

Every Kid. Every School. Every Day.

March 24, 2025

Good evening. Our current system of schools isn't working for too many of our children. Huge gaps in achievement, opportunities, and access to supports create a system that works very well for some, but not for all.

This is a problem that has been a long time in the making, and past solutions have left the public rightly skeptical that this time can be different. While there is broad agreement that we need to create lasting and sustainable change for all of our children, especially the Black, Brown and disabled children historically underserved by this system, there is rightful concern around how the current set of facilities proposals will help get us there.

As an organization, we have concerns about converting Arlington from a PreK-5 to a middle school without further information about demographic trends as the school has continued to see Kindergarten enrollment increases over the past few years. Yet, these specific concerns, we believe would best be addressed in community by community meetings where we are provided with the data and information we need to understand the tradeoffs *being made and how those changes sit in a larger context of district improvement*. For this reason, I am urging you to vote yes to begin the process of school discussions around closures, and to provide to the public what your process will be to get to the right answer for our kids and families. We know that keeping the status quo is not an option.

The status quo: segregated schools in Pittsburgh in grow achievement and educational opportunity gaps

Currently, 25 of the 50 regular schools within PPS have concentrations of poverty that are higher than 80%. The average size of these schools is less than 300 students. 82% of students in schools where concentrations of poverty are 75% or higher are students of color. Over half of the white students (53%) in the district attend schools where the concentration of poverty is less than 50%. In our middle schools only 10% of our students take Algebra (in part because 10 schools did not offer it) and only 18% take a world language.

K-12 segregation has been shown to widen racial achievement gaps – gaps created by the cumulative differences in educational opportunities.¹

Looking at data from 2008-09 to 2018-19, Stanford University researchers found that:

“Achievement gaps grow faster in more segregated school systems during elementary and middle school relative to less segregated school systems....high-poverty schools provide, on average, less educational opportunity than low-poverty schools.”²

In Pittsburgh the gap between Black and white third grade reading achievement is 41 percentage points (72% compared to 31%). And the gap between Black and white eighth grade math achievement is 32 percentage points (38.2% compared to 6.2%).

¹ Reardon, S.F., Weathers, E.S., Fahle, E.M., Jang, H., & Kalogrides, D. (2022). Is Separate Still Unequal? New Evidence on School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps. (CEPA Working Paper No.19-06). Retrieved from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp19-06>

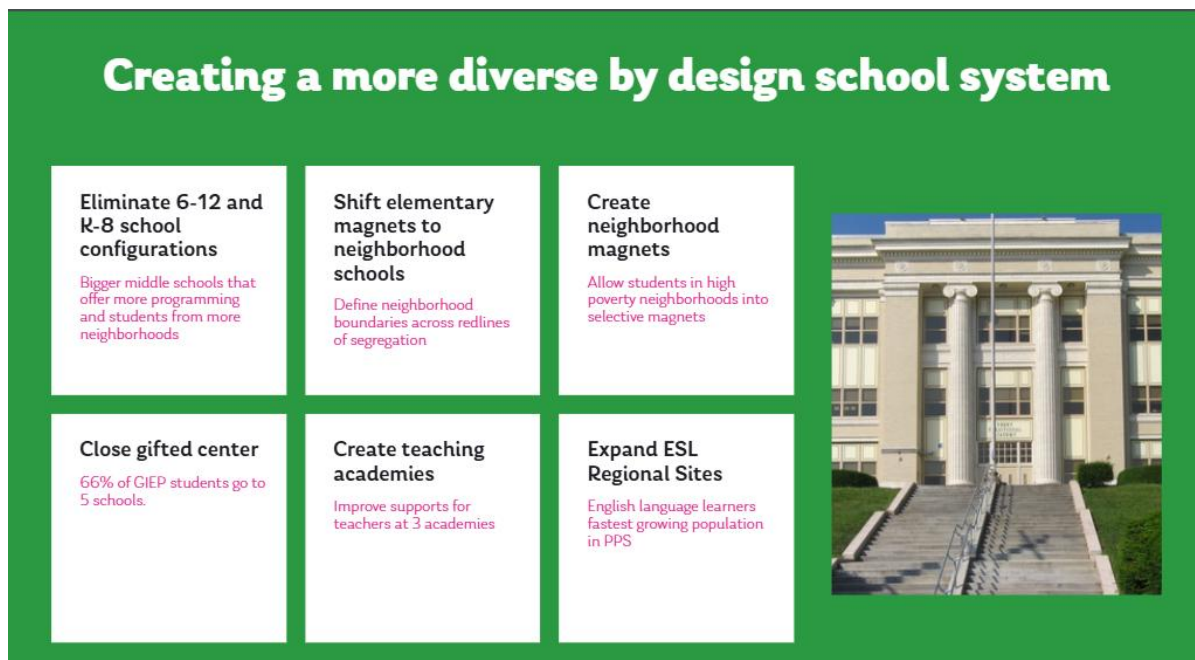
² Reardon, et al. (2022).

