

Opening Message from Assistant Superintendent Patti Camper

Greetings PPS Families,

As we close another successful school year, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our students, families, educators, and support staff for the dedication and support that make our special education programs strong. Together, we have celebrated growth, perseverance, and meaningful achievements across our schools.

We are also looking forward to welcoming many of our students and staff to this summer’s Extended School Year (ESY) program in July. Through continued learning, enrichment, and individualized support, ESY provides important opportunities for students to maintain progress, strengthen skills, and build confidence for the year ahead.

As we look ahead to next school year and the transition planning connected to the Future Ready Plan, families will begin receiving regular updates and highlights through our parent newsletters. We recognize that periods of change can bring questions and concerns, and we remain committed to providing transparent communication, collaboration, and support throughout the process.

Thank you for your continued partnership. We wish all of our families a safe, restful, and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Patti Camper

Assistant Superintendent
Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE)
pcamper1@pghschools.org



**When You Speak,
We Listen!**

**If you have feedback on this issue
of the Newsletter or have
suggestions for the future
Newsletters, please let us know.
Scan or click on the QR code below
to give us feedback.**



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Parent & Guardian Training Opportunities

Quarterly Update on Training Opportunities

How Can the Office of Developmental Supports Assist?

Are you a Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) family member or a helping professional in the PPS community? You are invited to a virtual summer information session hosted by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Developmental Supports (ODS).

Who Should Attend?

This session is designed for families of students with a diagnosis of:

- An Intellectual Disability
- Autism
- Developmental Disability (DD) prior to age 9
- Medically Complex Condition (MCC) prior to age 22

What We Will Cover:

- New to ODS? Learn how to connect with Supports Coordination (SC/case management).
- Already registered? We will discuss how to plan for your student's future supports and services.

Event Details

Date & Time: Tuesday, August 4, 2026, from 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Location: Virtual Session

Registration Deadline: Registration closes on August 2, 2026

Questions? Please reach out to Mary Evrard.

To contact Mary and learn more about ODS, visit the [Allegheny County ODS Website](#) and click on "Contact the ODS Community Liaison."



Supporting Success at Home: A Positive Approach

This presentation will provide parents and caregivers with practical, evidence-based behavior analytic strategies to increase cooperation, strengthen positive relationships, and reduce challenging behavior at home and in the community. The training focuses on three key practices: maintaining a 5:1 ratio of positive to corrective statements, using precision directives, and applying behavioral momentum.

Date & Time: Virtual session on July 15, 2026, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM



*Registration will close on 7/13/26





Keeping You Up to Date:



Special Message from Dr. Maria Paul:



Happy Summer, PSE Families!

☀ Extended School Year (ESY) programming will be held from July 6-24, 2026, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

ESY locations for this summer are as follows:

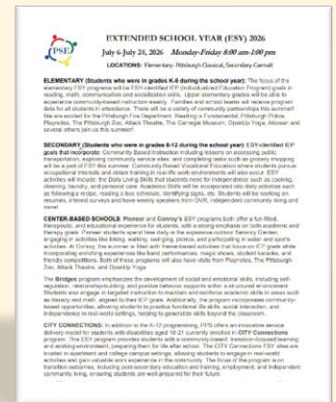
- Kindergarten-5th Grade students will attend Pittsburgh Classical Academy
- Grades 6-12 students will attend Pittsburgh Carmalt
- Conroy Education Center students will attend ATA due to ongoing construction
- Pioneer Education Center and CITY Connections students will remain at their typical school-year locations

ESY determinations are ongoing throughout the school year. If your child is part of the Armstrong Target Group, their ESY determination should have been completed prior to

February 28, 2026. The Armstrong Target Group includes students with:

- Autism/PDD
- Serious Emotional Disturbance
- Severe Intellectual Disability
- Degenerative Impairments with Mental Involvement
- Severe Multiple Disabilities

☎ If you have questions regarding your child's ESY eligibility or programming, please reach out to your child's IEP case manager. Transportation information for ESY will be mailed by the Transportation Department in June.



