



INSIDE THIS EDITION

Promise fulfilled
Sarah Walsh of Pittsburgh Brashear is among the first class of Pittsburgh Promise recipients.
Pages 10-11




Prepping for the future

University Prep makes student success its first priority

By MEAGHAN CASEY

In a school where every classroom is named for a particular college or university, pennants line the halls and even the guidance office is known as Academic Hall, the goal is clear: college.

University Prep 6-12, which opened this fall, is the city's first university partnership school. The University of Pittsburgh is collaborating with the District to create a rigorous system of support for students as they advance through their secondary education and prepare to take advantage of the Pittsburgh Promise.

"College, college, college," said Principal Sito Narcisse, emphasizing the school's mission. "There are two major priorities: one, to make going to



Teacher Jennifer Metikosh works with Heuston Foster, left, and China Bratcher at University Prep.

EDUCATOR

Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Directors

William Isler
President

Theresa Colaizzi
First Vice President

Thomas Sumpter
Second Vice President

Heather Arnet
Mark Brentley Sr.
Jean Fink
Sherry Hazuda
Floyd McCrea
Randall Taylor

Published by:

Pittsburgh Public Schools

Mark Roosevelt
Superintendent

Submit story ideas to:

Lynne Turnquist
Public Communications Manager
Pittsburgh Public Schools
341 S. Bellefield Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412-622-3620
lturnquist1@pghboe.net
www.pps.k12.pa.us

Produced by:

GRANT COMMUNICATIONS
CONSULTING GROUP
Boston ♦ New York
781-598-8200
gccc@grantgroup.com

Student achievement comes first in PPS



Mark Roosevelt

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year and our second issue of *The Pittsburgh Educator*. Thank you for the overwhelmingly positive response to this new publication. We appreciate the interest the Pittsburgh community has shown in learning more about our *Excellence for All* initiatives to improve student achievement and establish a culture of high expectations for all.

All of our work supports three objectives: improving student learning at every grade level; creating rigorous academic offerings, including three new schools for students in grades 6 through 12 - International Baccalaureate, Science and Technology, and University Prep 6-12; and dramatically expanding our students' life prospects through The Pittsburgh Promise.

The stories within represent the many good things happening across our District and our shared commitment to becoming one of America's premier school districts.

Student Achievement Gains

I play a little game with people called "Did you know?" I ask them and now ask you: "What

percentage of PPS students would you guess are advanced in reading at eighth grade (advanced meaning ahead of grade level)?"

CHOOSE ONE ANSWER: (A)10% (B)25% (C)12% or (D) nearly 38%?

Few get it right. The answer is (D), nearly 38%, a remarkable number for an urban school district. And it represents dramatic progress, as that number is more than double what it was just four years ago.

Eighth-grade student achievement results at PPS are particularly great. More importantly, our students made substantial academic progress across almost all grades and subjects in 2007-08. Through the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), the Commonwealth measures student achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics at seven grades - 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11, so there are 14 testing points.

In 2007-08, students made remarkable progress in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on 13 of 14 exams. In addition, we saw increases in movement to the highest category — advanced — on 12 of 14 PSSA exams. This movement from proficient to advanced is critical to achieving the District's vision of *Excellence for All*. Our goals and ambitions go beyond compliance with No Child Left Behind, which focuses on moving students to proficiency. *Excellence for All* reflects our belief that all students can achieve

academic excellence.

These gains are a clear indication that children are learning more and school communities are working hard to ensure that students at all levels of achievement get the support they need to have the best opportunity to succeed. I appreciate the positive role everyone has played in promoting high expectations and focusing on student learning, from the Board, teachers, principals and staff to parents, families, the community and most importantly, the students.

The key to sustaining student achievement gains is to constantly examine and deepen our work together.

New Secondary Learning Opportunities

On August 28, 150 ninth-grade students started the new school year at University Prep 6-12 at the Millions facility in the Hill District. By 2012, University Prep will serve grades 6-12. Focused on students acquiring the knowledge, skills and mindsets necessary for post-secondary education, this school represents a ground-breaking partnership between PPS and the University of Pittsburgh. The University is collaborating with the District to create a rigorous support system for students as they advance through high school. The University's Center for Urban Education staff have offices at University Prep and work closely with our faculty to help each student achieve at high levels. Workshops will help parents

See SUPERINTENDENT Page 18

BOARD VIEW

Members of the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education were asked to share their thoughts in response to the following question:

If a new family asked you, "Why should I send my children to Pittsburgh Public Schools?"--what would you tell them?



HEATHER ARNET, DISTRICT 2

"The Pittsburgh Public School District is committed to achieving *Excellence for All* students. We offer children and families

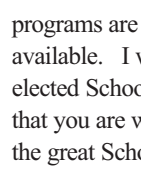
academically rigorous school environments within culturally diverse urban communities. With special focus on the arts, modern languages, and the sciences, PPS is reinvesting and reinvigorating the city of Pittsburgh through a renewed commitment to excellent public education. This commitment, coupled with a new Pittsburgh Promise to provide college tuition assistance to all graduates, provides a powerful and dynamic educational option for all families."



MARK BRENTLEY SR., DISTRICT 8

"I would encourage parents to come to Pittsburgh and send their children to the District, but also ask the parents to do their job prior to signing their children up. One

would be to meet with administration in the District, making sure that there is plenty of opportunity for parental involvement. Diversity is the main emphasis and quality education is a must for all regardless of race. I would encourage those parents to become investigators prior to signing up, and that is investigating what is being printed in the local media and what the District/administration is doing - i.e. printed test scores and what actually occurs and what



THERESA COLAIZZI, DISTRICT 5

"From my own personal experience with the Pittsburgh Public Schools, there's not a better education system out there. More importantly, as a Board member, I intend to keep it that way."



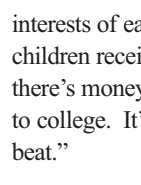
JEAN FINK, DISTRICT 7

"We have programs to meet a wide range of academic needs. All of our teachers are certified and we offer many activities - i.e. sports, band, and a variety of clubs. We also have magnet schools to meet any special interests or talents your child may have. My husband and I attended Pittsburgh city schools as did our six children. I currently have four grandchildren in our schools and I wouldn't want them educated anywhere else."



SHERRY HAZUDA, DISTRICT 6

"I first have to say that my four children were educated by the PPS and have done very well. Our schools offer a wide variety of programs to meet the needs and



WILLIAM ISLER, DISTRICT 4

"There are many reasons for a family to choose the Pittsburgh Public Schools. For a family with young children the most important reason to choose PPS is

our comprehensive PreK program. All classrooms, regardless of funding source, are meeting the highest quality standards. The District has a statewide reputation for excellence, based on research and proven results. Longitudinal studies have detailed how important the first five years of a child's life are to future educational and career success. Pittsburgh Public Schools considers parents primary partners in the education of their children. By choosing our public schools, parents have an exceptional opportunity to support their children in the critically important early learning years."



FLOYD MCCREA, DISTRICT 9

"We have the best educational choices in the tri-state area."



THOMAS SUMPTER, DISTRICT 3

"There are great opportunities in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. We are committed to the following: 1) maximizing individual student achievement; 2) providing a safe

learning environment; 3) supporting all students and employees efficiently and effectively; 4) distributing resources equitably to address student needs; and 5) encouraging strong parent and community engagement. A child's successful future is in the Pittsburgh Public Schools."



RANDALL TAYLOR, DISTRICT 1

"I would send my child to the Pittsburgh Public Schools because it offers academic excellence, educational choices, unique resources and

opportunities, and diversity. I believe any educational aspiration can or will be met. If your child aspires to the greatest universities in the world, a career in the arts, technology or business, your child will, if they work hard, graduate prepared. Pittsburgh Public Schools alumni include CEOs, Academy Award-winning directors, Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, great diplomats, Hall of Fame athletes, and great political leaders. I would recommend the Pittsburgh Public Schools because it believes in *Excellence for All*.

A plan for success

Excel.9-12 helps students reach potential

When Superintendent Mark Roosevelt introduced *Excellence for All*, the District's roadmap for improving student achievement, in May 2006, one of the first action steps in the plan was the launch of an initiative to improve the District's high schools. In July 2006, a task force of leaders of secondary and higher education, foundations and businesses, experts in workforce development, parents, and members of the community went to work to evaluate and reinvent Pittsburgh's high schools.

Why the emphasis on high school? Because, as the High School Reform Task Force learned during its research, too many high school-age students were: opting out by choosing to attend non-PPS schools; dropping out at the rate of approximately 35 percent; or zoning out as evidenced by the too-high percentage of students who were not proficient in reading and mathematics.

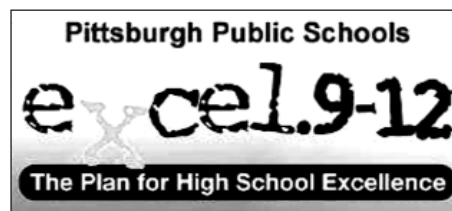
One year later, in April 2007, the task force introduced *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*. The plan was based on what the members discovered as they listened to input from students, parents, staff, and

community
members,
visited high-

performing, urban high schools throughout the country, and met regularly to discuss how their findings could best be applied to improve the experience of every Pittsburgh high school student.

Excel.9-12 is organized around five core principles: safe and welcoming schools; relationships; rigor; student support; and relevance. Year 1 tackled several of these principles simultaneously, focusing on: implementation of the Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS) model, consistent enforcement of the Student Code of Conduct, and training in team-building and student engagement for teachers to lessen disruptions in the classroom and increase learning time; creation of *9th Grade Nation* to offer a smoother transition from eighth to ninth grade, when many students lose interest in learning, and to develop a sense of community through summer orientation and other team-building activities; and introduction of Civics: Be the Change, a project-based, activity-oriented ninth-grade course that takes students to places such as the Sen. John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center and other local cultural organizations to offer real-world examples of how what happens in the classroom is connected to life outside the school doors. This new course is one example of the emphasis on rigor and relevance in courses that are part of the District's core curriculum.

While the efforts in the first year of *Excel.9-12* focused on some of the immediate needs outlined in the multi-year plan, Chief of High School Excellence



Derrick Lopez noted that Year 2 recommendations, announced in October 2007, called for the creation of new learning communities to provide more offerings and options for students and families.

"In the first year, we focused on the foundations of our High School Excellence initiative — coordinating professional development for staff; placing math and literacy coaches in every building; supporting school leaders as instructional leaders; and using data to make decisions about student achievement," Lopez said. "Year 2 will involve implementing plans for our new learning communities."

In August 2008, the first of four new 6-12 learning communities, University Prep 6-12, opened with 150 ninth-graders in the Milliones facility located in the Hill District. In addition to serving students who live within its attendance area as a school of choice, University Prep also accepts students from throughout the City during magnet registration. Beginning in 2009-10, students who attended Pittsburgh Vann and Pittsburgh Miller for grades 6-8 will now be assigned to University Prep for grades 6-12.

Pittsburgh Miller will serve students in PreK-5 and Pittsburgh Vann will become a K-5 school in 2009-10. University Prep will expand to the full 6-12 model by 2011-12.

The school represents a ground-breaking partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, with university staff working directly with students and staff to create a support system for students as they move through their high school years. Advantages of the 6-12 model include one transition for students; deeper relationships with faculty and staff; more accountability for schools and teachers; resource sharing between middle schools and high schools; and continuity of programming over an extended period.

The Science and Technology Academy, a full school magnet serving grades 6-12 which will be centrally located at the Frick facility in Oakland, is on schedule to open for the 2009-10 school year. This new school is designed for any student with an interest in science, technology, engineering, or math to develop skills for a career in life science, environmental science, computing, or engineering.

The expanded International Baccalaureate 6-12 (IB), also opening for 2009-10, will be housed at the Reizenstein facility in Shadyside for three years until a permanent home is identified and prepared. The school utilizes the world-renowned IB Middle Years and Diploma programmes for students in pursuit of the rigorous IB Diploma. Students from Pittsburgh Rogers CAPA 6-8 are scheduled to join Pittsburgh CAPA High School students in the downtown facility in 2009-10, establishing one 6-12 creative and performing arts magnet school.

"We are extremely excited by what this brings — four new, very high-end 6-12 learning communities and significant cost savings to the District," said Roosevelt.

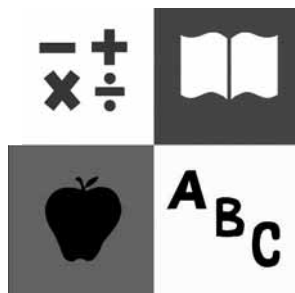
While Year 2 plans are being carried out, Lopez reported that the five-year roadmap for *Excel.9-12* includes engaging the community in conversations about the planning and implementation of additional High School Excellence initiatives.

The first of these conversations occurred in Homewood in October, and the North Side conversation will take place later in the 2008-09 school year. The West End and South Side communities are on the schedule for 2009-10.



Pittsburgh Perry high school students, from left, Keisha Phillips, Coron Howard and Amber Mullen take notes during class.

