces. Energy efficiency and sustainability could also be a significant focus, with proposals to retrofit older buildings with environmentally friendly technologies.

In conclusion, the role of consulting services in the development of the Facilities Utilization Plan is integral to ensuring that the plan is comprehensive, innovative, and aligned with the Board's vision of Equity, Excellence, and Efficiency. Their expertise will guide the District in making informed decisions that enhance the educational environment and contribute to the long-term viability and outcomes of the District.

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# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

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As PPS embarks on a pivotal journey to reshape the future of the District through a facilities utilization lens, it is crucial to anchor the decisions in a foundation of thorough research, best practices, and data-informed decision-making. The outlined recommendations are not mere speculations, but are deeply rooted in extensive community feedback, particularly from the design principles survey and the strategic plan development process, as well as recommendations from the Independent Equity Audit. The following recommendations are not intended to diminish the ongoing and valued input from the community regarding the proposed school district facilities utilization plan. Instead, they are meant to provide a thoughtful framework to guide the collective dialogue. The focus is steadfast on the core principles of equity, excellence, and efficiency, as the District seeks to chart a course that best serves the educational needs and aspirations of all PPS students. This is a journey of collaboration, and every voice is vital in shaping a district that reflects the shared commitment to creating an enriching, equitable, and exceptional learning environment for PPS students.



THE OUTLINED RECOMMENDATIONS  
ARE NOT MERE SPECULATIONS, BUT  
ARE DEEPLY ROOTED IN EXTENSIVE  
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK





### EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The cornerstone of Pittsburgh Public Schools' first recommendation for the facilities utilization plan is deeply rooted in the belief that every child within the Pittsburgh Public Schools' boundary has an inalienable right to an education that is not only high in quality but also comprehensive in its approach to learning. This conviction transcends racial, geographic, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnic, and socio-economic barriers. Such a commitment is underscored by the remarkable consensus—98% approval—from over 1,100 voices comprising students, staff, families, and community members in the "Designing Our Future" survey. This overwhelming mandate reinforces the decision to align District facilities utilization plan with these principles of inclusion and quality. By doing so, the District will lay the foundation for schools that are not only safe and conducive to learning but also equipped with the infrastructure necessary to support contemporary educational methodologies. This pivotal recommendation is more than just a plan for spatial organization; it's the opening move in a comprehensive strategy to instill equity, foster excellence, and enhance efficiency across the board. It signals the unwavering dedication to fostering an equitable educational landscape where every student has the chance to excel and where the District sets the standard for operational effectiveness.

**Recommendation 1: Develop safe, modern, and effective learning environments across Pittsburgh Public Schools, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education for all students, regardless of their background or identity, to support excellence and operational efficiency.**



### SCHOOL CONFIGURATIONS AND ENROLLMENT SIZES

Currently, within the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the structure of PreK-5, PreK-8, 6-8, 6-12, and 9-12 school configurations contributes to uneven distribution of resources, resulting in inequitable opportunities for students. Schools with lower enrollment cannot sustain a broad curriculum, thus limiting students' exposure to essential academic and extracurricular programs such as music, art, and career exposure, which are pivotal for their holistic development. This shortfall at the elementary level has long-term consequences, impeding students' preparedness for specialized schools or programs at higher levels and limiting their ability to fulfill prerequisites for advanced coursework.

The allocation of funding based on student enrollment exacerbates these issues, leading to a vicious cycle where small schools cannot offer diverse courses, further reducing enrollment as families seek more comprehensive educational environments. This not only affects immediate learning opportunities but also students' future academic trajectories, as early access to courses like Algebra 1 and music can determine their placement and success in high school and beyond.

