



**Pittsburgh
Public Schools**

**EXCELLENCE
FOR ALL**

Pittsburgh Peabody Stakeholders Working Group

IB 6-12 Site Selection Committee **List of Members**

Name	Represents	Represents
Shimira Williams	Alumni	Schenley IBDP
Tanisha Jones	Alumni	Schenley IBDP
Lena Andrews	Alumni	Schenley IBDP
Abass Kamara	Alumni	Schenley IBDP
Roberta Strauss	Central Office Staff	Budget
Pete Camarda	Central Office Staff	Budget
Oscar Huber	Central Office Staff	DP Coordinator
Paul Gill	Central Office Staff	Facilities
Wayne Walters	Central Office Staff	Frick Admin
Cate Reed	Central Office Staff	HSE
Mark Conner	Central Office Staff	Marketing & Communications
Sharon Smith	Central Office Staff	IB MYP Coordinator
Ted Vassar	Central Office Staff	Transportation
Karen Goldman	Parent	Pittsburgh Alderdice, IB Steering Committee
Roxanne Pearsall	Parent	Pittsburgh Dilworth
Leslie Ekstrand	Parent	Pittsburgh Frick
Lori Rongier	Parent	Pittsburgh Fulton/Schenley
David Atkinson	Parent	Future
Darla Cravatta	Parent	Pittsburgh Liberty
Matt Ferrante	Parent	Pittsburgh Liberty
Peter Harvey	Parent	Pittsburgh Liberty/Frick
Abigail Sheehan	Parent	Pittsburgh Linden
Leslie Hammond	Parent	Pittsburgh Linden
Sara Taylor	Parent	Pittsburgh Linden
Josette Fitzgibbons	Parent	Pittsburgh Phillips
John Tokarski	Parent	Pittsburgh Schenley
Amy McCall	Parent	Pittsburgh Schenley
Seana Brown	Student	Pittsburgh Schenley
Minrose Straussman	Student	Pittsburgh Schenley
Len Casilli	Teacher	Schenley IB Diploma
Wendi Obritz	Teacher	Schenley IB Diploma
Joe Ehman	Teacher	Schenley IB MYP & DP
Kelly McKrell	Teacher	Schenley IB MYP & DP

*Please be aware that all committee members were provided with the same information and opportunity to participate in the process. 17 non-district committee members participated consistently throughout the process and voted unanimously on a final recommendation. District staff did not participate in the voting process.

International Baccalaureate 6-12 Site Recommendation Committee

Goal of committee

To rank order permanent sites, from within the current PPS buildings, for the International Baccalaureate 6-12 School, beginning in the 2012-13 school year—and provide these rankings to the Superintendent. Until that time, the school will be located at Pittsburgh Frick in 2008-09 and in the Reizenstein facility for 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12.

Where we are now:

- The Board of Directors voted at their June 2008 legislative meeting to open this school in the fall of 2009-10 in the Reizenstein facility with grades 6-10, adding a grade each year to make a complete 6-12 school in 2011-12
- The Pittsburgh Schenley facility has closed—and the Pittsburgh Schenley school has been moved to the Reizenstein facility with grades 10-12

Requirements of Site Selection Members

- Agree to attend at least 80% of all meetings
- Keep information within the group until a final recommendation is made to the Superintendent
- Be committed to the idea of an IB 6-12 school and want to move forward with selecting an optimal site
- Agree to factors for deliberation including finances, space and student needs

Members to be Appointed

- Teachers from MYP and DP IB programmes
- Parents from IS/IB elementary, middle and high schools
- 3 IBDP alumni
- Students from IB high schools
- Community members

Representatives From Central Office From

- High School Excellence
- Facilities
- Budget
- Marketing & Communications
- Principals at Pittsburgh Frick 6-9 & Pittsburgh Schenley
- MYP coordinator
- DP coordinator



We Will Become a High-Performing School District

Our Vision is:

EXCELLENCE
FOR ALL

Improving student achievement at every level
Improving employee performance at every level

Superintendent's Introductory Remarks for the IB Site Selection Committee
August 9, 2008



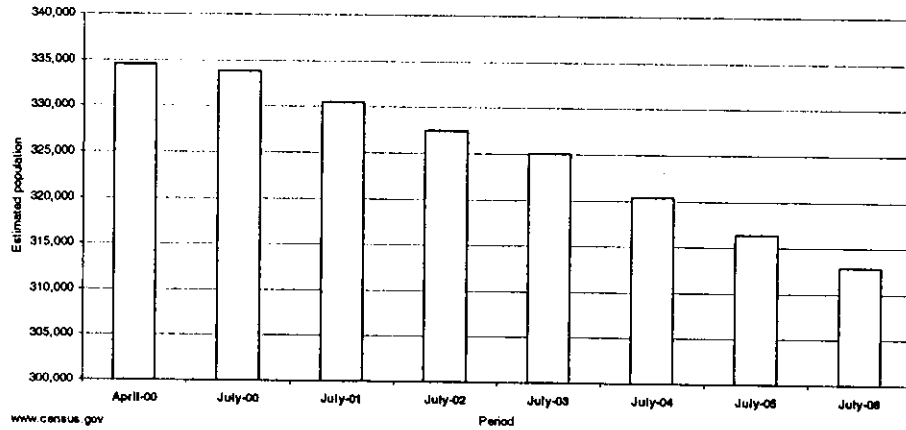
To Do So, We Must Address Major Issues

1. Enrollment:
 - Systemic loss of students without corresponding adjustments in school programs and staffing
2. Financial:
 - Enormous structural gap despite ample revenue
3. Academic:
 - Only pockets of academic growth despite a low student/teacher ratio and high per pupil expenditures
 - Lack of systemic central office service delivery

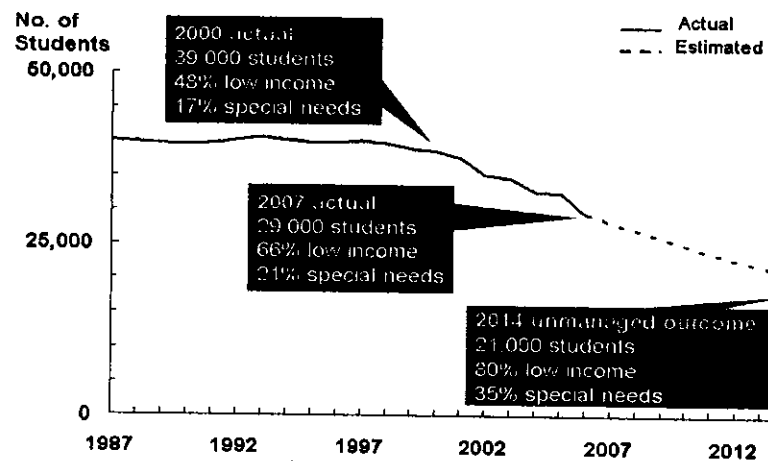


The City is Shrinking

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
Census population estimates
2000 to 2006



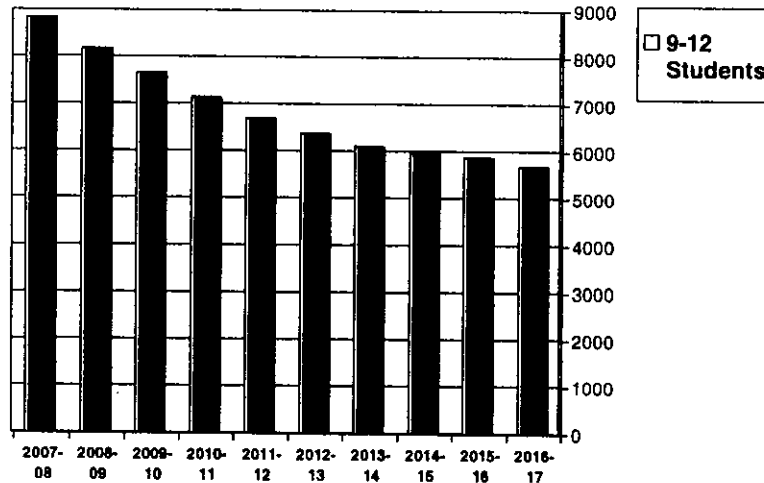
Enrollment Decline Mirrors City's





H.S. Enrollment Is Declining Faster

PPS 9-12 enrollment projected to decrease from 31% of total enrollment in 2007-08 to 25% of State's projected total enrollment in 2016-17



We Are Exercising Fiscal Restraint

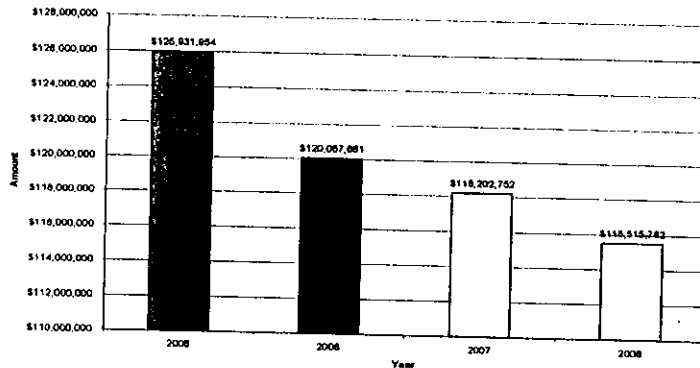
Major Contributions to Holding Line on Spending

- Internal protocols requiring reductions to offset necessary increases in spending
- Right-Sizing savings - \$14 million annually
- Significant reductions in personnel – savings of \$10 million annually in General Fund Payroll



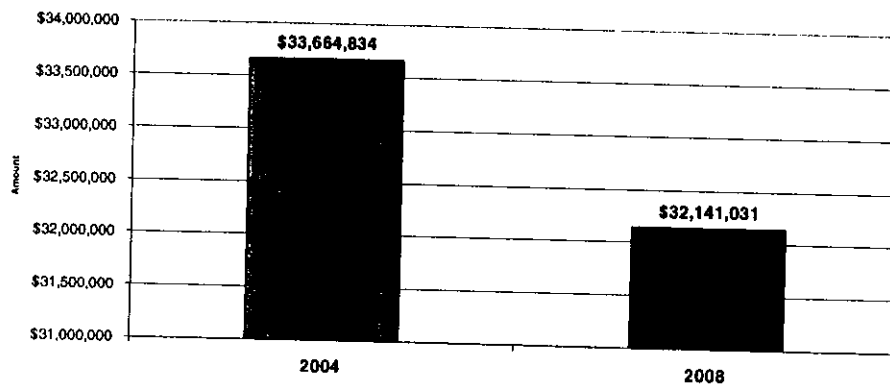
Despite Salary Increases, We Cut Payroll by \$10 Million Annually Over 3 Years

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH
Gross General Fund Payrolls as of July 3, 2008



We Have Reduced Central Office Positions by \$1.6 Million (90.5 FTEs)

