

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read  
December 8, 2025

April Clisura

Resident

Dear board members,

My major concern with the budget is the current unfairness of our tax system that funds the schools. Our city is undergoing a new "renaissance" of development along the riverfronts and in gentrifying neighborhoods. The new buildings are under tax abatement for multiple years and that shortchanges our students. Luxury apartment rents flow entirely into developer pockets for the first several years, and as their residents enjoy City infrastructure and amenities, I bet they themselves would think it is a shame that not a penny goes to the school children of the City. The public subsidizes a lot of things, and that includes people on low incomes paying into taxes while large scale developers do not. Why are these same developers not asked to help subsidize our public schools? When we talk about having a great City that means investing in ALL our children of the future. And I bet you that more than half of tenants in dog-friendly luxury buildings and owners of luxury condos would agree with that. Probably significantly more than half. If existing and new members of the board are willing to fight for payments in lieu of taxes from developers, and also from our large nonprofits, I would be with you on that. But if we don't ask, we will never receive. Instead of retrenching let's show the naysayers what is working in our school system (like a first grade that would rather be read a story than watch movies during recess). And then demand the support that our kids deserve.

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Richard Clark

**Subject:** Request for Full Transparency and Fiscal Responsibility Before Any Tax Increase

Dear President Walker, Ms. Ranalli, and Members of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any proposed tax increase until the District provides a complete, transparent accounting of its finances and a clear justification for the continued operation of under-utilized school buildings.

Pittsburgh Public Schools is facing serious budget pressures, yet the District continues to maintain facilities that are far from fully occupied. This approach drains essential resources that should be directed toward improving educational outcomes. Consolidation of facilities is not only reasonable—it is fiscally responsible and necessary for long-term stability.

It is difficult to understand why taxpayers are being asked to absorb higher costs while the District avoids making structural changes that would significantly reduce expenses. Keeping legacy buildings open for the sake of tradition or to appease small groups of constituents is not sound policy, and it places an unfair burden on the broader community. If certain parents or neighborhoods insist on preserving these legacy facilities, perhaps the financial responsibility for doing so should be proportionate and not shifted onto all taxpayers.

Before any tax increase is considered, the public deserves:

1. A detailed and transparent financial breakdown of the current budget and projected deficits
2. A clear explanation of the costs associated with maintaining under-capacity buildings
3. A comprehensive facilities plan outlining consolidation options and cost savings
4. An honest assessment of how maintaining excess facilities affects educational quality and districtwide equity

Taxpayers deserve accountable stewardship—not reflexive increases. I urge the Board to prioritize structural efficiencies and responsible decision-making before placing further financial demands on the community.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to seeing a more transparent and fiscally disciplined plan from the District.

Sincerely,  
*Richard Clark*