**Recommendation 2: Transition to a streamlined structure of foundational PreK-5 schools, uniformly providing a rich curriculum including music, art, STEM, career exposure, health and physical education, world language, and professional learning time for teachers. This foundational model will strengthen community ties, build trust in the school system, and ensure that all students have equal access to a diverse and robust education. Following this, students should progress to developmentally responsive 6-8 middle schools with advisory services, social-emotional support, and career and technical education exposure. This will create scalable pathways leading to high schools where students can make informed choices based on their foundational PreK-5 education and middle school experiences.**

By standardizing enrollment sizes across schools, resources can be equitably distributed, thus guaranteeing these opportunities for all. This strategic reduction in the variety of school types (such as eliminating certain K-8, 6-12 configurations) will increase efficiency and enhance the overall quality of education, thus ensuring that equity, excellence, and efficiency become the hallmarks of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' system.



### SCHOOLS AS THE HUB OF THE COMMUNITY

The concept of schools as vibrant community hubs emerges from a recognition of the multifaceted role that educational institutions play in a child's life and the broader community. A school that effectively leverages its facilities can provide more than just academic instruction; it can offer a center for community engagement, support, and enrichment for students and families. By optimizing the use of school spaces, resources can be utilized more efficiently, not only enhancing the educational experience but also providing a venue for after-hours activities and services that benefit the entire community. Such an approach aligns with a broader strategic vision of equity, excellence, and efficiency, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality educational and community resources.

Schools with the infrastructure to support this vision, such as adequate space for a variety of activities and state-of-the-art technology, can better serve the needs of their students and staff. They become sites where community-based organizations can collaborate to provide additional support and resources. Furthermore, integrating the community into the educational process through collaborative partnerships can not only enrich the learning environment but also strengthen the connection between schools and their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for student success.

**Recommendation 3: Transform schools into vibrant community hubs. This would involve reconfiguring school spaces to accommodate a broad range of activities and services that extend beyond the traditional school day and into the community. The District must ensure that every school has the necessary space, technological infrastructure, and resources to support not only the educational needs of students but also the professional and personal development of staff, and the wider community. Partnering with external organizations to support this vision can provide additional resources and expertise. This holistic approach to utilizing school facilities would enhance educational equity, drive excellence in learning outcomes, and ensure efficient use of District resources must ensure that every school has the necessary space, technological infrastructure, and resources to support not only the educational needs of students but also the professional and personal development of staff, and the wider community. Partnering with external organizations to support this vision can provide additional resources and expertise. This holistic approach to utilizing school facilities would enhance educational equity, drive excellence in learning outcomes, and ensure efficient use of District resources..**



### FEEDER PATTERNS

Feeder patterns — the systems that determine which schools students progress through — are pivotal in shaping their educational journey and the equity of the opportunities they receive. If these patterns are misaligned with transportation infrastructure, they can present significant challenges for students, restricting access to educational programs and limiting diversity within schools. Addressing feeder patterns is crucial in ensuring that all students have fair access to a continuum of educational experiences that cater to their academic and developmental needs.

Transportation challenges can significantly hinder students' ability to participate in specialized programs or access resources not available in their immediate community. By reexamining and optimizing feeder patterns, the District can reduce such barriers, potentially decreasing transit times and costs, and improving overall safety for students. Streamlining feeder patterns can also lead to more cohesive and articulated pathways from elementary to secondary education, which is essential for long-term student success.

In addition, thoughtfully designed feeder patterns can enhance student offerings by matching students with schools that provide the programs that best fit their interests and aspirations, such as advanced academics, arts, or technical education. This aligns educational offerings more closely with students' needs and future career pathways.

Lastly, diversified feeder patterns can help to create school populations that reflect the broader society, contributing to inclusive, culturally rich, and least restrictive environments. This diversity is beneficial not only for the social-emotional development of students but also for fostering a community where all members can thrive and learn from one another.

**Recommendation 4: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing feeder patterns to enhance equity, promote educational excellence, and achieve greater efficiency in district resources. The revised feeder patterns should aim to alleviate transportation difficulties, thereby improving accessibility to diverse educational programs. This review should also focus on creating clear and supportive pathways that align with students' academic and career goals, ensuring a seamless transition between educational stages. By doing so, the District will also foster more diverse school environments that reflect the community at large and support inclusive education for all students. This strategic approach to feeder patterns is fundamental in guaranteeing that every student has equitable opportunities to succeed and reach their full potential.**



### UTILIZING FACILITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITY, EXCELLENCE, AND EFFICIENCY

A school district's commitment to equity, excellence, and efficiency necessitates a rigorous evaluation of how school facilities are chosen and utilized. The creation of a protocol for school selection and use is pivotal in this process. It enables the District to systematically assess and optimize available space, ensuring that each school is not only a place of learning but also an environment that fosters creativity, innovation, and well-being for both students and staff. Modern educational paradigms underscore the significance of specialized amenities that support a broad range of disciplines, including the arts, music, science, STEM, career and technical education, and technology. These amenities are integral to developing future-ready students equipped with a diverse skill set.