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We know the factors that are leading to these gaps here in Pittsburgh – schools with declining enrollments cut back on staffing and programming and create a spiral of decline that leads to families opting for magnets, charters, or private schools, or leaving the district all together. Yet in all of these schools, there are amazing assets: families, teachers, and community programs, that are working hard to provide children the high-quality education they deserve. *At Pittsburgh Perry, Arlington, and Milliones, we have had the privilege of working hand in hand with educators and leaders that work diligently to address the systemic issues that make that promise ever more challenging.*

As we think about the changes needed to deliver on the vision laid out in your strategic plan, we must also address the systems issues that are intertwined with how many buildings we have (staffing, budgeting, operations, transportation) that if unaddressed will lead us back here in the future.

How does the District Vision laid out in your strategic plan look on the ground under a new configuration



We also need from this Board and administration a clear vision about what our schools will look like and how will they improve after the changes are made. Specifically,

- What are the feeder patterns planned and school catchment areas going to be?
- What are your targets for socioeconomic diversity (*no more than 65% students economically disadvantaged in any one school?*) and supports for students with disabilities and learning needs at each school?
- *What improvements will be in our schools as a result of the building consolidations or closures?*
- How will we support school staff and leadership through this transition?
- *How will we keep staffs together that have gotten great results for kids?*

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- *How will the changes improve staffing coverages at all buildings so that no child goes for a prolonged time without a teacher of record for their grade level?*
- *How will the changes improve resource efficiency so that students benefit from supports, programs, and opportunities more in the future than they do today?*
- *What considerations or tradeoffs were made in the creation of a recommendation and what was the data that informed your assumptions (cost of capital improvements, programmatic space needs, community birthrates and construction, neighborhood needs, etc.)?*
- *What are your targets for a baseline of educational opportunities in K-5 that will set up all students for educational success? Universal PreK? Before and afterschool care? Out of school and summer learning experiences?*
- *Where do you need the communities support and help to be successful? How can we be better partners? How can we provide constructive input and let you know when things are and aren't working?*

Most of this data and information has already been compiled in service of creating the recommendations. We need more of it to see the light of day as part of this process.

At A+ Schools, we have made a dramatic shift in our mission over the past few years to be a school support organization that helps to leverage the abundant resources of this community to solve the problems that get in the way of a child getting to school. We know that in communities where kids are doing well, it is the combination of family, school, and community partner support that makes it possible. We believe we have everything we need to succeed by our children. Let's get to work to make it happen.

