

Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies  
November 24, 2025

#1

Michelle Boyle

Community Member

Public schools are our childrens' second home. Stop evicting our children from their second homes.

Public schools are the foundation of our society. Stop the dangerous antisocial behavior of closing our children's schools.

As a neighbor and parent of PPS graduates, this is the third round of school closures threatening the well being of our children and the very fabric of our neighborhoods and communities. Each time we are told it would save money, evidence shows that it does not.

In fact with the recent state budget passing, greater funding is already secured for our schools.

Public schools are so important in our history that they are a guaranteed right in our state constitution. They gave birth to Freedom Riders, Union Leaders, and every profession that currently exists, whether the current federal government recognizes those professions or not. We know, we know, who and what professions are essential to our society. COVID taught us that. This board has an obligation to our society to keep these schools open.

The legacy of the current Board Members will be determined by their vote on this issue.



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#2

Robbie Ali

Volunteer

#3

Katy Rank Lev

Parent

You've all heard me speak about Sterrett repeatedly at these meetings. I'm here again to talk about Sterrett as an example of how the Future Ready plan is incomplete.

Right now you are facing a vote on this plan, which is labeled "final final final" in its file name, so you know the administration believes it's ready to go.

You as a board must vote NO on the plan as it is so that the administration can take that feedback and make revisions for the future of our district.

For example, nowhere in the 152 page document does it state whether the current neighborhood magnet at Sterrett will end. Does that mean it will stay? The plan should be revised to clarify, so you should vote NO on this version.

Another example: the plan says repeatedly that we are switching attendance zones and feeder patterns to create a seamless experience and continuity.

Sterrett seems left out of these goals, since children are coming in from multiple elementary schools in sixth grade, blended with the Wilksburg children in 7th grade, and then shuffled to multiple high schools afterward (some to Westinghouse and some to Alderdice). Does that sound like seamless continuity?

We don't have updated enrollment projections, but based on the information available to us from March, the final plan puts Sterrett 5 classrooms short of enough space. Do you, board members, feel like that plan is ready to green light?

While I am not familiar with the details of Mifflin, I can't help but notice that school, too, is absent from the plan. A complete and final plan cannot overlook the logistics and specifics for entire schools.

There are positive aspects to the plan currently. It can be revised and finalized. But as is, you must vote NO.

With my remaining time I wanted to mention that I'm glad you are discussing limits on cellphones in our schools. This discussion is timely—state rep Mandy Steele has just introduced legislation about this topic. Steele has introduced H.B. 1814, bipartisan legislation that would prohibit students in public schools from using or possessing a cell phone during the school day. Students would be required to secure their phones in a way that prevents access until the end of the day, with exceptions for certain emergency and medical needs approved by school authorities.

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Katy Rank Lev  
she/her



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#4

Mohammed Miah

Parent

#5

Kate O'Brien

Parent

No funding for Northview: Trust me Bro, that's a problem.

Vote No.

Hears is kinda of a list of my gripes, there are so much more but these are the ones that have been weighing on me since the last proposal to the board.

1. There isn't funding for Northview to be remodeled, and you want to push ahead and close north side schools. There isn't a plan of funding for Northview, but you wanna still push forward and close north side schools.

2. When asked for a project map with more details, and or check points to mark progress we were told we didn't need that, because we should trust the professionals.

3. Gene told us straight faced to trust the professionals and how sad it would be if we didn't. Gene also said this dramatic slop on behalf of the district, who employees a lot of folks. Most of them are exceptional and work hard for our kids daily and successfully change our kids lives for the better. There are a few that should have been fired years ago who willfully choose not to follow education law, targeting students they don't like, abusing a child with PTSD causing a program to withdraw from the district, fudging acceptance scores, denying iep accomdations.... I can go on, but this is stuff you all already know because it's passed through the board. None of these particular issues have gone through the legal system or been settled. The point of this is that even the problem folks at PPS are considered "Professionals" so you gotta do better than just telling us to trust them. You have to show us realistic growth, steps, and identify whare you might have issues.

4. I want to specifically call out Gene Walker for his plea for trust, that was 100% inappropriate and belittling to every family in PPS who have been hurt by "professionals" at PPS. You owe them an apology. Many of them did not get help early enough because of the type of B.S. you spewed, telling folks, and guilting them into going against what they know is true is the foundation for creating an abusive environment. You need to do better and stop trying so hard to get your gold star at the expense of what's right.

5. Because of a few bad "professionals" who are still at PPS, trust isn't there for a lot of us. There hasn't been adequate work to rebuild that trust from the administration. Never have we been asked what are

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the problems that cause us not to trust what the district is serving. We have often told our board members and the district what we need, but where told we don't need that info or are met with silence, some of us have bad ass board member who listen, other have ones that seem to want change no mater what it is. Even folks who love PPS, do not trust that this plan can be done in this time frame or that there is even a plan. Because there are no check points, there is no growth map, there is No Funding For Northview Heights, and none of us know whare early childhood will be moved to from all of the schools that are going to be closed down.

6. Maybe I'm wrong and the district has a plan. If so, it seems like it is being held hostage until the board votes yes to shut schools down, which erodes my trust in the "professionals" even further. This tactic by PPS should be pushed back against by the board ( some of you have, thank you)

7. After listening last week to Gene Walker, his idea of what a school board should do, and how they should only be voting on if the think the district could achieve their goals, and talked down to folks who said they needed a plan and how he didn't under stand basic aspects of project management . He should not be the president of the board because he is incompetent. He is doing more harm to PPS than PPS is doing to itself which essentially hurts students.

8. Lastly any plan that leans into the idea of inequity while simultaneously says they are doing it to end inequity but will not provide details how this new inequity will be more equitable is garbage and should be voted against just on that issue alone.

