

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

Jeannette Dow

It is extremely disheartening that essentially the same Future-Ready Facilities Plan is being brought back up for the school board to vote on with limited adjustments and answers to outstanding questions/concerns. It is also disheartening that this vote is happening again without additional community feedback - the vote itself has not been announced (I was actually putting this together this afternoon when the first mailer went out announcing the vote for tomorrow!) to the community and it feels very underhanded to be reintroducing the vote without additional community listening/learning sessions or addressing major concerns and flaws with the plan. I urge all board members to vote NO on the Future-Ready Facilities Plan and hold Dr. Walters and his administration responsible for pushing forward a plan that is underdeveloped and lacks realistic outcomes and deliverables. Instead of rehashing this flawed plan, we should be developing a NEW plan that is both feasible and puts student academic and emotional development as well as community support at the forefront. I find myself trusting the leadership of our district less and less as they continue to leave parents and students out of key discussions, lack transparency in their actions, and make decisions that are not grounded in facts or academic pedagogy.

Continued issues with the plan:

1. The timeline remains too fast - a restructuring of this magnitude cannot be implemented remotely well in the short timeframe laid out in the plan. I fear many students will be displaced and or in temporary or remote classrooms as the renovation timelines quickly fall apart. The timeline makes me severely distrust the district's preparedness or ability to execute a major overhaul. Their unwillingness to accept this inherent flaw is beyond stubborn and borders on recklessness.
2. Detailed financials and debt planning are still lacking in the plan - it is unclear where initial quotes have come from and the true cost of this plan remains unaccounted for. Debt financing and management is also not explained or accounted for. This is an expensive venture and the expected outcomes and deliverables need to be clearly outlined and the cost clearly detailed.
3. The plan still lacks safety analysis of the new walking routes for students that will be routed away from their current neighborhood schools. It has been pointed out at many community listening sessions that the walking routes to many of the new elementary feeder schools are not feasible or safe (needing to pass over a highway etc.). Busing is also still a concern for students that will no longer be walkers as busing has not been reliable or consistent since covid.
4. The district says magnet schools are not sustainable, why then is Linden not becoming a neighborhood school? Why is it the only elementary school maintaining its magnet status? I agree Montessori education is unique, but it also does not fit with the district's plan or statement that magnets are exclusionary and pull students away from local schools. If we are going to have a magnet, I want to hear how that magnet school is going to be diversified and open to a much larger number of students. Also if kept at Linden, it is very poorly placed to serve the whole district. It is not central by any means and will continue to attract mainly white students in PPS.
5. We need feed zones with accurate total student numbers so we can have a guarantee of smaller class sizes. Specifically, how many elementary students will be attending Greenfield, how many

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

middle schoolers will be attending a new Colfax 6-8, what will the class room numbers look like at both schools? Dr. Walters has stated that this plan is meant to improve academics. I want to see a guarantee of 25 or less students in a classroom if PPS really wants to make an impact. To do all these moves and make these promises of equity we need to commit to the most basic principles for active and engaged classrooms - lower class sizes and teacher support (both through physical items needed for classrooms and training). Right now PPS has allowed class room sizes to balloon over the past couple years and ignored requests for additional teaching staff. The administration has through "redistricting" routinely allowed elementary classrooms of 30+ students per class. Of course students are being left behind as teachers are shuffled or cut weeks into the school year. There is no teaching pedagogy or research anywhere that would support those large class numbers. PPS is curbing educational gains by putting learning strains on our most vulnerable learners and a hefty weight on our teachers trying to deliver foundational knowledge for future educational and emotional success. PPS is failing our students and I want to hear a clear commitment to permanently address the class size issue. This plan can promise language classes and electives at the middle school level but without realistic class sizes struggling students will continue to be left behind and basic needs not met. We cannot move forward with a plan until feeder zone numbers are projected and a plan put forward to maintain small class sizes.

6. I continue to doubt that funding for schools will change as the financial plan does not outline how school support will be given and maintained. PPS schools face a funding gap which the district has left to be filled by individual school PTO's and class parents. Without parent support my kids' school would drown. My daughter's kindergarten class would not have supplies and resources for new materials unless parents from the class stepped up. My son's class would have lost access to key educational tools without parent and PTO support. Neither of my kids would have had paper earlier this year without parent support. HOW IS THIS FAIR to parents and PTO's that don't have the funds. This report still doesn't outline how this equity gap in resources and teacher support will be bridged with the restructuring. We need guarantees from the board and Dr. Walters to actually fund all our schools and not push that burden to parents and teachers to fund their classrooms. Otherwise the cycle of inequality continues and again our students are left behind because the district doesn't provide basic resources for students to learn.

