



Friendship Community Group

P.O. Box 9180

Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Date: November 24th, 2025

Pittsburgh Public School Board

341 S. Bellefield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Re: Opposition to Proposal to Close Friendship School

Dear Members of the Pittsburgh Public School Board,

On behalf of the Friendship Community Group, we again write to express our strong opposition to the proposal to close the Friendship School and transfer its Montessori program.

The Friendship School sits in the heart of the Friendship neighborhood. As you are well aware, it is home to the thriving, vibrant PPS Montessori program. In addition to being a beloved learning space, the Friendship School is the beating heart of our community. The historic school and ample grounds provide an **essential space for the surrounding neighborhoods** to gather, play, recreate and perform civic duties. The beloved play park, built by Friendship Community Group, serves as a public amenity and a testament to the strong community involvement that surrounds the school. **Closing the school would not simply reassign students- it would dismantle a vital institution that supports the health, safety, and vibrancy of the surrounding area.**

Built in 1899, the school is an architectural gem designed for quality education and filled with functional beauty and charm that make it an ideal Montessori learning environment. Many of the students walk and bike to school, but families come from across the district to be a part of the highly sought-after learning environment.

Your constituents have provided exhaustive data showing again and again that school closures inflict deep and lasting harm on communities. They erode social cohesion, reduce civic engagement, weaken neighborhood safety, and depress economic vitality; all while producing minimal gains for students and district bottom lines.

Friendship Community Group envisions a brighter future. One that not only keeps our school open, but invests in its success as a shining star in the district - further enhancing a beloved and highly sought after program for more students in the district, while maintaining a vital community asset and strengthening the East End community of Pittsburgh.

Instead of shuttering the Friendship School, we urge the Board to:

1. **Keep the Montessori program in the Friendship School.** Treat the Friendship School as an asset, investing in its renovation and expansion to enrich, not relocate, the Montessori program.
2. **Explore grants and public-private partnerships** to fund accessibility upgrades and repairs. Resources are out there and our community is ready to help. Allow FCG and neighborhood stakeholders to help the district pursue funding sources.
3. **Include the community meaningfully in future planning decisions.** FCG and the Friendship community deserve a seat at the table in determining the building's future. It is essential that PPS commit to maintaining and preserving the Friendship School, and all of its buildings, and include FCG in decisions that would impact the community.

As stewards of our neighborhood, it is the duty of FCG to serve in the best interest of our residents. Likewise, **your obligation as members of the School Board is not only to manage budgets, but to make decisions that serve the best interests of your constituents**; the children, families and taxpayers of Pittsburgh. As stewards of the public trust, you are accountable for strengthening our students' experience AND protecting the school infrastructure and institutions of our diverse neighborhoods.

Enclosed you will find letters from our council members, and a petition signed by 476 school and community stakeholders opposing the closure of the school. Friendship Community Group is invested, organized, and prepared to work alongside you in preserving and strengthening the Friendship School for the continued housing of the Montessori program. We firmly believe that **the Friendship School is worth the investment** and we hope you will act in the best interest of the students, families, and taxpayers who depend on it.

Sincerely,

Friendship Community Group Board of Directors

Vice President: Gillian McTiernan

Secretary: Nancy Cohen

Treasurer: Steve Morrow

Lee Ann Antol

Aafke Butter

Nikki Coffee

John Eberle

Sheila Grab

Julie Grove

Vince Manetti

Roswell McNutt

Danielle Novick

Megan Palomo

Sierra Weir

President: Ellen DiBiase





PITTSBURGH COUNCIL DISTRICT 7

OFFICE OF DEBORAH L. GROSS



June 18, 2025

To the Members of the Pittsburgh Public School Board,

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposed closure of the Friendship School and the relocation of the Montessori program currently housed there. As a City Councilmember representing the Friendship neighborhood, I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this move would have—not just on students and families, but on the broader health and safety of the neighborhood and surrounding areas.

Schools are the heartbeat of any strong community. They bring structure, connection, safety, and opportunity. When we remove a school, we are not just reassigning children—we are weakening the fabric of a neighborhood. In many cases, the damage is long-term and irreversible.

Research has shown that school closures often lead to increased neighborhood instability, reduced property values, and higher rates of crime and vacancy. Friendship School plays a vital role in maintaining safety and community cohesion. As we know, active schools provide a critical layer of neighborhood protection—not only by triggering residency restrictions for offenders, but also by bringing enhanced policing, traffic safety measures, mandated child welfare oversight, and access to public infrastructure investments that prioritize safe, family-friendly communities.