Student Achievement



Oluwatofunmi Olaore participates in morning ceremony at Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5.



Pittsburgh Public Schools celebrate achievement gains

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

On the right track — that was the theme of the release of Pittsburgh Public Schools 2007–2008 student achievement gains in July.

At a community leadership briefing on July 24, Superintendent Mark Roosevelt highlighted the remarkable progress students made in both reading and mathematics on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams during the 2007-2008 school year. Students advanced in proficiency in both reading and mathematics on 13 of the 14 exams and outpaced the statewide rate of progress in nearly every area.

"There's no doubt that our children are learning more," stated Roosevelt. "We feel

confident that the student achievement data we're getting indicates we're on the right track."

Roosevelt highlighted progress in student achievement on key District priorities over the past three years. One of those goals focuses on increasing the percentage of students proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

"Prior to fourth grade, kids are learning to read and after that, they're reading to learn," said Roosevelt. "So we set a goal — a very high goal — of 80 percent proficiency in this District by the end of next year for third grade reading."

That goal is moving closer to realization. The percentage of students demonstrating proficiency in third grade reading increased by 15.3 percentage points, from 48.7 percent in 2005-06 to 64 percent in 2007-08.

In grade 5, students gained 24 percentage points in math and seven points in reading. Grade 8 scores increased by 27 percentage points in both math and reading and grade 11 scores increased by 13 percentage points in math and five points in reading.

Another one of the District's goals is reducing the number of students performing at the below basic level. This year students showed substantial progress in moving out of below basic on 11 of 14 PSSA exams.

Increases in student achievement bode well for ensuring that students will reap the benefits of The Pittsburgh Promise, Roosevelt said. "We're committed to improving our children's life prospects. This means students need to

dream big, work hard and be 'Promise-ready' so that they can receive Promise scholarships and pursue education beyond high school."

Noting the importance of strong gains in proficiency across all grade levels, Roosevelt also highlighted increases in advanced Reading and Mathematics on 12 of the 14 PSSA exams.

"No Child Left Behind judges us on moving students towards proficiency," he said. "We in Pittsburgh have set our goals broader than that. We want to be serving all of our children, no matter what level they come to us."

Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5 represents one example of the progress being made at the advanced level, with one third of the students reaching advanced in both reading and mathematics.

"At Pittsburgh Dilworth, what is at the heart of our success is the dedicated alliance of teachers, parents, community, students and administration," said Principal Monica Lamar. "Every day, we come to school with teaching and learning as our goal."

Over the past three years, students from Pittsburgh Westinghouse posted the largest increase in 11th-grade reading proficiency, the second-largest increase in mathematics proficiency and the largest reductions in below basic in both subjects.

"My key to preparing our students for college and beyond is simple," said Pittsburgh Westinghouse Principal Dr. Shemeca Crenshaw. "Face it, trace it and we as a

collaborative team can erase it. We carefully analyze all of the boundaries hindering our students and create action plans that are monitored carefully."

Recognizing that parents play an integral role in student success, the District has intensified its efforts to inform and involve families in their child's academic progress and performance. In August, families received individual student reports indicating how their child performed on the 2007-08 PSSA. This year, the District is planning to distribute individual student 4Sight assessment reports on reading and math as another indicator of academic progress. The program was piloted at certain grades last year and will be expanded to all grades this year. Parents also had an opportunity to review and discuss their children's achievement at Parent Teacher Conferences in October.

Roosevelt emphasized that the gains students are making provide evidence that the District's systemic initiatives are taking hold. Over the past two years, the District has put into place the core elements for raising student achievement, including a new rigorous curriculum; a nationally recognized system — Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System of Excellence (PULSE) — to train, support, evaluate and reward principals; aggressive, comprehensive and ongoing professional development for all instructional personnel; the use of diagnostic assessments to get help to students quickly; and instructional coaches in every school to deepen the work.



Westinghouse High School student Therae Crumpton takes notes.

Accelerated learning

Students at ALAs make impressive gains on PSSA exams

By MEAGHAN CASEY

Pittsburgh Arlington PreK-8's motto, "You Can If You Will," challenges every student to reach his or her highest level of performance.

Third-graders at Pittsburgh Arlington responded to that challenge by posting the greatest improvement in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) reading proficiency District-wide. The school was among nine District elementary schools to increase by more than 10 percentage points in that category from last year to this year. The others were Pittsburgh Beechwood PreK-5, Pittsburgh Fulton PreK-5, Pittsburgh King PreK-8, Pittsburgh Manchester PreK-8, Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8, Pittsburgh Vann K-8, Pittsburgh Weil PreK-8 and Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5.

Pittsburgh Arlington is one of eight Accelerated Learning Academies (ALAs). As part of the District's *Excellence for All* plan, the ALAs were created in 2006 to establish high expectations, structured routines and high standards for all students. Their first priority: to increase the number of students achieving at proficient and advanced levels.

"The Accelerated Learning Academies did in fact this year tremendously accelerate student learning," said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt during the release of 2007-08 PSSA achievement gains in July.

Students in ALAs posted increases in proficiency 2.5 times greater than the District overall in reading and 1.4 times greater in mathematics.

"These results confirm that many of the things that are happening in the ALAs are indeed contributing to meeting the goal that the name implies," Roosevelt said.

Dr. Christiana Otuwa, Executive Director of ALAs and Middle Schools, said several aspects of the ALAs set them apart from other schools, including a school day that is 45 minutes longer and a school year that has 10 extra days. ALAs emphasize development of writing skills and the use of specific methods to organize and manage learning.

"Our focus is on how we deliver essential skills using particular formats," Otuwa said, adding that the ALAs have a Writer's Workshop for 45 minutes every day. "We're incorporating reading skills and developing writing skills."



Reading Coach Jennifer Gadd works with fourth-graders Elizabeth Schoenberger and Reginald Davis at Pittsburgh Arlington PreK-8.

ALA students also achieved a 3.1 percentage point gain in advanced reading and a 5.4 percentage point gain in advanced mathematics.

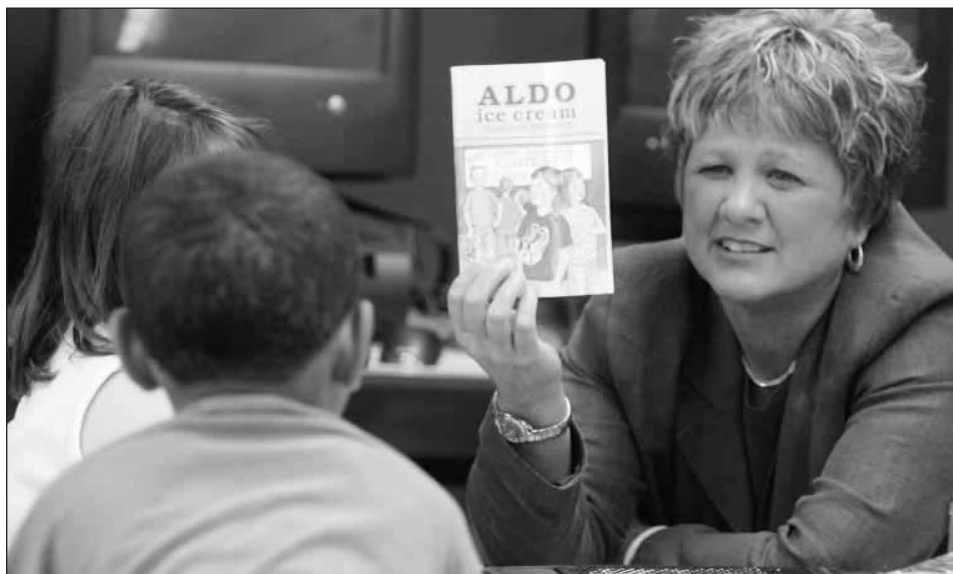
"To have 21 percent of students in our ALAs advanced in mathematics (up from 15.6 percent in 2006-07), is a wonderful achievement worth celebrating," said Roosevelt.

Stressing the limitless potential of every student, Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane praises the progress of the ALAs such as Pittsburgh Arlington and noted that the school's motto encourages students and staff to excel through an effort-based teaching and learning

model.

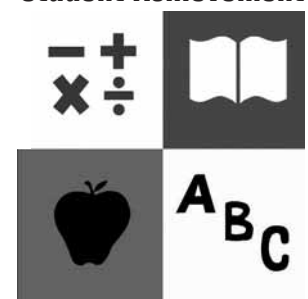
"When you enter the school, students are hard at work, engaged in learning," said Lane. "That's what leads to achievement. It's important to help kids, and adults as well, understand it's about effort. Everyone has the ability to do their best. Their sincere effort can get them where they want to be."

Each ALA uses the America's Choice Design model, which aims to create learning environments that engage students, reduce discipline issues and support differentiated instruction. The ALAs provide for a longer



Pittsburgh Arlington Principal Dr. Cindi Muehlbauer reads with fourth graders.

Student Achievement



school day and year, giving students more time to learn; rigorous coursework and learning expectations for all; a team approach; ongoing professional development; frequent monitoring of individual student progress toward the standards; and a high level of parent and community involvement.

"The greatest strengths of the ALAs are the people there," said Lane. "The structure has been put in place, but it's their hard work that's allowed it to succeed."

"When I first came to Pittsburgh Arlington two years ago, it was with the hope that something great was starting, something that was going to make a difference," said literacy coach Jennifer Gadd. "Yes, we would be the ones that went longer each day and longer each year, but it seemed that we had the furthest to go in the shortest time."

In that short time, Pittsburgh Arlington made record gains.

"In literacy, we found a way to create a K-8 experience, integrating

America's Choice with Macmillan (the District's elementary reading program) and our middle school curriculum," said Gadd. "We regularly look at student work and assessment data. Each teacher has an assessment binder and contributes to our school-wide data wall."

The data walls are designed to assist leadership teams in tracking the progress of all students, while the binders support data analysis and documentation for instructional plans.

"It's all about data," said Lane. "It allows the teachers and coaches to get a true picture of what's happening, and to adjust to that, focusing in on where students have the most need."

Roosevelt echoed Lane's emphasis on the importance of data. "There is no district in the country that has really moved student achievement that does not use formative assessment data to comprehend which students are absorbing the material and which aren't, in order to get help to the kids that aren't," he said.

In year three, the ALAs will continue to build on their success by increasing principal observations and support, thereby deepening classroom connections, and strengthening the work of teachers as learners, as they work together to implement new strategies from workshops.

PPS
ALUMNI
PROFILE

Pittsburgh's rising son

Perry graduate strikes a chord in Japan

By RICH FAHEY

Jerome White, known to his fans as "Jero", released a single that rose to No. 4 on the pop music charts in Japan.

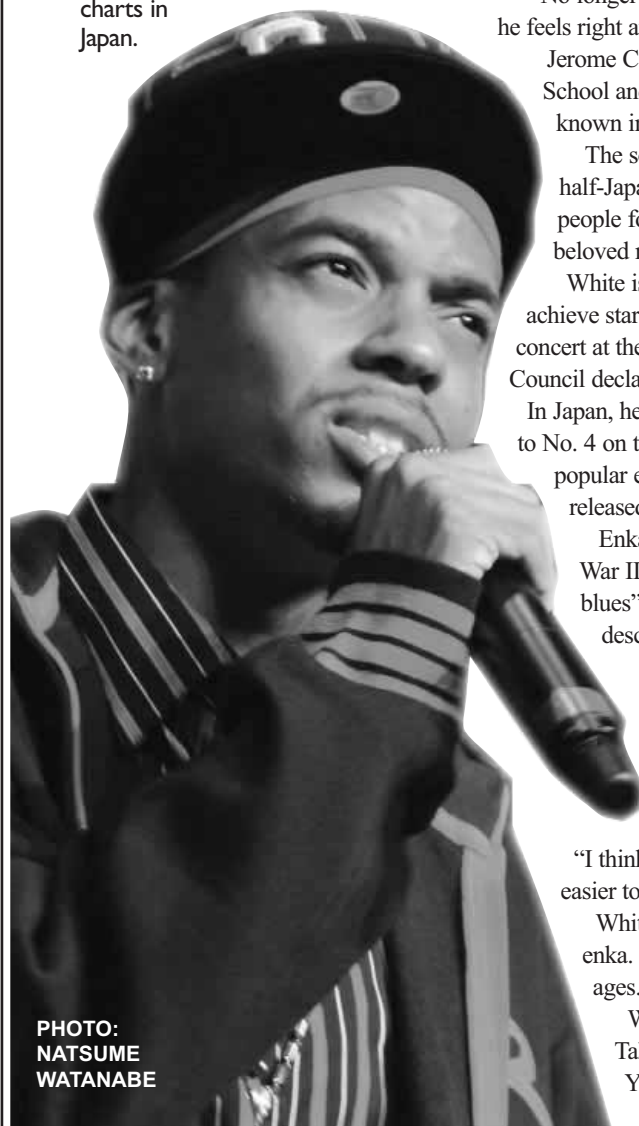


PHOTO:
NATSUME
WATANABE

No longer is he a stranger in a strange land. Indeed, in many ways, he feels right at home.

