

#1

Shirley Hill

Retired PPS Teacher

PUBLIC HEARING - SHIRLEY ANN HILL

March 23, 2026

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. She was cleared in February 2024 but was "conveniently transferred" to another school that does not have a Montessori program. Why is Kellie Meyer not being held accountable for her unfair treatment of Ms. Stephanie Lapine (the only lead black teacher)? Some Montessori teachers have filed grievances and still nothing has been done. Toxic principals like Kellie Meyer put fear in teachers who speak up by sabotaging their teacher evaluations. Pretending there are no problems at Montessori definitely creates an unsettling work environment. Teachers should not have to adapt to this leadership style to keep their jobs. Some principals are good for "conveniently cutting" positions when you speak up. I question how students are first when toxic principals are not held accountable. Dr. Sacco - Have you talked to Kellie Meyer regarding her toxic leadership that has been going on for years?

Carrick High School has a very small percentage of Black teachers. "Having a Black teacher builds cultural bonds between educators and students and has a positive impact on students' academic outcomes. Research has shown that Black teachers have a direct positive impact on Black and non-Black students." **BLACK STUDENTS AT CARRICK MATTER!!**

Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

#2

Mark Weaver

Parent

Good Afternoon,

Your decision to shut down for the NFL draft is enraging. My autistic son has already had to endure a week of remote learning earlier this year. Now it's going to be asynchronous, which means that you are stealing 3 additional days of learning from him. We live nowhere near downtown or the north side. How dare you. You close down every other Friday for professional development. Why not use some of those days for actual in-person learning? This draft has been scheduled for years - you let us know a month ahead of time? Why wasn't this planned out at the start of the year. You should reverse your decision immediately.

Mark Weaver
Concerned PPS parent



Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

#3

Sarah Zangle

Parent

#4

Sandra Woolley

Organization, Community Member, Grandparent, Chair of PIDD Public Education Task Force

Good evening!

I am Dr. Sandra Woolley, a retired educator, and a grandparent of PPS students.

Tonight, I am speaking as Chair of PIIN's Public Education Task Force.

PIIN is an Interfaith group of congregations, organizations, and individuals focused on Justice Issues in the Pittsburgh region, including Supporting Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Dr. Walters, when we met with you in January, PIIN was hopeful we could support the Reorganization Plan. We know your staff and current and past Directors have invested many hours.

However, we are disappointed that PPS is not more open to changes in The Plan.

As my title suggests, without significant changes,

PIIN is asking the Board to Vote NO on the Future-Ready Facilities Plan.

Let me read some of PIIN's concerns:

- The Plan was developed without meaningful Family Input.
- The Benefits of these Changes have not been Communicated.
Parents are confused and many more may choose to leave the District.
- The Plan was developed with little Input from Leaders and Stakeholders in Pittsburgh. This is a Missed Opportunity to get Support for PPS.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

We believe: Good Public Schools are Good for Pittsburgh.

- The Plan does not expand Community Schools.
Another Missed Opportunity to provide the Services Families Need Right in the Schools.
- The Plan cannot be Implemented Successfully in One Year.
The consultants recommended at least three to five years.

PIIN recognizes that some schools may need to be closed and that Parts of the Plan are Sound, but these Community Concerns Must Be Addressed before moving forward with a Plan of this Magnitude.

Mayor Cory O’Conner is already talking about creating Community Centers in the School Buildings you close. Why not work together?

PIIN believes you have an opportunity while renovating buildings and reorganizing schools to make space for other agencies in the buildings.

Dr. Walters and PPS Board Directors –

PIIN asks you to THINK BIG!

Work with other Stakeholders.

Make Public Schools Community Centers and

Families will want to Stay and Come Back.

Thank you.

#5

Tyler Allan

Student

To the Members of the School Board,

Thank you for taking the time to have me here today. My name is Tyler Allan, and I am an 11th grade student at Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy.

I am here today to briefly speak about what makes SciTech SciTech. We are a magnet school that brings together a diverse group of students from every corner of the district to the heart of Oakland. Our curriculum places a strong emphasis on forward-thinking science and technology, preparing students for the modern workforce.

To support this mission, we operate on a block schedule, meaning we have four 80-minute classes each day. Many students at SciTech thrive in this environment—that is exactly why it exists. I think any plan that allows more students to access this opportunity is exciting and worth considering.