To close such an institution without a comprehensive, community-led plan for reinvestment and replacement would be a grave mistake.

I urge the Pittsburgh Public School Board to reconsider this proposal and take a broader view of what schools mean to neighborhoods—not just as learning centers, but as hubs of stability and civic life. Your decisions must reflect the best interests of the communities you serve, including the families who have invested in and built their lives around this school.

I stand with the residents of Friendship and the many others across the city who are calling for meaningful engagement, transparency, and long-term thinking. Let us work together to strengthen our public schools—not shutter them.

Sincerely,
city,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deborah L. Gross", is written over the word "city,".

Deborah L. Gross
District 7 Pittsburgh City Councilwoman



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL – DISTRICT 9
COUNCILMEMBER KHARI MOSLEY

June 18, 2025

Dear Pittsburgh Public School Board,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed closure of the Friendship School and the relocation of its Montessori program. The school serves families who live in my district and provides a community gathering space for many of my constituents. As an active and thriving school, it contributes to the safety and stability of my district and adjacent neighborhoods.

The closure of Friendship School would not only disrupt the lives of students and families—it would also remove a valuable community anchor that supports safe, livable neighborhoods throughout the East End.

Active schools enhance neighborhood safety, vitality and investment. By removing this asset, risks creating a vacant site that invites blight, disinvestment and instability. These are problems that often spread beyond one neighborhood's borders.

I urge the School Board to keep the Friendship School open and invest in it as the resource it is, for students, families, and the broader community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Khari Mosley".

Councilman Khari Mosley
City of Pittsburgh - District 9

Petition: Save the Friendship Montessori School

<https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/save-the-friendship-school-and-grounds>

School closures weaken communities, displace students and negatively affect us all. PPS is considering plans to shutter schools across our city, including the iconic Friendship School.

Urge the PPS school board to vote NO on the consolidation plan and keep the Montessori program in the Friendship School.

Why the Friendship Montessori School Matters: The Friendship School, which sits in the heart of the Friendship neighborhood, is currently home to the PPS Montessori PreK-5 program; a thriving, vibrant school community. Built in 1899, the school is an architectural gem and designated historic landmark. The building, designed for quality education, is filled with functional beauty and charm that makes it an ideal Montessori learning environment. Many of the students walk and bike to school, but families come from across the district to be a part of the highly sought-after Friendship Montessori school community. Moreover, the school grounds are a vital gathering place, utilized by residents, sports teams, community groups, churches, and more. The beloved play park, built by Friendship Community Group, serves as a public amenity and a testament to the strong community involvement that surrounds the school.

The Case for Preservation: While we acknowledge that maintaining a historic building poses challenges, we firmly believe that the Friendship School is worth the investment. Closing this school would not only displace a tight knit family of students but also deprive the community of a vital resource. Instead of viewing it as an expense to cut, let's see it as an opportunity—an opportunity to maintain the vitality of our district and our community. We urge Pittsburgh Public Schools to explore grant opportunities and engage with potential funders to secure the necessary resources for renovation and accessibility upgrades.

The Friendship School **can meet the standards for a healthy, equitable school environment while continuing to serve as a cherished community space.** Through our network of architects,

engineers, attorneys and grant writers, the Friendship Community Group is committed to assisting PPS in any way necessary to achieve this goal. Join Us in Saving Friendship School! The Friendship School is not just a school building; it is the beating heart of our neighborhood.

Sign this petition to **demand that the school board abandon the plan to close the Friendship School and commit to investing in its future!** Together, we can ensure that this iconic landmark continues to serve our community for generations to come.

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Signed by 476 people:

Name	Zip code	Name	Zip code
Megan Palomo	15224	Ryan Morden	15206
Jennifer Haven	15224	Christa Brown	13676
Becky Mingo	15206	Jennifer Wilhelm	15206
Sara Leitera	15217-2726	Aaron Garland	15224
Kara Britanik	15206	Millie Sass	15224
Sara DeLucia	15224	Lucy Catlin	15210
Thomas Hritz	15206	Emily Lovallo	15206
Joe DeLucia	15224	Roswell McNutt	15224
michele timon	15206	Lowell Reade	15232
Sarah Hammock	15206	Jason C.	15224
Liza Barley	15206	Nora Andrews	15206
Alex Wert	15206	Julie Albright	15206
Mikaela Kingsley	15206	Elizabeth Albright	15213
Harmony Sullivan	15206	Elizabeth Ruzanic	15217
Laura Palotie	15206	Owen Norley	15232
Carson Loveless	21201	Melissa Sugzdinis	19355
Gil Teixeira	15206	James Malone	15224
Atticus Ryan	15224	Gladys Cantillo	15224
Akirah Wyatt	15206	Normajeanne Lee	60406
Sarah Porter	15232	Molly McTiernan	15147
Bill O'Donnell	15206	Casey Sciullo	15139
Diana Ames	15224	Candace McTiernan	15139
Kasia Sudol	15206	Callie Robinson	15232
Heather Sage	15201	Felipe Palomo	15224
Michael Wendt	15206	Joshua Snoke	15206
Debbie Manetti	15232	Michael George	15224
Gillian McTiernan	15224	Jonathan Vander Plaats	15212
Daniel Holland	15206	Emily George	15224
Danielle Novick	15224	Joel Lee	95959
Annie Clough	15206	John Stullken	15206
Patrick Martz	15224	Michael Scholar	15206
Sarah Elder	15224	Sara Stullken	15206
Victor Vrabel	15219	Emelia Stullken	15143
Kevin Brown	15201	Rebecca sass	15225
Dami Adebambo	15201	Matthew Stullken	15108
Jeremy Bustamante	15224	Jill Gleeson	15108
Kenneth Stiles	15232	Julia Wattick	15224
Holly King	15224	Brian Gruendl	15224
judith Vanderbeck	15232	Tayler Princeau	94610-4981
Sarah Cohen	15206	Ellen DiBiase	15224
Cierra Maloney	15206	Natalie Zubrow	15232

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Name	Zip code	Name	Zip code
Ann Hilton	15206	tomasz machnikowski	15206
Lee Ann Antol	15232	Hayley Davis	15017
Linda Vacca	15224	Max Zubrow	15232
Oksana Klueva	15217	Ryan Beaver	15224
Jayne Bower	15044	Draven Marino	15232
Daniel Paracat	15224	Bryn Laffey	15201
Denise Mianzo	15224	Carla Coleman	15206
Matthew Grove	15232	David Laffey	15201
Peter Kraus	15224	Rachael Mamula	15206
Elizabeth Malone	15224	Brad Wyland	15206
Emily Kraus	15224	Sydney Brown	51224
Giancarlo Dozzi	15232	Minette Vaccariello	15224
Olivia Ciotoli	15224	Katie Weimer	15209
Rick Craven	15206	Rachel Delphia	15206
Walika M	15206	Caileigh Johnston	15683
Christopher Baiamonte	15215	Beverly michael Higgins	15224
Courtney Menanno	15224	Ingrid Martinez	15224
Joshua Bowman	15201	Christin Hudson	15224
Lisa Hurst	15232	Molly Gunther	15216
Kevin Hurst	15232	Leslie Petrovich	15206
Abigail Hazlett	15206	Airicka C.	15232
Julie Vender	15232	Samantha Engelberg	15232
Konrad Holland	15206	Grazia Curatolo	15102
David Wohlwill	15232	Mayah E El-Dehaibi	15217
Diane Rizzo	15225	Eric D	15203
Valentina Scholar	16206	Christi Christofano	15232
Brian Johnson	15217	Chris Ward	15224
Jessica Ghilani	15224	Lynnetta Miller	15232
Nicole Hasak	15143	Scott Engelberg	15232
Nuria Ballesteros Soria	15224	John Murray	15214
Jamie Louden	15201	Jessica Collins	15214
Helen Smith	15201	Emelee mihalick	15217
Theres Payne	15206	Greg Collins	15024
Hannah Marvil	15206	Heather KULBACKI	15226-2323
J Horst	15218	Josephine Murray	15206
Lindsay Varhola	15207	Krista Winslow	15212
Tina S	15212	Joyce Kubasak	15120
David Ferguson	15206	Marilyn Gregory	15214
Sarah Defeo	15224	Amanda Dewalt	15243
Ashley Morgan	15224	Amanda Rotharmel	15324
Keith Payne	15206	Steven Seegers	15232
Craig Biertempfel	15224	Katie Sebastian	15205
Andrea Kubis	15201	Karen Sloan	15208
Alia Beaver	15224	Bonnie Dobies	15209
Christine Lepird	15224		