Jerome C. White Jr., 27, a 1999 graduate of Pittsburgh Perry High School and a 2003 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, is known in Japan simply as "Jero."

The son of an African-American father and a mother who is half-Japanese, White has been warmly embraced by the Japanese people for helping to revive — and changing the face of — a beloved musical tradition known as enka.

White is the first major enka star to come from outside Japan and achieve stardom. In August, he returned home to perform a free concert at the University of Pittsburgh and have the Pittsburgh City Council declare Aug. 27 a day in his honor.

In Japan, he has already released a hit single, "Umiyuki," which rose to No. 4 on the pop music charts, and a mini-CD of his versions of popular enka songs, with an original full-length CD set to be released early next year.

Enka was originally popularly sung and recorded after World War II, a form of music often simply termed the "Japanese blues" — mournful songs telling of lost or unrequited love — but described by others as schmaltzy ballads.

Its popularity had waned in recent years, but White has been credited with helping to revitalize it by updating it with a new fusion of rap and hip-hop. He also stands apart by wearing hip-hop clothing and not the traditional kimono while performing enka, which many say is part of his appeal.

"I think my arrangement of the music maybe has made it a little easier to listen to," he said in a telephone interview from Tokyo.

White is on a mission to get younger Japanese to embrace enka. He has already struck a chord with Japanese women of all ages.

White grew up listening to the enka records owned by Takiki, his maternal grandmother, who was originally from Yokohama, where she met his African-American

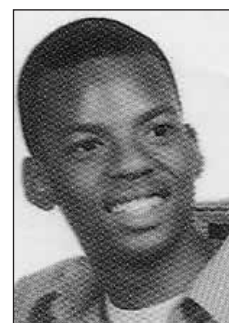
grandfather during his military service. He learned about his Japanese heritage at an early age.

"Both my mother and grandmother spoke Japanese at home and also introduced me to some Japanese customs and food," said White.

Isabel Espino de Valdivia, who taught White Japanese for four years in the gifted program at Pittsburgh Perry, said that at first she had no clue about his background. "He was very shy at first," said de Valdivia, who has been teaching Japanese and Spanish in the Pittsburgh schools since 1990. "Then I found out he had all these CDs at home with enka singers."

Japanese is among the world's most difficult languages, with three different alphabets. De Valdivia said White excelled at both speaking and writing the language. She said she is not surprised at White's success in Japan.

"Many young Japanese have a fascination with the hip-hop culture and Jerome gave a new twist to enka," said de Valdivia, who still teaches three sections of Japanese as well as Spanish classes in the Pittsburgh schools and is based at Pittsburgh Alderdice High School.



Jerome "Jero" White's 1999 Pittsburgh Perry High School yearbook photo.

When he was 15, White attended a Japanese Festival in New York City which included a Japanese speech contest. He won the contest and spent two weeks in Japan. Later, while a student at Pitt, he spent three months in Osaka as an exchange student.

After graduating from Pitt in 2003, he taught for an English school in Wakayama, a satellite city of Osaka. There he met someone from NHK, the national broadcasting company, who told him about an amateur singing contest. After auditioning, he was selected to compete on the show.

"I was extremely nervous," he recalled. "It was my first time singing in front of a group of people and it was televised."

He later signed with Victor Entertainment, moved to Tokyo and studied voice for two years while working as a computer engineer before beginning his singing career, which he now does full-time.

Student learning continues after the bell rings

By MEAGHAN CASEY

Learning shouldn't stop when the final bell rings. That's the message the Pittsburgh Public Schools hopes to reinforce through two of its after-school tutoring programs.

The federally funded Supplemental Education Services (SES) tutoring program is available, at no charge, to high school students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches and who attend schools that have not attained Adequate Yearly Progress for three or more years. Qualifying schools this year include Pittsburgh Brashear, Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Langley, Pittsburgh Oliver, Pittsburgh Peabody, Pittsburgh Perry, Pittsburgh Schenley and Pittsburgh Westinghouse. All students at Pittsburgh Oliver, Pittsburgh Peabody and Pittsburgh Westinghouse are eligible for SES, due to the fact that there are enough students at those schools eligible for free or reduced lunch to warrant the entire building being eligible.

Students at all achievement levels are eligible

to take advantage of SES, and tutors work closely with teachers to match what is taking place in the classroom. The goal is to accelerate achievement gains among participating students.

"It's important to emphasize that kids can be proficient or advanced and still enroll," said Lawrence Hubbard, Director of the Office of Funding and Compliance. "We want every child to do his or her very best and we want to prepare them for the Pittsburgh Promise. We want them to see the long-range goals."

"It's not a homework support program," said Tamiya Larkin, funding and compliance coordinator for Pittsburgh Public Schools. "The purpose is to build skills in math and reading. We want the text to resonate with students, and for them to really take in the information."

SES first became available during the 2005-06 school year. State-approved providers offer the tutoring sessions at the schools or at their own locations, after school and/or on Saturdays.

Transportation is not provided. Students who are

eligible to receive the services receive a letter and application in the mail, along with a list of providers. Parents had the opportunity to meet with providers at back-to-school nights and at Open House on Oct. 20. A provider fair was held Oct. 4 and providers will also be present at Pittsburgh Promise nights (see page 9).

This year, there are 17 providers ranging from for-profit corporations to non-profit or faith-based organizations. On average, they offer services from November through June. Providers are paid by the District out of Title 1 funds.

The District's second after-school offering is the Educational Assistance Program (EAP), a state-funded, extended-day program. Eligibility for EAP is not based on income but on proficiency levels. All students in K-12 who score below proficient in reading and math on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams can enroll. Students who score below proficient on the 4Sight exam are also eligible. Last year, about 6,000 students

participated.

Each school hires teachers, instructional paraprofessionals and tutors. Tutors are high school seniors, college students or community members. The curriculum mirrors what is being taught in the classroom.

"The idea is to help move kids who score 'basic' or 'below basic' to proficient," Larkin said.

EAP is available from October through May. On average, EAP is offered 2-3 days per week for 1-2 hours, depending on which school the student attends. Schools have the option of offering EAP before, during or after school. Schools are mandated by the state to record a minimum of 45 hours for reading and 45 hours for math by May 15, 2009, when the program ends.

Students are able to enroll in either program through the end of the first semester. Call the Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920 for more information about SES and EAP.



Cheryl Childs works with Jaivaunn Harrison in her first grade reading class at Pittsburgh Manchester PreK-8.

Thinking positive

PBIS helps create a safe work environment for students

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

“Keep our schools safe. Set a positive example. Be respectful and considerate of one another.”

These are three of the expectations contained in The Pittsburgh Pledge, and they give voice to the District’s commitment to creating safe and orderly environments so that children are given every possible opportunity to succeed.

One tool being used in a group of District schools to improve student behavior and build positive school climates is the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. As a proactive method of addressing student behavior, PBIS is grounded in the idea of teaching expected behaviors and negates the philosophy of waiting until a problem occurs to intervene.

“There’s a huge emphasis on prevention,” said Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr, associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh and leader of a technical assistance team for the implementation of PBIS in Pittsburgh Public Schools. “It reverses the reactive model. We don’t want to wait for a student to act up. We want to prevent that behavior in the first place. The goal is to create

“

The goal is to create welcoming, safe environments to do academic work.

Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr
University of Pittsburgh

welcoming, safe environments to do academic work.”

More than 5,000 schools across the U.S. have enacted the PBIS model. Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane understands the value of PBIS, through both research and experience. Lane completed her doctoral thesis on disproportionate rates of suspension among African-American males in the Des Moines Public Schools. She examined how PBIS, which was in place in a number of Des Moines schools, was impacting student behavior.

“In Des Moines, I was looking at students who were routinely suspended – 20 or more days in a school year,” said Lane. “Obviously in those cases, suspension wasn’t working. Dealing with behavioral

issues up front, for most kids, is the best way to make an impact.”

Kerr agreed. “The PBIS model is based on decades of research, revealing that the punishment-only approaches just don’t work,” she said.

“It also fosters parent relations,” added Lane. “If we’re preventing the disciplinary actions, it’s much easier to gain parent support and work with them towards a common goal.”

Additionally, the need for less disciplining leads to more learning time in class.

“We want to reduce behaviors that are disruptive to the learning process,” said Kerr. “Some reports show that school administrators can recoup up to 40 hours of time otherwise spent dealing with office referrals.”

The District introduced PBIS in 11 K-8 schools in January of 2007. University Prep 6-12 will pilot a high school version of the program this year. PBIS is coordinated through a three-way partnership among the schools, the University of Pittsburgh and the Watson Institute.

“We have to teach kids the appropriate behavior for appropriate settings,” said Lane. “Practicing with a model, and reinforcing that model is essential.”

A job “Whale Done” at Pittsburgh Schaeffer

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

At Pittsburgh Schaeffer K-8 Primary Campus, inflatable whales adorn the ceilings and miniature ones sit on students’ desks. Banners remind students and staff to “have a whale of a day” and individuals gesture to one another in swimming motion.

These are not the visible signs of a marine-themed school. Instead, they are the result of a program developed by Principal Cynthia Zurchin and the Pittsburgh Schaeffer staff based on Kenneth Blanchard’s book “Whale Done!: The Power of Positive Relationships.”

In the book, Blanchard and SeaWorld trainers Thad Lacinak and Chuck Tompkins share the techniques used to train killer whales, which can be easily translated to the classroom or workplace. The secret is to build trust; accentuate the positive; and when mistakes occur, redirect the energy.

“If you were a trainer, how would you train a killer whale?” asked Zurchin. “You’d only punish them if you want to be a short-lived trainer. The same is true with children. When babies are learning to walk, you don’t criticize them when they fall. You praise them when they take their first steps.”

By focusing on what’s right, “Whale Done!” is designed to teach people how to improve their relationships in order to become more productive and to achieve better results.

Visually, banners and whales reinforce the program’s themes. During morning assemblies, staff and students recognize one another with “whale dones.” Zurchin reads all of the submitted “whale dones” and nominators make a gesture with their hands, similar to that of a whale swimming. Teachers also distribute stickers, certificates and stuffed animals (whales, of course) to recognize positive behavior.

“Watching the kids’ smiles and their pride, it’s really paid off,” said Zurchin. “They just want to work so hard.”

Since implementing “Whale Done!” one year ago, Pittsburgh Schaeffer has reduced the overall suspension rate by 30 percent. Zurchin said tardiness has also dropped, which she attributes to the popularity of the morning recognition ceremony. With minimal distractions, the overall focus in the classrooms has improved.

“We want to build a successful culture of learning,” said Zurchin. “It’s working. The community is ecstatically happy. Now we want to work with the families and be able to move this approach into homes.”



Student Aiden Cavanaugh demonstrates a “whale done” swimming gesture during morning assembly.



The Science and Technology Academy design team, from left, Dan Lentz (principal), Stacey Pharrams (project assistant), Stephen Pellathy (curriculum coordinator) and Sam Franklin (project director) enjoyed a tour of U.S. Steel's Edgar Thomson plant. The team has been working with U.S. Steel and other companies to take advantage of their expertise in the development and design of the new school.

Magnetic mantra

New Science and Technology Academy preparing for August 2009 opening

BY GRETCHEN WEBER

Dream. Discover. Design.

That's the mantra of the Science and Technology Academy, a new magnet school designed to inspire tomorrow's scientists by integrating these three concepts into every step of the learning process. The school will open for classes in the fall of 2009 for grades 6-9, and will add a grade each year for the following three years. All students with a passion for science, technology, engineering or math are encouraged to apply for this unique opportunity.

The Science and Technology Academy's curriculum takes the term "active learning" to a new level. Classes will be student-centered and hands-on, so that students actually become scientists and engineers, rather than just learning about them. And at a time when the United States is falling behind other nations in science education, the school's innovative approach to proactive learning and problem solving may prove to be a vital model for future schools.

"The purpose of the school is to provide opportunities every day, in every classroom, to dream, discover, and design because those are the fundamental skills of successful scientists and engineers," said Sam Franklin, who directs the project, and who first imagined the Science and Technology Academy as a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School.

"Our vision is to make the Science and Technology Academy more than a school.



"The purpose of the school is to provide opportunities every day, in every classroom, to dream, discover, and design because those are the fundamental skills of successful scientists and engineers."

Sam Franklin, Project Director

We want to be a launching pad for ideas, for the architects of future technologies, and for success for every student."

Students will learn to "dream" by generating ideas, setting goals, planning, and learning to mark progress. They will "discover" by learning how to research and find answers, and they will "design" every time they solve a problem with a creative solution. In a senior course called the Executive Experience, students will apply their dreaming, discovering, and designing skills as they work with area businesses, laboratories, and organizations to solve real problems in the science and engineering fields.

"The opportunity this school is going to provide will be amazing," said Principal Dan Lentz. "We are embracing a true 21st century model of instruction where the role of the teacher is changed to that of facilitator. This way, the students are the ones doing most of the work."