However, this model is not the right fit for everyone. Some students have chosen to return to their home schools because those environments better suit their learning styles and needs. I share this because, in the district's proposed plans, there has been discussion of making SciTech a designated home school for certain students.

The concern is that SciTech, by design, is not intended to serve every type of learner. Not thriving at SciTech is in no way a reflection of a student's academic ability. In fact, some of the smartest people I know have decided that SciTech was not the best fit for them. My concern is that if SciTech becomes a home school without guaranteeing students another option, the district may unintentionally place some students in an environment where they cannot succeed. To truly serve those students, I urge you that if SciTech becomes a home school option, students should also be guaranteed placement at a more traditional school so they can choose the setting where they will thrive.

Additionally, I ask that in your district planning, you speak directly with SciTech administrators and teachers. They understand how we serve our unique student body and can provide insight into how future plans may impact our ability to continue offering our distinctive curriculum.

Thank you for your time and consideration

#6

Michael Cummins

Student Organization, PIIN Education Justice Task Force

Good evening,

My name is Mike Cummins. I am a proud parent of two PPS students, a member of the PIIN Education Justice Task Force, and a coordinator of the PPS Community Proposal. Thank you for your recent vote not to approve new charter schools during this process. I'd like to highlight several ways the Future Ready Plan falls short of Dr. Walters' stated tenets for reconfiguration:

Consistent grade bands: Making an exception for one of the district's most inequitable schools—based on prior facility investment—undermines consistency and contradicts the plan's equity goals. More equitable access to CAPA can be achieved without sacrificing consistency or past investments.

Schools as community hubs: The plan not only fails to expand this model, it reduces it—eliminating two of nine community schools and significantly altering others, with no strategy to replace or grow this strategy. This is a missed opportunity to integrate community-centered design into building renovations and to plan for the use of closed buildings.

Feeder pattern reorganization: This process was conducted in-house without a comprehensive demographer study, raising concerns about rigor, transparency, and long-term viability.

Comprehensive education plan: The district proposes major building closures and disruptions before developing a clear educational vision. This reverses the proper order—educational goals should drive structural decisions, not follow them.

Scheduling allocation: Current schedules prioritize tested subjects to an extreme degree, limiting access to well-rounded programming such as world languages and physical education. This signals a focus on test performance and funding over robust engaging opportunities and equity.

Revitalizing magnets: Rather than strengthening magnet programs, the plan reduces them without a consistent model. Existing inequities in access remain unaddressed, and fewer seats will only exacerbate the problem. Finally, the plan lacks a clear, actionable strategy to address disparities across race, IEP status, and socioeconomic status. Resource shifts alone are insufficient without defined pathways to outcomes and accountability.

This plan also overlooks key ERS recommendations.

Implementation: The timeline of the plan is what ERS stated would be the WORST thing you could do - rushing it and not taking 3-5 years or longer to handle the transition with proper care.

Meaningful Community Engagement: Not just telling us why the plan is good, but listening to develop a plan that meets community needs/desires.

Transition Support: Much more work needs to be put in place, and much more time allocated, to proper student/family transition supports, particularly for our most marginalized communities.

We can—and must—do better for every student in PPS than this half-baked plan. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

#7

Emily Sawyer

Parent, Substitute Teacher



Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

#8

Jazlynn Worthy

Parent

#9

Jourden Bolten

Student

Good evening, my name is Jourden, and I am a 10th grade student at Sci-Tech. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about my experiences and observations at our school.

One of the things I truly appreciate about Sci-Tech is its strong commitment to academic excellence. I've experienced how our advanced curriculum and dedicated teachers create an environment that is both challenging and supportive. The focus on STEM fields has been especially meaningful—not just for me, but for many of my peers—because it opens doors and creates pathways toward future careers. I believe even more students should be able to take full advantage of the STEM education offered here, as these opportunities can be life-changing and empowering for all of us. The school's emphasis on innovation and critical thinking helps prepare us for both college and future careers.

Personally, I hope to pursue a career in engineering, and Sci-Tech has already helped me begin building a strong foundation. The hands-on projects and rigorous coursework have deepened my understanding of scientific principles and made learning engaging and meaningful.