Summer COVID Compensatory Services (CCS) Are Back!

If your child is still owed CCS hours, summer programming is available. Click the image to explore your options and view the list of available programs..

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's IEP case manager or me directly at mpaul1@pghschools.org or 412-529-3156.

I look forward to a productive, engaging, and enriching summer for all of our students!



Additional Resources:



REGISTER FOR INCLUDI-CON 2026!



Inclusion for Every Learner: Strategies to Remove Barriers and Strengthen Belonging

WHAT TO EXPECT

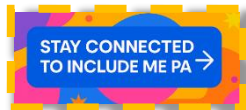
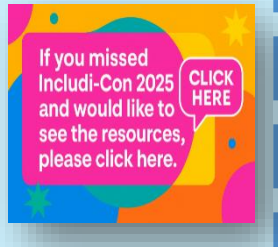
- ✨ Energizing Keynotes from Leaders in Inclusive Education
- 🗣️ Real Stories from Self-Advocates with Lived Experience
- 🔧 Practical Strategies You Can Use Right Away
- 🤝 Networking with Educators, Families & Advocates

Register Here:



Date: August 11-13, 2026
TIME: 8:30-12:00 PM
Location: Anywhere, it's Virtual!
Cost: \$50
Link: thearcpa.org/includicon

Include Me districts attend FREE OF CHARGE using code **Free99 when registering.**



IMCC presents:

Include Me Connection Club: Camp IMCC is a virtual experience designed to bring students together through interactive games, themed activities, and student-led conversations. Each session is facilitated by our engaging and energetic staff, creating a welcoming space where students can build friendships, share ideas, and have fun. With a mix of creativity, collaboration, and summer-themed experiences, this camp keeps students connected, engaged, and inspired all season long.

If interested in joining the club, [SIGN UP HERE](#) For more information: Contact Nick Webster, nwebster@includemepa.org

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services

Secondary Transition

Transition planning is a multistep process that guides a youth from high school into adult living after graduation. In Pennsylvania, planning begins at age 14, or younger if determined appropriately by the IEP team, and continues through high school as academic instruction and community experiences help clarify and support students' goals.

Take Note

If you have been following the Parent & Guardian newsletter for the last few years, you will recall that we LOVE to celebrate our Transition Services and the amazing work that our students are doing during the school year.

Please let this page serve as a review of the overall Transition Services and the following pages, highlighting specific site highlights for 2025-2026.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

Post-Secondary Education

Preparing students to pursue their dreams of further education or training.

Independent Living

Fostering skills for living independently in the community.

Employment

Preparing students to be competitively employed or supported through the appropriate continuum of employment services.

WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES: HOW DO THEY BENEFIT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

The passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990 and the subsequent reauthorization in 1997 mandate school districts to provide transition services for students with disabilities to improve post-school outcomes for youth. To help meet the requirements for transition, school districts have developed transition programs that provide work experiences for students prior to graduation. These programs are designed to help students meet their graduation requirements and prepare them for life after graduation. More specifically, they prepare students for post-secondary education or training programs, employment and independent living. These programs also identify specific goals which may include one or more of the following objectives:

- Obtaining employment in a full or part-time paid position in the community
- Participating in college classes
- Increasing mobility in the community
- Engaging the support of adult service agencies
- Improving social and communication skills
- Improving self-determination skills
- Developing friendships with other people of similar ages
- Developing age-appropriate recreation and leisure activities

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

Setting high expectations early in life is an important step for youth to develop the skills to succeed in the future. Community-based work experiences can help students identify their interests, strengths, skills, and needs related to career development. A hands-on experience in a real-work setting includes a wide range of opportunities including job shadowing, mentoring, service learning, volunteering and paid employment. These experiences during high school can benefit students in a variety of ways including:

- Identification of career interests, skills, and abilities;
- Exposure to job requirements and responsibilities, employer expectations, workplace etiquette, and workplace dynamics;
- Development of critical workplace skills and a solid foundation for good work habits;
- Improvement of post-school outcomes; and
- Selection of appropriate courses of study tied to career goals



Research shows that providing work experiences during high school is one of the best ways to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities in secondary education. Youth who participate in such experiences have the opportunity to receive more individual guidance and support that will prepare them for successful adult employment. Youth with disabilities often face challenges that make it difficult to achieve successful employment as adults.