In the ninth grade, students will choose

one of four concentrations: Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, or Computer Sciences. Within each concentration, students will take a series of in-depth, hands-on classes that explore different aspects of their chosen subject. Instead of a year-long biology or chemistry course, students will learn science and its real-world applications through a series of project-based classes with titles such as Chemical Analysis, Electrical Design, Genomics, and Prototyping.

The Science and Technology Academy is dedicated to giving students the support they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond. There will be time during the day for students to work on independent projects and to seek academic support from teachers. All seniors will take a post-secondary preparation course, which allows students to apply to college and identify job opportunities and training programs with the help of a teacher. All students in grades 9-12 will have a laptop, and all grade 6-8 classrooms will have laptops for students to use while they are in school.

When it opens next fall in the centrally located Frick building in Oakland, the Science and Technology Academy will be the product of three years of planning, collaboration and research by the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School and members of the community.

For more information, visit the school's Web site: www.pghscitech.net.

How to apply to a magnet school

Applying to a magnet program is easier this year thanks to a few simple changes. In the second week of October, booklets detailing the application process were mailed out to all Pittsburgh households with students currently in PreK-8.

One major change to the process this year is that applications will not be accepted at school sites and should be mailed to the magnet office at the address shown below. The *Guide to Offerings and Options in the Pittsburgh Public Schools* will contain the application form and a return mailing envelope, as well as a list of open houses being held at many schools across the city throughout November. Applications also may be completed and submitted at the Magnet Fair scheduled for Nov. 1 at Pittsburgh Frick or dropped off in person at the magnet office on the fourth floor of the Board of Education Administration Building.

Another change in the process allows students to apply to more than one magnet program by indicating their top three choices on the application form.

In the past, students currently enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools were required to provide proof of residency when their applications were submitted. Beginning this year, only students new to the District will be asked to provide this documentation with the application.

Applications are due in the Magnet Office, Pittsburgh Public Schools, 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, no later than 5 p.m. on Dec. 12. (Applications for CAPA 6-12 are due by 5 p.m. on November 21). Lotteries will be conducted, with all included preferences, on December 17. Letters will be mailed promptly to inform parents and families of their child's acceptance or waiting list position. The Science and Technology Academy lottery will be slightly different, and information about this lottery can be found at www.pghscitech.net.

Parents and families who need additional applications may pick them up at any school or download the form from the Pittsburgh Public Schools Web site, www.pps.k12.pa.us. Parents also may call the Parent Hotline at (412) 622-7920 to request an application. Applications also may be photocopied.

Changes at a glance

- ◆ Apply at the Magnet Fair
- ◆ Mail-in applications instead of in-person drop-off at the school site
- ◆ Three choices instead of one
- ◆ Only students new to the School District must prove residency

Important dates

- ◆ **Magnet Fair:** Nov. 1, 2008, 1-3 p.m., Pittsburgh Frick, 107 Thackeray St. (Oakland)
- ◆ **Application period:** Nov. 1-Dec. 12, 2008
- ◆ **Applications for CAPA 6-12:** due Nov. 21, 2008
- ◆ **Lotteries:** conducted on Dec. 17, 2008

PROMISE FULFILLED



Pittsburgh Frick 6-9 Principal Wayne Walters speaks with students between classes.

Pittsburgh Promise Nights

Pittsburgh Allderdice
Wed., Dec. 3 • 6:30-8 p.m.

Pittsburgh Brashear
Tues., Dec. 16 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh CAPA
Wed., Dec. 3 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Carrick
Thurs., Nov. 13 • 7-8:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Langley
Thurs., Nov. 20 • 6:30-8 p.m.

Pittsburgh Oliver
Tues., Dec. 9 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Peabody
Thurs., Nov. 6 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Perry
Thurs., Dec. 4 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Schenley
Tues., Nov. 18 • 6-7:30 p.m.

University Prep
Wed., Nov. 12 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Pittsburgh Westinghouse
Thurs., Dec. 11 • 6-7:30 p.m.

College access program awards nearly 1,000 scholarships

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In two short years, a promising idea has become a triumphant reality as the first scholarships granted through the Pittsburgh Promise have helped pave the way to education after high school for members of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Class of 2008.

"A lot of times, folks have to fall in love with an idea and, if it doesn't become reality they're disappointed," said Saleem Ghubril, executive director of the Pittsburgh Promise. "Not this time."

Nearly 1,000 Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates were awarded scholarships through the Promise for 2008. Ninety-six percent of eligible students applied.

Announced in 2006, the Pittsburgh Promise is a college access program and revitalization strategy for the City of Pittsburgh. The program is administered by a newly created organization that takes the same name as the scholarship, the Pittsburgh Promise. It provides scholarship awards up to \$5,000 (with the potential of up to \$20,000 over four years) to pay for tuition and fees not covered by federal and state grants at eligible colleges or technical/trade schools within the state of Pennsylvania. Officials hope to increase the aid to as much as \$40,000 over four years per eligible graduate beginning with the class of 2012.

"The greatest gift that's happened since I've been here is the gift of the Pittsburgh Promise," said Superintendent of Schools Mark Roosevelt. "It is nothing short of extraordinary that we will be able to say to every one of our kids that money should truly not be a barrier to their going on to higher education."

In 2007, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) committed to donating up to \$100 million to the Pittsburgh Promise. UPMC donated \$10 million to mobilize the program and to fund the class of 2008. The remaining \$90 million is a challenge grant to spur the fundraising necessary to create a permanent



Franco Harris speaks with Pittsburgh Promise recipient Chelsea Lipscomb.

endowment fund.

"UPMC gave the Promise vitality," said Edward Jones, project manager of the Pittsburgh Promise. "It changes the culture of schools District-wide, and it changes the life prospects of students in a dramatic way."

In June, Massey Charitable Trust, an independent charitable foundation established by the late Harris B. and Doris J. Massey, provided a \$1 million grant to the Promise.

"Our trustees are convinced that the Pittsburgh Promise is the innovative and bold initiative needed to keep and improve Pittsburgh as a vibrant city for decades to come," said Bob Connolly, executive director of Massey Charitable Trust. "This grant demonstrates our confidence in the ability of the students of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The Promise can help to unlock their academic potential by offering them hope, incentive and the knowledge that there should be no limits to their aspirations and dreams."

To be eligible, students must be graduating from a Pittsburgh public school, maintain a minimum grade point average and earn admission to any pre-approved school. The Promise award multiplies based on number of years spent enrolled in Pittsburgh schools. Only students who have been enrolled at least since the ninth grade qualify.

Officials recently announced some changes for

future classes, raising the GPA requirement from 2.0 in 2008 to 2.25 for 2009 graduates and 2.5 for graduates in 2010 and thereafter. In addition, a new attendance standard requires students to be present in school 85 percent of the time.

To ensure that students are on the right path towards Promise-readiness, the District is creating *Pathways to the Promise* to make it easier for students, parents, teachers, counselors and principals to understand how a student is progressing and where additional supports are needed. Just as regular visits to a health care provider help to maintain a child's physical health, Pathways to the Promise will provide regular educational check-ups to make sure students are on track and gaining the knowledge and skills that they must have to be successful in life.

"The college mindset and aspirations have to start developing in K-8," said Jones.

Key checkpoints are in grades 3, 6 and 9. "At each point we want to know: 'Are students on track?' Jones said. "If not, how can we get them intervention?"

"Ninth grade is one of the most significant and one of the last checkpoints," said Nancy Kodman, principal on special assignment in the office of High School Excellence. "The Promise might still seem so far away, but it's important for students to realize that every action along the way steers their future."



FIRST CLASS

Miles Porter

“The Promise was a big advantage. It means I didn’t have to take out loans.”



Roxanne Rudov

“The Promise money was so helpful for my family because it allowed all three of us to do what we want to do.”



Sarmed Shareef

“I’m the first in my family to go to college and they’re very proud of me. I feel very lucky.”



Tajia Williams

“I wasn’t even going to go to college at first, so the Promise played a very big role.”



Vanessa Thompson

“I’m very grateful for the Promise scholarship. It would have been more difficult otherwise.”



Sarah Walsh

“College has always been in my future. (The Promise) definitely let me go to the college of my choice. It helped me stay in Pennsylvania”



Pittsburgh Promise fulfills its pledge to send students to college

By MEAGHAN CASEY AND PAUL HALLORAN

For two years, the Pittsburgh Promise was just that – a pledge to help Pittsburgh Public Schools graduates go to college. It was a great idea to be sure, but an idea nonetheless.

During the summer of 2008, the Pittsburgh Promise made the significant leap from idea to reality when the first class of Pittsburgh Promise scholarship recipients was announced, and there were 1,000 reasons to believe the promise had been kept.

Of the 1,250 members of the Class of 2008 who applied for a Promise scholarship, more than 1,000 were eligible to receive an award, which for this class is worth up to \$5,000 per year for each year they are in college. It is a significant grant, especially with the rising cost of higher education.

“You are the first class of the Pittsburgh Promise; you are very important to us,” Pittsburgh Steelers legend and Promise chairman Franco Harris told a group of the recipients at a celebration at Riverview Park Aug. 12. “It’s wonderful to have ideas, but to go out and make it happen, to see the fruit of the ideas, makes us feel so fortunate to be a part of this.”

Miles Porter, a Pittsburgh Schenley High School graduate, is now studying sports management and marketing at California University of Pennsylvania.

“The Promise was a big advantage,” said Porter, who considered pursuing his education in Virginia before he was awarded the scholarship. “It means I didn’t have to take out loans.”

Promise recipient Roxanne Rudov, a Pittsburgh Allderdice High School graduate, is attending Penn State

University. Rudov served as captain of the field hockey club, a member of the varsity swimming team and a member of Amnesty International.

Rudov plans to major in communications at Penn State. “I wanted that experience of a big state school,” she said. Her mother, a Pittsburgh native, attended the University of Pittsburgh. Both parents are attorneys in the area and currently have three children in college. Rudov’s older brother attends the University of Southern California and her twin sister attends Emory University in Atlanta.

“The Promise money was so helpful for my family because it allowed all three of us to do what we want to do,” said Rudov.

For Sarah Walsh, a Pittsburgh Brashear High School graduate, receiving a Promise scholarship allowed her to attend Robert Morris University close to home, rather

than Columbia College in Chicago.

“College has always been in my future,” Walsh said. “(The Promise) definitely let me go to the college of my choice. It helped me stay in Pennsylvania.”

With another daughter at Pittsburgh Brashear and son at Pittsburgh South Brook 6-8, Theresa Walsh is very grateful for the assistance. “Our job and responsibility as parents is to find opportunities like this for our children,” she said. “The Pittsburgh Promise is a wonderful opportunity that became available to us at the right time.”

Those thoughts were echoed by Pat Thompson, whose daughter, Vanessa, graduated this year from Pittsburgh Westinghouse High and received a Pittsburgh Promise scholarship. “This gives us hope. We were very blessed that the Promise started with her graduating class.”

A single parent with two younger

daughters attending Pittsburgh Frick 6-9, Thompson, who works in medical coding at UPMC Presbyterian, graduated from Pittsburgh Westinghouse 20 years before her older daughter. “They didn’t have anything like this when I graduated high school,” she said.

Vanessa Thompson has moved on to Chatham University in Pittsburgh. She has set a goal to “change the world.” Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Thompson credits the school system for the opportunities it gave her and urged this year’s high school students to take advantage of the Promise.

“To get the job you want, it’s very important to have at least a bachelor’s degree,” said Thompson, who plans to major in psychology and eventually pursue law. “I’m very grateful for the Promise scholarship. It would have been more difficult otherwise.”

The Pittsburgh Promise Chairman and Steelers legend Franco Harris had words of wisdom for Promise scholarship recipients, from left, Alyssa Weisensee, Anastasia Coates, Dana Butler, Xia Winston, Vikki Moser, Julie Cosentino, Tajia Williams and Miles Porter.



9th Grade Nation kicks off second year

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In a city and stadium where Steeler Nation dominates, *9th Grade Nation* is creating a name for itself.

Pittsburgh Steelers Coach Mike Tomlin, joined by players, Pittsburgh Public Schools board members and staff and City officials, helped to kick off the second year of *9th Grade Nation* at Heinz Field in September, urging members of the Class of 2012 to seize the opportunities placed in front of them.

"We all know what we should do," Tomlin said to a crowd of approximately 2,100 freshmen. "We all dream of doing great things. What are you going to do today to make that happen?"

The event brought together ninth-graders from all of the District's high schools, challenging them to embrace high school as the next exciting and important phase of their life.

"At every high school, people know or have heard of *9th Grade Nation*," said Nancy Kodman, principal on special assignment who works on the



Students gathered at Heinz Field to celebrate the second year of 9th Grade Nation.

High School Excellence team. "The goal is to create a sense of belonging and to strengthen that bridge to high school achievement. Our students must take ownership for their learning and graduate with a plan for the future."

"High school can be challenging, but you do have to take the

opportunities and chances that you have and make the best of them, because you really only get the opportunity once," said Jason McCrea, a student at Pittsburgh Perry High School.

9th Grade Nation is a component of *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, a multi-year plan, unveiled

by the High School Reform Task Force in 2007, focused on the redesign and restructuring of the District's high schools and improved student achievement.