If they can't give you details how services will be provided, how volunteer resources will be equatable, will their be tutoring services offered at the school for families who have less resources to counter the private tutoring families with more resources can provide there students? Will there be more guidance counsilors to help navigate opportunities and paperwork for families that do not speak English? Like you can't just wish equity and expect it to happen, which is all this plan has said it would do. In the end if the day, while the intention may be to make Northview heights a better more equitable school, there are no plans or markers about how that will be done, or how it will be prevented from slipping back into a situation that caused it to close the first time.



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#6

Michael Cummins

Parent



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#7

Renee Wilson

Parent



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#8

Martha Riecks

Parent

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#9

Gordon Mitchell

Parent

(Please see attachment)

#10

Wanda Henderson

Organization

PPS Public Hearing Testimony November 24, 2025

Good evening, Board President Walker, Fellow Board Members, Student Board Representatives Ms. Trumbull and Mr. Graves and Superintendent Walters. I, Wanda Henderson, am one of the original Advocates for African American Students complainants in the PHRC Discrimination Complaint and the current Equity Advisory Panel Chairperson. The Equity Advisory Panel (EAP) was created as part of the 2006 PHRC Conciliation Agreement between the “Advocates” and PPS to monitor the district’s progress in remedying the horrific academic racial inequities.

Section IV. of the M.O.U. states “ Designated representative(s) of the Board of the District shall attend meetings of the EAP. Very few of the Board members have done so.

Section IX. of the M.O.U. states, “The Equity Office and the EAP shall have an opportunity to present to the Board of Education semi-annually on topics related to the MOU, Equity Audit, Equity Plan, Achievement Gap Data, and other related information.” The last time the EAP was invited to present to the Board on M.O.U. issues was April 2023. There was another presentation to the Board August 2023 by the Equity Office relating to the Independent Racial Equity Audit. Today is November 24, 2025.

Neither the PPS Board, nor the PPS Administration asked the Equity Advisory Panel for any input into the components or design of this Future-Ready Facilities Plan, although the EAP is charged in the M.O.U. to make recommendations to remedy the decades of disparities and inequities. While watching one of the presentations, I was shocked to hear the PSE Director state they will solicit recommendations from the Office of Equity and the Equity Advisory Panel. If the Board and Administration had included the EAP, and other organizations in creating this plan from the beginning, you would not have received so much anger and pushback from parents and the community. The Equity Advisory Panel does **not** doubt that this Administration is committed to making PPS an equitable school district for all students. However, this plan as it stands has too many loopholes for too many students to fall through. If the Board approves this plan, you must attach a “**Community Safety Net**” to protect students that we all know will get lost in this complex plan. We need a “**Community Safety Net**”, composed of parents/community members from all

affected schools, closed or redefined, to make sure not only all kids get to school safe but they are not entering school environments that may be hostile to students coming from inequitable school buildings. We need a “**Community Safety Net**” to make sure students coming from poorly resourced schools get all the support and resources they need for academic success. We need a “**Community SafetyNet**” to hold the Administration and Board accountable for assuring “**equity**” for all students. **Students First Always, in all ways!**  
DO NOT PASS THIS PLAN WITHOUT ATTACHING “**Community Safety Net**” FOR OUR STUDENTS!

Respectfully,  
Wanda Henderson, Chairperson  
Equity Advisory Panel



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#11

Charlie Britanik

Student



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#12

Kara Britanik

Parent



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#13

Lucy Thompson

Student



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#14

Kari Thompson

Parent

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#15

Sara Leitera

Parent

When you have a strong, thought out plan, you can present facts and answer follow up questions without hesitation and hyperbole. That is all the community and several of your board members asked of you.

When you do not, you passive aggressively bully your board to vote for the sake of moving forward on something that lacks evidence.

It is dishonest to make promises that you can't fulfill. Please vote no on the Future Ready plan because it does not appear ready or positive for the future of our city.



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#16

Allie Petonic

Community Member



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#17

Erin Childs

Parent



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#18

Anne Farris

Parent



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#19

Lily Allman

Student



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#20

Valerie Webb-Allman

Parent



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#21

John McFarlane

Community Member



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#22

Zach Scheider

Community Member



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#23

June Wearden

Organization, Community Member

#24

Dr. Allyce Pinchback-Johnson

Parent, Organization, Community Member

Creating a Truly Future-Ready PPS for Students, Families, and Pittsburgh My name is Dr. Allyce Pinchback-Johnson. I am a PPS parent, taxpayer, and the Executive Director of Black Women for a Better Education. I am here this evening to highlight several concerns about the PPS Future-Ready Facilities Implementation Plan, and to offer recommendations for how we might move forward more effectively. A more detailed version of this testimony was sent as a letter co-signed by Black Women for a Better Education and A+ Schools directly to board members and Superintendent Walters earlier today. PPS describes the Future-Ready Facilities Implementation Plan as “a commitment to ensuring that all students, in every neighborhood, attend schools that inspire learning, reflect dignity, and prepare them for a bright future.” We agree that bold, sweeping, innovative changes are necessary to transform PPS. However, the current plan lacks critical specifics on how PPS will address the academic needs of students, especially those who have been historically underserved, and the current staffing shortages call into question the district’s capacity to implement the plan within the proposed timeline. Recommendation 1: Elevate academic achievement goals in Year 1, forming the foundation for strong school cultures before students are relocated. More specifically, prioritize high-quality teaching and learning as a key component of building a strong school culture, develop a comprehensive academic and professional learning plan, and provide tangible evidence of how this plan will address the equity focus areas outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Recommendation 2: Create a pragmatic timeline grounded in both ambition and the district’s organizational realities. More specifically, consider delaying school closures and consolidations until the 2027-28 school year to ensure that school buildings, staff, and families are adequately prepared for transition. A detailed timeline that provides families and staff with a clear understanding of how elements of the plan are to be sequenced is essential. Recommendation 3: Build the capacity of the PPS team before moving students. PPS currently lacks the internal capacity to implement this plan effectively. More specifically, hire a Deputy Superintendent charged with restructuring PPS central office in preparation for a successful district reconfiguration. Also, adopt a “regional network model” in which Assistant Superintendents for Instructional Leadership manage a team of central office support staff, including an implementation-focused Project Manager. Recommendation 4: Staff schools for academic excellence by piloting new programs, replicating successful staffing models, and deepening external partnerships. More specifically, the district should consider addressing staffing issues through strategic collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), empowerment and incentivization of veteran/expert teachers, and replicating creative staffing models districtwide. Recommendation 5: Create a braintrust of regional experts in education, real estate, strategic planning, continuous quality improvement, and finance. More specifically, PPS should authentically engage families, teachers, administrators, and communities to guide and support the reconfiguration process; create a “brain trust” composed of board directors, district administration, and community leaders to reestablish mutual trust and guide the implementation process; and unapologetically solicit businesses, philanthropy, and the government for funds to implement a truly transformational, future-ready plan for the district. With the proper internal infrastructure, an