James Fogarty
Executive Director
A+ Schools

3rd Grade ELA PSSA Scores 2024

School Name	Subject	Group	Grade	Number Scored	Percent Advanced	Percent Proficient	Percent Basic	Percent Below Basic	Percent Proficient and above	% of School Economically Disadvantaged	# of 3rd Grade Teachers Required by Contract	Avg Class Size
PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	72	34.7	47.2	13.9	4.2	81.9	29	3	24
PITTSBURGH GREENFIELD K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	34	26.5	52.9	14.7	5.9	79.4	55	2	17
PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	76	30.3	43.4	25.0	1.3	73.7	67	4	19
PITTSBURGH MONTESSORI K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	34	26.5	47.1	14.7	11.8	73.5	26	2	17
PITTSBURGH CARMALT K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	59	15.3	44.1	25.4	15.3	59.3	69	3	20
PITTSBURGH BROOKLINE K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	34	0.0	58.8	26.5	14.7	58.8	64	2	17
PITTSBURGH CONCORD K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	48	6.3	50.0	20.8	22.9	56.3	80	2	24
PITTSBURGH WHITTIER K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	18	11.1	44.4	22.2	22.2	55.6	74	1	18
PITTSBURGH PHILLIPS K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	33	18.2	36.4	30.3	15.2	54.5	65	2	17
PITTSBURGH WESTWOOD K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	26	7.7	46.2	23.1	23.1	53.8	83	2	13
PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	44	6.8	45.5	25.0	22.7	52.3	75	2	22
PITTSBURGH DILWORTH K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	62	11.3	40.3	35.5	12.9	51.6	55	3	21
PITTSBURGH WOOLSLAIR K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	34	8.8	41.2	44.1	5.9	50.0	72	2	17
PITTSBURGH LINCOLN K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	18	5.6	44.4	33.3	16.7	50.0	91	1	18
PITTSBURGH FULTON K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	33	6.1	42.4	42.4	9.1	48.5	80	2	17
PITTSBURGH BEECHWOOD K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	32	6.3	40.6	37.5	15.6	46.9	71	2	16
PITTSBURGH SPRING HILL K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	14	0.0	42.9	42.9	14.3	42.9	87	1	14
PITTSBURGH WEST LIBERTY K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	28	0.0	42.9	32.1	25.0	42.9	77	2	14
PITTSBURGH MINADEO K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	33	3.0	39.4	45.5	12.1	42.4	83	2	17
PITTSBURGH SUNNYSIDE K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	17	5.9	35.3	35.3	23.5	41.2	73	1	17
PITTSBURGH GRANDVIEW K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	32	3.1	34.4	40.6	21.9	37.5	94	2	16
PITTSBURGH LANGLEY K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	39	5.1	25.6	46.2	23.1	30.8	92	2	20
PITTSBURGH WEIL K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	27	11.1	18.5	37.0	33.3	29.6	94	2	14
PITTSBURGH BANKSVILLE K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	41	4.9	24.4	36.6	34.1	29.3	66	2	21
PITTSBURGH FAISON K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	47	0.0	27.7	42.6	29.8	27.7	95	2	24
PITTSBURGH LINDEN K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	15	6.7	20.0	46.7	26.7	26.7	84	1	15
PITTSBURGH ARSENAL K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	34	0.0	23.5	47.1	29.4	23.5	85	2	17
PITTSBURGH MILLER K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	24	0.0	20.8	50.0	29.2	20.8	92	1	24
PITTSBURGH MORROW K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	34	2.9	17.6	47.1	32.4	20.6	89	2	17
PITTSBURGH ROOSEVELT K-5	English Lang	All Students	3	23	0.0	17.4	56.5	26.1	17.4	90	1	23
PITTSBURGH MIFFLIN K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	14	0.0	14.3	50.0	35.7	14.3	74	1	14
PITTSBURGH KING K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	34	0.0	8.8	41.2	50.0	8.8	96	2	17
PITTSBURGH ARLINGTON K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	15	0.0	6.7	33.3	60.0	6.7	92	1	15
PITTSBURGH MANCHESTER K-8	English Lang	All Students	3	9						88	1	9

All students group