9th Grade Nation aims to create a culture in which students are valued and inspired; attend, adjust and achieve in an environment of high expectations; have at least one involved, caring adult to turn to; are connected to the school and community through extracurricular activities and service learning projects; and will be academically promoted to 10th grade.

During the summer, students had the opportunity to come together for the first time as the class of 2012 through a unique transition program that included team-building activities, school tours and acclimation, planning for graduation, off-site social activities, and a full day at Camp Guyasuta. At the camp, students from high schools throughout the city participated in a challenging ropes course, mobile climbing wall and other outdoor

activities.

Kodman said the District is working to make the entire year more hands-on, infused with academic rigor and meaningful and engaging activities for students. As part of *9th Grade Nation's* full-year required course, Civics: Be the Change!, visits to the Heinz History Center are scheduled for December and a youth roundtable event will be held in January. The roundtable will provide ninth-graders with an opportunity to speak out to community leaders about issues that concern them. Throughout the spring semester, students and civic leaders will work together to design service-learning projects and implement action plans to address those issues.

Kodman said the District hopes to again solicit student applications next spring for participation in The Future is Mine (TFIM) Student Leadership Conference, part of Imagine Week in Pittsburgh. TFIM is an initiative committed to encouraging all youth to find their passion and pursue their dreams in an informed way.



Gillian Kacsuta and Fred Quinn in Spanish class at Pittsburgh Schenley High School.



Students listen during class at the new school.

Extreme MAKEOVER SCHENLEY EDITION

Pittsburgh Schenley High School students are adjusting to their new home in the Reizenstein building. Roughly 750 students in grades 10-12 are enjoying the newly remodeled facility equipped with new amenities that include a soccer field, tennis courts and renovated gym, two student lounges, updated classrooms and air conditioning.



The updated high school features a new gymnasium.



Rayonda Lay puts her backpack on in the hallway.



Drama class at Pittsburgh Schenley High School.

Motherly Love

School volunteer has been taking care of students for 11 years

By RICH FAHEY

If you get to school late at Pittsburgh Langley High School, you don't have to report to Principal Linda Baehr's office. You have to answer to "Mom."

"Mom," better known as Edith Henderson, 81, has been volunteering at Pittsburgh Langley High School for the past 11 years. One of her duties is greeting visitors and students at the school's front door, and she's usually on duty at about 6:20 a.m., an hour ahead of the opening bell.

Latecomers get quizzed about why they

are late before they are given a late pass — and detention notice.

"I tell them, 'If I can get here early from Penn Hills after getting up at 4 a.m., then you should be able to make it on time from across the street,'" she said.

Henderson was one of six winners of the 2005 Jefferson Awards for Public Service, a prestigious program started in 1972 by the American Institute for Public Service to recognize those who performed remarkable deeds in community service without expectation of reward or recognition. Henderson and the other five recipients were among the 52 Community Champions who were nominated by the public and private sector for the Jefferson Awards that year.

She wishes there were more people who volunteered at the high school level. Volunteerism tends to be strongest for the elementary grades and then peters out as students get older. She knows that some people might be

intimidated by the high schools and advises them to mimic her method: kill them with kindness.

As well as being "everyone's grandmother," Baehr said Henderson is "the collective conscience of the school," in her role as gatekeeper for late students. "Edith is a very upbeat, positive, nurturing person," said Baehr.

For those students who don't have a loving grandparent, Henderson fills the bill. "I can sense when something is wrong with a child," she said.

She keeps aids such as Kleenex, hand lotion and mints on hand for those who want to talk. "It makes me feel good if I can help one child, talk someone who might have gotten into trouble out of it," she said.

When she's not being the guardian at the gate, Henderson can be found stamping or filling envelopes, or doing whatever needs to be done, including keeping the whereabouts of both teachers and students.

"I know where everyone is all the time," she laughs.



Henderson knows that being with the students every day is helping keep her young.

"I meet with some friends each month — we call ourselves the 'golden girls,'" she said. "Some of them are bent over and forgetful. But I'm doing great."

A graduate of Schenley High School in 1946, Henderson later worked in the Pittsburgh Public Schools for 17 years before beginning her career as a volunteer after retirement. She rides to Pittsburgh Langley each day with her daughter, Darlene Ross, who is a social worker at the school. Another daughter, Earlene Henderson, recently retired as a Pittsburgh Public Schools teacher.

Baehr is dreading the day Henderson retires for good.

"She can never truly be replaced," said Baehr. "She's unique — a one-in-a-million person."

From left, Brian Schanz, Volunteer Edith "Mom" Henderson, Jaron Dickerson, Elvie Brown and LaTijah Mosley at Pittsburgh Langley High School.



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Conner calls on all parents to get involved

By Paul Halloran

As a parent, Mark Conner understands how important it is to play an active role in his children’s education. As the new Director of Family and Community Engagement for Pittsburgh Public Schools, Conner’s mission is to convince other parents.

“When parents are involved, children do better academically, perform better on standardized testing and graduate at a higher rate,” said Conner, who started in his position May 5. “The more involvement, the better the outcome for the child.”

A Pittsburgh native and Pittsburgh Brashear High School graduate, Conner is convinced that factors outside the classroom affect how students perform in school. “Why do some children succeed and others don’t?” he said. “It comes down to the beliefs and expectations of parents.”

A U.S. Army veteran and former sales manager – “That skill set is paying off here,” he quipped – Conner said his ultimate responsibility is to increase parent engagement throughout the District. “The idea is to move everyone up to the next level,” Conner said. “We believe in *Excellence for All*. My mission is to try to reach parents through unconventional means.”

Conner said he will use churches, synagogues and mosques, as well as social service providers to “reach parents where they congregate.” His goal is to identify those parents who have no interaction with their children’s schools. “I will make phone calls and even go door-to-door if that’s what it takes.”

“This is not an overnight process, but it’s an essential thing to do,” Conner added. “Not all parents realize the power they have in affecting their children’s education. They have to expect the child to do well and let the child know that if they put forth the effort, the reward will come.”

In Pittsburgh, there is a very tangible reward available for high school graduates who put forth that effort: the Pittsburgh Promise, a program that provides scholarship awards up to \$5,000 per year to pay for tuition and fees not covered by federal and state grants at eligible colleges or technical/trade schools within the state of Pennsylvania. The Class of 2008 marked the first class of Promise scholarship recipients.

“The Promise can change the entire complexion of a city,” Conner said. “With the Promise, the money is there. That is a phenomenal opportunity. We have to make sure kids are Promise-ready.

“I’m not an educator,” said Conner, who has two children attending Pittsburgh Banksville PreK-5, “and most parents aren’t. But we have to ask what we can do to make sure a child has the best chance to succeed. Parents have to understand there is a direct correlation between what they do at home and their kids’ performance in school.”



Customer Service representative Nicole Stallworth answers a call on the Parent Hotline.

At your service

Hotline helps parents get their questions answered

By Paul Halloran

In Pittsburgh Public Schools, the pursuit of excellence is not limited to the classroom.

“Improving customer service to families and the community is part of our *Excellence for All* agenda,” said Susan Chersky, Senior Manager of Communications and Customer Service for the District. Chersky noted that there is a section in the draft of the District’s six-year Strategic Plan entitled, Customer Service: Build a world-class customer-service organization.

“We will provide timely and accurate information in response to inquiries and will be customer focused to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students and families,” the report reads. “Our parents and families will be engaged with us at every level and will know, understand, and participate in our major initiatives and in each of our schools. Our community and faith-based partners will play a key role in our implementation efforts and will be an important source of advice and knowledge to us. We will provide tools and training to our parents to enable them to support their child’s academic experience in Pittsburgh Public Schools.”

Under Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, Pittsburgh Public Schools is undergoing a variety of changes and implementing new initiatives to provide all students with the support they need to achieve academic excellence. At the heart of this ambitious agenda is *Excellence for All*, a comprehensive reform agenda and a District-wide emphasis on improving student achievement. To meet the goal of giving every student the best possible opportunity to succeed, it is critical that parents and the general public have a clear understanding of what is taking place and have a way to get more information as needed.

One way the District is making that happen is the Parent Hotline, which gives parents a vehicle to get questions answered and express concerns. Parents can call or e-mail the Parent Hotline office and expect to get an initial response within 24 hours, according to Tanya Gore-White, Customer Service Manager.

Gore-White said she and her colleagues in the Parent Hotline – Harriett Webb and Nicole Stallworth – field a

variety of questions, from when magnet school applications are due to what time the football game starts Friday night.

“We listen, address questions or concerns and direct customers to the appropriate person or information,” she said. Some calls take two minutes and others take 20 minutes.”

Calls related to specific schools are directed to the principal first, Gore-White explained, to open a direct line of communication between the principal and parent. The hotline follows up with the school and appropriate District staff if a return call is received about the same subject.

Chersky said the District last year implemented a customer service software system to help central office ensure timely and consistent responses, identify any trends and quickly address issues before they turn into problems.

“Ensuring parents and the community have a positive experience when calling, e-mailing or stopping by one of our schools or offices is a major priority for us,” Chersky said. “We want parents to feel they’re getting their needs met and they are getting the service they deserve. We want to be proactive.”

Gore-White said the Parent Hotline office will implement a feedback mechanism to gauge how it can further improve customer service. “We want to see if our callers were satisfied with their experience,” she said.

Lisa Fischetti, Chief of Staff and External Affairs for the District, said one part of *Excellence for All* is the expectation of a high level of accountability. That’s where the strong emphasis on customer service in general, and the Parent Hotline in particular, comes into play.

“The hotline is a mechanism to connect parents and families to the resources they need,” she said. “We need to be responsive, high-performing and have a high level of accountability.”

The District realizes Pittsburgh parents, families and students have options and wants to ensure that Pittsburgh Public Schools is at the top of their list, Fischetti said. “We are working to improve our performance at all levels,” she said. “Our mission is to become one of the nation’s premier school districts.”

The telephone number of the parent hotline is 412-622-7920. The e-mail address is: parenthotline@pghboe.net.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

November 2008		16 Parent Engagement Tuesday Pittsburgh Phillips K-5, 1901 Sarah St. - 6:30-8 p.m.
4	Parent Engagement Tuesday Admin. Bldg. - 9:30-11 a.m.	January 2008
11	Parent Engagement Tuesday YMCA North Side, 600 W. North Ave. - noon-1:30 p.m.	
18	Parent Engagement Tuesday Pittsburgh Phillips K-5, 1901 Sarah St. - 6:30-8 p.m.	6 Parent Engagement Tuesday Admin Bldg. - 9:30-11 a.m.
22	Celebration of parents, schools and the community - Pittsburgh Weil ALA PreK-8 - noon-4 p.m.	7 Parent Engagement specialist PD - Greenway - 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.
December 2008		13 Parent Engagement Tuesday Location:TBD - noon-1:30 p.m.
2	Parent Engagement Tuesday Admin Bldg. - 9:30-11 a.m.	20 Parent Engagement Tuesday Location:TBD - 6:30-8 p.m.
9	Parent Engagement Tuesday YMCA North Side, 600 W. North Ave. - Noon-1:30 p.m.	February 2008
		3 Parent Engagement Tuesday Admin Bldg. 9:30-11 a.m.
		4 Parent Engagement specialist PD - Greenway 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
		10 Parent Engagement Tuesday Location:TBD - noon-1:30 p.m.

Teaching and Learning Teams help District improve student achievement

BY GRETCHEN WEBER

Pittsburgh Public Schools has developed a new protocol this year that is designed to provide critical support for principals, teachers and, ultimately, students throughout the District. By using Teaching and Learning Teams, the District's executive directors are ensuring high quality feedback and support to the schools they supervise as they deepen their work in the third of year of District initiatives.

Executive directors have always visited schools to provide support and evaluate principal practice, but the new protocol provides a framework for teams of experts to visit schools more frequently, for longer periods of time, complete with tools that help principals and coaches identify best practices that should be continued and areas that need improvement.

"We wanted to create something that was more uniform throughout the district," said Dr. Barbara Rudiak, Executive Director for Pittsburgh's K-5 schools. "This is going to allow us to take our roles in central office into the classroom at the level of teachers and students, and it's going to give us a clearer view of what we really need to do to increase student achievement."

Central to the new protocol is that a team of specialists in areas such as literacy, math, science and special education accompanies the executive director on school visits. At each school, the team follows a set schedule that includes an orientation from the principal who reports data on a range of topics including test scores, attendance, and misconduct. The principal also outlines the professional development activities in which the school staff has engaged. The team visits classes together as a group, and then splits up so that content experts can observe classes and instruction in their subject areas.

"It's brilliant," said Victoria Burgess, Principal of Pittsburgh Woolslair K-5. "This protocol puts people who are masters in their subject areas in the classrooms with my teachers. They give us good information because they are experts in these areas. I am excited to hear their suggestions."

After these classroom observations, the entire team comes together with the principal and coaches to share observations,



Student Kevin Le works during math class at Pittsburgh South Hills 6-8.

make recommendations, and create a plan of action.