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extended timeline, and community collaboration, we believe district reconfiguration provides an opportunity to transform the trajectory of Black students, families, and our region as a whole. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further, and we stand ready to support the administration as a dedicated community partner who is deeply invested in the future of this region.



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#25

Holly Munson

Parent

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#26

Kent Jackson

Parent



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#27

Kristen MacKenzie

Parent

#28

Sarah Martin

Community Member, Community Activist

Greetings of Peace,

I am Sarah J. Martin, elder in our beloved community. I come to you tonight to remind you that you were hired and elected to help lead the effort to educate our children. We educate our students to high standards as they travel along the path to excellence. It is an awesome responsibility, but your paths were freely chosen and have led to this juncture where you must decide to correct your path or continue going the wrong way. I speak from a historical and primary source, noting that I have struggled through six decades of redistricting, closing, disrupting, and chaos at the school board over your disproportionate number of school closings, which have primarily affected the majority of black students. I come to you for course correction to your plan (by the way, it does have some good points) and ask you to keep open and support all the schools of the Hill District.

The histories of the schools have evolved from the energy and needs of the community. They evolved as a result of housing patterns, commitment to cultural standards, and a devotion to high academic achievement. In order to carry the names and experiences of our cultural traditions and community activist Miller African Centered Academy, Pittsburgh Wiel, and Pittsburgh Milliones, were born. We have preserved our schools and support our children. The struggle continues with the wisdom of our parents and the freedom of activists.

I am told that our superintendent came from a home that was constantly filled with children who needed to be helped, and he has done that through a vast array of outreach within the community and other school programs. We are reminding you Dr. Waters that in the Hill District, our children need your help just as you were helped in your home. We now employ you to bring that legacy of caring that you were taught at home, to Pittsburgh. These values can resonate from across the Atlantic Ocean to the

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three rivers. Our schools need to be kept open and supported. Do not let the maternal family legacy of helping get lost with you. Your power to lead must be evident. We ask you to take a calculated risk and correct your course of action. We are all in need of refinement, adaptation, and reconsideration. Our children are entitled to your best judgment and abundant resources.

We have a high expectation here in Pittsburgh for our parents, teachers, students, and administrators. Our high intentions from the very beginning were determined not to have a disruption in the education of our children. The school's motivations are evident in data that corroborate that teachers in the Hill District schools have one of the highest attendance rates in the city. They have principals who have dedicated their energy and professionalism to improve our schools. From my personal interaction with children of the Hill, I surmise that they are happy with going to the schools they attend. Parents chose to send their children to Hill District schools and support them. Teachers are motivated to teach, students are committed to learn, with these kind of responses from all stakeholders, the potential for growth remains high. Don't miss this opportunity to participate in the growth and sustainability of the Hill District community.

The question arises, why does the board of education want to close Miller African Centered Academy? It is said that the students of Miller African Centered Academy are low achievers. I suggest they are not low achievers, these children are low receivers! They have not received the resources that their taxes have paid for and that the board of education has promised and is responsible for providing. We advise you to continue the new innovative relevant curriculum at Milliones, form alliances to support Wiel, and keep Miller as an African-centered school. Dr Waters and school board members don't mess with the Hill District schools. It is very difficult to walk when your feet are cut off.



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#29

Julia Russell

Student



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#30

Rachel Schlosser

Parent



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#31

Felipe Palomo

Parent

#32

Megan Palomo

Parent, Organization, Community Member

Dear PPS Board Members,

In advance of tonight's hearing, we ask that you please read the attached letter from the Friendship Community Group.

We once again urge you to hear our community and **vote no** on the plan to shutter the Friendship School. This facility is an integral public institution and its closure will have irreversible effects on the east end.

In our letter you will find our position on the proposal as well as community stakeholder letters and a petition form the community.

**We stand ready and willing to work with you on a plan that benefits the district, our students and the community at large.**

Sincerely,

Friendship Community Group Board of Directors

**(See attached Friendship Community Group Flyer)**

#33

Shirley Ann Hill

Retired PPS Teacher

**PUBLIC HEARING – SHIRLEY ANN HILL**

**November 24, 2025**

I have followed the public hearings regarding the **unfair treatment** of former Montessori teacher Ms. Stephanie Lapine by principal Kellie Meyer. Throughout my 41-year career with PPS, I too was subjected to toxic principals like her. In December 2023, Ms. Stephanie Lapine was removed from her classroom by Kellie Meyer. Ms. Stephanie Lapine was cleared in February 2024 but was “conveniently transferred” to another school that does not have a Montessori program. Because you chose to **completely ignore Kellie Meyer’s toxic behavior**, Ms. Stephanie Lapine will be starting her own Montessori school. Dr. Sacco - Have you talked to Kellie Meyer regarding her toxic leadership that **has been going on for years?**

I am **appalled** that the Student Achievement Center is on the chopping block. This school offers our kids so much that credit recovery can’t come close to it. When is the last time you observed a credit recovery class? While at Carrick, I can say credit recovery was dismal. The students log on and they are basically on their own. This also goes on at other schools. Take off the blinders and keep SAC open.