EFFECTIVE TRANSITION PRACTICES

Strong secondary transition plans start with effective transition practices. How does the PPS transition team provide experiences to ensure that all young people with disabilities, families, and professionals are empowered to create a successful transition plan? Read on to find out....



The **13th Annual Disability & Mental Health Summit Futures Fair** was held on Thursday, May 7th at CCAC's Northside campus. Pittsburgh Public Schools had more than 200 students, 60+ staff and several families participate in this event.

This free event offered educational, employment, training, housing, recreation and leisure resources for students ages 14+ with disabilities. Students, staff and families enjoyed a day filled with valuable information and resources to help students prepare for life after graduation. Over **80 local businesses and agencies** that offer employment services, postsecondary education/training opportunities, independent living resources and recreation & leisure activities for individuals with disabilities were on site to provide a wealth of

information and resources. Vendors included: Abound Health PA, ACCESS Transportation, Achieva, AHEDD, Agh Co Dept of Human Services, Allegheny Family Network, *Autism Connection*, *Bender Leadership Academy*, *Bunny Bakes*, *CCAC Disability Services*, *CCAC Vocational Training programs*, *Disability Pride PA*, *DisabilityRights PA*, *Easterseals of Western PA*, *Educ Law Center*, *Evolve Coaching*, *Family Links*, *Friendship Circle*, *Giant Eagle*, *Goodwill Industries*, *L.A.M.P*, *Life'sWork of Western PA*, *Mental Health of America*, *NAMI*, *Mercyhurst University*, *Office of Developmental Supports*, *OVR*, *PEAL Center*, *Robert Morris Univ*, *Special Olympics*, *Spectrum Fudge*, *Steamfitters*, *TechOWL*, *Three Rivers Rowing Adaptive Programs*, *UPMC Disabilities Resource Center*, *VisAbility*, *Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI)* and many more!

Feedback from this event was positive and we hope to participate again next year!

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

Start On Success

School: Westinghouse
Teacher: Kayleigh Gaborek

Program Achievements

This was a great year for transition programming at Westinghouse!

- **6 students** participated in paid work SOS (Start on Success) internships.
- **6 students** (11th-12th grade) participated in a PWE (Paid Work Experience) at CVS through Bender Leadership Academy and OVR.
- **9 students** (11th-12th grade) learned to travel independently using PRT (Pittsburgh Regional Transit).
- **10 students** (11th-12th grade) participated in Disability Mentoring Day.
 - Got to meet Ed Gainey, the first black mayor of Pittsburgh!
- **14 students** (11th-12th grade) participated in the Giant Eagle Young Leaders Academy.
 - Included job shadowing experience.
- **12 students** (11th-12th grade) participated in the Bender Leadership Academy Student Leaders program.
- **9 students** (10th-11th grade) participated in the Mock Interview Day.
 - The average score was a 24/30.