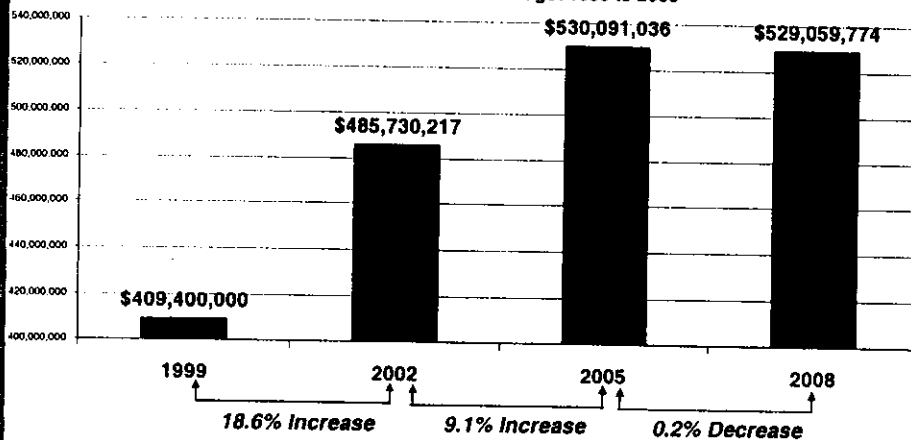
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH
FTE budget 2004 to 2008
2008 includes \$1.06 million in 14 privately funded positions





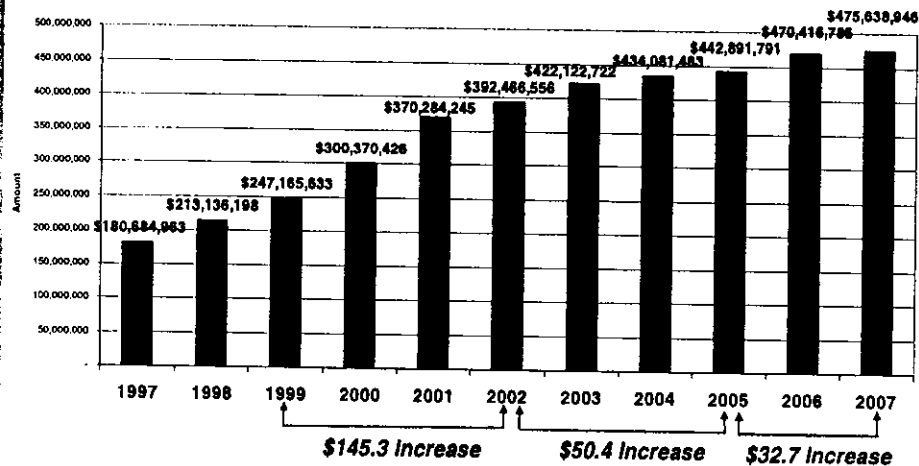
We Have Reversed the Prior Steep Upward Trend in Spending

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH
Comparison of General Fund Budget 1999 to 2008



We Have Dramatically Reduced the Rate of Increase in Debt Obligation

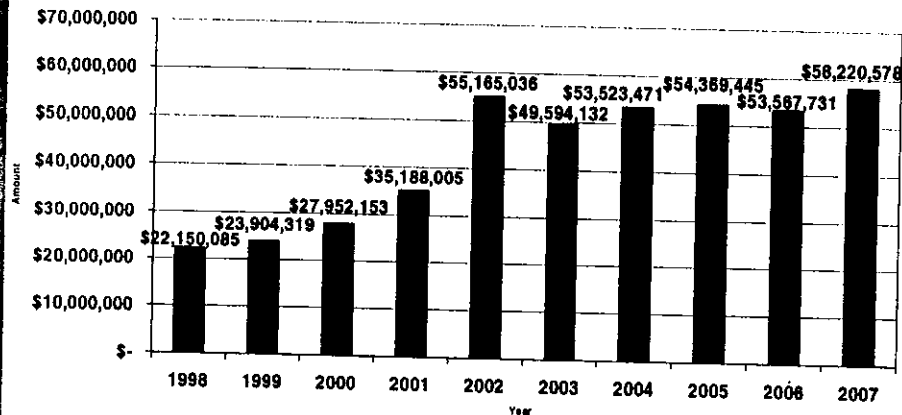
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH
General Obligation Bonds Outstanding 1997 to 2007





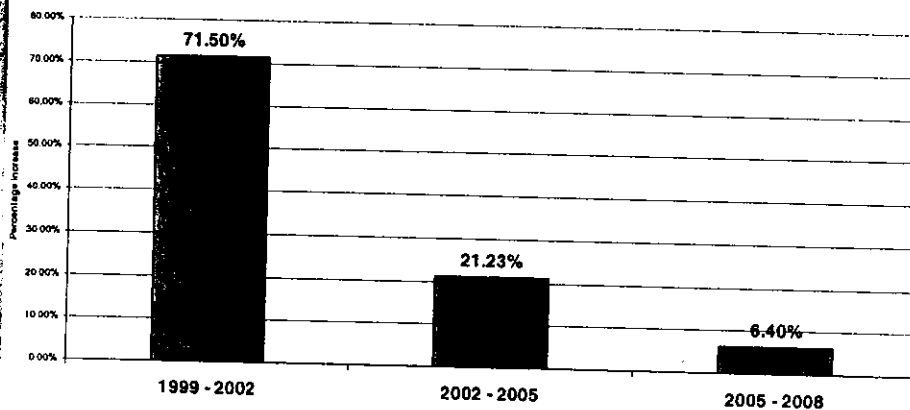
We Had to Address Debt Service -It Grew by \$36 Million Over 10 Years

PPS Debt Service from 1998 to 2007



We Have Significantly Reduced the Rate of Increase on Debt Service

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH
General Fund Budget debt service increase 1999 to 2008



Debt Service Includes both payments toward principal and interest



We Recognized We Could Not Afford to Renovate the Schenley Facility

- Currently we must cut \$40 million in recurring budget expenses by 2010
- A \$76.2 million debt obligation for Schenley renovation would have required additional debt service payments of \$7 million each year for 20 years
- In 4 years, debt service would have approached 15% of General Fund budget, limiting our ability to borrow
- \$7 million in debt service equates to the reduction of approximately 79 positions (at teacher salary levels)
- We cannot afford to make more budget cuts on top of those we must already make



We've Made Major Accomplishments While Holding Spending in Check

- New curriculum in most grades and subjects
- Dramatic expansion of professional development
- Creation and launch of PULSE: Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System of Excellence
- Coaches in every school
- Turning data into useful information through extensive training and use of technology to support 4Sight assessments
- Reaching a contract settlement with the teachers
- Securing private funding for *The Pittsburgh Promise* for today's students and our future generations



Excellence for All **Vision for School Redesign**

A system of school options that offer high quality and academically rigorous programs and promote high student achievement in the most equitable and cost-effective manner



Our High Schools Are Failing to Meet the Needs of Too Many Students

We are addressing the fact that too many students are:

Opting-out:

- Over 27% of the city's high school students choose to attend non-PPS schools

Dropping-out:

- Over 35% drop-out

Zoning-out:

- Of the remaining 11th graders, 49% are not proficient in reading and 60% are not proficient in math



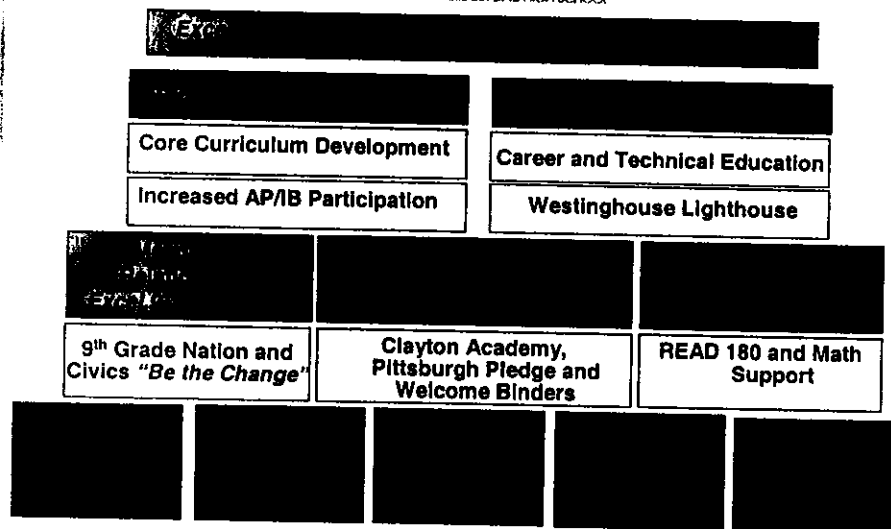
We Have Sequenced *Excel.9-12*, The Plan for High School Excellence

- In April 2006, we recommended that our high school reform plan take a phased approach over five years
- Year One (2007-08) focused on initiatives that address the core unmet needs of our students and provide a strong foundation upon which to build
- We emphasized that this work is complex and will require a significant shift in district and school culture
- We committed to exploring exciting new programs and options for Years Two (2008-09) through Five (2011-12), including university partnerships and theme-based schools



the Pittsburgh PROMISE

CREATING A FUTURE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL





New IB 6-12 School is Among Critical New Secondary Learning Options

- Feb 2008: Board approved University Prep 6-12 opening in 2008-09
- June 2008: Board vote to open International Baccalaureate 6-12 in 2009-10
- June 2008: Board vote to open Science and Technology 6-12 magnet in 2009-10
- July 2008: Board vote to open Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 magnet in 2009-10

Research to help inform the Work

FROM AUGUST MEETING REVIEW ASAP NO RUSH TO REVIEW HOLD ON REVIEWING

Title	Description	Priority to Review
Blight Map	MAP: Lena will explain at meeting	
Building Permit Report	MAP: Shows where permits are being given in city	
Central Crime Points Map	MAP: Crime points in the central city	
Charts	Charts from first meeting in August in soft copy	
Chicago Charter	ARTICLE: reviewing 6-12 schools in Chicago	
Code Violations	MAP: Where building code violations have occurred	
Condemnations Map	MAP: Where building condemnations are	
Dark Blue	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
Dark Orange	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
Dark Purple	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
URA Development	SPREADSHEET: Where URA is planning development	
Education Week Edge Found for Chicago...	ARTICLE: Relating to Chicago study on 6-12 schools	
Families living in poverty	MAP: Where families in poverty live	
Housing Units Owner Occupied Age 60 Plus	MAP: Where people 60+ live in city	
Housing Units Occupied	MAP: Where houses are occupied in the city	
Housing Values Map	MAP: Values of homes in Pittsburgh	
ILACLCE Exec Summary	Executive summary of proposed school from Aug mtg.	
Indicators	KEY: For colored maps	
Junior High	ARTICLE: On elimination of middle schools pros & cons	
Light Blue	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
Light Orange	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
Light Purple	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
List of Members	List of members from our group from Aug mtg.	
Mark's Intro for IB Committee	POWER POINT: From Mark's intro at Aug mtg. *suggest that those not at August 8 meeting should read	
Median Household Income	MAP: Household incomes	
Mortgage Foreclosure Maps	MAP: Where homes are being foreclosed	
MVA Map	MAP: Lena will explain at meeting	
North Crime Points Individual	MAP: Crime points in the North of the city	
Overview of Committee	Overview of committee's goals from Aug meeting	
Percent Delinquent Map	MAP: Delinquent properties in the city	
Percent Tax Lien Map	MAP: Properties with a tax lien	
Pop Change Map	MAP: Population change	
Projected Enrollment	MAP: Projected enrollment at IB from Aug mtg.	
Rethinking High Schools	ARTICLE: Regarding successful 7-12 schools	

School Age Population Map	MAP: School age population in Pittsburgh	
Schools Meeting Minimum	MAP: Schools list from Aug. mtg.	
Single Head of Household	MAP: Where single moms live in the city	
South Crime Individual Points	MAP: South crime points in city	
Trying to Find Solutions in Chaotic Middle	ARTICLE: Regarding middle schools	
Vacant Residential Homes Map	MAP: Where vacant homes are in the city	
West Crime Points Individual Map	MAP: Where crime occurs in the west	
Yellow	MAP: Related to real estate map housing values	
Zip Codes	SPREADSHEET: Zip codes of current 6 & 9 IB students	

**Pittsburgh Public Schools
IB 6-12 Site Selection
Committee
Recommendations**

December 2008

Overview

The process of decision making for this committee followed three general steps:

1. Considering the hard data, and reviewing tangible criteria: In this step, we first looked at the schools that met the initial guidelines established by the Superintendent. These included a current occupancy of less than 50% capacity, as well as adequate classrooms, computer and science labs, and other facilities such as sports and performance amenities. Six schools met these standards.