Moreover, the protocol should extend to include wellness spaces for students and staff, reflecting the growing awareness of the importance of mental and physical health in educational outcomes. Community engagement and support services are also essential, requiring dedicated areas within schools that facilitate such interactions. A strategic approach to the use of space not only maximizes resources but also ensures that educational facilities can adapt to the evolving needs of the student body and the larger community.

**Recommendation 5: Implement a facilities utilization protocol that strategically evaluates school spaces to enhance modern learning and working environments. This protocol should:**

- **Ensure that spaces are optimized for a comprehensive range of disciplines, promoting innovation and creativity through dedicated areas for art, music, science, STEM, career and technical education, and technology.**
- **Incorporate wellness areas for students and staff, recognizing the integral role of well-being in educational success.**
- **Include provisions for community engagement and support services, making schools central to the broader community.**
- **Consider the flexibility and adaptability of spaces to meet the changing demands of education and community needs.**

By adhering to this protocol, the District will advance towards a future where every school facility is a microcosm of broader educational objectives, embodying equity, excellence, and efficiency in every aspect of its design and utilization.



### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The path to educational excellence hinges on the quality of instruction, which, in turn, relies on the effectiveness of continuous professional learning for educators. PPS aligns with Learning Forward's insight, recognizing that to optimize student learning, every educator must undergo continuous, effective professional learning. However, to truly advance educational outcomes in alignment with principles of equity, excellence, and efficiency, PPS must not only evolve its professional learning but also strategically utilize its facilities.

PPS must tailor professional learning to address the unique needs across different grade levels and educational configurations. Optimizing the utilization of educational facilities becomes imperative to foster an environment where equity prevails. Facilities should be designed and equipped to facilitate professional learning activities that cater to diverse needs, ensuring that educators have access to the resources necessary for effective teaching. Furthermore, professional learning programs should incorporate training in culturally responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction, key elements for fostering high-quality educational practices that honor student diversity. Simultaneously, efforts to bridge digital divides, as highlighted by the [National Education Technology Plan](#), should be integrated into facility planning. Facilities should provide educators with the necessary infrastructure and support to integrate technology seamlessly into the curriculum, thereby enhancing learning outcomes through innovative, technology-supported instruction.

**Recommendation 6: Implement a comprehensive educational enhancement plan that prioritizes tailored professional learning systems addressing the diverse needs of educators and students across all grade levels. Additionally, optimize facility utilization to ensure equitable access to spaces, resources and opportunities, fostering an environment for learning and growth. This plan should ensure that educational materials are universally designed for accessibility, allowing all students, including those with diverse learning needs, to fully engage with the curriculum. Moreover, professional learning must encompass training in culturally responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction, essential components for high-quality educational practices that respect and respond to the rich tapestry of student backgrounds. Additionally, educators must be equipped with the necessary skills to deliver dynamic, engaging, technology-supported learning experiences that empower students to thrive in an evolving teaching and learning landscape.**





### BRINGING JOY TO OUR FACILITIES

Gholdy Muhammad's five pursuits, centering on identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy, provide a comprehensive framework for creating a transformative school culture that benefits all stakeholders. In the context of a facilities utilization plan, emphasizing these pursuits can facilitate environments that foster holistic growth and learning.

Equity is addressed through the intentional design of spaces that allow for the exploration of students' and educators' identities, nurturing a sense of belonging and affirmation of diverse backgrounds. Excellence is pursued by ensuring facilities support the development of high-level skills and intellectual engagement, preparing students to meet the challenges of a complex world with competence and confidence. Efficiency comes from streamlined, multipurpose spaces that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.