7. More on magnets - if some high schools maintain a partial magnet stream how are the feeder schools leading into those high schools going to be revamped to allow students to succeed in those magnet concentrations? How are new resources going to be implemented in the elementary and middle schools feeding into SciTech for instance - how will these schools shift to prepare all students to take on a STEM focus and be prepared for that curriculum? And if CAPA is to remain a full magnet, how is PPS going to make sure all students, regardless of their background and economic status have access to building a competitive portfolio to apply to and be accepted to CAPA? Will the district be funding opportunities like school musicals and more robust art and music programs at all schools? HOW is PPS going to finance opportunities to maintain some magnets, revamp school curriculum, and truly deliver on their promises?

8. Gifted education: I wholeheartedly agree that the gifted identification system is broken. Broken because PPS itself DOES NOT ADVERTISE the gifted program. It was only last year that PPS for the first time finally piloted testing second grade students. Before that pilot, and it would be wonderful to see data from that pilot, if you didn't know about the program, you would be hard pressed to find out anything about it: including services offered and how to request testing. The process to complete the

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

application for testing is arduous and exclusive. The process needs to be overhauled and PPS needs to commit to having a better system for identifying gifted students AT ANY SCHOOL. Where I disagree with the Future-Ready Facilities Plan, is with the proposal to move gifted education into all schools instead of a centralized building. Right now gifted education, because it is centralized and overseen by dedicated staff, is one of the only educational offerings in the district that is the same regardless of where you live and your family circumstance. The classes are all at a high level and taught by the same teaching teams. Because they are specialized and have the same high level of resources the teachers can offer unique and engaging classes. If you put gifted programming into individual schools I have no confidence that programming will remain consistently high for all students. The level will drop as programs are not properly supported by PPS. We will end up with students receiving substandard gifted services because schools don't have the bandwidth to support or integrate due to the lack of district financial support. This is the one place where we should spend busing money. It's an invaluable resource to students across the district.

So in summary, please vote NO on the Future-Ready Facilities Plan and demand more transparency and genuine analysis from the administration to create a plan that focuses less on building space (the name of this plan says it all) and instead focuses on what is best for our communities and guarantees a standard of support across all schools to support academic achievement and the emotional growth of our students.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

Jamie Piotrowski

Dear Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Directors,

I want to express my concerns regarding the Facilities Utilization Plan.

Aside from all of the same concerns I had during my tenure on the Board, as it appears there have been minimal, if any changes, the job posting for the Project Manager position is an impossible ask.

In my experience as a **certified** Project Management Professional, expecting a single person to manage a project this size for a salary posting of ~\$86k will only attract weak candidates and lead to a failure in implementation of a plan this size, regardless of how many District staff will be involved. In my current role as a PM I get to work from home and make a six figure salary for a significantly less stressful and in a much lower stakes environment. I suggest re-writing the job description and hiring credentialed candidates for the position. This plan is a serious move and requires skilled people. Hiring a Deputy Supt. will not remedy the issues with the Project Management Position.

As I've stated many times previously during my tenure, the timeline of this plan is unrealistic, there is no realistic budget, and there are no real cost savings which all come at a detriment to students and is irresponsible to taxpayers footing the bill.

There is a lack of trust in the District because there is no real plan.

Thank you for your time.

Jamie Piotrowski

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

Dana Cestra

Dear Board Members,

The Board rejected this plan in November 2025, and the reasons for that decision remain unchanged. The proposal still includes the same school closures and consolidations, lacks critical details, leaves major questions unanswered, and places significant burdens on students and families.

There is still no clear plan for relocating more than 6,000 students, addressing overcrowding, protecting students with disabilities, or replacing Community Supports currently serving more than 1,300 students. Families are being asked to accept major disruption without clear evidence of improved outcomes.

The public engagement process was inadequate. Three of the nine Board members voting on this plan were not in office when the required public hearings were held. Those hearings occurred during the summer and included only 91 speakers across nine school closure hearings—far too limited for a decision that will permanently affect thousands of students and families.

Quarterly updates are not accountability. The plan still lacks measurable student outcome goals, benchmarks for success, an equity analysis, and clear standards for evaluating whether students are better off after these changes.

