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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA CONTENT

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For Immediate Release

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Superintendent Wayne N. Walters Postpones Request for Vote on Facilities Item to Provide Additional Information to Board and Community

PITTSBURGH, March 26, 2025 – Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) Superintendent Dr. Wayne N. Walters has requested that the Board of Directors postpone its vote to open the state-required public comment period related to proposed facility closures. The Superintendent pulled item 17.03 for Board consideration this evening. The delay will allow additional time for further analysis and to incorporate information requested by the Board into the District’s Feasibility Report.

The decision follows requests from the Board and community members for more detailed data following last month’s presentation of a feasibility study conducted by District leadership. The study evaluated the recommendations made by Education Resource Strategies (ERS), a national consulting firm, regarding the District’s use of facilities. The Feasibility Report, requested by the Board, analyzed building capacity, enrollment projections, and infrastructure readiness to assess the practicality of ERS’s recommendations. The original ERS recommendations were the result of six months of research and extensive community engagement.

“The recommendations presented by ERS were not developed in isolation. They were informed by deep engagement with thousands of stakeholders, including students, staff, families, community members, and the Board,” said Superintendent Dr. Wayne N. Walters. “Still, we have heard clearly that more information is needed, and we remain committed to transparency and collaboration as we move forward.”

The updated Feasibility Report will include financial analysis, a preliminary transportation plan, and a review of capital investment needs. This additional information will be used to shape a final set of recommendations and a proposed phasing plan for the Board’s future consideration.

Dr. Walters acknowledged the need to rebuild trust within the school community. “We cannot ignore the impact that the erosion of trust has had on our relationship with members of the Pittsburgh Public Schools community. While this breakdown has a long history, I fully accept the responsibility of helping to restore it,” he said.

He continued, “Removing this item from the agenda reflects our commitment to being both responsive and accountable—to the Board and to the public.”

Currently, PPS educates approximately 20,000 students in a facility footprint designed to serve 40,000. The District operates five schools with fewer than 149 students and 16 schools with fewer than 249 students - enrollment levels that make it challenging to provide comprehensive academic and extracurricular programming.



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The District's Facilities Utilization Proposal, presented last April, is designed to address these long-standing inequities by reimagining how PPS uses its buildings to better serve students. The plan outlines 12 recommendations for optimizing the use of District facilities and enhancing the educational environment for all students. Key recommendations include transitioning to a streamlined grade structure of K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 schools; reviewing feeder patterns; and creating safe, modern, and effective learning environments.

"Our Facilities Utilization Plan proposal challenges us to move beyond the status quo," said Dr. Walters. "We must confront the inequities that exist in our District - inequities that often provide access and opportunity for some, rather than uplift the needs of all. Every student deserves access to a high-quality education in a well-resourced, vibrant school environments."

The updated Feasibility Report will be presented publicly to the Board in April. The District will also bring forward a final recommendation for a demographer to conduct a comprehensive demographic study, which will help inform the development of future attendance zones.

"I understand the challenge of developing a plan that brings comfort to everyone, and I recognize that we likely will not reach a final version that satisfies all perspectives," said Dr. Walters.

"While I cannot promise that every voice will agree with the outcome, I can promise that I will always put students first. For me, that means ensuring every student, no matter their zip code, has access to the high-quality education they deserve."

For more information and ongoing updates, visit www.pghschools.org/facilitiesuplan.

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