The pursuit of joy, however, is often undervalued in educational planning yet is vital for creating a positive and engaging school climate. Facilities that invite joy can transform the educational experience from one of mere obligation to one of excitement and inspiration, improving both academic outcomes and overall well-being for students and staff. Joyful environments can increase engagement, reduce stress, and foster a more collaborative and creative school community.

**Recommendation 7: Incorporate Gholdy Muhammad's five pursuits into the facilities utilization plan with a particular emphasis on cultivating joy. This will be operationalized through:**

- **Designing flexible and inviting spaces that celebrate and affirm diverse identities.**
- **Creating facilities that support the development of critical skills and intellectual exploration.**
- **Equipping environments with resources that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.**
- **Ensuring spaces contribute to the joy of students and staff, such as through areas for art, music, relaxation, and recreation.**

By prioritizing joy alongside the other four pursuits, the District can achieve a balanced approach to facility planning that not only meets logistical needs but also elevates the human experience, leading to more enriched outcomes and a more vibrant District culture.



### SCHEDULING FOR DIVERSE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The foundational literacies in reading and mathematics are critical to students' ability to access all areas of the curriculum and are predictors of academic success. However, education is more than literacy and numeracy. A well-rounded curriculum, including STEM, art, music, world languages, health and physical education, and career exploration, equips students with the diverse skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a complex, rapidly changing world. Integrating these subjects significantly contributes to the development of the whole child and prepares students for the future workforce, fostering creative, technical, and critical thinking skills.

To achieve true equity, a facilities utilization plan must ensure that all students have equitable access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Excellence is cultivated through high achievements in literacy and math and through the diverse experiences and skills gained through other disciplines. Efficiency involves using school time in such a way that it maximizes the impact on student learning and development across a spectrum of subjects, preparing students for a variety of post-secondary pathways.

#### **Recommendation 8: Develop scheduling and time allocation models that:**

- **Prioritize literacy and math as the bedrock for all learning, ensuring that every student achieves proficiency in these key areas.**
- **Dedicate significant time to subjects like STEM, art, music, world languages, and physical education, acknowledging their importance in developing diverse skill sets and knowledge.**
- **Integrate career exploration opportunities into the curriculum, allowing students to connect their learning with potential career paths and to better understand the relevance of their education to the real world.**

By balancing the curriculum in this manner, the District can ensure that all students can excel in a variety of disciplines, fostering a rich educational environment that supports both academic growth and personal development.



### A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SAFETY

A comprehensive approach to safety within a school district is essential, extending beyond the physical confines of the school buildings to include the journey to and from school. Ensuring student and staff safety in both physical and academic aspects is a fundamental responsibility of the school district, directly impacting student learning, outcomes, experiences, and the District's overall reputation. Integrating student voice into safety planning ensures that the measures are relevant and responsive to their needs. Conflict resolution and violence prevention structures are critical in creating a safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning.

Engaging critical partners and community support is pivotal. Collaborative partnerships with local law enforcement, mental health professionals, and community organizations can provide additional resources and expertise. These collaborations also foster a sense of shared responsibility for the safety and well-being of students and staff.

**Recommendation 9: Implement a unified, comprehensive safety plan encompassing both physical and academic aspects. This plan should include the development of robust safety systems, structures, and infrastructure that protect students and staff on school premises and during their commute. Integral to this plan is the active involvement of students in shaping safety protocols, ensuring their needs and concerns are addressed. The plan should also establish spaces for effective conflict resolution and violence prevention programs, which include training in communication, empathy, and peaceful dispute resolution. Strong partnerships with mental health agencies, community organizations, and local law enforcement, community organizations are essential to enhance these safety measures. Regular reviews and updates of safety protocols, coupled with drills and training, are necessary to maintain their relevance and effectiveness. Finally, clear and transparent communication of these safety policies with the school community is crucial for building trust and ensuring a safe, supportive educational environment.**

By prioritizing safety in its facilities utilization plan and involving key stakeholders in the process, the school district can create a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment, contributing to positive educational outcomes and reinforcing the District's reputation for excellence and equity.