Next, we considered the results of a parent survey to develop additional criteria that included overall facility amenities, location and access, and financial costs involved in upgrading the building. At this point, the field was narrowed to four schools.

The final piece of this step was touring each school, then developing a scoring system through which to analyze the information that had been presented.

2. Considering intangible, qualitative factors: Once the hard data was scored and considered, we then took a step back and looked at qualitative factors, such as potential community partnerships, easily accessible neighborhood amenities, and access to cultural facilities. Two schools were eliminated during this part of the process.
3. Making a recommendation: As will be explained later in this document, we reviewed all of the information about the two finalist facilities, and came to a unanimous recommendation.

Charter to Committee

The superintendent chartered the IB School Site Selection Committee to recommend a permanent site for the IB 6-12 school. The recommendation had to be developed from within the current PPS buildings, with the intention of moving into the permanent site beginning in the 2012-13 school year. He also outlined the following important factors for consideration:

- Fiscal constraints of the school district
- Academic space available in PPS, and academic needs of the program
- Family and student needs
- Fair and equal consideration of all ideas

A committee was formed that included parents from each IB school level (elementary, middle and high school, current IB high school students and teachers, appropriate PPS staff (transportation, facilities, finance) and other community representatives. To winnow the candidate facilities, the Superintendent presented us with an initial list of criteria to consider:

- <50% occupancy
- 50+ Classrooms
- 4+ Computer Labs
- Pre-existing high school ready science labs
- Gymnasium
- Pool

Based on these criteria, we were able to develop a short list of six facilities:

- Connelly
- Langley
- Oliver
- Peabody
- Reizenstein
- Westinghouse

Reviewing Parent Survey Results

Before our first meeting, the district sent out 1600 surveys to parents of students attending schools that would feed into the IB 6-12 program. These include Frick, Linden, Liberty, Phillips, Fulton, Northview and Manchester.

The goal of the survey was to assess interest in the IB program and to receive feedback from parents about what would be important to the facility. One thing to point out here is that a high percentage of interest and response was from families that live in the east quadrant. The survey did receive a 20% response rate, which we felt was normal.

What we found wasn't surprising: parents believe the academic quality of the program to be the most important and facility amenities, such as a pool, an auditorium and an overall welcoming building are critical.

One item that scored high was the perception of the community. However, we found that each school on the short list had issues around perception. Also community perception was very difficult to quantify. So, as a committee, we chose not to rule out any school based on the perception of the community. And, we decided to focus on measurable tangibles.

Within the difficult discussion about community perception, however, we did review crime statistics for the surrounding neighborhoods near each school. This led us to two realizations:

1. That the PPS commitment is that every school is a safe school and that we, as parents, community members and educators knew that the district would guarantee that and
2. That the crime statistics we were looking at were in a vacuum of sorts. We couldn't compare one area to another – because there is crime all over the city.

So, what we knew was that we needed to focus on developing strong criteria that reflected what parents would feel comfortable with, which led us to looking at data.

Reviewing Data

The data that we focused on was the student demographics of the IB program and the feeder patterns of the short list of schools.

We understand that there is a belief that a central location is an issue. However, we saw that while the IB program was in the most central of areas for years – Oakland – the student demographics show that the IB Program drew primarily from the East End area of the City.

We also looked at feeder patterns of each school, to get a picture of where the students that live in the feeder patterns of our short list of schools attend. We found some interesting information:

- 70% opt out of the Oliver High School feeder pattern
- 75% opt out of the Peabody High School feeder pattern
- 62% opt out of the Westinghouse High School feeder pattern

With that we also saw that Westinghouse serves the greatest percentage of students in their feeder pattern, and the Peabody feeder pattern is losing the greatest number of kids to non-Pittsburgh Public Schools (private, parochial and charter).

Developing, Reviewing and Scoring Criteria

At our first meeting, members were asked to list items they deemed to be of importance around the three categories listed below. Once a list of criteria was established for all three categories, we were asked to rank them in order of importance via an online survey generated by Cate Reed.

1. Programmatic Needs and Facility Amenities: In addition to the basic amenities identified by the short list, i.e. a pool, a gymnasium, etc, issues such as the availability of an auditorium, outdoor athletic facilities, large or numerous spaces for Diploma Programme examinations, and an appropriate number of computer labs were identified as criteria. Natural light was also established as an important criterion.
2. Location of the school and the transportation issues related to its location: Most criteria address the need for efficient transportation into and out of the school community, though the presence of community resources, such as a library, green spaces, and coffee shops, and of organizations willing to establish partnerships with the school were clearly taken into consideration.
3. Financial issues and limitations: In identifying criteria for this last category, committee members gravely considered the impact that selecting a building could have on the school district's finances. The criteria developed by the group demonstrate a commitment to minimize said impact without overlooking the IB programs' needs.

Prior to scoring the facilities, we visited each site; spoke with architects, principals, accounting personnel and other members of the Pittsburgh Public School staff; analyzed information from PPS including parent surveys and demographic data, data from the city of Pittsburgh, URA and crime statistics; listened to presentations from community planners and heavily debated ideas and ideals among ourselves.

When it was time to narrow our selection in preparation for making a recommendation, we developed a scoring rubric. Each school has been ranked based on whether or not they met almost none of the criteria, some of the criteria or virtually all of the criteria and receive a value of 0, 1 or 2, respectively.

From the "short list" of schools from which we were to choose a site, we decided to eliminate two schools from contention without scoring. Those schools are Connelly and Langley. Connelly has limited usable space for an IB program and would need to be completely rebuilt. Also, it is located in an area that is removed from the neighborhood of most IB students. Langley was removed from list for two reasons. One, it no longer fit the original criteria for being put on the list by having less than 50% occupancy, and two because it is the only PPS high school in the western portion of the City, and closing it was thought to greatly undermine that community.

Proceeding with scoring the remaining schools, Oliver, Peabody, Reizenstein and Westinghouse, we evaluated them by assigning a score of 0, 1 or 2 for each category: facility/amenities, location and financial. Schools will appear in alphabetical order.

1. *Oliver*

Oliver received a "2" for facility/amenities because it had all of the essential spaces that were important to the parents (auditorium, gymnasium and natural light) and the IB experts on the committee (which included additional testing spaces).

It scored a "0" on location because most IB students live in the East End and would not be able to get to the site on the North Side using one PAT bus, or have a short commute for the lower grades, which was a high priority on the parent list as evident from the surveys. In addition, there were not sufficient amenities (libraries, coffee houses, bookstores) for the students to partake of during the time between school ending and post school day activities beginning. In addition, the site is neither accessible to the local universities nor conducive to students biking to and from school.

2. *Peabody*

Peabody, as with Oliver, scored a "1" for financial because some capital improvements are necessary, but it is not a complete overhaul.

Peabody scored a "2" on facility/amenities and location. The school has a beautiful gymnasium and some outdoor athletic space, an auditorium, extra rooms for testing and many of the other preferred amenities.

In regard to the location, it is a short commute, one PAT bus ride or a bike ride away from the home of most IB students, which was also a priority expressed in the parent survey that was spoken of earlier. Peabody is within close proximity of libraries, coffee houses, book stores, retail shops and restaurants, so students will have safe and inviting places to go between the end of their school day and the start of an after school activity.

3. *Reizenstein*

Reizenstein received a "2" for location for many of the same reasons Peabody did. It is in East Liberty, located across from the soon to be opened Bakery Square development.

It received a "1" for facility/amenities because even though it is in a great location and has outdoor athletic spaces, it does not have an auditorium or quiet rooms for classes or exams.

To correct the items that need to be changed based on parental requests and input from teachers and students currently utilizing the space, PPS architects and accountants informed us that it would be a "rebuild." To get the spaces requested and eliminate the sound travel and interference between classrooms because of the "open" construction design, it would be cheaper to raze the building and build what we wanted than attempt to fix the problems. Even though several of us thought that was a great idea, we were reminded that part of our charge was to be fiscally responsible. Hence, Reizenstein would require significant cost to bring it to a presentable level to house the IB community.

4. *Westinghouse*

Westinghouse has an incredibly beautiful facility. It has all the amenities that have been listed and more, which earned it a "2" for facilities/amenities. There is more than enough room for extra testing rooms and there is enough ground space to more than adequately accommodate separate entrances for middle and high school students.

The facility was recently renovated, and would cost virtually nothing because it is not in need of any capital improvements, which rendered it a "2" in the category of financial. The IB program could simply move into the space.

The drawback is the location. It is not easily accessible by multiple PAT buses and may require students to take multiple buses to get there, even though it is in the East End. The thoroughfare has not been updated or modified to accommodate bikers, or walkers, if coming from outside of the immediate Homewood area. Moreover, there are no bookstores, libraries and/or coffee houses, and the like, that would be easily accessible to students between school's end and activities beginning. Therefore it received a "0" for location.

As seen from the final scores, Peabody received a “5” and Westinghouse received a “4” overall. A one-point difference was not enough to make a final recommendation. So, we, debated more points, reviewed information from an East Liberty community leader, had even more lively discussions, revisited and questioned our original charge along with parent, student and community needs.

Choosing a Neighborhood

At this point, we stepped back from the hard data and took a look at the communities surrounding the schools. A presentation by Ernie Hogan, Deputy Executive Director for East Liberty Development, Inc., helped us to reach a turning point in our discussions. East Liberty is a “happening place” right now. Eastside, Bakery Square, a planned Target store – all of these recent and upcoming developments add to the vitality and excitement of the community. In addition, ELDI is working throughout the neighborhood on a wide range of projects and activities, from greening efforts to housing development. They regularly partner with schools and other agencies to implement their programs. The opportunity in this neighborhood for an IB school to become an integral part of the community fabric is phenomenal.

Making a Recommendation: Peabody

The IB Site Selection Committee used several factors to arrive at a recommendation. First, we considered the priorities of parents that were elicited in a survey. These priorities included perception of community, facility amenities, proximity to home and public transportation. Next we analyzed other data including demographic and feeder patterns. The demographic patterns showed that three out of four students come from the East End. The feeder patterns showed that - of the East End schools considered - Peabody had the most students from feeder schools opt out. We also learned that a large portion of the student at the current Schenley High School come from the Peabody feeder pattern. We developed multiple criteria grouped as facility amenities, location and financial factors. Peabody scored higher than Oliver, Reizenstein and Westinghouse.