Carrick High School has a **very small percentage of Black teachers**. “For all students, Black teachers cultivate critical lessons in empathy, diversity, and leadership, laying the foundation for stronger, more equitable communities.”

As the late, great Nikki Giovanni reminds us, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Black teachers are architects of this change, equipping students to confront inequities and build a future rooted in justice and opportunity.” (The NEA Foundation, February 2025)

**BLACK STUDENTS AT CARRICK MATTER!!**

What is the rationale behind virtual public hearing speakers going after in person speakers? Please return to the **original format** where it did not make a difference which option you selected to speak at the public hearing.



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#34

Harvey Holtz

Community Member



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#35

Liz Dell

Parent



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#36

Billy Hileman

Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers



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#37

Rita Porterfield

Parent, PPS Alum



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#38

Jude Porterfield

Student



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#39

Phil Porterfield

Parent, Organization



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#40

Sarah Zangle

Parent

#41

Rosanne Levine

Organization, Community Member

Dear Pittsburgh Board of Public Education Representatives,

Thank you so much for considering a policy for eliminating the use of personal electronic devices on school property. With the full backing of Pittsburgh Public Unplugged and Pennsylvania Unplugged, I wholeheartedly support such a bell to bell policy with minor revisions that Juditka Adelson will describe in her testimony.

I am the mother of four Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates, a former PTO president, and a former participant in many district-wide committees and task forces. Although my offspring are now adults, I remain supportive of public education in Pittsburgh as a citizen and as a taxpayer. Our region and our democracy depend on our students' abilities to function effectively in society which is directly related to education.

I have been retired from my position as a Nurse Practitioner for the last year. I spent 25 years practicing in a primary care capacity in pediatrics. Since 2011, a portion of that practice has involved behavioral health. As market penetration of smartphones and personal electronic devices as well as video gaming platforms increased, so did anxiety, depression, suicidality, inattention, poor social skills, poor school performance, and metabolic problems. These expanding issues in our patient population took up more and more of my practice, and we needed to add more practitioners to deal with all of this. Around 2016, I began to read studies correlating these issues to social media and smart phone use. Whistleblowers at tech companies revealed that executives knew that the applications were harmful and produced them anyway, incorporating purposeful persuasive design elements to increase addiction to the devices. In fact, Pittsburgh Public Schools signed on to a lawsuit of META because of the increased costs that the district incurs because of all of these problems.

Critics will say that this is “correlation, not causation”, or “anecdotal evidence”. However, more recent studies absolutely indicate causation, as the problems are temporally related to media use and improve when the devices are removed. There is nothing like clinical practice to demonstrate the problem, as I saw this over and over and over. When I advised that parents take away the devices, behavior worsened for a week, indicating withdrawal from an addictive device, and then improved dramatically. When I advised that students do other things instead, such as school activities, chores, volunteering, outdoor activities, in person gatherings and conversations, sports, involvement in the arts, involvement in youth or community groups, activities at rec centers, part-time jobs, etc., the issues dramatically improved.

Removing personal electronic devices from students from the first bell of the day to the last would give students six to eight hours a day free from these devices that are addictive and harmful.

A few parents and students will push back, saying that the students need phones in case of emergency. The National Association of School Resource Officers, as well as the PA chapter, take the clear position that students using phones in a true emergency make the situation

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more dangerous. Students need to pay attention to the adults in charge during an emergency; they do not need to be texting and calling their parents and creating a situation where roads are blocked and emergency responders cannot get through, airwaves are jammed, phones vibrate or make noise revealing location, and rumors and misinformation are spread. My own daughter is a teacher at a public school in the Bronx that has experienced four lockdowns since a bell to bell device ban has been in effect. In each case, the school personnel were able to keep the students safe.

During the policy committee hearing, the question came up as to whether we have data from schools that have already implemented such a policy. I would suggest that you call superintendents and principals in districts where bell to bell policies have been implemented, such as Penn Hills, McKeesport, Woodland Hills, Sto-Rox, Erie McDowell, Seneca Valley, Clairton, Bucks County, and more. They will tell you that there are far fewer fights, there are increased test benchmark scores, there is increased participation in school activities, library book loans are up, students are not making Tik Tok videos in the bathroom or videoing everyone who comes in or out of the bathroom, students are not ordering food and letting people in through the side doors of the buildings, students are not videoing fights or sexting during school, and the students actually talk to each other during lunch.

I strongly urge you to pass a bell to bell personal electronic device policy, with exceptions if needed for IEPs or 504 plans or medical use, but without exceptions for emergencies or principal discretion as to whether students can hold onto their phones. Principals should have discretion as to how to collect and store the phones. Such a policy is long overdue.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosanne Levine



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#42

Vanessa Dagavarian

Parent



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#43

Rachel Canning

Parent, Community Member

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#44

Bella Ballin

Parent



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#45

Ms. Paulette Foster

Parent, Organization, Community Member



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#46

Jazlynn Worthy

Parent



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#47

Jaliyah Haden

Student



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#48

David Haden

Student



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#49

Elijah Mitchell

Student

#50

Emily Sawyer

Parent, Substitute Teacher

Emily Sawyer, parent of 4 students at Manchester, Schiller, and Perry.

Eve Ewing reminds us that “a fight for a school is never just about a school.”

I don’t believe for a second that Manchester deserves to close. I believe that when we start trying to justify which buildings deserve to close and which don’t, we have already lost.