"It's a way to use different sets of eyes so that the principal can go back to teachers and say, 'This is what was shared,'" said Rudiak. "The team shares both effective practices that have been observed and raises questions about curriculum implementation and pedagogy. It creates a conversation with everyone who is important to the work of that school."

At the end of the last school year, Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane and the School Management executive directors reviewed the process in place for school visits, using feedback from central office supervisors and school administrators. They determined that the schools needed a different kind of support than was provided in the past, and

that the support provided needed to be adjusted according to the needs of individual schools. They built on this foundation by setting clear procedures for Teaching and Learning Teams to help principals, teachers and students to succeed. Some schools are visited monthly while others are visited every other month. Schools have goals to meet and areas to work on in between visits. Content experts may visit schools more frequently as needed to offer support and training to teachers and subject coaches to help schools meet their goals.

"We're excited about this," said Burgess. "In order for us to grow as a school we need to be reflective of our practices, and if we aren't open to different perspectives, we're not going to make the gains we otherwise would."

Konczal-Evans awarded 2007-08 Teacher of Excellence

TEACHER: from Page 20

Those multiple nominations may be a result of her reputation for going the extra mile when it comes to her students.

"I try to see what the strengths and needs of each student are and teach to those needs," she said. "I also try to get the parents on board." After she gets a feel for each student, she makes it a point to call parents to talk about their child.

Konczal-Evans is a champion of both early childhood education and early intervention for those students who need help. She says making early childhood programs and early intervention screenings available throughout the District makes her job easier by giving her a snapshot of the student.

"Separation anxiety on the first few days of school isn't as bad, since most kindergartners will have attended a pre-school program," she said.

Sally Rifugiato, principal at Pittsburgh Beechwood for the past four years, has been a friend and colleague of Konczal-Evans for 20 years.

"She really cares deeply about each child and their family," said Rifugiato, adding that one of the things that makes her such a good teacher is that she's always learning new things.

"She brings articles in and invites other teachers to breakfast to discuss her findings," said Rifugiato.

Parents love her and she has a fantastic reputation in the community. "Kids don't want to leave her class," said Rifugiato. "That's the highest honor you can give a teacher."



Teacher of Excellence Linda Konczal-Evans works with a student at Pittsburgh Beechwood PreK-5.

Districtwide

Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Division of Finance received the Association of School Business Officials International Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. ASBO International created the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting program to enable school business officials to achieve a high standard of financial reporting. The award represents excellence in preparation and issuance of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report — commonly known as the CAFR — and is the highest recognition offered for school district financial reporting.

DARE graduation

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police worked with the School District to coordinate the first-ever citywide DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) graduation exercise for more than 2,300 fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students from 47 schools in the region, including approximately 2,200 PPS students. The event was held at Heinz Field. PPS staff, including Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane and School Management Executive Director Barbara Rudiak, were in attendance, as well as City of Pittsburgh and Bureau of Police officials, representatives of law enforcement agencies from across the Commonwealth, and a host of major corporate sponsors. DARE is the world's largest and most successful educational drug-prevention program developed for school-age children. DARE officers provide children with the resistance and decision-making skills to remain drug- and violence-free. T-shirts and certificates were distributed to all participants. Student essays written during the DARE classes were compiled into a booklet and distributed to the participants.

40 Under 40

Instrumental music teacher Marylou Monich Bushyager was selected by *Pittsburgh Magazine* and Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project (PUMP) as a 40 Under 40 honoree. 40 Under 40 recognizes individuals who are making a positive impact in the Pittsburgh region. Bushyager is an instrumental music teacher at Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5, Pittsburgh Schaeffer K-8 Primary Campus and Pittsburgh Westwood K-8. In addition, she teaches at Woodlands Foundation — Notes from the Heart music camp, and Mays Music.

Carson Scholars

Fifty-two PPS students were among the 600 national recipients of the 2008 Carson Scholars Awards. The Carson Scholars Fund, Inc., was founded in 1994 by pediatric neurosurgeon Benjamin S. Carson and his wife, Candy, to motivate and reward academic excellence in young people. Each year, Carson recipients in grades 4-11 receive \$1,000 scholarships for academic achievement and humanitarian qualities. Students must maintain a 3.75 grade point average and demonstrate involvement in their communities.

National Merit Scholarship

Nine PPS high school students have been named National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. Congratulations to Pittsburgh Allderdice seniors Molly Brea, Catherine Cobetto, Matthew Cummings, Sam Gutkind, Zara Koong-Karuman, Eric Levine, Joshua Safyan and Miriam Shiffman, and Pittsburgh CAPA senior Jeremy Malvin. Semifinalists were chosen based on their performance on the PSAT/NMSQT exam.

Breaking Barriers

In celebration of the anniversary of Jackie Robinson Day, the Pittsburgh Pirates introduced a



new program in partnership with the Pittsburgh Public Schools: the Jackie Robinson — Breaking Barriers Essay and Poetry Contest. The contest invited students in grades 3-8 to submit original poems exploring one or more of Jackie Robinson's nine values for success: courage, determination, teamwork, persistence, integrity, citizenship, justice, commitment and excellence. Students also had the option to write an essay that chronicled the personal struggles of Jackie Robinson and the characteristics they felt were necessary for him to overcome the challenges he faced. First-place winners were: Sujay Utkarsh, Pittsburgh Liberty; Sarah Sanfilippo, Pittsburgh Whittier; Deron Bentley, Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8; Aysar Gharaibeh, Pittsburgh Sterrett; Ebony Horton, Pittsburgh Miller; and Joe Ostrowski, Pittsburgh South Hills. All winners were honored on Jackie Robinson Day, April 27, 2008, before the Pirates game at PNC Park.

Global travel

The World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh selected two PPS students to receive full scholarships for educational travel overseas this past summer through the Council's Global Travel Scholarship Program. Erica Green of Pittsburgh Oliver High School spent five weeks in Brazil, where she participated in orientation in Rio de Janeiro, a week-long home stay, an intensive traditional dance and music workshop in Salvador, and a week of touring the Bahia province. Tracey Massengill from Pittsburgh Westinghouse High School spent four weeks in France through her

scholarship. Tracey's orientation took place in Paris and she also enjoyed a home stay, with a French family, as well as the Avignon Theater Festival, with a culminating performance of a student play entirely in French.

In the limelight

Each year, the Gene Kelly Awards celebrate the best in high school musical entertainment in the region, and two PPS high schools were among the 2008 winners. The Pittsburgh Allderdice student orchestra, under the direction of instructor Brian Lee, earned a Kelly Award for Best All-Student Orchestra for its performance during the school's spring musical production of "Footloose." Student musicians were Julie Baur, Miles de Klerk, Roy de Klerk, Adam Khalil, Sam Levinson, Peter Masters, Stephen Shannon, Eric Telmer and Karri Uusi-Aijo. Pittsburgh Schenley's production of "All Shook Up" won two Kelly Awards. Student Teressa Lagamba won for Best Supporting Actress, and the production earned a Best Musical Award. The play was directed by Kelly McKress and student director Ashley Pinchback.

First in Math

Pittsburgh Concord K-5 and Pittsburgh Stevens K-8 were First in Math champions for Pittsburgh Public Schools. First in Math is a fast-paced, engaging Web site that challenges students to solve problems from simple addition through multi-step algebra, and for each three problems solved, the competitors earn virtual First in Math award stickers. Stickers accumulate for individual students and their class teams, and rankings range from the school to national level. Pittsburgh Concord students earned 205,000 award stickers, most in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. That means Pittsburgh Concord students correctly answered more than 600,000 math questions on the First in Math Web site during the last school year. By grade level, Pittsburgh Concord had first-place teams in grades 1, 2 and 5. Pittsburgh Stevens earned 143,000 award stickers, most in the grade K-8 category, for a total of more than 425,000 correct answers. Pittsburgh Stevens had first-place teams in grades 6, 7 and 8.

K-5 schools

Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5

Students were asked to tell the story of an African-American who has had an impact on Pittsburgh in the National City African-American History Contest. Students could use poetry, an essay, art, music or video to complete the assignment. Winners were recognized on May 6 at the Carnegie Science Center. Among those honored were Pittsburgh Allegheny students Chanice Cures, grade 3, who placed first in the age 6-9 essay category;

Chanel Curgis, grade 3, who placed second in the age 6-9 essay category; and James Blakemore, grade 4, who placed third in the age 6-9 essay category.

Pittsburgh Concord K-5

The Concord Chess Club is so popular at the school that it now has two teams of students in grades 3-5. Students work on chess skills and compete with classmates and chess master John Young during 7-week cycles at lunchtime. On June 3, the students donned their new Chess Club T-shirts and competed against students from Pittsburgh Morrow and Pittsburgh Beechwood at the Pittsburgh Youth Chess annual competition, where they earned the first-place team trophy.

Principal Susan Barie was the delegation leader with the People to People Student Ambassador Program for seventh- and eighth-grade students during a 17-day visit to China this past summer. Barie has traveled with students over the past 16 summers to all areas of the world, including Australia, England, France and Fiji. In China, Barie and the students hiked the Great Wall, visited a school in Beijing, played soccer with Chinese students, stayed with a Chinese family in Xian, and explored the Terracotta Warriors site, considered one of the world's greatest archaeological treasures.

Pittsburgh Phillips K-5

More than 150 community members gathered on August 9 to install a playground at Pittsburgh Phillips. Parents voted to center their efforts on recycling the playground from the former Knoxville Elementary School site, and with the help of a \$70,000 grant from the Allstate Foundation, plus the collection of more than \$2,000 in the school's Pennies for the Playground drive, they were able to carry the project to completion. The original playground was built through the Injury Free Coalition for Kids, and Mercy and Children's hospitals, with funds from Allstate and the Birmingham Foundation. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held during the Pittsburgh Phillips back-to-school event on August 26. More than 300 attended the ceremony, including the former Knoxville PTO president, Chaquita Barnett. The Knoxville community will be permanently recognized for its part in the process through the installation of a plaque on the playground. Several local businesses provided entertainment, food and supplies for both events, and the Pittsburgh Carrick High School Steel Drum Band performed.

Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5

Marsha Robbins, a retired PPS special education teacher, coordinates a special program in partnership with the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society. Robbins visits classrooms and presents assemblies to teach

SUPERS LEARN THE ROPES



Deputy Superintendent Linda Lane, left, and Superintendent Mark Roosevelt were more than casual observers at Camp Guyasuta, which hosted team-building events over the summer for incoming members of 9th Grade Nation.

students safe behaviors to decrease the risk of dog bites. At Pittsburgh West Liberty in May, the Humane Society sponsored a literacy event which brought six trainers, with their certified therapy dogs, to the school to read to students. All stories involved animals and featured a character-education theme. Each child received two books for his or her personal library as part of the event. An assembly to review dog-bite prevention followed the classroom activities, and trainers provided a brief history of their dogs' breeds. West Liberty plans to continue the Humane Society partnership during the 2008-09 school year.

The President's Education Awards program honors student achievement and hard work by presenting the President's Award for Academic Excellence and the President's Award for Academic Achievement. To be eligible for the President's Award for Academic Excellence, students must have an average of "A" on a letter grade or 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, as well as high achievement on state or nationally normed tests or recommendations from faculty. Pittsburgh West Liberty students Tomilola Adebayo, Jeffrey Arnold, Alexis Binnie, Mark Granatire, Jessica Ignasky, Brianna King, Thomas Long, Morgan McCoy, John Novakowski, Megan Recker, Martin Shulik, Aaron Staab, Patrick Thomas, Joey Walz and Zachery Witt earned the President's Award for Academic Excellence.

K-8 schools

Pittsburgh Carmalt PreK-8

Mark Steidl of Pittsburgh Carmalt received the Yes I Can! Award in the technology category from the Council for Exceptional Children for his use of technology in and out of the classroom. Steidl has a form of cerebral palsy which affects the use of his arms and legs as well as his speech. He began using his first electronic communication device at age 3 and, as Ken Kwasniewski, assistive technology coordinator at Carmalt when Steidl entered kindergarten, said in an interview, "We were always pushing the envelope." Steidl uses a laptop computer, and staff at the school scan his worksheets and textbooks into a computer. He also has software for writing and research. At age 6, Steidl expressed an interest in music and has been involved in community children's theater groups. Thanks to a program called "Sibelius," he is now composing music. He finished his first piece, "American Tour," and was working on a sonata.

Pittsburgh Colfax K-8

Pittsburgh Colfax student Ben Foster participated in the Math Kangaroo competition in March 2008 at the University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning.

Participants completed a math test, then scores were compared against other students from across the country. Nationally, 348 fourth-grade students took the test, and Ben was one of seven in his grade to score 100 percent. Ben was honored at an award ceremony in May in Chicago.