Based on all of these factors, the committee unanimously recommends Peabody.

Peabody meets the needs of parents. The school will be located in a diverse, vibrant and growing community that is in close proximity to a large number student's homes. The facility meets the basic needs of the IB program and has additional features such as an auditorium, extra space for IB exams, and some outdoors athletic amenities. The busway is less than a mile from the school, and several PAT buses have routes near Peabody.

Peabody meets the needs of students. Peabody is an easy commute now, and transportation options for students should improve. A bike lane was added to East Liberty Boulevard recently, and more bike lanes are planned including a bike lane on Highland Avenue. The neighborhood also offers services such as a library and coffee shops for older students who have time between the end of school and after school programs.

Peabody meets the needs of PPS. Peabody will be a fiscally prudent choice for the PPS. The facility is in excellent condition and will easily house the IB program. Furthermore

many students in the Peabody feeder pattern currently opt out of Peabody. Locating the IB program there can potentially draw a number of students back into the public schools and grow the enrollment in this currently under-utilized facility.

Finally, after spending time researching facilities, we arrived at a few 'extra' recommendations.

- Parents feel that natural light is important for young people. Peabody has some existing windows beneath the brick veneer, which could be restored. This would be an immense benefit to the facility.
- We urge PPS to engage in community partnerships and pursue developing a greener structure. Green space around the facility would be welcome and could be pursued by PPS. East Liberty Development, Inc. is nationally known for their expertise in greening neighborhoods – they would be a valuable and enthusiastic resource.

In conclusion, the IB Committee engaged in vigorous debate and proceeded in a thoughtful and open-minded manner. Each facility had its own set of strengths and weaknesses. The recommendation to locate the IB program at Peabody is based on the belief that Peabody best meets the needs of the community based on the factors considered by the committee. Peabody is an excellent facility in a good location that will be a fiscally conservative choice. Parents clearly stressed the importance of community, and it is the hope of the committee that the PPS will partner with community groups and the IB program at Peabody will be an integral and part of the community.

**Pittsburgh Public Schools IB 6-12
Site Selection Committee
Recommendations**

Overview

- **Charter**
- **Short List**
- **Survey**
- **Data**
- **Criteria**
- **Recommendations**

Charter

- The superintendent chartered the committee to recommend a site for the IB 6-12 school
 - To rank order permanent sites, from within the current PPS buildings, for the International Baccalaureate 6-12 School, beginning in the 2012-13 school year—and provide these rankings to the Superintendent.

Charter

- The superintendent outlined important factors for consideration
 - Fiscal constraints of the school district
 - Academic space available in PPS, and academic needs of the program
 - Family and student needs
 - Fair and equal consideration of all ideas

Charter

- PPS formed a committee with members from the community...
 - Efforts to achieve a representative committee
 - Parents from IB elementary, middle and high school
 - One IBDP alumni
 - Students from IB high school
 - Community members
 - URA representative

Charter

- ...and members from PPS
 - High School Excellence
 - Facilities
 - Budget
 - Marketing & Communications
 - Principal at Pittsburgh Frick 6-9 (Removed self)
 - Teachers from MYP and DP IB programs
 - MYP coordinator (Removed self)
 - DP coordinator
 - Transportation

Short List

- To winnow the candidate facilities, the Superintendent developed short list criteria
 - <50% occupancy
 - 50+ Classrooms
 - 4+ Computer Labs
 - Pre-existing high school ready science labs
 - Gymnasium
 - Pool

Short List

- Several facilities met those criteria
 - Connelly
 - Langley
 - Oliver
 - Peabody
 - Reizenstein
 - Westinghouse

Survey

- PPS conducted a survey of IB parents
 - 350 responses were received
 - 67% represented K-5 students
 - 33% represented 6-9 students
 - K-5 responses came from across the City
 - 18% from Pittsburgh Phillips
 - 38% from Pittsburgh Liberty
 - 40% from Pittsburgh Linden
 - 6% from Pittsburgh Manchester, Northview & Fulton

Survey

- Parent priorities were identified

Academic Quality	7.8	1
Perception of Community	6.7	2
Facility Amenities	6	3
Proximity to Home	5.5	4
Public Transportation	5.1	5

Data

- The committee analyzed other data
 - Student Demographics
 - Feeder Patterns

Data

- Most students live in the East End

East	69%	74%	1
North	16%	13%	2
South	12%	9%	3
West	2%	3%	4

Data

- The committee identified feeder patterns

Oliver	42%	21%	7%	70%
Peabody	34%	33%	8%	75%
Reizenstein				N/A
Westinghouse	36%	15%	11%	62%

Criteria

- The committee developed criteria
 - Building Program/Facility Amenities
 - Location
 - Financial

Criteria

▪ Building Program/Facility Amenities

- Short List Criteria
- Auditorium
- Natural light
- Computer labs for every 200 children
- Separate entrances for lower and upper grades
- Some outdoor athletic facilities
- 3+ IB exam rooms

Criteria

▪ Location

- Community resources & community partnerships
- Most students should take 1 PAT bus or less
- Bus frequency around school hours
- Separate bus drop off spots
- Access to local universities
- Community with moderate to dense population
- Bicycle Friendly
- Perception of community

Criteria

■ Financial

- Major upgrades not needed for a reasonable time
- 75% of school is used when at full capacity
- All renovations should be completed w/o overtime
- Minimize capital expenditure
- Per pupil renovations costs should not exceed previous projects

Criteria

■ How were the facilities scored?

- Visited each site at least once
- Talked to PPS staff such as architect, principals, etc...
- Analyzed data from PPS, city, URA, etc...
- Listened to presentations from community experts
- Debated amongst the committee

Criteria

- The committee excluded Connelly and Langley
- The committee scored Oliver, Peabody, Reizenstein and Westinghouse

Criteria

Oliver	2	0	1	3
Peabody				
Reizenstein				
Westinghouse				

Criteria

Oliver				
Peabody	2	2	1	5
Reizenstein				
Westinghouse				

Criteria

Oliver				
Peabody				
Reizenstein	1	2	0	3
Westinghouse				

Criteria

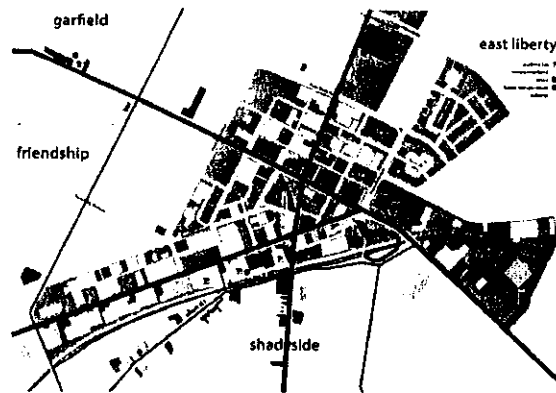
Oliver				
Peabody				
Reizenstein				
Westinghouse	2	0	2	4

Criteria

Oliver	2	0	1	3
Peabody	2	2	1	5
Reizenstein	1	2	0	3
Westinghouse	2	0	2	4

Data: A Turning Point

- East Liberty is a developing neighborhood



Recommendation

- The committee developed a recommendation
 - Developed short list

Recommendation

- The committee developed a recommendation
 - Developed short list
 - Gathered and analyzed survey data

Recommendation

- The committee developed a recommendation
 - Developed short list
 - Gathered and analyzed survey data
 - Gathered and analyzed other data

Recommendation

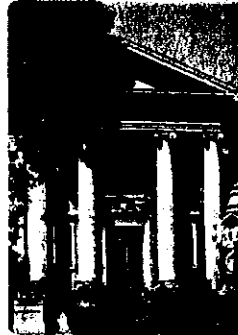
- The committee developed a recommendation
 - Developed short list
 - Gathered and analyzed survey data
 - Gathered and analyzed other data
 - Developed criteria and scored schools

Recommendation

- The committee came to a unanimous decision to select one school...

Recommendation

- The committee came to a unanimous decision to select one school...**PEABODY**



Recommendation

- Peabody meets the needs of **parents**
 - Community development
 - Facility amenities
 - Proximity to home
 - Public transportation



Recommendation

▪ Peabody meets the needs of **students**

- East end location
- Community amenities
- Access to local universities
- Bicycle friendly



Recommendation

▪ Peabody meets the needs of **PPS**

- Minimize capital expenditure
- Can be a draw for feeder schools
- Utilize a currently
• under-utilized school



Recommendation

- The committee also recommends that PPS
 - Daylight existing windows
 - Develop community partnerships
 - Utilize green materials
 - Develop green space



Conclusion

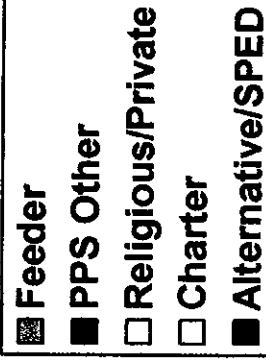
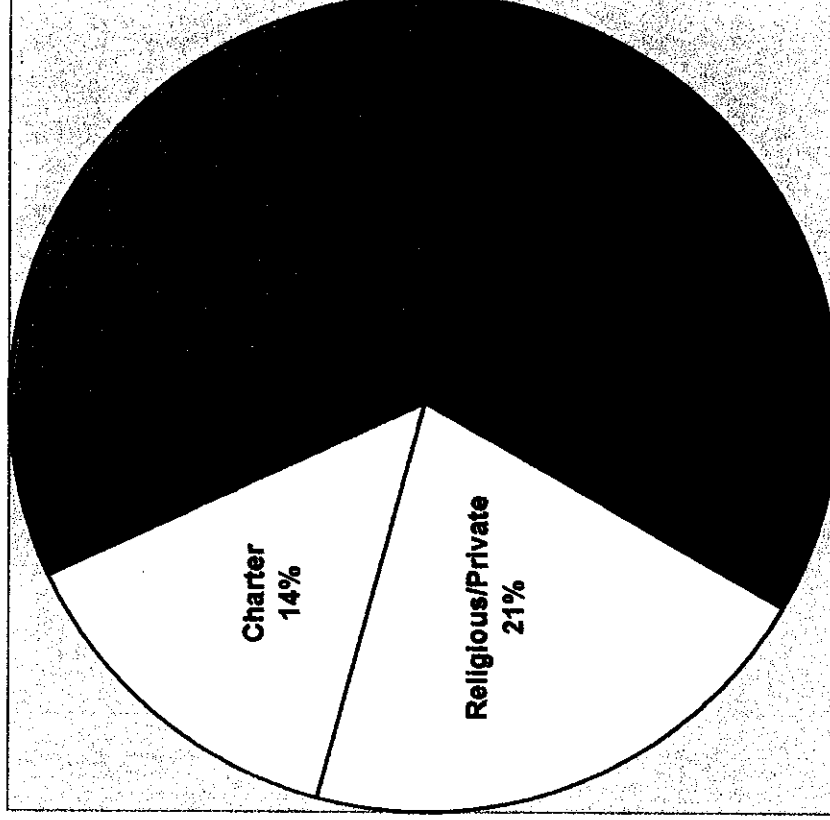
- Summary
 - Short List
 - Survey
 - Other data
 - Criteria
- Recommendation
 - Peabody