When it comes right down to it, you haven’t convinced me that the “deal” our families and communities are being offered is legitimate. I am not convinced that the change that is needed is closing schools, or that closing schools will suddenly make possible so many promises – many of which have been made before and not delivered.

I support ending elementary magnets. I support moving delivery of gifted education into school buildings.

I support a consistent service delivery model and resource allocation calculation that ensures all schools can deliver an excellent and consistent educational experience to all of our students regardless of enrollment. This is a heavy lift and will likely be unpopular, so it is crucial we know what we are doing and have an iron will to pull it off. The district has shown itself to be unwilling to do what is necessary to create equity: The District’s own On Track to Equity Implementation plan, dated 2019, includes an item called “Equitably Distributed Resources” that calls for the District to (emphasis mine),

Implement an instruction system with aligned and equitably distributed resources, a team is developing a formula to further allocate resources based off of student need.

The District’s Site-Based Budget has been designed with an eye towards transparency and equity of resource allocation. It is based off a per-student allocation that is checked to ensure that each school is able to cover its Service Delivery Model. This formula was developed in conjunction with the Budget Office and the Office of School Performance.

1

Is this happening now? Did we develop a new “formula to further allocate resources based off of

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student need?” What is this Service Delivery Model? People have been asking for this, and y’all look like a deer in headlights like you’ve never heard of such a thing before but here it is, in your 1 Pittsburgh Public Schools, “Integrating Equity Throughout PPS: An Implementation Plan,” 2019, p. 34

own document since 2019. A document may I remind you, that is part of a legally binding conciliation agreement and then MOU that it took the district 14 years to even agree to and that the District hasn’t been able to make significant progress on for the past 19 years. As another example, the District recently indicated total disinterest in making the new sponsorship policy equitable and actually noted that doing so would require all other policies to be reviewed and created with a view to equity despite the fact that you have a racial equity audit on your shelves that directs you to review and create policies that are explicitly equitable – neutral or “not openly discriminatory” is insufficient). From the report (emphasis mine),

Chapter 9 offers broader policy recommendations, while specific recommendations tied to their respective documents can be found in the tables at the end of each section.

Overall, the PPS policies themselves are generally facially equitable. There are potential policies where inequities through unconscious bias, or intentional animus could result in inequities for minority communities as well as economically disadvantaged families.

Some analysis of these realities is offered in each section.

2

We NEED more equitable resource allocation, but to convince me that school closures are needed in order to do so, I need details on how exactly having less stretched thin resources will lead to more equitably distributed resources. It is not a given, as the District’s own intransigence indicates. Equitable isn’t about the amount, it’s about the distribution. If we are not equitably distributing resources now, I have no reason to believe we can do it when we have less stretched resources.

I support a new consistent service delivery model, but the proposed schedules<sup>3</sup> are HIGHLY problematic and have hardly been discussed. If a vote for this resolution is a vote to approve those schedules then a "no" vote is imperative. That's how bad they are.

In regard to the proposed elementary schedule:

- i. More art and music is great!

ii. Where is library? “Embedded” in classroom instruction is not good enough.

3

Pittsburgh Public Schools, “Advancing Equity, Excellence, and Efficiency: Feasibility Report Update,”  
May 2025, p. 38-39, 42

2 Pittsburgh Public Schools Racial Equity Audit, “The Current State of Racial Equity at Pittsburgh  
Public

Schools,” September 2023, p.20

iii. Recess must be longer. I think it’s fine to decrease phys ed, but recess must be expanded. Free, unstructured, independent play is crucial developmentally.

iv. Block scheduling for elementary school is absurd. THREE periods of ELA is criminal, especially when it is at the expense of Science and Social Studies, or even a longer recess. This must be redone. More of something that isn’t working won’t necessarily work, so more instruction isn’t necessarily the solution to poor ELA and math scores. Blocked scheduling is completely developmentally inappropriate at this age and it will further erode our youngest students’ experiences of and feelings about school. Especially in lower elementary, focus should be on play, curiosity, and following kids interests. THIS will give them a strong foundation for a love of learning that WILL result in higher test scores if we create it. I will die on this hill.

v. There is no indication of when instrumental or other specialty programs would happen.

vi. Is “community time” before school starts? So tardy students always miss it and no one would even be expected to be there yet even if they weren’t tardy?

vii. (p. 39 specifically) this indicates that W.I.N and career explorations will be once every 12 days (if these alternate on a once every 6 day cycle).

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In regard to proposed middle school schedule:

viii. Is this suggesting that a student would have art everyday for a quarter and then not again until the next year? That doesn't seem like a good idea? And there would only be one quarter of library???. I am genuinely flabbergasted.

ix. Block scheduling is developmentally inappropriate still even for middle school students.

x. This also seems to suggest that world language would only occur in 8th grade? What is the point of introducing world languages in elementary school and then not offering them until 8th grade?

xi. House systems should not be connected to PBIS. PBIS is a discredited and ineffectual behaviorist program.

4 5 6 7

xii. Music electives being offered as an "alternative" to period 5 courses is not good enough. Middle school students shouldn't have to choose. What quarter would this be available? You can't learn an instrument one quarter and then not play again until the next year. I just don't understand how this works.

xiii. I don't understand what W.I.N time is.

xiv. I would submit to you that middle schoolers still need free play. Some middle schoolers in PPS still get recess. Are they wasting their time? If so, why are they still doing it? If not, why doesn't every middle schooler get recess?

