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For Immediate Release

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Pittsburgh Public Schools Highlights Readiness for 2026–2027 School Year

District Enters Final Stretch of Preparations Ahead of August 24 First Day of School

PITTSBURGH, PA August 18, 2026 — As Pittsburgh Public Schools teachers return to classrooms today, the District is entering the final stretch of preparations to welcome students for the first day of the 2026–2027 school year on Monday, August 24. Superintendent Dr. Wayne N. Walters and members of the District’s leadership team recently presented a comprehensive Back-to-School Readiness Report to the Board of Directors, outlining the work underway across the District to ensure schools, staff and systems are ready for Day One.

The report highlighted months of coordinated work across academics, staffing, transportation, technology, facilities, school safety and student supports. With teachers now back in buildings, teams across the District are using the remaining days before students return to complete final preparations and ensure families have the information and resources they need for a successful start to the school year.

“Successful school openings don’t happen by chance. They require months of planning, collaboration, coordination and problem-solving across every department in this organization,” said Superintendent Walters. “Our teams have worked throughout the summer to prepare our schools, strengthen our systems and address the details necessary to welcome students into safe, supportive and engaging learning environments on the first day of school.”

District Prepared for August 24

Among the readiness updates shared with the Board:

- **Teaching and Learning:** New and updated instructional resources are in place across multiple content areas, including Open Court Reading materials for grades K–5, MyPerspectives resources for grades 6–12, a new AP Pre-Calculus curriculum and K–5 STEAM Curriculum Unit Maps. Rising Voices classroom libraries, featuring culturally relevant texts that honor the richness of Black stories, have also been implemented in every K–3 classroom.
- **Professional Learning:** More than 400 PPS educators participated in the 2026 Summer Leadership Academy, focused on strengthening leadership practices, instructional systems and equitable student outcomes. School leaders also participated in instructional readiness sessions to prepare for curriculum implementation and instructional expectations.
- **Student Devices:** Every student will have access to a District-issued device on the first day of school. Devices requiring repairs have been returned to schools, with additional devices provided to accommodate late enrollment.



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- **Family Access to Information:** The Home Access Center (HAC) has been expanded to serve as a one-stop student portal for families. Families can access report cards from both the current and previous school year, transportation information, grades, attendance and other student information, as well as complete required Back-to-School Forms. Student schedules will be available beginning August 21.
- **Transportation:** Transportation planning remains on schedule, with no changes to school start or dismissal times for 2026–2027. Transportation information has been distributed to families by email and made available through HAC. StopFinder real-time bus tracking is also expanding to all First Student buses.
- **Electronic Devices:** While 45 schools already collected student cell phones, all schools have refined their procedures for personal electronic devices in alignment with Board Policy 216 and its accompanying administrative regulation. Schools will communicate specific procedures for collecting, storing and returning student cell phones to families before the first day of school. The District's goal is to increase student engagement, minimize distractions and maximize instructional time.
- **School Safety:** All staff will receive in-person training on the District's Standard Response Protocol before students return. The protocol establishes consistent language and procedures for five emergency actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. PPS will also continue using the Raptor Visitor Management system in every school.
- **Facilities and Maintenance:** The District is managing 116 active contracts across 60 separate design, construction and professional-service projects. Recent work includes flooring, roofing, lighting, emergency generators, security improvements and other infrastructure upgrades. Maintenance managed more than 20,000 routine, urgent and emergency work orders between July 2025 and July 2026.
- **Staffing:** As of August 7, PPS has filled 70 percent of identified vacancies, with Human Resources and school leaders continuing recruitment, hiring and employee clearance efforts ahead of opening day.
- **Student Supports:** The District is expanding Bridges Academy's emotional support satellite model that serves students in kindergarten through grade 12. PPS is also launching Pathfinder, an internally developed student engagement and intervention platform that will help counselors, social workers and school leaders coordinate and monitor student supports.
- **Middle School Belonging:** The Ron Clark Academy House System will expand to the District's remaining middle schools during the 2026–2027 school year, creating a consistent culture framework focused on belonging, relationships, student leadership and school pride.

Connecting Families with Back-to-School Resources

The District is expanding efforts to ensure families are informed and connected before and throughout the school year.

The District's [Back-to-School webpage](#) has been updated to provide families with one centralized location for the District calendar, Home Access Center resources, enrollment and Find My School tools, Future-Ready Facilities Plan information, District news and other resources families need throughout the opening of schools.

PPS is also launching its inaugural **Parent Ambassador Program**, with parents representing schools across the District serving as trusted connectors between families and PPS. Parent Ambassadors will help families navigate District resources, share important information, encourage



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participation in school activities and strengthen relationships within their school communities. They will also support family engagement throughout implementation of the Future-Ready Facilities Plan.

PPS is also increasing the visibility of the community organizations and businesses that support District schools. Beginning this school year, **Proud PPS Partner** decals will appear at businesses and organizations across the city, identifying them as partners committed to supporting Pittsburgh Public Schools and its students. School Adoption Partners will also be featured on their partner school's website, making it easier for families and community members to see the organizations investing in their school communities.

Future-Ready Implementation Moving Forward

While the Back-to-School Readiness presentation focused primarily on preparations for the upcoming school year, Superintendent Walters also provided the Board with an update on early implementation activities connected to the Board-approved Future-Ready Facilities Plan.

Work underway includes school-based inventories of textbooks and curriculum materials, development of educational specifications for future instructional spaces, preparation of Community Schools staff to support families experiencing transitions, training of Parent Ambassadors and continued expansion of family communication tools.

The District's [Find My School](#) tool has been updated so families can view both their current school assignment and their assignment beginning with the 2027–2028 school year. Following the start of school, all PPS families will receive a postcard directing them to the tool. Once enrollment for the 2026–2027 school year is finalized, families whose school assignments will change under the Future-Ready Facilities Plan will receive personalized communications with information specific to their transition.

Facilities planning is also advancing. A feasibility study for the Northview site is expected by the end of August and will help inform options related to renovation or rebuilding. The study will help inform the development of an appropriate project timeline. The District has also identified locations for early childhood classrooms to meet regional needs and support key implementation timelines.

The District is working collaboratively with the Board to establish a quarterly reporting process to track Future-Ready implementation, measure progress toward key milestones, identify challenges and next steps, and keep the Board and community informed. Formal updates are planned for **November 2026, February 2027, April 2027 and June 2027.**

“Our immediate focus remains clear: opening our schools successfully and ensuring that every student who walks through our doors feels welcomed, supported and ready to learn,” Walters said. “Together, we are laying the foundation not only for a successful 2026–2027 school year, but for the long-term transformation of Pittsburgh Public Schools in ways that expand opportunities and improve outcomes for every student.”

The first day of school for all students, except Kindergarten, is **Monday, August 24, 2026**. The first day of Kindergarten is Thursday, August 27, 2026.

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