PPS's own history shows that school closures can lead to lower attendance, academic declines, increased suspensions, and enrollment losses. Yet the superintendent has not demonstrated how this plan will measurably improve student access or outcomes.

Major safety concerns also remain unresolved. With fewer bus routes, more students will be required to walk longer distances and cross dangerous intersections. PPS has not shown that the necessary safety measures will be in place.

Trust is not built after schools are closed and students are displaced. It is built through transparency, planning, and accountability before decisions are made. After two years of requests, families still do not have the details or assurances they deserve.

For these reasons, I urge the Board to reject this proposal.

Sincerely,
Dana Cestra

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

Sara DeLucia

Dear Dr Walters, Mr. Walker, and the Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Education,

I am a parent of three children who are students at PPS. My daughter is a junior at CAPA (elementary at Liberty), my son is in 8th grade at CAPA (elementary at Liberty), and my son is in 4th grade at Montessori. All three of my children have GIEPs and attend or have attended the Pittsburgh Gifted Center. I also am a resident of Friendship and a member of the Friendship Community Group where the Friendship school and building is a vital part of our community.

I am unable to attend the public hearing tonight on 26May2026 because I need to attend my children's activities. Instead I am sending this note to be recorded as a parent and community member's voice urging you to vote NO to closing our schools. It is rather unfortunate that you plan such an important hearing and meeting during one of the busiest times of the school year.

After the Board of Education in November 2025 voted "no" to the plan to close nine PPS schools, the same topic is up for vote in May 2026. The only significant changes to the plan are the three new Board members who weren't able to vote last time. The same reasons to vote "no" exist today as did in 2025.

I urge the Board of Directors to vote "no" to a plan that will result in over-crowded schools, and an educational environment that is not focused on academically gifted scholars, and will cause the decline of Pittsburgh neighborhoods. I can attest that academically gifted students are overlooked and do not have the chance to thrive and achieve their potential in schools that are teaching to the median. All students should have their right to a free and appropriate public education, even the academically gifted high potential students. If you take away the Pittsburgh Gifted Center, you will take away the chance for students to be stretched and challenged in a way that is not replicable if decentralized as proposed.

Closing public schools that are vital to a neighborhood's identity will result in more than overcrowding in the remaining schools. PPS needs to be ready for an exodus of families from the City of Pittsburgh to the suburban school districts and private schools. We are giving PPS every chance we can, but the actions of the Board and the Administrative office are threatening the City's long term health as well as the outlook for our children in the PPS schools.

kind regards,

Sara DeLucia

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

Justin Beers

Hello PPS School Board,

When the facilities utilization plan goes to vote tomorrow I ask that you vote no to moving forward with the current plan.

There are still a lot of points brought up that I continue to agree with, but overall this plan is the same as the previous plan that was voted down last fall.

I understand change is hard to accept and there will be challenges with any type of change. However, I also understand changes need to happen to schools within the district. I just feel the currently proposed changes are too dramatic and negatively impact the district overall.

Concerns:

- Overall cost
 - Expenses tied to creating these changes
 - Including large CapEx expenses
- Future state of school
 - Including feeding patterns and attendance zones
 - Benefit to the current and future students/families
- The total number of schools proposed to close
 - Including some of the more desirable and better performing schools
 - Impacting many different communities, students, families, and staff
 - Changing the dynamics and culture within all the schools
- The elimination of the magnet programs (except in a limited number of situations)
 - Reducing the number of school options for the students and families

Suggestions:

- Keep the current magnet programs in place
 - Use them as a model/foundation for the feeder schools
 - Build off the success currently in place
 - Versus eliminating it and starting over
- Expand the magnet programs throughout the district
 - Make new programs to provide more opportunities for all
 - Allow better access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
- Review and reduce the list of schools proposed to close

Pittsburgh Public Schools Budget Public Hearing Testimonies Submitted Not Read
May 26, 2026

- Make sure to take into account the different impacted communities, students, families, and staff
- Better understand how these proposed changes impact the dynamics and culture within all schools
- All of this is better understood by our families, students, staff, and the board compared to a proposal developed by an outside consultant

Agree:

- Aligning schools to all be K-5, 6-8, and 9-12
 - Makes sense to have all the school aligned by the same grades
 - Eliminates there being a wide range of ages in different schools
- Using the magnet programs as a model for other schools

Thank you,
Justin Beers