I love the idea of focusing on school culture, student belonging, and whole child health and safety. This is what I'm usually standing up here advocating for. But again, you have not convinced me that we need to close schools in order to do this, or that once you have closed schools, you have the will and ability to actually do what needs to be done. The plan says some of what might happen, but "the what" is woefully insufficient and there is no indication of how? What positions will be added or job descriptions changed to actually operationalize changes that

will improve student experience in schools? How will the code of conduct be improved to operationalize restorative practices consistently and equitably? What changes will be made to job evaluations at all levels so that adults are held responsible for operationalizing school culture, student belonging, and whole child health and safety targets? What KPIs related to school culture, student belonging, and whole child health and safety will be monitored?

An email from the Superintendent on 11.18.25 stated,

As we move from the 2025–26 school year to the 2026–27 school year, our district is proposing to close some school buildings. When schools close, we do not need as many staff to run them. This means:

7 Becoming a Trauma-informed Restorative Educator, YouTube, July 8, 2024.

6 <https://www.unconditionalllearning.org/blog/pbis-resource-roundup>

5 <https://giftedguru.com/pbis-is-a-terrible-idea/>

4 Kohn, Alfie. “Punished by Rewards.” Houghton Mifflin, 2018.

- We need fewer principals and assistant principals because there are fewer schools to lead.
- We need fewer counselors, social workers, secretaries, student data systems specialists, food services, and custodians because fewer buildings mean fewer staff are needed in those roles.

The above assumes that you agree that our schools are staffed adequately right now. Closing schools is supposed to mean MORE for our students, not the same just at fewer buildings. In every case mentioned above (except principals), it could be argued that many of our schools are currently short-staffed. And if culture is our priority, more of each of these kinds of folks will be key. For example, additional secretaries or other office staff will be necessary to create the welcoming environments we claim we want – this is not always being delivered currently. Reducing overwork by having MORE office staff would help with this. Or, for another example, additional custodians will be necessary to keep up with the cleaning and maintenance that are truly needed to create the clean, safe, and welcoming schools that are key to any work to improve culture and student experience. Current custodial staffing levels do not make this possible. MORE counselors, social workers, and ADDED dedicated restorative practice

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practitioners and other support staff will be necessary to meet our aspirations for our school culture and humane discipline systems with buy-in from students, staff, and families. We cannot do more with less, even if we have fewer buildings. And, given that the district is positing that we will need fewer of all these other positions, why are we projected to increase security staff????? We have to stop catering to privilege in our planning and decision-making. Case in point: If this passes, we have to stop calling the proposed schools Schiller at Allegheny and Allegheny at King. They aren't going to be magnets anymore so it's just confusing, and it's just one more way we are twisting ourselves in knots to comfort the privileged who are just threatening to leave anyway because they aren't getting things exactly their way. It's also offensive to people who go to King already and to the current Allegheny MS, like their programs aren't good enough. It should be Allegheny MS and King ES. Period.

I think it is disingenuous to condemn this plan for resegregating our school district, when, in fact, our school district is already extremely segregated. It may be true that some of our magnet schools have ended up looking somewhat integrated, but we ignore what happens to the schools that the magnet students come from, which generally end up being even more significantly segregated by race and class, or both. If we really cared about integration, we would never shut up about CAPA, Montessori, or the gifted center. I think it's time we really deal with this question: is the existence of schools like this neutral or do they exist at the expense of those we continually underserve in this district? "Choice" embeds in something that is meant to be public a market-based infrastructure that requires competition and a consumer mindset; in this system exclusion and inequality are justified by a perception of a just and meritocratic system.

89

Lastly, I want to once again challenge my people – if you are a white person, and especially if you are white and socioeconomically privileged, and you are threatening to leave the public school system, I just want you to notice what legacy you are making yourself a part of. You may think that you are justified this time, but so did those who came before us - when we created segregation academies, closed down entire school districts rather than integrate, engaged in white flight & created our own separate school districts, when we refused to bus our students for

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desegregation in the name of “neighborhood schools” but we have no problem bussing our students across town for the exclusivity of a boutique magnet school. We may think the district is leaving us with no choice, but we always have a choice, we’ve always had the most choices.

And if we leave, taking our students’ resources with us, we will be allying ourselves with the forces that are divesting from public education, whether we mean to be or not. We can stay and be part of building something better for all the district’s students. Or we can bail because we

didn’t get our way, just like we always have. In the words of Audre Lorde:

“Your privilege is not a reason for guilt, it is a part of your power, to be used in support of those things you say you believe. Because to absorb without use is the greatest error of privilege... How much of your lives are you willing to spend merely protecting your privileged status? Is that more than you are prepared to spend putting your dreams and beliefs for a better world into action?”

9 Research report on magnets schools in PPS, 2024

8 Aggarwal, Ujju. “Unsettling Choice.” Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2024.



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#51

April Clisura

Parent, Bus Driver



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#52

Mayan Harris

Community Member



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#53

Joshua Yallery

Parent

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#54

Jynene Roer

Parent

Good evening,

Thank you all for being here and providing me the time to speak. My child attends Minadeo Elementary and these changes will not deeply impact her, however I am still adamantly opposed to the F10 plan. Have you ever gone on a vacation with your kids without any plan? you arrive and you don't know where you are going to stay, you don't know where you will eat, you have none of the basics lined up? It sounds like a nightmare right? Everytime I hear you speak about this plan, read the report, or your emails I think "what a nightmare"



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#55

Justin Grotelueschen

Parent

#56

Holly Cox

Parent

Good evening. My name is Holly Cox and I'm the parent of a 9th grader at Allderdice and a class of 2021 Obama graduate. Both of my children went to Pittsburgh Linden for elementary school and my daughter was at CAPA for middle school.

Our family has been in the district since 2008. My children have both had good experiences at their schools, and the majority of the time we've had positive experiences with teachers and administrators. Overall, I have spent the last 17 years advocating for the schools and encouraging families to stay in the district. It doesn't always work, but I'm a proponent of public education and I believe in the greater good.