Field Trips & Workplace Tours

- **3 Field trips to post-secondary options:**
 - The Trade Institute of Pittsburgh
 - Job Corps
 - CCAC Allegheny
 - Rosedale Tech
- **2 workplace tours with the YWCA:**
 - Eaton Electrical
 - Pittsburgh Water Authority

Student Highlights:

- **Scholarship Winner:** A'meir Ladd-Seymore won one of the \$1,000 Linda Dickerson Scholarship awards from Bender Leadership Academy. A'meir will be attending CCAC in the fall for the Cybersecurity and IT Support Specialist AS Program.
- **Cross-Program Collaboration:** Great teamwork between SOS (Start on Success), Autistic Support, and Carpentry CTE (Career and Technical Education).
 - Carpentry students joined SOS on field trips to visit post-secondary options and workplace tours.
 - Autistic support students participated in the Giant Eagle Young Leaders Academy and the Job Corps visit.
- **Growth & Leadership:** All 14 students who participated in the Bender Leadership Academy Student Leaders program practiced their public speaking skills and grew in confidence! The Bender staff said that this was one of the best groups and showed great growth!

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

Student Highlight

Josh Uber, senior at Allderdice High School, has participated in Early Childhood CTE program at Uprep since 10th grade. Through his participation in the program, he has earned certifications in AED Essentials, First Aid, Infant and Child CPR, Mandatory Reporting, and OSHA. He has also had an opportunity to participate in shadow days and work experiences at local childcare centers. As a senior, Josh has applied and been accepted to Carlow University to study Early Childhood Education with the career goal of being an elementary school teacher.



School: Allderdice
By Transition Counselor: Maggie Ionadi

Travel Instruction

Travel training provides students aged 14 to 21 with disabilities with the opportunity to gain the skills to travel independently. A student may need to learn a walking route, or a route using one or multiple modes of public transportation. This year, students worked hard and focused on street crossing and learning their specific route. Some of our students added new routes to their already regularly traveled ones. Each route contributing to their independence and opportunities. Students learned how to use transportation apps. As Pittsburgh Regional Transit continues to make many changes in an effort to improve the public transit system, students are able to check their routes for delays or detours using the apps.

Program: Travel Instruction
Program Coordinator: Sarah Kaminski

CBVE Student Highlight

Ciera Darby, a 12th-grade student at Perry High School, has truly made a lasting impression during her CBVE placement this year at Dormont Eat'n Park. Ciera's responsibilities go far beyond bussing tables. She warmly greets every guest who walks through the door, often opening the door for elderly customers and making them feel welcome. When guests are seated, she thoughtfully brings silverware and extra napkins to ensure they have everything they need. Ciera also takes initiative behind the scenes. She cleans booths in sections of the restaurant before they open, prepares jelly caddies for the next day, fills the ice, and even assists with icing and individually wrapping Eat'n Park's signature "Smiley" cookies. Her positive attitude, strong work ethic, and willingness to help wherever needed make her an invaluable member of the team. Ciera's friendliness and dedication shine through in everything she does.

Ciera is truly a superstar!

Program: Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)
Program Coordinator: Louise Alfer

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

PSE's CBVE Program: Preparing Students for Life Beyond Graduation

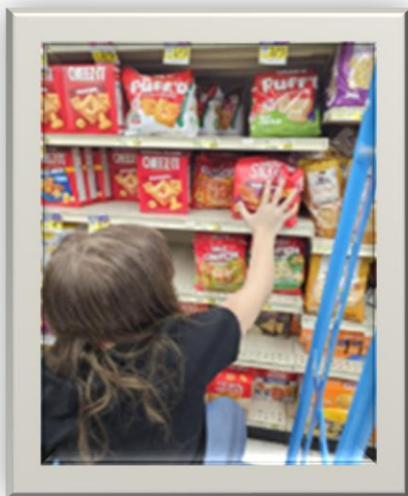
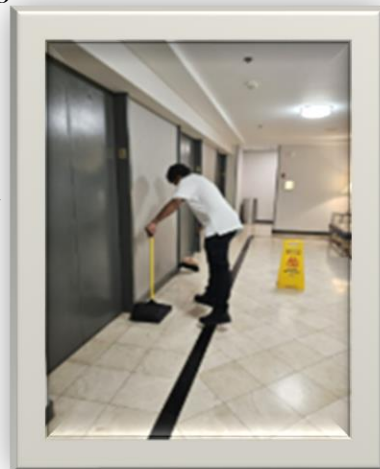
At PSE, our Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE) Program is designed to give students meaningful, real-world experiences that build the foundation for future success. With a strong focus on vocational exploration, the CBVE Program provides students with the opportunity to develop essential job skills while working in local businesses and community organizations.