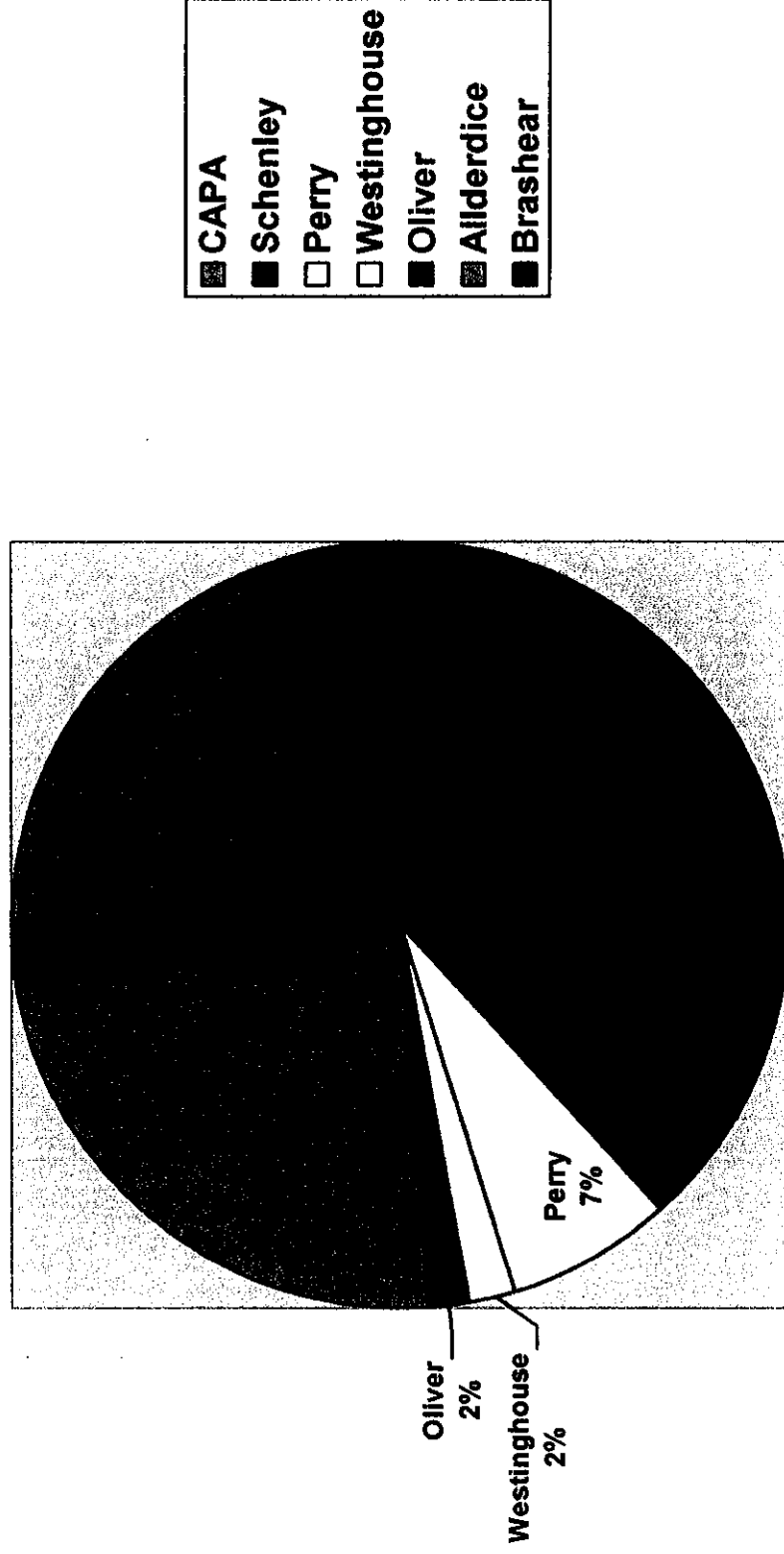
Questions



School Options Exercised by Pittsburgh Peabody Feeder Students in 2007-08 (n=~1500)



Pittsburgh Peabody Students Choosing PPS Schools Other than Peabody in 2007-08 (n=~510)

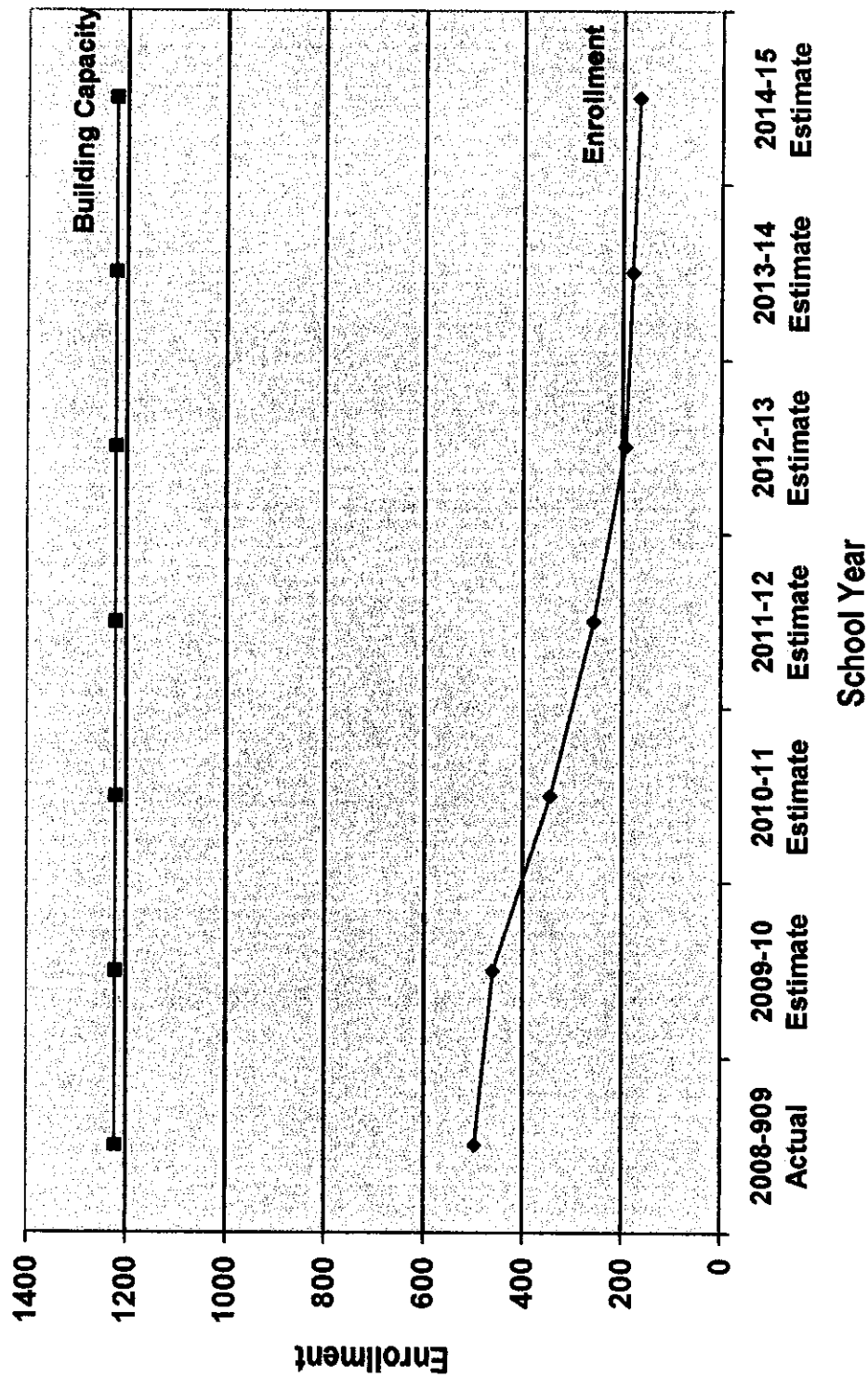


% of PPS Who Opt Out of Their Feeder

School	Other PPS	Non-PPS	Other**	Total Opt Out %
Peabody	34%	34%	8%	75%
Oliver	42%	21%	7%	70%
Westinghouse	36%	15%	11%	62%
Allderdice	12%	33%	4%	49%
Carrick	21%	17%	8%	46%
Brashear	23%	23%	7%	53%
Langley	24%	22%	8%	54%
Allderdice	14%	30%	8%	52%

* Students who attend alternative schools for special needs or similar issues

Projected Pittsburgh Peabody Enrollment Decline





Pittsburgh Peabody

Stakeholder Working Group Meeting

January 28, 2009



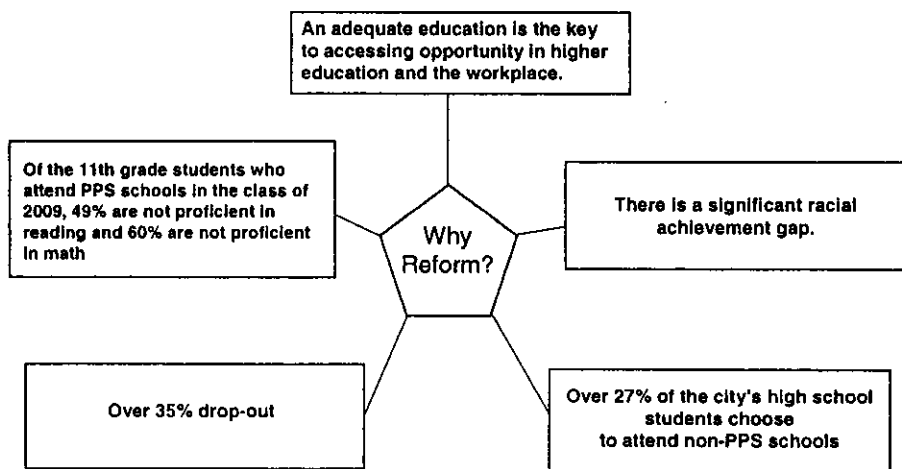
Summary of Information

- High School Excellence – Excel. 9-12
- Factors to consider when designing educational plans in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS)
- The Challenge and the Charge

High School Excellence – Excel. 9-12

3

At least five compelling facts support reforming Pittsburgh's secondary schools.



