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April 25, 2025

Board of Directors

Pittsburgh Public Schools
341 S. Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Re: Request for School Board Support of the Manchester TRID and Esplanade Master Development Plan

Dear Members of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board,

On behalf of Project Destiny, INC. and the families we serve, I write to request that Pittsburgh Public Schools formally support the **Manchester Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) and the Esplanade Master Development Plan**. These initiatives represent a rare and transformative opportunity for our neighborhood—and by extension, for the families, students, and future of our public schools.

Project Destiny, INC. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the Pittsburgh community. Our mission is to REIGN; **R**each out to the community, **E**ducate, **I**nspire, **G**row leaders, and **N**urture children, youth, and families in the Pittsburgh area. Working with our community partners, we strive to address and meet the needs of families and create opportunities for growth.

As you consider decisions regarding the district's school network in the face of fiscal constraints, we urge you to look toward neighborhoods like Manchester—communities that are already undergoing coordinated and community-centered revitalization. Manchester is not a neighborhood in decline; it is a neighborhood **on the rise**. The TRID and Esplanade are key to ensuring that this revitalization benefits current residents, stabilizes enrollment, and creates lasting educational, social, and economic opportunity.

Why PPS Should Support the TRID and Esplanade Development

1. **Population Growth & School Stability**
2. With more than 700 new residential units—including **at least 20% affordable housing**—the Esplanade development will bring families back to Manchester. Housing diversity (from studios to multi-bedroom units and senior housing) will allow **multigenerational families to stay rooted in place**, providing a steady student population for local schools and strengthening enrollment over time.
3. **Equity for a Majority-Minority Community**

Mission: To REIGN- Reach out to the community, educate our youth, inspire others, grow leaders and nurture our youth in the Pittsburgh area.

4. Manchester is a **majority-Black neighborhood**, and one that has been deeply affected by disinvestment, segregation, and displacement. Supporting the TRID is an **act of racial equity**—affirming that Black and Brown communities are worthy of investment, opportunity, and vibrant educational ecosystems. The TRID supports a vision for Manchester as a **modern-day Black Wall Street**, where Black entrepreneurship, culture, and community wealth-building are prioritized.
5. **Job Creation and Economic Mobility**
6. The Esplanade will generate hundreds of **construction and permanent jobs**, supporting local hiring and workforce development opportunities, particularly for youth and families within the district. With retail, restaurant, and business incubation spaces planned, the development supports **pathways to prosperity** that will uplift entire households, which in turn supports educational achievement and stability.
7. **Access to Services and Amenities That Support Learning**
8. The project includes plans for healthcare providers, grocery retail, childcare services, and community spaces—all of which directly support student well-being. These wraparound services reduce the barriers that disproportionately affect low-income and minority families and have been shown to improve **student attendance, focus, and long-term success**.
9. **Green Space and Health Equity**
10. The Esplanade will include **parks, walking trails, and riverfront access**—offering safe, recreational, and nature-based environments for children and families. In a dense urban community like Manchester, equitable access to green space improves mental and physical health and provides after-school and weekend spaces that promote safe, healthy development.
11. **Connectivity and the Route 65 Planning Study**
12. The TRID coincides with a **critical PennDOT study of Route 65**, a highway that has long divided Manchester from its riverfront and neighboring Chateau. The Esplanade, through new crossings, safe pedestrian infrastructure, and transit-oriented development, will begin to **reconnect Manchester physically, economically, and socially**—supporting a more unified school catchment and neighborhood network.
13. **Sustainable Development and a Model for Growth**
14. The TRID model will leverage **future tax revenues from development** to reinvest in infrastructure and public services. It offers a **fiscally responsible and sustainable path forward** for neighborhood growth. For PPS, this means supporting a strategy that does not ask for additional school funds today but will pay educational and economic dividends in the years ahead.

Community-Led Vision and Accountability

MCC has engaged with residents since 2018 to shape this plan through the **Manchester-Chateau Neighborhood Plan** and is committed to ensuring that **community voice, cultural heritage, and public accountability** remain central. We see the Esplanade not just as a development, but as a reflection of Manchester's hopes, identity, and future.

Our Request to the Board

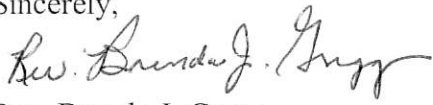
We respectfully ask that the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Directors:

Mission: To REIGN- Reach out to the community, educate our youth, inspire others, grow leaders and nurture our youth in the Pittsburgh area.

- **Formally support the Manchester TRID and Esplanade Master Development Plan**, recognizing its alignment with the district's goals of equity, stability, and long-term sustainability.
- Affirm the importance of preserving and investing in majority-Black communities like Manchester by supporting housing, job creation, and economic development that supports families and schools.
- Collaborate with MCC and community leaders to **ensure local schools are integrated into the revitalization vision**, with a shared focus on uplifting the whole child, the whole family, and the whole neighborhood.

We stand at a turning point in Manchester's history. Your support of the TRID will send a powerful message—that Pittsburgh Public Schools stands with our community as we rise, reconnect, and reclaim our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Brenda J. Gregg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brenda" being the most prominent part.

Rev. Brenda J. Gregg
Founder/Executive Director