The current plan makes advocating for PPS that much harder. A friend of mine in the West End had one neighbor switch their student to a parochial school this year. Two more of her neighbors are moving out of the city, and one of them is a PPS teacher. Online posts and comments and ongoing testimony from affected families do not reflect a plan that is creating clarity, confidence, and connection before change has begun.

For instance, the lack of clarity around transportation is concerning. Have conversations been happening between PPS and PRT? Have conversations been happening between PPS and city council? The mayor's office? Other departments that could shed light on planning for the district? In June I sent an email to each member of the board sharing concerns about the plan. In that email I shared links to a few similar plans across the country. One was DC, which is of course a much larger district. What impressed me about their plan though, was that they contacted city council members to discuss how families would be impacted. They talked to housing and planning offices at the city to see what forecasting looked like so that those elements could be built into the plan. It seems that is something that hasn't happened here- if it has please be transparent about that. But these are conversations that are valuable for our schools and our transportation needs. It's one thing to say the child lives within the 1.5 mile range and therefore can walk to school. It's another to see what that route to get to school actually looks like. These conversations matter.

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The lack of specifics around academics and resources is also an issue. What will program offerings at all of the schools look like? How will they be equitable? What can families expect? If we don't have answers yet for a five year plan then maybe a vote shouldn't happen until we can answer some of these questions. No one is saying that they don't want change. What is being said is families would like a better idea of what that change looks like before a plan is agreed to. Especially since these are things that families are being told won't happen until years 2-5. How can you expect people to get behind the plan when we don't have a clear idea of what this will look like in all of our schools? Please vote No to move forward with the plan.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Holly Cox



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#57

Annette Hall

Parent

#58

Emily Kane

Teacher/Staff, Parent, Community Member

Dr Walters: We are merely asking you to do your job.

I've been here before, asking you to protect PPS Fulton, a thriving majority minority school that houses one of our regional autism support classrooms, from closure.

I'm here tonight to ask the board to vote NO on the Future Ready plan. Everyone in this situation together, ALL of the stakeholders, administrators, students, teachers, parents, support staff, volunteers, and neighbors work very hard to stay engaged in caring for our children, their futures, and thereby the future of our city.

We all know that the majority of care for children in our community and throughout this country is either unpaid or poorly paid.

I'm here now to express that it is disheartening and demoralizing to watch Dr. Walters, one of the few affected stakeholders who is extremely well paid for his labor to care for our children, repeatedly refuse to supply clear planning, information, and responses to questions that teachers, parents, and students have been bringing for almost 2 years about how this plan might increase equity and either maintain or improve academic outcomes in our schools.

It is okay not to know. It is disturbing to watch Dr. Walters refuse to find out unless the board he is meant to be working for complies with his ideas.

To our board members: you represent your constituents and Dr. Walters works for you. Not the other way around. Unlike the majority of people who will be impacted by proceeding with the current Future Ready plan, he is paid for this work and he chose to take it on. The beauty and hope of public education is that it is held within a system of public accountability. Please require Dr. Walters to do his job, respond to community concerns, and provide clear planning before you give him the opportunity to begin implementing the Future Ready Plan. Your job is to hold our administrators accountable. I'm so grateful to those of you who have taken this work of accountability seriously, despite being publicly, rhetorically insulted by our Superintendent. Until Dr. Walters is comfortable finding answers to sensible questions from his neighbors about how this plan will work, including clarity in how it addresses equity gaps found in the 2023

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Equity Audit, I'm asking the board to vote NO on the Future Ready Plan.

I'd also like to ask you to consider two other issues that are impacting learning for all students: adopting a cell phone ban in our schools, and adopting a clear policy on when and how students will interact with Artificial Intelligence within our school buildings and within the school day, and via publicly owned school devices.

Thanks to our Community Elders who have come to us tonight to share their earned wisdom:

Wanda Henderson, Sarah Martin, Robbie Ali, and Shirley Ann Hill. They deserve our respect and to be taken seriously and listened to by this board and administration



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#59

Marguerite Link

Parent



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#60

Raqueeb Bey

Parent



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#61

Kerri Welsh

Teacher/Staff, Parent



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#62

Abby Foulds

Teacher/Staff, Alum



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#63

Shannon Striner

Parent



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#64

Jessica McPherson

Parent



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#65

Ashley Rooths

Parent



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#66

Madelyn Hall

Student



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#67

Abigail Hall

Student



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#68

Laura Mullen

Parent



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#69

Beth Sondel

Parent

#70

Pam Harbin

Community Member

Pam Harbin

Nov. 24, 2025 Public Hearing

I urge you to vote NO — not because nothing should change, but because this plan is not ready, and you do not have what you need to responsibly approve it – this month or next month.

1. There is no analysis of racial disproportionality.

This matters because in this plan, Black students are overrepresented - they make up a higher percentage of students being moved than they do in the district overall, and white students are underrepresented - they make up a lower percentage of students being moved than they do in the district overall.

2. There is no timeline.

Every major initiative comes with a timeline.

Your own SOFG vote in September included a detailed two-year timeline.

This plan — which moves 6,000 students, closes schools, shifts staff, and promises new programs — has no timeline at all.

3. Key city partners were never consulted.

Hundreds of new walkers will need crossing guards for their safety.

But the City's Department of Public Safety did not commit to more crossing guards, and no funding exists in the City budget to provide additional crossing guards.

4. What exactly are you being asked to vote for?

- The 10/30 plan does not list new attendance zones. Instead, it sends you to an address lookup tool.

Are you voting on attendance zones — or the look up tool?

- Teacher Centers are vaguely mentioned in the plan —

Are you voting to approve those?

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- The 10/30 Implementation Plan mentions the Delivery Model — but it does not contain the Delivery Model itself. There are no sample schedules, staffing allocations, or programming.

The only place where the Delivery Model is described — with examples and detail — is the May 21 Feasibility Report, which is not included in the resolution you are voting on.