During the 2025–2026 school year, our students participated in hands-on training at a wide range of community job sites. These sites included popular local establishments such as Eat'n Park (three locations), Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Main Branch, UPMC Mercy Hospital, Northland Library, The Wyndham Hotel, Farmer Girl EB, Hamilton and Eastminster Presbyterian Churches, Happy Day Dessert Factory, Light of Life Donation Center, Thriftique, Seton Center Preschool, Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP), Kuhn's Supermarket, Shop 'n Save (Mt. Washington), Mt. Washington Senior Center, The Dog Stop, and PPS Food Service (CAPA, Brashear and Allderdice).

At each site, students work closely with a dedicated Job Coach and collaborate with their peers to build both vocational and social skills. Training shifts typically last between two and three hours, allowing students to gain consistent, structured experiences in a supportive environment. Through these placements, students learn important workplace behaviors such as communication, teamwork, time management, and task completion. The CBVE Program is more than just job training—it is an opportunity for students to build confidence, independence, and a sense of purpose. By engaging with community partners and participating in authentic work experiences, students are better prepared for the transition from school to adulthood.

We are proud of the growth our students have demonstrated and grateful to our community partners for providing these valuable opportunities. Together, we are helping students develop the skills they need to succeed in life beyond graduation.

Program: Community-Based Vocational Education (CBVE)
Program Coordinator: Louise Alfer



Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

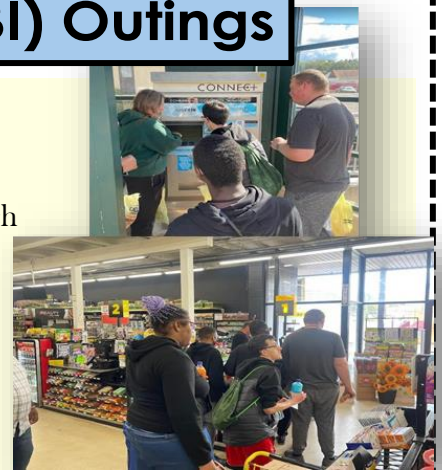
CITY Connections

From the
perspective of
the students

Community Based Instruction (CBI) Outings

In October, we visited the Crafton Library and the Family Dollar across the street. At the G2 bus station, we had to check the balance on our bus passes. We have to check the balances to make sure we have enough money for each month. After going to the Crafton Library, we walked across the street to Dollar General. We each purchased a snack. It took so long at Dollar General, we missed our G2 bus and had to take the 28X into Sheraden.

By: Cole



We also went Uptown and visited Brother's Andre Coffee Shop. This was a very nice coffee shop that supports individuals with disabilities. To get there we had to take the 26 into town and then get on the T red line going towards uptown. We got off at Steel Plaza and walked up towards the PPG Paints Arena. The coffee shop is located in the lower level of the church next to the arena. We would recommend going and supporting this coffee shop. It's a great place to meet a friend for coffee.

By: Bryant and Sasha

Work Skills

We gained work skills by stapling Sarris order forms with the candy flyer. We completed this task for a local elementary school fundraiser. As a reward for helping, we were given a candy treat!

By: CITY Connections



Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

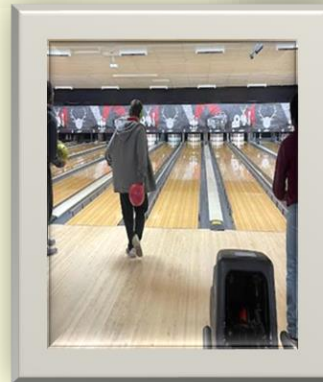
Work Skills

We continue to volunteer at **Fabled Table** every Thursday. Even though it's hard work, it's one of our favorite places to go!