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Name	Zip code	Name	Zip code
Jessica Pacelli	15205	Hugh Abe	15206
Melissa Petitto	15024	Wakana Abe	15206
Tamaira Binion	15219	Brittany Miller	15206
Mary beth Fazio	15206	Raeed Chowdhury	15224
Bev Michael	15224	Nameera Chowdhury	15201
Samantha Ridgeway	15226	Meilani Erickson	15226
Sarah Yazvac	15234	Gary Kline	15201
Sara Parisi	15206	David Gerritsen	15206
Abbey Fedrow	15201	Robert Thomson	15203
Elyse Thimons	15239	Nina Chase	15201
Judith Tucker	15206	Abigail Anderson	15223
Angele Ellis	15206	Steven Dang	15206
Melissa Katigbak	15211	Jeffrey Dorsey	15224
Alexandra Schaefers	15206	Kat Marquez	15206
Brian Riedel	15206	Betsy Yazvac	15146
Kurt Schaefers	15206	Andrew Dunn	15219
Lisa Schaefers	15215	Cynthia Turich	15208
Eileen Schaefers	15201	Sophia Van Gorder	15206
Kayla Stokes	15223	Elizabeth Zimmerman-Clayton	15201
leah russano	15116	Andy Wolk	90212
Terrell Grayson	15206	Lisa campbell	15201
Amie Stokes	15223	Nicholas Milasich	15206
Klm Weild	15206	Travis Scott	15206
Jennifer Gallagher	15206	Hannah Glass	15223
Nema G	15206	Tiffany Ditch	15215
David Pini	15201	Robert Widmaier	15232
David Brodbeck	92617-4089	Sean Mahan	15224
Marc Glowczewski	15206	Elizabeth Lamitina	15224
Melinda Eshelman	15215	Dominique Kelly	15214
Susan Tsu	15235	Nikki Coffee	15232
Gabrielle Reznek	15201	Ernesto Bedoy	15210
Joe Pino	15227	Vivi Bedoy	15210
Ausar Stewart	15217	Stephanie Ballard	15224
Sam Turich	15201	Marie Henninger	15211
Kristi Good	15235	Kelly Rerko	32811
Giulia Fanti	15232	Andrew Smith	15238
Danielle Staresinic	15201	Amie Lopus	15219
Kelly Iverson	15201	Kizuwanda Raines	15206-3494
Judith Conte	15206	jayson kryla	02740
Tiffany Seidelman	48133	Sarah Axtell	15212
Michael Hilton	15206	terry cleary	90631
Lisa Velten Smith	15238	Janice Grant	98012
Becky Paul	15201	Licia Slimon	15206
Anna Brodbeck	75224		

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Name	Zip code	Name	Zip code
James Caton	15206	Walter Burlack	15206
Jennifer Joy Wilson	15206	David Lawrence	15224
Kavitha Conti	15206	Isabelle Moldovan	15224
Matthew Conti	15206	Susan Nash	15206
Will Zavala	15206-3425	Gia Serianni	15224
Dutch MacDonald	15206	Jourdan Schmitz	15206
Lisa Werner	15224	Teddy Winovich	15224
Martha Terry	15224	Steven Winslow	15212
Elizabeth Winter	15206	Diana Winovich	15224
John Werner	15224	Morgan Cottingham	15206
Linda Colbaugh	15101	Nina Paesano	15224
Amy M.	15241	Nicolette Garcia-Pawlowski	15224
fabrizio rambaldi	15217	Jacqueline Frost	15201
Danielle Cazier	83201	Richard Frost	15201
Joe Ritacco	15206	Jen Hayes	15201
Daryl Cross	15206	Krystle Fitzpatrick	15201
Bayley Brown	15208	Alexander Schwall	15232
Michael Dolan	15206	Eric Smith	15201
Shaun Birch	15206	Lena Makaroun	15206
Katherine Esterl	15206	Luca Sbrizzi	15201
Susan Peake	15206	Jenna Breitbach-Eldredge	15201
Victor Dubbs	15206	Ivy Breitbach	15206
Connor Mitchell	15211	Lesley Breitbach	15209
Adela Holland	15206	Daniel Breitbach	15209
Diane Hurkmans	15232	Cal Stonecipher	15206
Eileen Kraus	15206	Allison Grzybek	15044
Rosa Tapia	15206	Sheila Grab	15224
Mikayla Bird	97045	Alison Bartolone	15201
Ronnie Cook Zuhlke	15217	Abigail Harter	15210
Brittney Finley	15224	John Goray	15224
Rita Porterfield	15224	Erica Pasquali	15235
Rebecca Studer	15221	Adrienne Seapker	15202
Eileen Quigley	15224	Sally Folan	15221
John Ryan	15224	Matt Sundermann	15201
Alessia Deidda	15217	Natalie Gaughan	15224
Maria DeLima	15224	Amanda Kefal	15224
Desirae Corona	15206	Maggie Folan	15218
Devin Mascilli	15201	Cindy Du	15224
Deidra Albanese	15224	Rohith Krishnan Pillai	15206
Nino Albanese	15224	Jesse Carpenter	15224
Dilla Mastrangelo	15224	Karla Coello	08820
Veronica Rae Green	15210	Judith Faggart	27573
Chris Minnerly	15206	David Stuart	60644
Julie Zaichuk-Ryan	15224	Thistle Elias	15206