At the same time, I think there are areas where we can continue to grow as a community. SciTech is a diverse school, which is something I value, but there are moments when some students may feel overlooked or not fully supported. For example, the Black Student Union has faced challenges in receiving consistent faculty support. This can sometimes make students feel like their voices and experiences are not being fully heard. I don't believe this comes from a place of harm, but rather from an opportunity for us to do better together.

To strengthen our school community, I encourage the administration to continue prioritizing diversity and inclusion efforts, including providing support and guidance for student organizations like the BSU. Encouraging more faculty involvement and awareness can help ensure that every student feels seen, respected, and supported.

I am proud to be a student at Sci-Tech, and I believe that by working together, we can continue to grow into a school where every student feels included and every student has access to opportunities—especially in STEM—that help them succeed.

Thank you for listening to my voice.

#10

Josiah Chalmers

Student

Good evening, my name is Josiah, and I am a 10th grade student at Sci-Tech. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today about my experiences and perspective on our school.

Sci-Tech is a school that really values learning and high expectations. In my experience, our classes encourage us to think more deeply, ask questions, and challenge ourselves. The focus on STEM is especially important because it helps students explore different interests and start thinking about future careers. I think it's a great opportunity, and I believe even more students should feel encouraged and supported to take full advantage of everything the STEM program has to offer. I also think more students should have the chance to experience what Sci-Tech offers, because it can really help shape their goals and confidence.

Personally, I hope to become a neurosurgeon one day, and Sci-Tech has already helped me take steps toward that goal. The coursework can be challenging, but it has helped me grow, stay focused, and build confidence in my abilities. I appreciate the effort that teachers put into helping us succeed.

At the same time, I think there are ways our school community can continue to improve. Sci-Tech is a diverse place, which is something I really value, but there are moments when some students may not feel fully heard or understood. For example, the Black Student Union has faced some challenges in receiving consistent support. I don't think this is intentional, but it can sometimes make students feel like their voices are not as recognized as they should be.

I also think it's important to recognize that there are teachers who do try to support student groups like the BSU, and those efforts matter. As students, we also have a responsibility to show respect and work together so that those relationships can grow stronger. Building a supportive environment takes effort from everyone.

Another area where we can grow is how we handle conflict between students. Sometimes situations can spread quickly, especially through social media, and it can create stress and distractions in school. Having more guidance and consistent support from staff when these situations come up could really help students handle things in a more positive way.

Overall, I believe Sci-Tech is a strong school with a lot of potential. By continuing to focus on inclusion, communication, and support for all students, we can make it an even better place to learn and grow. I am proud to be a student here, and I believe that if we work together, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged to succeed.

Thank you for listening.

#11

Sebastian Bard

Student

Good afternoon, members of the board. I'd like to preface my remarks by thanking you for the opportunity to share my experience in such an impactful setting.

My name is Sebastian Bard, and I am a graduating senior at SciTech. I've been at SciTech since 6th grade- almost 7 years. As such, I've seen most of what the school has to offer: its greatest strengths, its shortcomings, and everything in between. I feel qualified to testify on SciTech's behalf- qualified to attempt to explain the special place our school inhabits in the Pittsburgh Public ecosystem.

SciTech's magnet focus isn't reserved for high school: from the very first day of 6th grade, the attention paid to creating a well rounded, in depth STEM education was evident. Before my time at SciTech, I had never taken science class in a lab. However, by the end of 8th grade I felt confident in creating research questions and attempting to answer them using the wide variety of equipment available to us.

In high school, students are given the opportunity to choose their own path, through the concentration system. SciTech's concentration system is one of its most important features: it allows students to hone in on the ideas they actually care about. I've seen students, otherwise almost completely disengaged, participate actively in the classroom when they realized that what they were learning in their concentration was applicable to their lives and aspirational careers. I believe our concentrations are what truly set SciTech apart. The resources, and opportunity for exploration that they offer make it possible for students who would otherwise have no access to such diverse offerings to receive a university level understanding in subjects they will continue to reference in college and beyond.

