

Every Kid. Every School. Every Day.

Good evening, Board Chair Walker, Superintendent Walters, and members of the Board of Education.

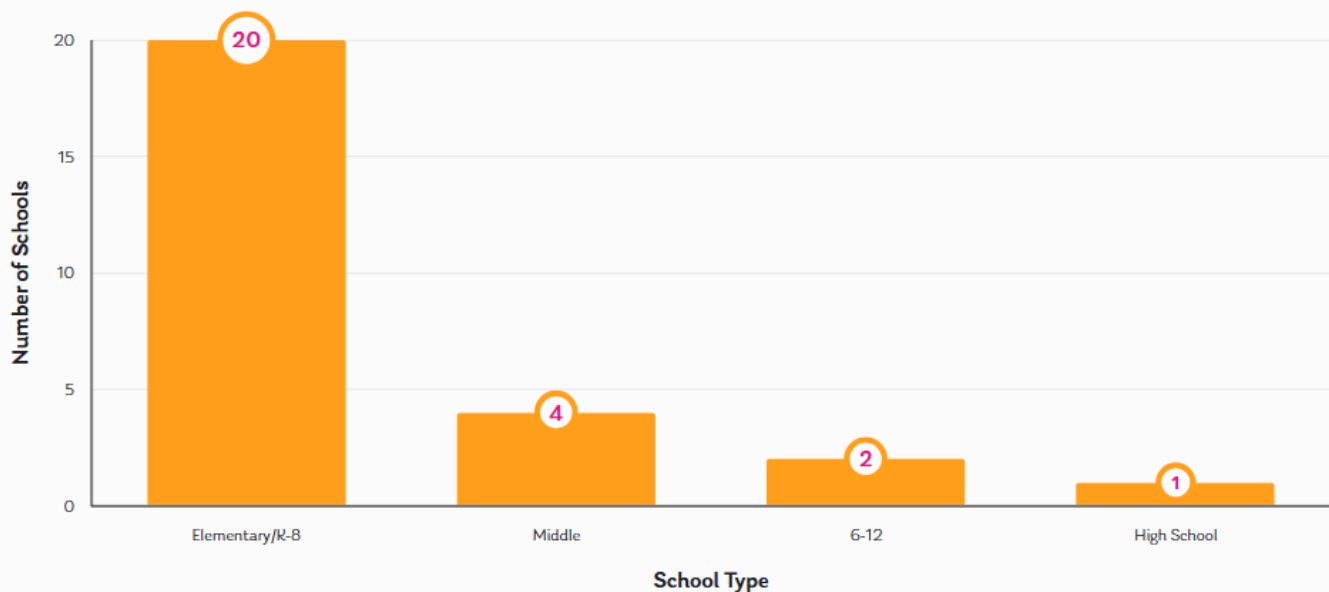
As a PPS parent and Executive Director of A+ Schools, I am deeply committed to ensuring that this community shows up for our children by coordinating resources and supports that get every kid in every school every day.

I come to you tonight to encourage you to approve Board item 8.11, opening the public hearing process to reimagine a more equitable and excellent school system – and to ask you to invest or seek investment in a cross-functional project management, communications, human resources, and construction team that can deliver on whatever timeline is proposed. I hope that the next three months provides you with additional feedback to improve this plan and build momentum for greater support. We as a City need this effort to be successful. Here's a few reasons why:

- The current footprint of **54 underutilized schools**, creates problems in maintenance and staffing that lead to teacher coverages that worsen morale and lead to kids not getting the rigorous coursework they deserve. The proposal before you creates substantial long-term savings—estimated at nearly **\$100 million** in deferred maintenance plus \$5 million annually in transportation—into high-quality learning environments with modern HVAC systems.