### EQUITY, EQUITY, EQUITY!

A school district's commitment to equity, excellence, and efficiency necessitates a focused approach to addressing racial and disability disparities. These disparities often manifest in unequal access to resources, opportunities, and a continuum of services, leading to significant gaps in educational outcomes. By implementing strategies that specifically target these disparities, the District can ensure that all students, regardless of their race or abilities, have equal opportunities to succeed. This involves creating learning environments that are not only physically accessible but also culturally responsive and inclusive of diverse learning styles and needs.

Addressing these disparities is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and respect among students, which in turn enhances their academic engagement and achievement. Moreover, it aligns with legal and ethical obligations to provide equitable education for all students. In doing so, the District not only improves the educational experiences of its students but also sets a standard for inclusivity and excellence in education.

**Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a holistic strategy aimed at eliminating racial and disability disparities in education. This strategy should focus on ensuring equal access to educational resources and opportunities and fostering inclusive environments. Key elements include making facilities and learning materials accessible to all students, regardless of their abilities, and ensuring that curricula are inclusive and reflective of diverse cultures and histories. Additionally, the plan should provide targeted support to historically underserved or marginalized students and communities, as well as special education services currently only available in a regional model. It's crucial to train educators and staff in culturally responsive teaching methods and in understanding diverse learning needs. Regular assessments and evaluations of these strategies are essential to continuously enhance equity and inclusivity in the educational experience.**

By prioritizing the elimination of racial and disability disparities, the school district can create a more equitable, excellent, and efficient educational system that meets the needs of all students and prepares them for success in a diverse world.



### MAGNET PROGRAMS

A strategic reassessment of the school District's facilities utilization plan, especially regarding magnet programs, is essential to address a range of systemic challenges impacting equity, excellence, and efficiency. Key issues include the presence of outdated magnet program models that lack clear definition and purpose, oversubscription and inconsistent admission requirements leading to inequitable access, and poorly supported pathways for continuous engagement in magnet programs from elementary through high school. Also, magnet programs inadvertently place comprehensive middle and high schools at a disadvantage, potentially affecting student outcomes and the overall perception of these schools. The geographic location of magnet schools presents logistical, transportation, and financial challenges. Furthermore, the varied acceptance criteria across different magnet programs create disparities in equitable opportunities, potentially reinforcing perceptions of exclusivity and neglecting students not in magnet programs. As the District aims for overall excellence, these factors necessitate a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to ensure equitable, high-quality education for all students, not just those in magnet programs.

**Recommendation 11: Revitalize and regularly update all magnet programs, standardize admissions for equitable access, establish continuous and supportive education pathways within magnet programs, strengthen comprehensive schools, strategically optimize the location and transportation logistics of magnet schools, introduce a diverse range of new magnet program options, revise the magnet policy to better align with goals of equity and efficiency, and actively involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process.**

Implementing these recommendations will address current disparities and inefficiencies, moving the District towards a more equitable, excellent, and efficient future where all students, regardless of their school type, receive a high-quality education.



### ALIGNED FISCAL MANAGEMENT

In the context of a school district, the intersection of fiscal responsibility and the pursuit of equity, excellence, and efficiency is crucial. A balanced approach to spending ensures that resources are allocated in a way that maximizes the impact on student and staff learning experiences and outcomes, without leading to financial overextension. Developing a protocol for examining cost-saving constructs is key to achieving this balance. It allows the District to identify and implement more efficient spending practices while ensuring that expenditures do not exceed revenues. Such a protocol not only safeguards the District's financial health but also ensures that resources are being used in the most effective manner to support the educational mission.

**Recommendation 12: Establish a protocol for financial management that focuses on:**

- **Analyzing current spending to identify areas where facility and program costs can be reduced without compromising the quality of education and services provided.**
- **Implementing cost-saving measures that align with the District's goals of equity, excellence, and efficiency.**
- **Ensuring that expenditures do not exceed revenues, maintaining a sustainable financial model.**
- **Regularly reviewing and adjusting the budget and spending practices to respond to changing needs and priorities, and to incorporate new opportunities for cost savings.**
- **Prioritizing investments in areas that directly enhance student learning experiences and staff development.**

This protocol will guide the District in maintaining fiscal responsibility while continuously improving the quality of education and operational efficiency.