4

EXCELLENCE
FOR ALL

**These principles guide the reform process
Excel. 9-12 (Board adopted April 2007)**

SAFE & WELCOMING SCHOOLS	School is a physically and emotionally safe place that supports learning
RELATIONSHIPS	Personalized learning environment with meaningful connections to teachers, peers, and the school
STUDENT SUPPORT	Consistent and ongoing help to ensure student progress towards goals
RIGOR	High academic expectations for all students; engaging and demanding content and teaching
RELEVANCE	Prepare and connect students to the real world

5

EXCELLENCE
FOR ALL

**Factors to consider when designing
educational plans in PPS**

1. Population/Enrollment
2. Fiscal Implications
3. Board Policy/PA School Code
4. Achievement
5. Programs/Services

6

EXCELLENCE
2011

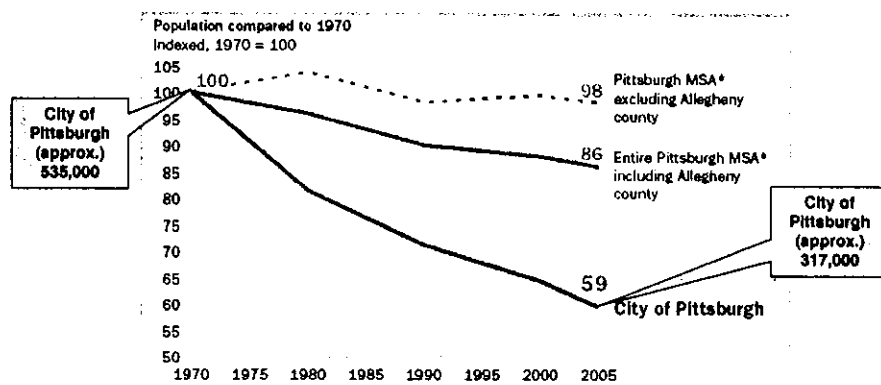
Factor 1: Population/Enrollment

- City of Pittsburgh
- School District of Pittsburgh
- Pittsburgh Peabody High School

7

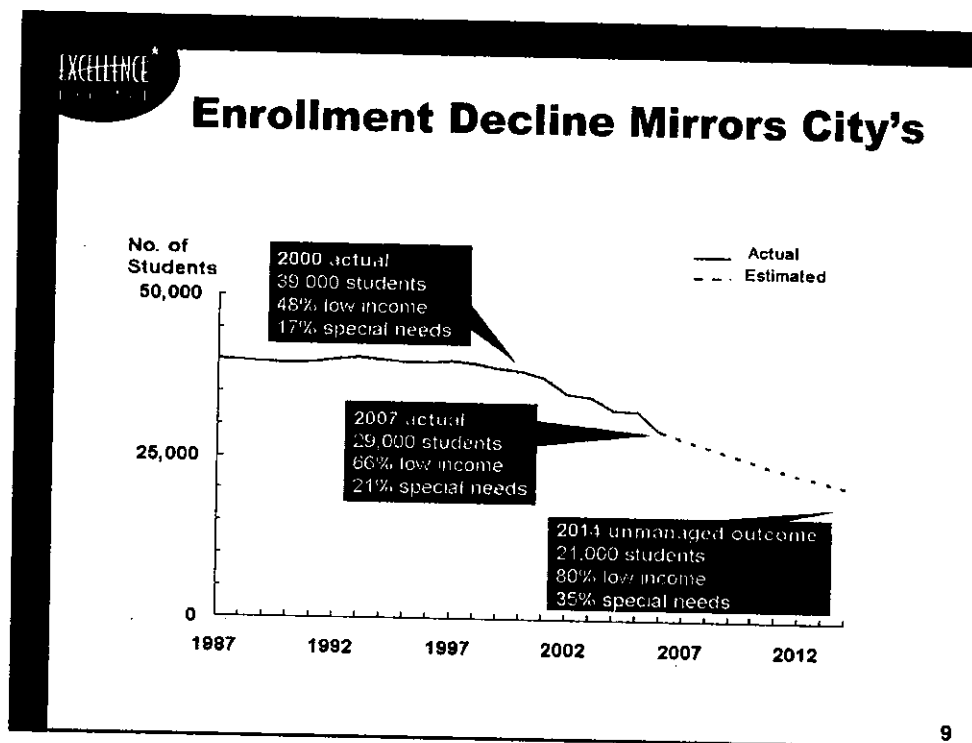
EXCELLENCE
2011

The population of the City of Pittsburgh is shrinking



* Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Washington, Westmoreland Counties
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Center of Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh; Housing and sociodemographic trends

8



EXCELLENCE

Pittsburgh Peabody Enrollment History

9	228	232	180	166	146	141
10	190	188	205	150	145	146
11	152	139	148	153	106	122
12	138	105	109	116	110	88
TOTAL	708	654	642	585	507	497

10



Pittsburgh Peabody Enrollment Projections

2008 (current)	497
2009	461
2010	346
2011	259
2012	194*
2013	181
2014	168

* This is the *recommended* year that IB would move to the Peabody facility

<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12statistics/lib/k12statistics/0607PittsburghSD.pdf>

11



Factor 2: Fiscal Implications

12



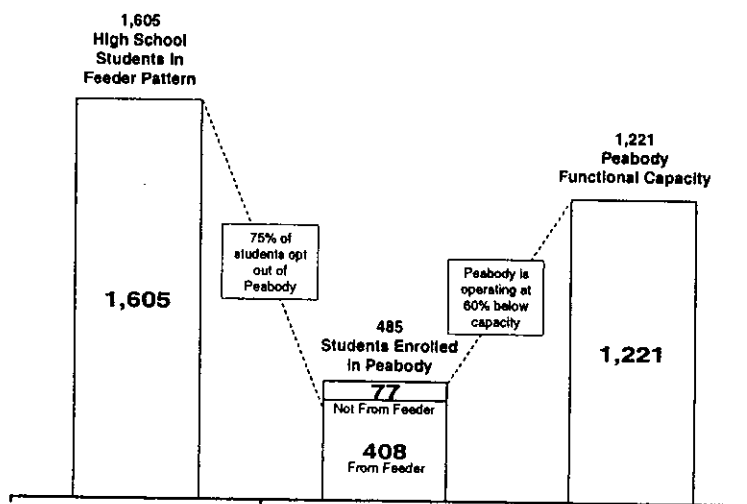
Fiscal Implications

- PPS will make decisions in an equitable and efficient manner, taking into account all of the financial and resource needs of the district.
- PPS has declining enrollment, and all of our programming decisions must be made in a fiscally responsible manner.
- PPS has a surplus of functional capacity which must be taken into account.

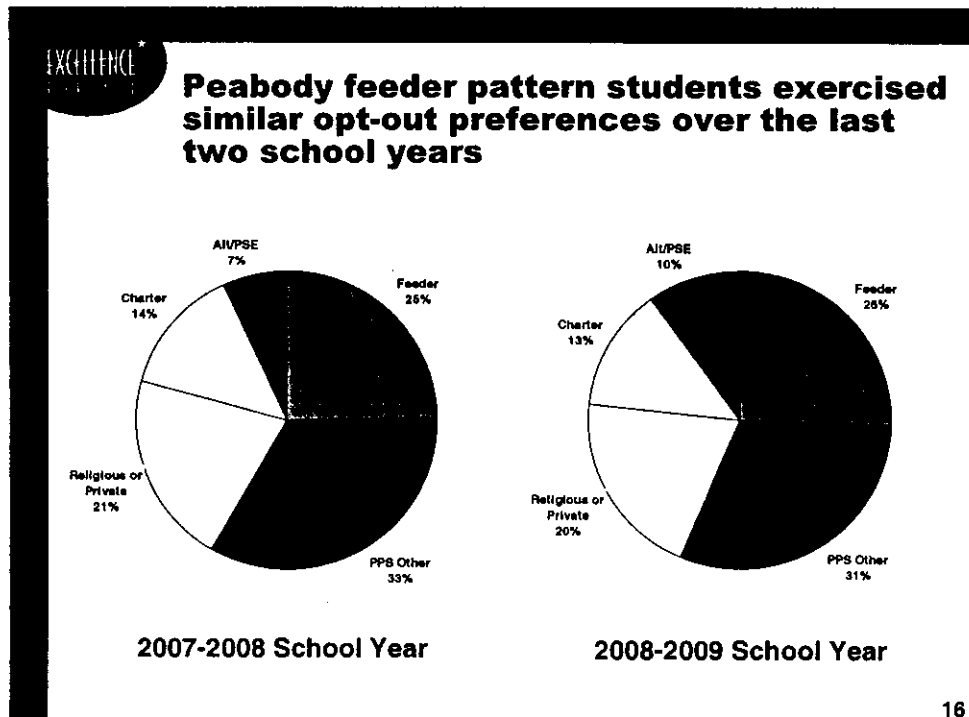
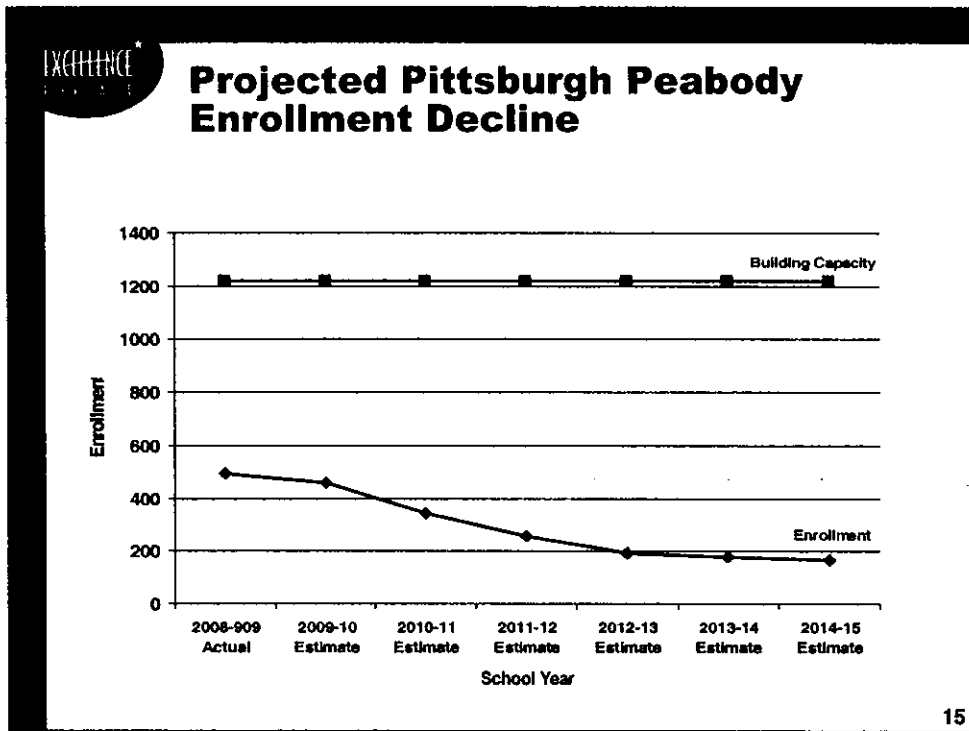
13



Current Pittsburgh Peabody feeder pattern and enrollment analysis

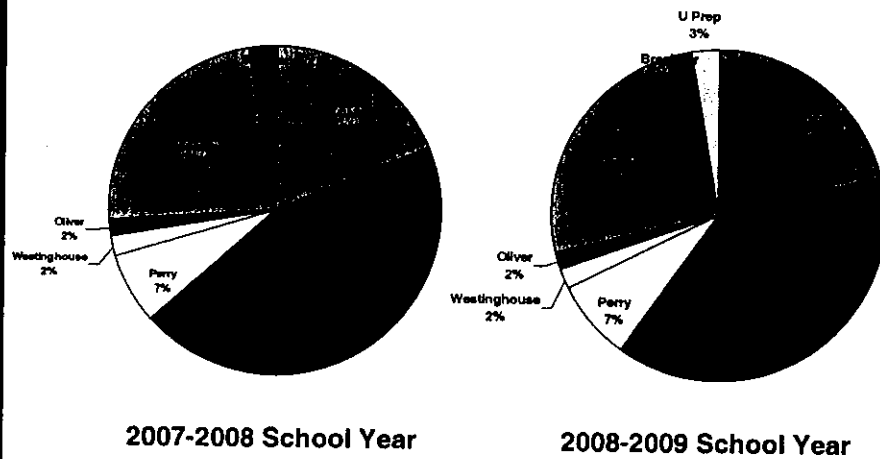


14





Peabody feeder pattern students opting to attend other PPS schools made similar choices over the past two years



17



% of PPS students who opted out of their Feeder Pattern in 2008-09

	Peabody	Oliver	Westinghouse	Langley	Brashear	Schenley	Alderdice	Carrick
Peabody	32%	37%	33%	22%	19%	14%	10%	19%
Oliver	33%	25%	18%	24%	26%	30%	34%	19%
Westinghouse	10%	12%	15%	11%	10%	8%	5%	11%
Langley	75%	73%	67%	57%	54%	52%	50%	49%
Brashear								
Schenley								
Alderdice								
Carrick								

* Students who attend alternative schools for special needs or similar issues

18

Factor 3: Board Policy/PA School Code

19

Board Policy/PA School Code

- All decisions must be made in accord with the Board of Education and District Policy.
- All recommendations will be made to the Superintendent, who will in turn make a recommendation to the Board.