Too many buildings, too few students

27 out of 54 buildings less than half full*



PPS 2024 Data

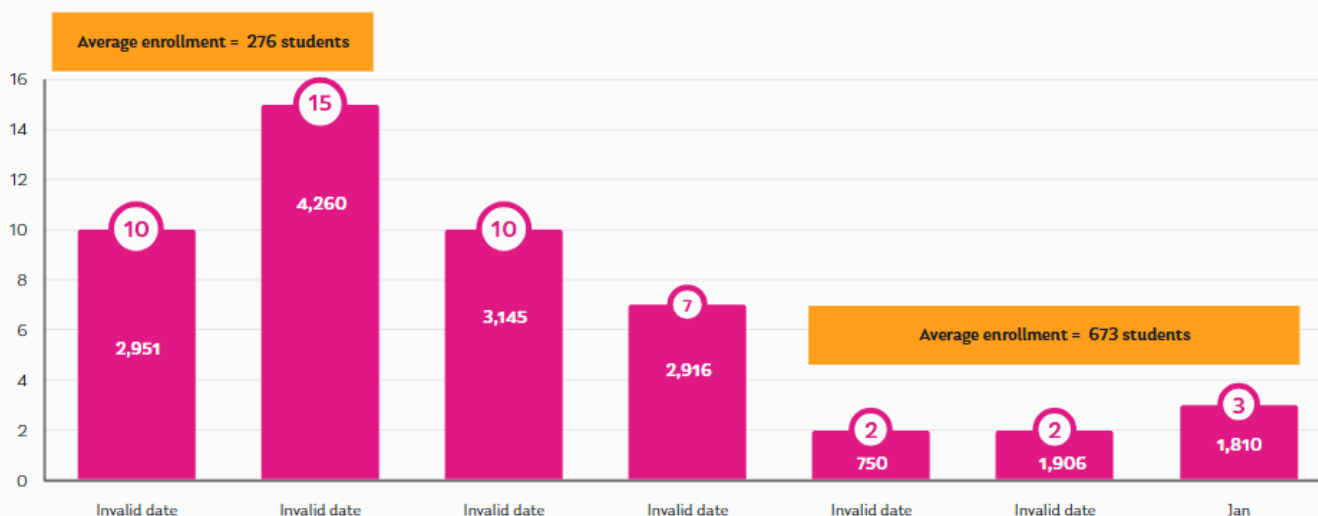
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- That's not just fiscal prudence; it's foundational to creating greater equity among our schools.

Second, the district is intentionally realigning **attendance zones and feeder patterns** to foster **racial and socioeconomic diversity by design**. Each remaining school aims to operate at **75-85 percent capacity**, reflecting the City's geography and demographics, with feeder zones crafted to reduce isolation and strengthen community representation. 25 out of PPS' 50 regular schools are schools where the concentration of student poverty exceeds 80%. These buildings also have an average size of 276 students. Highly segregated buildings tend to get less resources based on their small size, exacerbating challenges to getting to equity.

Concentrated poverty creates higher chronic absence

Half of PPS regular schools have concentrated student poverty of 80% or more



Third, and most critically, is the educational equity at the heart of this effort:

- Dedicated **ESL sites** will improve how we serve our fastest growing population of students —nearly doubling the number and placing them within students' neighborhoods, promoting inclusion and reducing long bus rides for kids.
- Consolidation enables district-wide access to consistent **academic programming, social-emotional supports, and specialized spaces**—from Pre-K to special education—bolstered by updated infrastructure and technology.

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- **Teaching academies** create opportunities for our best teachers and leaders to learn from each other and drive improvements in outcomes and engagement (only possible with staffing redundancies in schools that can't happen in a system that is stretched thin).

Why this matters:

Research confirms that more integrated schools improve empathy, reduce implicit bias, and enhance academic outcomes. We are not simply closing schools—we are **investing in vibrant, diverse learning communities** capable of delivering on PPS's mission: preparing all students to graduate "college, career and life-ready". And let's be clear, too many of our children are not meeting that standard with only 27% of the 2018 PPS graduates having completed college or trade school by 2024.

In closing, this plan offers Pittsburgh Public Schools a once-in-a-generation opportunity. By *purposefully* reimagining facility use—closing outdated buildings, drawing equitable zones, and directing resources where they matter most—we align operations with core district values: equity, excellence, community. There's much work to be done, and we as a community will Show Up to problem solve and coordinate resources. Together, we can give all kids and staff schools where they are excited to be and feel they belong.

🎯 Key Messages

1. Strategic Savings → Smart Reinvestment

By closing nine schools and halting \$103 million in backlog costs, PPS frees critical funds to upgrade every climate-controlled classroom and resource center in the remaining schools.

2. Intentional Diversity by Design

Through thoughtfully drawn boundaries and feeder patterns, PPS transforms isolated buildings into **inclusive hubs** where students learn from each other's cultures and life stories—on purpose, not by accident.

3. Equitable Access for All Learners

New ESL centers, robust special education facilities, teacher academies, and expanded Pre-K ensure every child receives the support they deserve, right in their own neighborhood.