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Developing key performance indicators (KPIs) to gauge the success of a facilities utilization plan centered on equity, excellence, and efficiency involves aligning metrics with the overarching goals of the plan. Below are proposed KPIs for each of these areas. As the plan progresses, additional KPIs will be established, and some may rely on lagging data that is not currently available. Moving forward, the process will require deliberate decisions on data collection methods to ensure alignment between PPS KPIs and the data collected.



## EQUITY IN FACILITY UTILIZATION

**Demographic Representation:** Track and report demographic and economic diversity of students in each facility to monitor equitable representation across the District.

**Resource Allocation:** Report on the equitable distribution of resources including technology, libraries, staff, and extracurricular facilities among schools.

**Accessibility:** Report the ADA accessibility of facilities for students with disabilities, including physical access and availability of necessary accommodations.



## EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

**Learning Environment Quality:** Monitor the condition of physical learning environments, including classroom size, temperature, and building maintenance.

**Technology Integration:** Measure the integration and effectiveness of technology in classrooms, including the availability of digital learning tools and resources.

**Extra-Curricular Facilities:** Assess the quality and availability of extra-curricular facilities like sports fields, art rooms, and science labs.



## EFFICIENCY IN FACILITY MANAGEMENT

**Utilization Rates:** Report utilization rates of educational facilities.

**Energy Efficiency:** Report energy usage in conjunction with measures implemented for energy conservation to allow public scrutiny of sustainable and cost-effective practices.

**Maintenance and Operations Costs:** Review and report the costs associated with maintaining and operating school facilities, offering insight into achieving cost-effective management working towards no compromise on quality.



## IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES

**Academic Performance:** Report the correlation between facility quality and student academic performance.

**Student Satisfaction:** Conduct regular climate surveys to gauge student satisfaction with their physical learning environments.

**Safety and Security:** Report on the implementation status of physical safety and security measures in place at school facilities.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

**Parent and Community Feedback:** Report feedback from parents and the community regarding the perceived impact of facilities on student learning and well-being, with a commitment to solicit responses to ensure representation of the diverse spectrum of families within the District and accurately reflect its demographic composition.

**Partnership Utilization:** Report on the use of school facilities by community organizations and partnerships.

These KPIs can serve as benchmarks for monitoring progress, identifying areas for improvement, and evaluating the overall effectiveness of the facilities utilization plan in promoting equity, excellence, and efficiency within Pittsburgh Public Schools. It is important to note that these KPIs will require additional investments. Regular monitoring and analysis of these indicators will help ensure that the District remains accountable to its goals and responsive to the needs of its diverse student population.



KPIs CAN SERVE AS BENCHMARKS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS, IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, AND EVALUATING THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