20

EXCELLENCE


Factor 4: Achievement

21


EXCELLENCE

Examining the trajectory of a 9th grade student in PPS


20 children starting high school in PPS



13 graduate from high school




9 pursue higher education



Pittsburgh Promise Cohort

3 earn a higher education degree



22



The Pittsburgh Peabody Current Student Performance Picture

- Pittsburgh Peabody is in Corrective Action II
- 80.7% of students scored below proficient on the PSSA mathematics exam (or 19.3 % proficient or advanced)
- 81.8% of students scored below proficient on the PSSA reading exam (or 18.2% proficient or advanced)
- An achievement gap exists between African American students at Pittsburgh Peabody and African American students in the District by 17.4% in mathematics and 16.6% in reading
- An achievement gap exists between African American students at Pittsburgh Peabody and white students in the district of 54% in Mathematics and 56.5% reading

23



Factor 5: Programs/Services

24



Programs/Services

- Pittsburgh Peabody feeder pattern student data tells us that we have work to do
- Partnerships with community organizations and service providers are essential to meet the needs of the student body and to the success of any program.
- Pittsburgh Peabody school leaders and community partners continue to work towards meeting the needs of their students.
- Challenges around athletics and extracurricular activities exist not only in the Pittsburgh Peabody community but at other PPS schools. These will be addressed on a District-wide basis.

25



The Challenges and the Charge

- Create high quality viable school options for all students
- Recognize that every decision has an impact on other schools and students
- Utilize the City, School District and individual school data to arrive at best options and decisions
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders on a viable plan

26

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For Immediate Release

Contacts: Ebony R. Pugh (412) 622-3616

Committee Recommends Peabody Facility As Permanent Home for District's International Baccalaureate 6-12 School for the Start of the 2012-13 School Year

PITTSBURGH December 5, 2008 – The Pittsburgh Peabody facility is the best permanent home for the District's International Baccalaureate (IB) 6-12 School, according to the unanimous recommendation of the IB Site Selection Committee. After several months of research, a dozen meetings, and many site visits, the 30 member Committee presented its recommendation to the Superintendent this week.

At the direction of the Board, the Committee was created to evaluate District facilities that would accommodate the IB program and be ready in time for the 2012-13 school year. Members of the Committee include parents from across the City with students at Pittsburgh Dilworth, Frick, Liberty, Linden, Phillips, Schenley and Allderdice. In addition to parents, the Committee was comprised of students, representatives from the URA, alumni of Pittsburgh Schenley and Pittsburgh Frick, IB Diploma Programme teachers and community members.

"I thank the Committee for their work, time and thoughtful deliberation," said Superintendent Roosevelt. "Their recommendation will inform the work we are currently doing to restructure our high schools."

As part of its work on *Excel.9-12, The Plan for High School Excellence*, the District has been grappling with the underutilization of its high schools and student enrollment projections that show continuing decline. In the next five years, the District's two East End high schools are projected to lose two-thirds of their student population, leaving Pittsburgh Peabody with a student population of fewer than 200 and Pittsburgh Westinghouse hovering around 100 students.

Selection Process and Criteria

Keeping in mind the District's available facilities, fiscal constraints and projected enrollment decline, the Committee developed the following selection criteria for determining the best permanent home for the IB school. The facilities reviewed by the Committee were either closed schools or those schools that currently have an excess capacity greater than 50%. Based on this parameter the IB Site Selection Committee deeply explored six District facilities: Connelly, Langley, Oliver, Peabody, Reizenstein, and Westinghouse.

- **Building Program/ Facility Amenities** – The facility must provide the following: more than 50 classrooms, 4 or more computer labs, high school ready science labs, a gymnasium and a pool. Additional facility amenities identified by the Committee as necessary to accommodate the IB 6-12 school include: an auditorium, natural light, computer labs for every 200 children, separate entrances for lower and upper grades, some outdoor athletic facilities, and three or more IB exam rooms.
- **Location** – The site must be located near community resources and provide easy access to local universities. Access to Port Authority transportation was important as a majority of the students would need the service to travel back and forth to school.
- **Financial** – The site must minimize capital expenditure and have per pupil renovation costs that do not exceed that of recent construction projects.

-more-

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

IB school program may move to Peabody

By Rick Wills
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Saturday, December 6, 2008

A committee is recommending that Pittsburgh Peabody high school become the permanent home of the district's rigorous International Baccalaureate program starting in the 2012-13 school year.

The program could bring hundreds of new students to Pittsburgh Peabody, which enrolls about 500 students but is expected to have a student population of less than 200 over the next five years.

The International Baccalaureate Programme offers students a chance to earn college credits. The program teaches subjects through an international perspective. It had been housed at Schenley High School until the district closed Schenley in June.

A 6-12 International Baccalaureate program was created in the Reizenstein school in East Liberty. However, the cost to make needed upgrades to Reizenstein has been estimated at \$50 million, and the district has been looking for a new site for the IB program.

Peabody, which is located in East Liberty, was selected by a 30-member site selection committee, which presented its recommendation this week to schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. The committee is made up of parents, students and alumni from across the city.

"I thank the committee for their work, time and thoughtful deliberation," Roosevelt said in a statement issued Friday evening. "Their recommendation will inform the work we are currently doing to restructure our high schools."

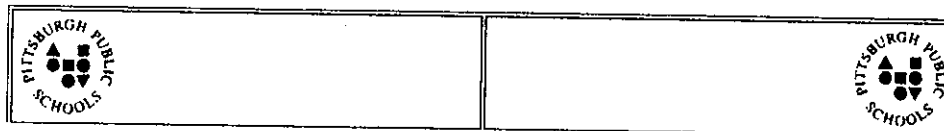
Roosevelt and his staff are expected to provide a recommendation to the school board in the next few months.

The site selection committee looked at six schools -- Connelly Vocational School, Reizenstein along with Langley, Oliver, Peabody and Westinghouse high schools.

Peabody was selected as the best option. Its East End location is convenient to many students in the program, and few building renovations will be needed. It also is close to public transportation, the district said.

For the next three years, the IB program will remain at Reizenstein Middle School.

Rick Wills can be reached at rwills@tribweb.com or 724-779-7123.



post-gazette **now** LOCAL / NEIGHBORHOODS

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Peabody touted as home of IB magnet

Saturday, December 06, 2008
 By Joe Smydo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

East Liberty--experiencing a resurgence with new stores, hotels and housing--in a few years may have a new high school to brag about, too.

A search committee has recommended that the Pittsburgh Peabody High School building on North Highland Avenue become the permanent home of the district's International Baccalaureate school for grades six through 12.

The school would locate at Peabody in fall 2012.

Pittsburgh Public Schools announced the committee's recommendation last night, two days after it was presented to Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. The proposal must be vetted by the administration and school board, but Mr. Roosevelt praised the committee's thoroughness.

The group consisted of parents, students, alumni, teachers, development officials and community members. "I was just very impressed with the seriousness with which they took their task," Mr. Roosevelt said.

Peabody now functions as a neighborhood high school, and it was unclear what would happen to its feeder-pattern students if the building is converted into a home for the IB magnet. Mr. Roosevelt noted that all of Peabody's current students will graduate by the time the IB school would open there.

Like many district schools, Peabody has been experiencing a long-term enrollment decline. It has 497 students now, down from 507 in 2007-08, and the district yesterday said enrollment could drop to fewer than 200 in five years.

The building, built in 1903, has space for more than 1,100 students.

Nor was it clear how much the district would spend to convert Peabody into the IB school. The district did not provide a figure last night, but costs have been estimated to be in the \$10 million range.

The IB school is a key part of the district's plans to improve high schools.

It will open next school year in temporary quarters, the Reizenstein building in Shadyside, with 750 students in grades six through 10. It would grow into a school for 1,050 students in grades six through 12, moving to Peabody in fall 2012.

Before selecting Peabody, the search committee considered several school buildings that are closed or using less than 50 percent of their capacity.

Dave Atkinson of Highland Park said he and other members ranked the buildings on physical amenities, location and financial considerations. Peabody came out on top, Mr. Atkinson said, noting members believed the IB school would complement the neighborhood's development boom.

"We feel that's a really growing, vibrant and diverse community," he said.

School board member Randall Taylor praised the committee's recommendation, while member Mark Brentley Sr. criticized the district's "piecemeal" approach to overhauling high schools. He also said the district would waste money by putting the IB school at Reizenstein temporarily.

Joe Smydo can be reached at jsmydo@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1548.

First published on December 6, 2008 at 12:00 am

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Peabody best site for IB program, panel says

Friday, December 05, 2008

By Joe Smydo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A 30-member site-selection committee has unanimously recommended the Pittsburgh Peabody building as the best permanent home for the International Baccalaureate program for grades 6 through 12 in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The district today released the recommendation, which calls for the building to be ready for the 2012-13 school year.

The recommendation noted the district's location near public bus transportation and the fact the building would need fewer renovations than some other buildings.

More details in tomorrow's Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

First published on December 5, 2008 at 6:08 pm

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

High school enrollment to decline 25% by 2014

By Bill Zlatos
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Friday, December 26, 2008

Pittsburgh Public Schools expects enrollment in city high schools to drop nearly 25 percent in six years as a wave of enrollment losses in the early grades reaches the high schools.

City high schools enroll 8,105 students, a number that is projected to fall to 6,111 in 2014-15. If not addressed, the decline means costly overstaffing and maintenance of underused buildings that could "most likely destroy" the district, said school board President Theresa Colaizzi.

Facing a budget surplus that could be gone by 2012, the school board is asking parents and community groups for ideas to boost enrollment at underused high schools. One idea is to keep high school buildings open by making more of them grade 6-12.

A committee has recommended closing Peabody in East Liberty as a comprehensive high school and converting it into a grade 6-12 International Baccalaureate magnet. School Superintendent Mark Roosevelt will make his own recommendation on Peabody in the next few months.

Getting input from the ground up is a marked difference from how the district dealt with surplus space in schools about three years ago. At that time, Roosevelt made recommendations and asked the public to react to them.