Pittsburgh Lincoln K-8

Pittsburgh Lincoln K-8 Principal Regina Holley received the 2008 PreK-12 Educator Award from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education as part of the Distinguished Alumni Awards program. The Distinguished Alumni Awards recognize alumni for their professional and academic accomplishments. Dr. Holley was nominated by an Emeritus faculty member of the School of Education for her work in our School District as well as her support for teacher education, as she has demonstrated in her efforts to recruit students to the School of Education. As reported in the School of Education alumni newsletter, "Holley's students have a record of consistently high achievement, earning Holley praise from colleagues both locally and nationally. She has earned an exceptional level of respect from parents and members of the community in which her school is located." The PreK-12 Educator Award was created in 2008, and Dr. Holley is the first recipient of this award.

Pittsburgh Manchester K-8

Pittsburgh Manchester celebrated Students Against Violence Via Education (SAVVE) Week during the week of May 12. Events included various activities designed to promote violence prevention in school. The week began with Shut the Door on Violence, with each class creating an anti-violence slogan for its room and decorating the doorway to reflect the slogan. The building theme for the day was Kindness Counts. On Tuesday, students brought or created hats to wear for Keep the Lid on Violence day. The theme for the day was Respect. Parents were invited to sign a Parents Against Violence petition. Students, staff and parents were encouraged to wear orange on Wednesday for Orange You Glad You're Not a Bully, and the daily theme was Tolerance. A Safety Zone Partnership meeting was held in the school gym, with officials from the District and the mayor's office discussing how Pittsburgh Manchester and the surrounding community is being made safer and what everyone in the community can do to help. Thursday — Nacho Day to be Angry — began with the announcement of winners of the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) campaign. Everyone was encouraged to wear yellow as a reminder to be cautious when tempers start to flare. The student who RAK-ed up the most Random Acts of Kindness points by getting caught spontaneously helping



someone else was rewarded with nachos. The theme was Anger Management. Green was the color of the day on Friday to remind everyone to Go for a peaceful resolution to problems, and the theme was Conflict Resolution. The culminating activity was a staff vs. students basketball game.

Pittsburgh Schaeffer K-8

Pittsburgh Schaeffer teacher Josh White didn't need a map to find his way around the building on his first day. White attended Schaeffer Primary for kindergarten through third grade from 1987-91. He graduated from Slippery Rock University with a bachelor's degree in physical education and his first teaching position with the PPS brought him back to Pittsburgh Schaeffer. "It is awesome to come full circle and now be able to impact the lives of the students at Schaeffer just like the teachers I had made an impact with me," he said.

Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8

Get Your Read On! was the theme for Sunnyside's Literacy Week, held May 12-16, 2008. During the week, staff and students participated in numerous activities that celebrated the beauty of reading. It began with Hats off to Reading, when everyone wore a hat while participating in D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read) time. Tuesday found people dressed for Read from Head to Toe with words on their clothes. That evening, approximately 50 families played Book BINGO, and everyone received at least one free book. On Wednesday, bedroom slippers were the order of the day for Slip into a Good Book and guest storytellers made balloon animals during their read-alouds. Thursday won the flashiest award as students and staff wore their "bling" and nominated their favorite books, authors or characters for Book Oscar Day. Guest readers came in from the community to share their favorite stories and spoke a bit about their careers. Vivid Vocabulary Day completed the week-long extravaganza. Each student was encouraged to design a costume to express the meaning of an out-of-the-ordinary word.

Middle Schools

Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8

Pittsburgh Arsenal student Kayla Young won first place in the Do the Right Thing essay contest sponsored by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas Family Division. Her winning essay earned Kayla dinner at the City-County Building, a laptop

computer and two tickets to see a Steelers and a Pirates game.

Pittsburgh Frick 6-9

Pittsburgh Frick eighth-grade student Isabella Bubash and seventh-grade student Zoe Grubbs traveled the globe this past summer as part of the Children's International Summer Villages (CISV) program. Zoe traveled to Belgium under the Villages program, where she stayed with a family and learned that "families are a lot different there; they talk to each other a lot." She described Bruges as a "very beautiful" city, and enjoyed shopping in Brussels. Asked to name her favorite Belgian cuisine, she responded "Belgian waffles with chocolate."

Isabella traveled to Portugal through the Interchange program. A second-year CISV participant, Isabella described her experience as "amazing," since it "helped me understand how different cultures are." Isabella traveled with a group of eight students from various school districts and a team leader as they visited various sites in Portugal, including the country's capital and largest city, Lisbon, and some of the country's historical castles and forts. They also enjoyed a day at the beach. According to Isabella, Portuguese food is all organic, and her favorite meal was "vegetables and fried octopus."

High Schools

PPS Cosmetology Program

Cosmetology students at Pittsburgh Oliver and Pittsburgh Westinghouse high schools ended the 2007-08 school year on a high note. Twelve students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse, under the direction of Angela Mike, and five Pittsburgh Oliver students, instructed by Jamie Lynn Szulczewski, passed the rigorous state board exam that tests their knowledge of the theory as well as practical application of cosmetology skills. Other students passed one component of the test, enabling them to work in salons by using their nine-month temporary license. During that time, the students will gain additional skills and prepare to re-take the test to ultimately receive their licenses. The positive results seen in the program last year are due in part to the assistance provided by former cosmetology teacher Mary Pat Valentino, now an employee of Bumble and Bumble in New York, who is committed to continuing to sharing her expertise with staff and students. Valentino provided modeling and worked one-on-one with students to hone the skills they needed to take the state board exam.

Pittsburgh Allderdice High School

The Junior Engineering and Technical Society (JETS) teams, under the direction of faculty sponsor Sally Martin, swept the regional

competition last spring, winning first and second place in the varsity competition and first place in the junior varsity competition. At the state level, one varsity team placed fourth in the state and the junior varsity team finished second, qualifying for the national competition. At the national level, the varsity team finished second in the nation and the junior varsity team placed ninth in the nation.

Congratulations to varsity team members Molly Walter, Emily Feder, Seth Weidman, Blake Barnett, Sarah Larue, Brendan Saulsbury, Jake Schiller, Jacquet Kehm, Peter Schillo, Kurt Stahlfeld, Amitte Rosenfeld, Eva Resnick-Day, Max Gold, Hannah Burgess, Margalit Goldschmidt and Dan Salgarolo. Junior varsity team members were David Clemens-Sewall, Matt Cummings, Miriam Shiffman, Zara Koong-Karuman, Joshua Safyan, Joe Barbish, Molly Brean and Eric Levine.

Pittsburgh Brashear High School

Pittsburgh Brashear's student clubs program is off to an exciting start, with 10 new clubs on the roster. Among the offerings are Sign Language, being sponsored by one of the school's interpreters, Zumba Fitness, Future Chefs, and Bowling. More than 100 students have expressed interest in bowling, and plans are in the works to create a relationship with the Western PA School for the Deaf to work with Sign Language Club members.

Pittsburgh CAPA High School

Isaiah Smith, 2008 graduate of Pittsburgh CAPA, was one of 12 finalists in the ABC reality competition series "High School Musical: Get in the Picture." Smith was invited to audition for the series after a talent scout saw him perform in Pittsburgh CAPA's production of the musical "Children of Eden." He made the switch from instrumental to musical theater major after his first appearance in a musical in 10th grade. While his first love is theater, his experience in film during the reality series has given him reason to consider broadening his options as an actor. "I want to have a well-rounded career," he said in a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* item published in July. Smith is attending Point Park College.

Pittsburgh Peabody High School

Student Argena Olivis was named Best of the Best in Career & Technical Education for Pittsburgh Public Schools for 2007-08. Argena studied accounting with teacher Vivian Kirk and was dually enrolled at Community College of Allegheny County. Argena's photo was displayed at the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg in recognition of this honor.

AROUND PITTSBURGH SCHOOLS

Continued from Page 17

Pittsburgh Perry High School

Pittsburgh Perry cheerleaders and their coach, Brooke Musko, appeared with B94 radio host Flick as part of Pep Rally Thursdays to name the best cheer squad in The Burgh. At the end of the season, videos of cheer squads from different area schools will appear and listeners can vote for their favorite. The cheerleaders also recorded voice promos to be used on the air during the season.

A story in the May 26 edition of *Time* magazine on the trend toward newer, more ambitious high school musicals over some of the "old standbys" included a quote by Pittsburgh Perry teacher Christine Travalino and a photo of the entire cast of "Urinetown," Pittsburgh Perry's spring musical.

Last spring, Pierre Carr became the first City League runner since 1964 to win the PIAA 100-meter final, and only the third in PIAA championship history. Pierre gave the crowd an extra thrill by pulling ahead of the second-place runner with only five meters left in the race.

Charlynn White, 2008 Pittsburgh Perry graduate and Pittsburgh Promise recipient, was honored in May at Pittsburgh Perry's Academic Banquet for her outstanding success in the Pittsburgh Perry Biotechnology program. The Biotechnology

Program is funded by a state initiative to help students earn college credits while in high school.

Pittsburgh Schenley High School

Pittsburgh Schenley International Baccalaureate students enjoyed a rare opportunity to use their French language skills when they had a brief audience with French Ambassador Pierre Vimont during his visit to the University of Pittsburgh on Sept. 15. Vimont was invited to lecture on the European Union by the university's European Union Center of Excellence and European Studies Center, and teacher Devin Browne arranged for the students to meet the ambassador prior to his public lecture. The students presented Vimont with flowers, a Schenley pennant and T-shirt, which the ambassador told his visitors he would wear on a return visit.

Volunteers from Carlow College, in a joint initiative with Amizade Global Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs, are painting a world map mural at Pittsburgh Schenley. Once the countries are painted, a group of 10th-grade students will work with the Amizade volunteer to fill in map details.

Pittsburgh Westinghouse

Teacher and girls basketball coach Phyllis Jones was selected as one of the *New Pittsburgh Courier's* 50 Women of Excellence for 2008. Nominated by the paper's readers, the Women of Excellence recognizes and introduces the contributions of African-American women on the Pittsburgh community. Jones, who has been girls basketball coach since 1990, has led her teams to eight City championships. She has received two national coaching awards and more than 30 of her players have gone on to careers in teaching, coaching and community service.

Student achievement comes first in PPS

SUPERINTENDENT: From Page 1

and families understand District standards and expectations for student achievement.

Next year, the Science and Technology Academy, our newest high school magnet, will offer a new way of thinking about education. Centrally located at the Frick facility in Oakland, the school will offer a rigorous curriculum tailored to students with a passion for science, technology, engineering or math.

The school's mission is to provide daily opportunities for students to "dream, discover, and design;" set goals and generate ideas; do research and discover answers; and design real solutions for real-world problems they'll face after graduation, whether they go on to higher education or immediate employment.

Parents and families can apply for these new schools during magnet registration beginning on November 1. Read about how to apply on Page 8.

Our Focus on Teaching and Learning

Evidence shows that changes we have implemented over the past three years are taking hold. Our focus this year will be to reflect on our work and deepen our efforts so that we continue to see student achievement gains for many years to come.

The theme of our 2008 Summer Leadership

Academy for principals and other administrators was "Student Success: Leadership Matters." Sessions provided participants with tools, practices and understanding of District initiatives that support their efforts to improve teaching and learning. Our aim is to develop transformational leaders who contribute to the development of a positive, reform-oriented culture focused on instructional quality and student achievement.

We are introducing Teaching and Learning Teams this year to support professional development and learning of teachers. Through classroom visits and "learning walks," these teams will work with school administrators and faculties on the use of instructional practices that focus on instructional quality and student achievement.

On the Right Path

We are excited about the progress our students are making and delighted to share our good news through The Pittsburgh Educator. We value your support as we continue our efforts to give every child the best possible opportunity to succeed with a Promise for the future.

Mark Roosevelt is Superintendent of Schools.

University Prep makes student success its first priority

UNIVERSITY PREP: From Page 1

college a normalcy, and two, to make sure students understand they can do it. They are expected to do well here."

University Prep's motto — "We believe. We achieve. We succeed." — is based on the belief that all students can learn at high levels. Students are expected to maintain high academic standards, display respect for themselves and others and contribute to the community in which they learn. A uniform dress code reinforces the sense of professionalism.

"This is a school that pushes everybody to the next level," said Narcisse. "Often you see speakers splitting up their audience into groups to make a point. Here, we want to say, 'Look to your left. Look to your right. You're all going (to college).'"

Narcisse, a native of New York, was most recently an assistant principal at Woodland Hills High School in the eastern portion of Allegheny County. Prior to that, he taught in Nashville and Atlanta. He earned his bachelor's degree at Kennesaw State University, his master's at Vanderbilt University and his doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh. As a full-time doctoral scholar at Pitt, Narcisse focused on school-community partnerships. He was immediately drawn to the unique model of University Prep.

"In schools that were truly successful, there were partnerships with parents, partnerships with universities and partnerships with community members," said Narcisse. "Students with a majority of those connections had the most success."

The University of Pittsburgh's Center for Urban Education has offices and staff at University Prep. In June, the university announced the appointment of Louis Gomez as the inaugural holder of the Dr. Helen S. Faison Chair in Urban Education and the first director of the center. University Prep teachers will work directly with Gomez and Pitt professors to help students achieve.



Chris Horne, right, works with student Kwante Johnson at University Prep.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for the teachers, who are taking on a more scholarly, collegial attitude," said Narcisse.