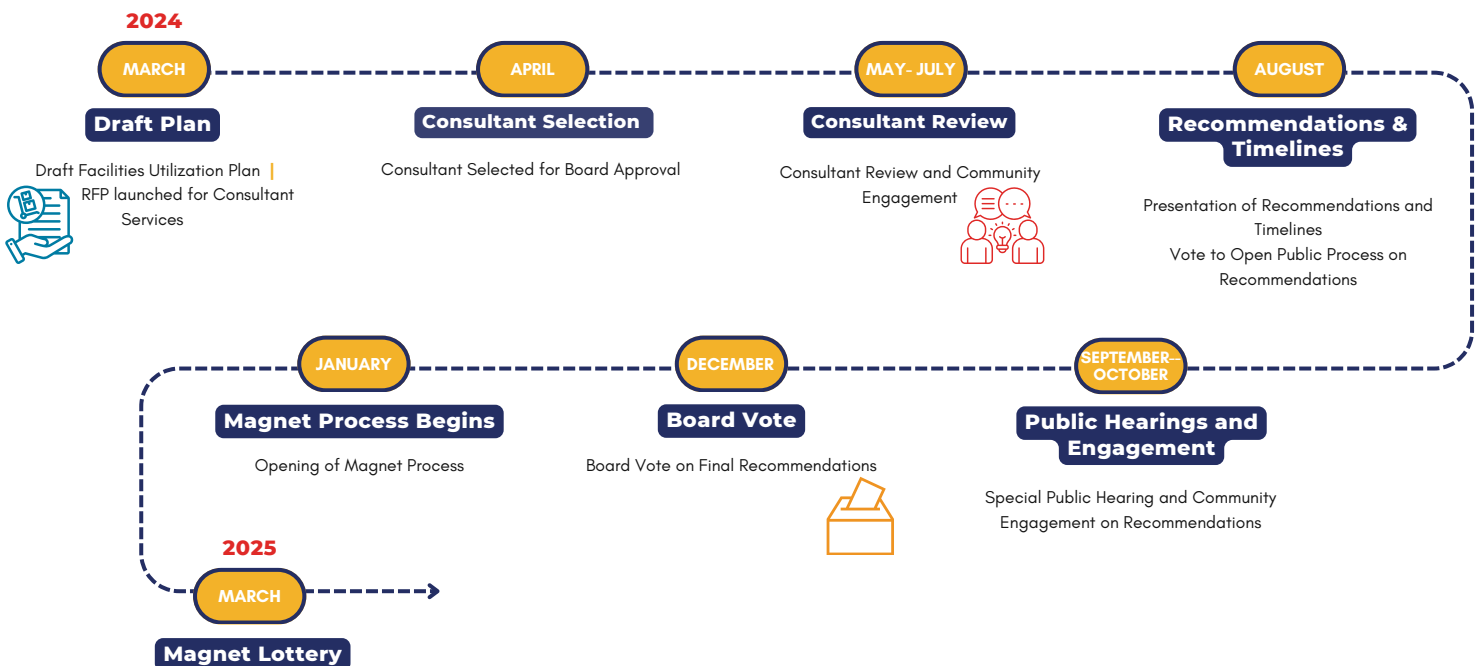




# TIMELINE

At the request of the Board of Directors, the Superintendent met the March 15 deadline for a draft Facilities Utilization Plan. The proposal outlines essential recommendations aimed at optimizing the District’s resources to ensure equitable student experiences, bolstered by an updated District footprint. A robust engagement plan will include multiple opportunities for input from the Pittsburgh Public Schools community to inform the development of a final plan for Board consideration over the next six months. The plan leverages diverse strategies for engaging all stakeholders. In addition to the Board’s public hearings, a series of methods will be used to engage stakeholders comprehensively.

The proposed timeline below highlights key milestones and is not exhaustive of each action necessary to facilitate the development and implementation of the final plan. The proposed timelines below is also subject to change based on Board Action, consultant availability, and stakeholder input.



# CONCLUSION



## IN CONCLUSION,

the proposed Facilities Utilization Plan, as directed by the Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh, is a transformative and future-oriented undertaking. It represents not just a commitment to improving the District's educational landscape through strategic and equitable use of facilities but also a resolve to mend the systemic processes for the betterment of PPS students. At this juncture, the plan focuses on system-wide enhancements rather than pinpointing specific schools for closure or consolidation. This approach aligns with the goal of nurturing the educational system as one would cultivate a garden, ensuring that each student – like every plant in a well-tended garden – receives the attention and resources necessary to flourish. Rooted in the core values of Equity, Excellence, and Efficiency, the proposed plan offers recommendations for student access to quality educational environments conducive to learning and personal growth. The inclusion of broad community outreach, including Board public hearings, highlights the District's commitment to transparency and inclusivity, valuing the voices of students, families, educators, and community members in shaping the plan. By involving all departments within the District and engaging with expert consulting services, the plan embraces a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Ultimately, this Facilities Utilization Plan is not merely a blueprint for the optimal use of physical spaces but a strategic pathway toward a future where every student is nurtured and supported, paving the way for their success and well-being.





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