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Name	Zip code	Name	Zip code
Sandra Murray	15206	Rose Hamilton	15206
Mary Ellen Poole	15224	Andre Thomas	60615
Cody Williams	92543	Elizabeth Zimmerman-Clayton	15201
Mary Beth Cole	80016	mary trigo	15212
Lyla Gideon	76367	Christopher Guignon	15208
Lindsey Hollands	76209	Staci Offutt	15206
Kaylee Leon	08533	Michael Franklin	15224
Jacob Tredway	25507	Anna Radder	15224
Jessi Cramer	15224	Ida Brockman	15228
Sarah Hawkinson	92109	Sean Carroll	15201
Kristin Hughes	15206	Jessica Hower	15206
Penny Wendell	94801	Hallie Pritts	15226
Jessica Tiberi	15232	Emily Standridge	15210
Hannah Santone	15224	Ana Alba	15206
Kimberly Mangan	15232	Eileen Kraus-Dobratz	15206
Michael Rebinski	15232	Saya Terada	15206
Maria Colonna	15206	Jessa Gibboney	15217
Mary Levrio	15224-1704	Karen Hochberg	15217
Mike Santone	15224	Jill Walsh	15237
Monica McElwain	15116	Rhaven Nelson	15217
susan spangler	15232	Karen Springmeyer	16055
Jennifer Quinio	15224	Ryan Wotus	15143
Norman Beck	15232	Tara Wotus	15143
lauryn stalter	15224	Ashley Devine	15229
Jennifer Burnau	15224	Samantha Mariani	15224
Tara Durstewitz	15232	Ginger Mariani	15224
Michael Yoder	15224	Courtney Callas	16055
Stefani Danes	15224	Richard Fredin	15224
Juliana Geyer	15232	Robert Handley	15224
Joseph Mattis	15206	Ian Candy	15224
Solange Zavala	15206	Mary Klein	15218
Larry Laude	15224	Ken Bolden	15224
Nancy Martin	15229	Sarah Lewis	15238
Kenya Sero	18042	Karla Tirimacco	15241
Nicholas Sero	15214	Kris Callender	15243
Barbara Spell	15214	Kris Tirimacco	15017
Yeonhee Stanley	15219	Norman Brown	15213
Andrea Grebiner	15201	Jessica Gumbert	15201
David Grebiner	15201	Nancy Cohen	15224
Lora Laverty	27330	michele morris	15206
Annie Conner	15208	Fred Noel	14224
Laura Schuck	15224	Julie Grove	15232
Terra Ferderber	15212	Connie Haller	15232
Natalie Antonucci	15213	Victoria Potter	15224

Save the Friendship Montessori School

Name	Zip code
Charles Gianakas	15232
Lee Haller	15233
Anne Gianakas	15232
Jennifer Stein	15208
Megan Shelly	15232
Dan Potter	15224
Yuliia Sergeeva	15224
Max Zubrow	15232
David Zubrow	15217
Patrick Zubrow	15235
Anna Zubrow	15632
Molly Simon	98107
Anne Marie Kuchera	15206
Alice Ceraso	15221
Emily Zubrkw	15235
Stephanie DeLucia	15206
Kevin Bell	15206
Laura Hansen	15215
Madeline Schindel	15232
CHARLES SCHINDEL	15232
Susan Petersen	15224
Greta Hall	15217
Priscilla Gibboney	15217
Karen Cornell	15208
Christine Zubrow	15235
Benjamin Gibboney	15217
Beth Corning	15224
Marc Nieson	15224
Art Gola	15206
Susan M Smith	15224
Julie Aiken	15224
Elizabeth Bjerke	15210
Sarah Collins	15206
Megan Leitch	15224
Brittany Spinelli	15005
Rachel Noorlag	15237
Alice Walthour	15218
Wesley Walthour	15218
Martha Riecks	15206
Danella Winovich	15203
Melissa Swenda	15203
Lily MANGANIELLO	15207