As you continue to think about the future of our district, I hope that you will keep my experience, and the countless others like it that have stemmed from time at SciTech, in mind. I believe in the goal of leveling the playing field: I hope that whatever action the district pursues results in a fulfilling education for every PPS student. However, I would caution against equating the unique opportunities that some of our schools provide with a need to ensure that there is both a baseline and a ceiling to the quality of education that a PPS student can receive. I am hopeful that, at the conclusion of this process, SciTech will still be a school where students can pursue their goals in the same specialized and driven environment that exists today.

Thank you

#12

Zaire Howze-Jetter

Student

Good evening! I hope everyone is doing well. My name is Zaire Howze Jetter. I am 17 years old, and I am currently a senior enrolled at Obama Academy. I plan to attend Temple University after high school to pursue a career in teaching. I focus my work on student advocacy within Pittsburgh Public Schools through student voice and AACAS.

Overall, my experience with Pittsburgh Public Schools has been phenomenal, especially in terms of academics, due to the rigorous path I have chosen and been placed on.

However, there has been one major issue I have experienced for a very long time as a student in Pittsburgh Public Schools: the fact that I have only had six teachers of minority descent. To be specific: one Black man, two Black women, two Asian women, and one mixed-race woman. Not to discredit anyone's work, but one of the Asian women was my Chinese teacher—I do not even take Chinese; she was my homeroom teacher. Still, she made herself much more memorable.

I bring this up to highlight the lack of representation of Black and other minority groups in PPS classrooms. While some may see this as a non-issue, it truly is important. Some students are not excelling or may even be falling behind due to a lack of familiarity or connection with their teachers. This is not a criticism of teachers—it simply means that, for some students, especially younger ones, having a familiar face can make a difference. Seeing someone who looks like you can help open a student's mind and make them feel more comfortable.

For example, in elementary school, I did complete my work, but my behavior was not the best. In fact, it was worse than many of my peers. I got into physical altercations with other students and was suspended multiple times, both from school and from the bus. This made things harder for my family, as my mom had to drive me to school when she needed to be at work.

I did not begin to improve until 4th grade, when I had the Black woman and man I mentioned earlier, Ms. Wilson and Mr. Perkins. It was not until I had strong Black role models in my education that I began to feel understood. There was less pressure to explain myself, and it became easier to connect with my teachers. Seeing someone who looked like me in a position of success was truly inspiring. Even when Mr. Perkins left a few years later to pursue his goal of becoming a principal, his impact stayed with me.

Thank you for listening to me and allowing me to share my Student Voice.

#13

Holly Cox

Parent, Organization PIIN

Good evening!

I am Dr. Sandra Woolley, a retired educator, and a grandparent of PPS students.

Tonight, I am speaking as Chair of PIIN's Public Education Task Force.

PIIN is an Interfaith group of congregations, organizations, and individuals focused on Justice Issues in the Pittsburgh region, including Supporting Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Dr. Walters, when we met with you in January, PIIN was hopeful we could support the Reorganization Plan. We know your staff and current and past Directors have invested many hours.

However, we are disappointed that PPS is not more open to changes in The Plan.

As my title suggests, without significant changes,

PIIN is asking the Board to Vote NO on the Future-Ready Facilities Plan.

Let me read some of PIIN's concerns:

- The Plan was developed without meaningful Family Input.
- The Benefits of these Changes have not been Communicated.
Parents are confused and many more may choose to leave the District.
- The Plan was developed with little Input from Leaders and Stakeholders in Pittsburgh. This is a Missed Opportunity to get Support for PPS.
We believe: Good Public Schools are Good for Pittsburgh.
- The Plan does not expand Community Schools.
Another Missed Opportunity to provide the Services Families Need Right in the Schools.
- The Plan cannot be Implemented Successfully in One Year.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Fulton Special Public Hearing Testimonies
March 23, 2026

The consultants recommended at least three to five years.

PIIN recognizes that some schools may need to be closed and that Parts of the Plan are Sound, but these Community Concerns Must Be Addressed before moving forward with a Plan of this Magnitude.

Mayor Cory O’Conner is already talking about creating Community Centers in the School Buildings you close. Why not work together?

PIIN believes you have an opportunity while renovating buildings and reorganizing schools to make space for other agencies in the buildings.

Dr. Walters and PPS Board Directors –

PIIN asks you to THINK BIG!

Work with other Stakeholders.

Make Public Schools Community Centers and

Families will want to Stay and Come Back.

Thank you.