And to make it even more confusing, the FAQ page on the website incorrectly implies that the 10/30 Implementation Plan does outline how time, staffing, and resources are organized during the school day in the new delivery model.

Are you approving the Delivery Model with this vote?

5. This Resolution contradicts others.

Tomorrow, you are being asked to approve a Resolution that authorizes the permanent closing of 9 school buildings and the Implementation Plan presented to the Board on 10/30. This does not follow the Resolution you passed in June, directing you to vote on 2 plans - a Reconfiguration Plan and an Implementation Plan.

The Reconfiguration Plan is meant to include everything that must be submitted to the state for approval. According to the PDE website, it should include the current and proposed configuration along with the Board Affirmation Statement or School Board Minutes, plainly and clearly supporting the decision.

It appears the assumption is that the 10/30 Plan contains all the details required for submission to the state. It does not.

There are two magnet schools and one K–8 school missing entirely from the 10/30 plan. So, if you vote on this Resolution, you are voting to keep 2 additional magnet schools and keep 1 of our K-8's.

Nothing about what you are being asked to vote on is clearly defined — not the staffing, not the attendance zones, not the delivery model, not even which schools you are voting on.

Without clarity, there can be no accountability.

The only responsible thing to do is to vote NO



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#71

Kathleen Michelotti

Teacher/Staff



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#72

Sedria McCoy

Parent

#73

Nathan Mason

Parent

When I first heard about the plans to close schools I kind of felt like we'd fallen for a bait and switch. The magnet programs, the supposed jewel of PPS, the reason that many of us chose to send our kids to PPS, are being shut down. As a parent of a child with a GIEP, it was doubly devastating, when we found out that the Gifted Center (Greenway) is also closing. Finally, my son receives extra enrichment on school days where an instructor comes and gets him to teach advanced mathematics. He and his friend are doing trigonometry as 3rd graders, working alongside those who are also pulled as advanced 5th graders. The advanced math alone is enough reason for me to want him to remain at Liberty.

I'm not naive enough to think that anything I say can save the magnet programs or the gifted center. Transportation costs are high and bussing a few kids across the city to attend a school because it teaches a chosen language isn't budget friendly. The same goes for maintaining the gifted center, no matter how wonderful the programs are there. As a parent it seems that those two things are fait accompli.

What I'm advocating for is letting the kids who are already attending a magnet school stay there if they have separate transportation. The district could cut the costs of transportation by letting the parents decide if they wish to continue at their chosen school. I would obviously opt into this for my son because I'm very, very doubtful that the district has a coherent plan for how to deal with all of the Greenway kids. It would be my guess that the "in class enrichment" would quickly fall by the wayside when a stressed out teacher is dealing with a bunch of rowdy kids. He already complains that the regular classes are either:

1. boring because it's too easy or
2. pointless when his classmates misbehave.

This is why being given the option of staying at Liberty would be so appealing. Having Dr. Ali challenging his mind at least some of the time will help him continue to remain engaged at school. If he doesn't have the choice and I see him start to lose interest or waste his potential, then I'm going to have to exercise the only choice I have and send him elsewhere.

Thank you,

Nathan Mason

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#74

Ian Kane

Parent



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#75

Lauren Stuparitz

Parent, Organization, Community Member

#76

Evelyn Ulysse

Parent

From struggle to strength of parent stories with children in the  
school closed list.

For more than 8 months we have had to survive the high levels of stress and anxiety  
because of the possible closure of some schools in PPS. The current situation does not  
allow us to plan time with our children for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year or manage  
our budget for transportation, food, and after-school activities. This whole situation is to save  
money, and I wonder how much we will have to spend in the future to face the  
consequences of the negative impact on our children and their mental health. Maybe in 3  
years we will have children with high levels of anxiety, stress, spoiling problems in school  
and parents in total collapse,

Will PPS be prepared to support our families in the future?

Evelyn Ulysse



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#77

Monica Thomas

Parent, Community Member

#78

William Fulmer

Student

Since July, nothing in this process has reassured me that PPS is making decisions with students at the center. The district still plans to close Spring Hill and other North Side schools years before a feeder school is even renovated; without breaking ground, without a guaranteed timeline, and with only assumptions on successful outcomes and only to save us a small pittance each year in our overall budget. This level of disruption puts students at real risk. We have seen it in other cities: when neighborhood schools close abruptly, dropout rates rise. That is not speculation; it is documented.

We now know the foundation of this plan still comes from ERS's work, even if they are no longer formally in the driver's seat. The biggest change is not the plan itself, but the timeline; it is moving faster, not slower. Accelerating a plan that is already disruptive only increases risks for students and communities. This matters because, nationally, similar ERS-style plans show a strong correlation with increased charter enrollment. In cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Kansas City, once closures began, private charter operators filled the vacuum and public dollars followed them, enriching private interests rather than serving community needs. I am not claiming that ERS-style plans directly cause this, but the pattern is consistent: disruption in public schools creates openings for private operators to step in, often with weaker oversight and poorer outcomes for the very students PPS says it wants to protect. Speeding up implementation only magnifies the likelihood of further disruption.

If PPS is really doing this for "savings," then the math should justify the chaos. But even using your own numbers, the district is saving maybe \$2 million a year out of a \$700 million budget, less than a third of a penny per dollar. Why destabilize entire neighborhoods for that? Why not pursue revenue solutions instead of pushing students into risky transitions that historically harm them based on only assumptions it will work, since as I indicated the evidential outcomes is increased drop out rates and move public dollars being funneled into private charter school

I believe in public education. I believe in neighborhood schools. This plan does not protect either. It puts children at risk, it weakens our communities, and it creates the perfect conditions for continued loss of public control over public education.



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#79

Amy Williams

Parent



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#80

Rebecca Maclean

Parent