In July, the U.S. Dept. of Education awarded Pittsburgh a three-year \$600,000 grant through its Smaller Learning Community (SLC) grant awards. The funding will be used to fully implement a small, personalized learning community at University Prep.

"Because learning is an intensely personal experience, we are grateful for this funding that will allow us to personalize the learning environment at University Prep," said Chief of High School Excellence Derrick Lopez. "With this grant, we will be able to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all the students."

"It allows more in-depth learning," said Narcisse. "We're also able to fund extra equipment for teachers, professional development and talent development to deepen our work."

Specifically, the SLC funds will be used to hire a program manager for the school's parent resource room; provide training for teachers in research-based math programs as part of the Johns Hopkins Talent Development High Schools Model; institute the development of a personal education plan for each student; and coordinate multiple parent and community engagement workshops. Additionally, the funding will be used to send students on two visits per year to local college campuses. The school will also invite motivational speakers to visit the school monthly.

University Prep started its inaugural year with 150 ninth-graders, 14 full-time teachers, additional staff members and Pitt's Master of Teaching interns and undergraduate tutors. There is also a full-time parent engagement specialist, as well as volunteer parent advocates. The school hosted a Family Day on the first day of school, during which time parents shadowed their children during classes.

"Parents play a very important role," said Narcisse. "If they're not on the same page, trying to get their kids to the top, we're fighting two-fold. With a new school and a new concept, we're working on pre-setting a culture for success. The expectations we set now will be the legacy of this school."

Next year, the school will welcome students in grades 6-8, expanding to a 6-10 model, and with the start of the 2011-2012 school year, the expansion to a 6-12 school will be complete.

"As we grow towards the 6-12 model, we'll be able to take students in as sixth-graders and guide them through the seven years," said Narcisse. "We'll be able to say, 'here's what we do here,' and make sure they're following that path."

PITTSBURGH DIRECTORY schools

K-5 Schools

Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5
Viola Burgess, Principal
810 Arch St., 15212
412-323-4100

Pittsburgh Arsenal PreK-5
Ruthie Rea, Principal
215 39th St., 15201
412-622-7307

Pittsburgh Banksville PreK-5
Dr. Patricia Washington, Principal
1001 Carnahan Rd., 15216
412-571-7400

Pittsburgh Beechwood PreK-5
Sally Rifugiato, Principal
810 Rockland Ave., 15216
412-571-7390

Pittsburgh Concord K-5
Susan Barie, Principal
2350 Brownsville Rd., 15210
412-885-7755

Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5
Monica Lamar, Principal
6200 Stanton Ave., 15206
412-665-5000

Pittsburgh Fulton PreK-5
Kevin Bivins, Principal
5799 Hampton St., 15206
412-665-4590

Pittsburgh Grandview K-5
Dr. Ethel Flam, Principal
845 McLain St., 15210
412-488-6605

Pittsburgh Liberty K-5
Barabara Soroczak, Acting Principal
601 Filbert St., 15232
412-622-8450

Pittsburgh Linden K-5
Carla Berdnik, Principal
725 S. Linden Ave., 15208
412-665-3996

Pittsburgh Minadeo PreK-5
Glory Getty, Principal
6502 Lilac St., 15217
412-422-3520

Pittsburgh Morrow PreK-5
Dr. Annette Scott-Piper, Principal
1611 Davis Ave., 15212
412-734-6600

Pittsburgh Phillips K-5
Rodney Necciai, Principal
1901 Sarah St., 15203
412-488-5190

Pittsburgh Roosevelt PreK-5
Primary Campus (PreK-1)
Vincent Lewandowski, Principal
200 The Boulevard, 15210
412-885-7788

Pittsburgh Roosevelt PreK-5
Intermediate Campus (2-5)
Vincent Lewandowski, Principal
17 W. Cherryhill St., 15210
412-885-7780

Pittsburgh Spring Hill K-5
Todd Van Horn, Principal
1351 Damas St., 15212
412-323-3000

Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5
Kathy Moran, Principal
785 Dunster St., 15226
412-571-7420

Pittsburgh Whittier K-5
Elaine Wallace, Principal
150 Meridan St., 15211
412-488-8211

Pittsburgh Woolslair K-5
Victoria Burgess, Principal
501 40th St., 15224
412-623-8800

K-8 Schools

Pittsburgh Brookline K-8
Valerie Lucas, Principal
500 Woodbourne Ave., 15226
412-571-7380

Pittsburgh Carmalt PreK-8
Dr. Sandra Och, Principal
1550 Breining St., 15226
412-885-7760

Pittsburgh Faison PreK-8
Primary Campus (PreK-4)
Yvona Smith, Principal
7430 Tioga St., 15208
412-247-0305

Pittsburgh Faison PreK-8
Intermediate Campus (5-8)
Kevin McGuire, Principal
8080 Bennett St., 15221
412-247-7840

Pittsburgh Greenfield K-8
Eric Rosenthal, Principal
1 Alger St., 15207
412-422-3535

Pittsburgh Lincoln K-8
Primary Campus (K-4)
Dr. Regina Holley, Principal
328 Lincoln Ave., 15206
412-665-3980

Pittsburgh Lincoln
Intermediate Campus (5-8)
Dr. Regina Holley, Principal
7109 Hermitage St., 15208
412-247-7880

Pittsburgh Manchester PreK-8
Henry Stephens, Principal
Theresa Cherry, Acting Principal
1612 Manhattan St., 15233
412-323-3100

Pittsburgh Mifflin PreK-8
Edward Littlehale, Principal
1290 Mifflin Rd., 15207
412-464-4350

Pittsburgh Miller PreK-8
Alvin Gipson, Principal
2055 Bedford Ave., 15219
412-338-3830

Pittsburgh Montessori PreK-8
Cynthia Wallace, Principal
201 S. Graham St., 15206
412-665-2010

Pittsburgh Schaeffer K-8
Primary Campus (K-3)
Dr. Cynthia Zurchin, Co-Principal
LaVerne Anthony, Co-Principal
1235 Clairhaven St., 15205
412-928-6560

Pittsburgh Schaeffer K-8
Intermediate Campus (4-8)
Dr. Cynthia Zurchin, Co-Principal
LaVerne Anthony, Co-Principal
3128 Allendale St., 15204
412-778-2170

Pittsburgh Stevens K-8
Virginia Hill, Principal
822 Crucible St., 15220
412-928-6550

Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8
Laura Dadey, Principal
4801 Stanton Ave., 15201
412-665-2040

Pittsburgh Vann K-8
Derrick Hardy, Principal
631 Watt St., 15219
412-622-8455

Pittsburgh Westwood K-8
Denyse Littles-Cullens, Principal
508 Shadyhill Rd., 15205
412-928-6570

Middle Schools

Pittsburgh Allegheny 6-8
Toni Kendrick, Principal
810 Arch St., 15212
412-323-4115

Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8
Debra Rucki, Principal
220 40th St., 15201
412-622-5740

Pittsburgh Classical 6-8
Valerie Merlo, Principal
1463 Chartiers Ave., 15220
412-928-3110

Pittsburgh Frick 6-8
Dr. Wayne Walters, Principal
107 Thackeray St., 15213
412-622-5980

Pittsburgh Rogers CAPA 6-8
Ronald Jones, Principal
5525 Columbo St., 15206
412-665-2000

Pittsburgh Schiller 6-8
Paula Heinzman, Principal
1018 Peralta St., 15212
412-323-4190

Pittsburgh South Brook 6-8
Gina Reichert, Principal
779 Dunster St., 15226
412-572-8170

Pittsburgh South Hills 6-8
Dr. Deborah Ann Cox, Principal
595 Crane Ave., 15216
412-572-8130

Pittsburgh Sterrett 6-8
Sarah Sumpter, Principal
7100 Reynolds St., 15208
412-247-7870

Accelerated Learning Academies (ALA)

Pittsburgh Arlington PreK-8
Primary Campus (PreK-2)
Dr. Cindi Muehlbauer, Principal
2429 Charcot St., 15210
412-488-4700

Pittsburgh Arlington PreK-8
Intermediate Campus (3-8)
Dr. Cindi Muehlbauer, Principal
2500 Jonquil Way, 15210
412-488-3641

Pittsburgh Colfax K-8
David May-Stein, Principal
2332 Beechwood Blvd., 15217
412-422-3525

Pittsburgh Fort Pitt PreK-5
Verna Arnold, Principal
5101 Hillcrest St., 15224
412-665-2020

Pittsburgh King PreK-8
Joan Murphy, Principal
50 Montgomery Place, 15212
412-323-4160

Pittsburgh Murray PreK-8
James Nath, Principal
800 Rectenwald St., 15210
412-488-6815

Pittsburgh Northview PreK-5
David May, Principal
310 Mt. Pleasant Rd., 15214
412-323-3130

Pittsburgh Rooney 6-8
Jennifer Mikula, Principal
3530 Fleming Ave., 15212
412-732-6700

Pittsburgh Weil PreK-8
Mark McClinchie, Principal
2250 Centre Ave., 15219
412-338-3840

High Schools

Pittsburgh Allderdice High School
Robert Scherrer, Principal
2409 Shady Ave., 15217
412-422-4800

Pittsburgh Brashear High School
John Vater, Principal
590 Crane Ave., 15216
412-571-7300

Pittsburgh CAPA High School
Dr. Rhonda Taliaferro, Principal
111 Ninth Street, 15222
412-338-6100

Pittsburgh Carrick High School
Dr. Jennifer Murphy, Principal
125 Parkfield St., 15210
412-885-7700

Pittsburgh Langley High School
Linda Baehr, Principal
2940 Sheraden Blvd., 15204
412-778-2100

Pittsburgh Oliver High School
Dennis Chakey, Principal
2323 Brighton Rd., 15212
412-323-3250

Pittsburgh Peabody High School
Melissa Friez, Principal
515 N. Highland Ave., 15206
412-665-2050

Pittsburgh Perry High School
Nina Sacco, Principal
3875 Perrysville Ave., 15214
412-323-3400

Pittsburgh Schenley High School
Sophia Facaros, Principal
129 Denniston Ave., 15206
412-665-2260

University Prep 6-12
Dr. Sito Narcisse, Principal
3117 Centre Ave., 15219
412-622-5900

Pittsburgh Westinghouse High
Dr. Shemeca Crenshaw, Principal
1101 N. Murtland Ave., 15208
412-665-3940

Special Schools

Pittsburgh Conroy
Rudley Mrvos, Principal
1398 Page St., 15233
412-323-3105

Pittsburgh Gifted Center
Dr. Jerry Minsinger, Principal
1400 Crucible St., 15205
412-338-3820

Pittsburgh McNaugher
Jane Doncaster, Principal
2610 Maple St., 15214
412-323-3115

Pittsburgh Pioneer
Dr. Sylbia Kunst, Principal
775 Dunster St., 15226
412-571-7405

Pittsburgh South Side Annex Transition Center
Rhonda Brown
93 South 10th St., 15203
412-488-5185

Pittsburgh Student Achievement Ctr.
Dalhart Dobbs Jr., Principal
925 Brushton Ave., 15208
412-247-7860

Early Childhood Education Centers

Pittsburgh Bon Air E.C. Center
252 Fordyce St., 15210
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh Chartiers E.C. Center
3799 Chartiers Ave., 15204
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh Conroy E.C. Center
1398 Page St., 15233
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh Homewood E.C. Center
7100 Hamilton Ave., 15208
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh McCleary E.C. Center
5251 Holmes St., 15201
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh Reizenstein E.C. Center
129 Denniston Ave., 15206
412-325-4291

Pittsburgh Spring Garden E.C. Center
1501 Spring Garden Ave., 15212
412-325-4291



Teacher of Excellence

Linda Konczal-Evans wins award, grant for Pittsburgh Beechwood

BY RICH FAHEY

Even after 29 years in education, Linda Konczal-Evans gets butterflies the night before the first day of school.

"I can't sleep," she said with a laugh, after spending a fitful night in anticipation of meeting a new class of kindergartners for the first time just after Labor Day.

The newness and excitement that marks the beginning of the school year at Pittsburgh Beechwood PreK-5 is always there for her. "I still love it," she said. "I don't think you can do it well if you don't."

Konczal-Evans was one of seven southwestern Pennsylvania educators to receive the 2007-08 Teacher of Excellence Award from the Teacher Excellence Center, a professional development organization. She and the other recipients received a \$2,500 grant for their schools. Eleven other Pittsburgh teachers were among the 101 finalists for the award.

At Pittsburgh Beechwood, the grant money will be used to fund a program on the history of Pittsburgh and its landmarks.

A graduate of South Hills High School, Konczal-Evans graduated from Point Park College and received her master's degree in education from Slippery Rock University. After being nominated every year since the award has been presented, she won the award in the first year that she completed the process, which includes a nomination form and program application, a written essay question, and a personal interview.

2007-08 Teacher of Excellence award winner Linda Konczal-Evans works with Rhiannon Carrozzi at Pittsburgh Beechwood PreK-5.

PHOTO: JASON COHN

See TEACHER Page 14