Social Skills

Bowling at Bowlero on Noblestown Road to work. It helps to work on social skills!



Independent Living Skills

At CITY Connections, we continue to work on our cleaning and cooking skills. On this particular day, Cole worked on wiping down all the kitchen cabinets. Andrew learned to make grilled cheese for lunch and Bryant and Andrew worked together to cook the sandwiches.



Our CITY Connections West 1 & 2 sites teamed up with Ms. Melissa from Power Up We made applesauce from scratch. We had to wash and cut the apples into the smallest pieces as we can. After we put it all inside a bowl with vanilla, cinnamon and brown sugar. We put it all in the pot until it cooked. While we waited, we all completed a survey for Ms. Melissa. After it was done cooking, we blended the apples. Some of us thought it was delicious, and others did not.

Annual Spotlighting: Transition Services (Continued)

Disability Mentoring Day

For Disability Mentoring Day in October, we went to the Pittsburgh CLO. They talked to us about the different jobs that they have at the CLO such as Acting, Costumes, Stage Crew and Financing Plays. They also gave us a tour of the whole place. At the end we got a gift bag that had t-shirt, frisbee, and water bottle. We had a wonderful time! We also went to the Greer Cabaret Theater for a tour and had lunch



Transition Resources

New to Transition? Check out [Transition 101!](https://www.pasecondarytransition.com/practice) PA Secondary Transition Events Calendar
<https://www.pasecondarytransition.com/practice> Check out <https://www.pasecondarytransition.com/events> to stay up to date on all events related to secondary transition

National Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C)
NTACT:C provides information, tools, and supports to assist multiple stakeholders to provide effective services and instruction for students and out-of-school youth with disabilities. Check out their [Training Resource Library](#).

SAVE THE DATE

Bridging Knowledge to Know-How: Empowering Educators and Partners Conference
Bridging Knowledge to Know-How: Empowering Educators and Partners offers conference attendees a broad, inclusive platform to learn from presenters as they share their expertise and innovative practices. This conference was built from the strengths of the HELIX, National Autism, and Secondary Transition conferences.

Location: The Lancaster County Convention Center
25 S Queen St, Lancaster, PA 17603
[Download and share our flyer](#)
[PaTTAN - Bridging Knowledge to Know-How: Empowering Educators and Partners, August 4-7, 2026](#)
Virtual and In-Person Opportunities Available

For more information on transition services within the Pittsburgh Public Schools, please contact:

Crystal Evans
Transition Coordinator
(412) 529-3143 | cevens1@pghschools.org



A Note from Dr. Bresnahan & the School Psychologists:



Summer break gives kids and parents a break from school routines, but it also removes structure. That shift can feel freeing, but it often creates new challenges like boredom, childcare juggling, work-family balance, and stress around transitions like summer camp. Kids may struggle with less routine, fewer social interactions, and emotional regulation. A bit of structure helps: simple daily routines, planned activities, social time, and check-ins about feelings can make summer smoother.

Helpful resources:

💡 Summer can affect kids' social-emotional skills, but routine and enrichment help reduce that impact. Harvard Graduate School of Education – <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/whats-new/summer-sel-slide>

💡 Practical tips for supporting kids' mental health during summer (routine, coping skills, structure). Texas Psychology Center – Summer Mental Health Strategies
<https://www.texaspsychologycenter.com/keeping-kids-cool-navigating-mental-health-on-summer-break>

💡 How workplace flexibility and childcare support can reduce parent stress during school breaks. Bright Horizons – Workplace Family Support
<https://investors.brighthorizons.com/node/15311/pdf>

💡 Book on children's separation, independence, and camp adjustment experiences. Homesick and Happy – Michael Thompson
<https://michaelthompson-phd.com/books/homesick-and-happy/>



Parents as Coaches
Sessions will
return in the fall!