"You don't expect everyone to agree with school closings, but we can build a process where the community can wrestle with some of the issues the district has to wrestle with and come up with solutions that make sense," said Carey Harris, a mother of three children and executive director of A+ Schools, a community group that works to improve the school district.

The school district, for example, has been holding public hearings in Homewood to get input on what to do with Westinghouse High School, projected to have only 109 students by the fall of 2014. One possibility is converting it into a grade 6-12 school with an emphasis on sports or another special focus.

The school district is reluctant to close Westinghouse because it was renovated in 2002 at a cost of \$25.8 million.

"That makes it worth our time and the community's time to really investigate potential uses of the building," Roosevelt said.

Next fall, the district will open University Prep, a grade 6-12 school that is a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, at the former Milliones school in the Hill District.

By then, Pittsburgh will have 16 schools that serve either high school students only or high school students with other grades. The district estimates that between now and the fall of 2014, four high schools -- Langley, Oliver, Peabody and Westinghouse -- will have only 100 to 200 students each.

A recent junior varsity game of Westinghouse's girls' basketball team was called off after a player fouled out because there were too few players on the team, Roosevelt said.

"If you have 300 kids at a high school, you can't field the variety of activities kids want," Roosevelt said.

The school district has averted tax hikes by dipping into its operating surplus in five of the past six years. The surplus has shrunk from a high of \$98.2 million in 2003 to \$48.1 million with last week's adoption of the 2009 operating budget of \$525.3 million.

With no further changes, the district's surplus would drop to nearly \$26.1 million by the end of 2010. By 2011, it would plummet to \$1.5 million if the district does not change the way it does business, said Christopher M. Berdnik, the chief financial officer.

During its biggest round of school closings, the district saved \$14 million by closing 22 schools. Berdnik said the savings came from cutting a principal, a quarter of the staff, but mostly through utilities.

The administration can avoid some of the rancor that accompanied the 2006 closings by getting more input from parents and other residents, Harris urged.

"No one likes to lose schools in their community," she said. "That's why we advocated a community process to deliberate about the next round of changes, especially as they relate to high schools."

Colaizzi said the anticipated decline may not materialize if The Pittsburgh Promise, a \$250 million scholarship program for graduates of the city's public schools, works. The goal of The Promise is to boost academic achievement and stem the loss of students from the district.

Roosevelt said the district cannot allow the loss of high school students to hurt the finances. He has adopted a policy of requiring cuts in school operations equal to enrollment declines.

"It is something that obviously demands to be dealt with," Roosevelt said. "It means there has to be consolidation."

Bill Zlatos can be reached at bzlatos@tribweb.com or 412-320-7828.

ThePittsburghChannel.com

Pittsburgh School Enrollment Dropping; Peabody Could Close

Idea Of Changing Peabody High To 6-12 Discussed

POSTED: 3:33 pm EST December 26, 2008

PITTSBURGH -- The Pittsburgh Public Schools are grappling with the forecast of a 25 percent drop in high school enrollments by 2014, predicated on a current drop in the elementary schools.

Currently, city high schools have 8,105 students. That number is expected to fall to 6,111 in 2014.

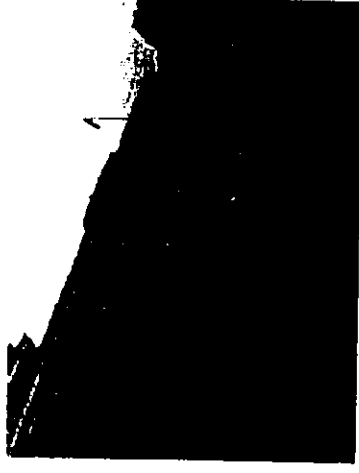
School board president Theresa Colaizzi said such a steep drop in enrollment would lead to overstaffing and costly maintenance for underused buildings. She says it would "most likely destroy" the school district.

WTAE Channel 4's news exchange partners at the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review reported that a committee has recommended converting East Liberty's Peabody High School to a grade 6-12 International Baccalaureate magnet school.

Superintendent Mark Roosevelt will make his own recommendation on Peabody in the next few months.

Next fall, the district will open University Prep -- a 6-12 school in partnership with the

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BOB MAYO'S BLOGS

UPMC Drops City Side Agreement for Pittsburgh Promise

Podcast Q&A: Mayor's UPMC Apology

UPMC Sets The Stage For Promise Debate

UPMC's "Essential Condition" On The Pittsburgh Promise

University of Pittsburgh -- in the Hill District. By then, Pittsburgh will have 16 schools that serve either high school students only or high school students with other grades.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city's population has dropped from nearly 370,000 in 1990 to just over 311,000 in 2007.

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Neighborhood group wants input on IB school at Peabody

Friday, January 02, 2009

By Joe Smydo, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. is moving to gather neighborhood input on a proposal to locate the Pittsburgh Public Schools' new International Baccalaureate magnet at the Pittsburgh Peabody High School building in East Liberty.

The neighborhood group sent a letter to school Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, saying it "has already begun to identify community and parent leadership" to join a committee.

The committee "will review the proposed International Baccalaureate program proposal, gain additional broad-based community and parent input, and appropriately respond to the Pittsburgh International Baccalaureate proposed plan," said the Dec. 26 letter, signed by Richard Flanagan, the group's youth development director.

Mr. Flanagan asked Mr. Roosevelt to appoint a district administrator to work with the committee and provide documents about school plans. The district declined comment on the letter.

In an e-mail to colleagues and supporters, Mr. Flanagan said the committee's initial meetings will be at 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday at Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.'s Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave., Garfield.

In December, a committee appointed by Mr. Roosevelt recommended the Peabody building as the permanent home of the new IB school for grades six through 12. The proposal must be voted on by the school board.

Mr. Roosevelt's committee included parents of students at seven schools, but not Peabody. It included teachers, development officials and alumni of the existing IB programs at Pittsburgh Frick 6-9 and Pittsburgh Schenley High School. It also included individuals described as "community members."

Mr. Flanagan's letter seeks to have the proposal vetted by a group with ties to Peabody, its feeder schools and East End neighborhoods. He asked for the names of those who served on Mr. Roosevelt's site selection committee and for minutes of their meetings.

"As always, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. seeks to support your restructuring plans," he said, adding the new committee's work would give the Peabody community "a sense of pride and ownership over whatever restructuring plans are finally approved by the Board of Education."

The proposed IB school emerged from district efforts to improve high schools.

It's slated to open next school year in the Reizenstein building in Shadyside with 750 students in grades six through 10. It would evolve into a school for 1,050 students in grades six through 12, moving to Peabody in 2012.

The district said its selection committee considered several buildings that are closed or half-vacant. Peabody has about 500 students but space for more than 1,100, and officials have projected that its enrollment will continue to drop.

Ernie Hogan, deputy director of East Liberty Development Inc., said his organization spoke to Mr. Roosevelt's committee about East Liberty's growth and supported the idea of locating the IB school at Peabody. He said he believed East Liberty would help to implement the program and urged the district to consider using green technology in any renovations to Peabody.

It wasn't clear what would happen to current students at Peabody if the IB magnet moves into its building.

Joe Smydo can be reached at jsmydo@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1548.

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WPXI.com

Meeting Held About The Future Of Pittsburgh High School

Peabody High School Could Close

Wednesday, January 7, 2009 - updated: 10:43 pm EST January 7, 2009

PITTSBURGH, Pa. -- A Pittsburgh High School could close its doors.

A meeting was held Wednesday night, about the proposed closing of Peabody High School.

Superintendent Mark Roosevelt and members of the Pittsburgh Public School Board are thinking about closing the school and turning it into a magnet school.

Concerned parent, Donna Cox said, "Why would they want to move the kids out of a good school and into a neighborhood where there is violence? I want answers."

The school would serve as a prep school for college, only in a high school setting.

Wednesday's meeting was the introductory phase.

School officials said nothing has been set in stone.

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Subject: RE: All press releases and media articles related to URA and EGLI PEabody area Development

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URA wants to improve area around E. Liberty Target

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Can transit grow neighborhoods?

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09012/941226-147.stm>

New homes to transform tawdry streets in East Liberty

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East Liberty group wins design grant

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08352/935749-100.stm>

Target on track for East Liberty store

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08318/927533-53.stm>

Leaders say East Liberty can handle hotel boom

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Officials pledge better city for cyclists, walkers

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Neighbors join to redevelop East End

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East Liberty YMCA building being converted into condos

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08024/851821-53.stm>

\$1 million state grant to aid Bakery Square project

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07041/760923-28.stm>

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URA wants to improve area around E. Liberty Target

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

By Mark Belko, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

When a Target store arrives in East Liberty, the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority wants to make sure it finds an inviting environment.

Toward that end, the URA board is expected to consider a \$2 million tax increment financing plan tomorrow to raise funds for traffic, sidewalk and other infrastructure improvements in support of the development and revitalization of East Liberty.

Under the East Liberty TIF plan, 75 percent of the real estate tax revenue generated by the Target store would be used to pay off the debt associated with the infrastructure improvements.

None of the money would be used on the 5-acre Target site itself, said Robert Rubinstein, URA director of economic development.

The \$2 million TIF would be part of \$7 million in improvements that would include conversion of Penn Circle South and Penn Circle East from one-way to two-way traffic between Highland and Collins avenues.

In addition, the Port Authority bus loop at Penn Avenue and Penn Circle East would be revamped to turn a five-way intersection into a four-way.

Mr. Rubinstein said the change was sought by Target as part of the deal to bring a store to East Liberty.

There also would be sidewalk, crosswalk, lighting and curb improvements designed to enhance the redeveloping East Liberty commercial and residential core.

Besides the \$2 million in new TIF money, another \$2.5 million from a previously approved Bakery Square tax increment package would be used to finance the work. The URA also is counting on \$2 million in state funding.

The East Liberty TIF would run 20 years. The Target site is expected to generate \$285,564 a year in real estate taxes, of which \$214,173 would go to pay off the tax increment financing.

That would leave \$71,391 to be shared between the city, the school district and Allegheny County. The site currently produces \$45,887 in tax revenue, according to the URA.

The financing plan also must be approved by the city, the county and the school district.

Target originally was hoping to open the two-story store by fall of next year, but now is looking at July 2011, according to the URA.

Also tomorrow, the board is expected to consider the sale of the former South Hills High School on Mount Washington to a private developer for \$1 for the proposed \$22.5 million conversion of the building into housing for seniors.

On Mount Washington, developer A.M. Rodriguez Associates is proposing to convert the high school into 84 affordable and 22 market rate apartments for seniors.

It also is planning 12,000 to 15,000 square feet of commercial space that is to include a YMCA and an early childhood development center.

Besides the \$1 sale of the property, the board will consider a \$2 million Pittsburgh Development Fund bridge loan and a \$3 million Rental Housing Development and Improvement Program loan as part of the project's financing.

The developer also expects to receive a \$1.5 million state capital grant. It hopes to close on financing in the first quarter and have the first units ready by June 2010.

Mark Belko can be reached at mbelko@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1262.

First published on January 14, 2009 at 12:23 am

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Can transit grow neighborhoods?

Monday, January 12, 2009

By Jon Schmitz, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Bob Donaldson/Post-Gazette

Empty storefronts are all too common around the Hampshire trolley stop on Broadway in Pittsburgh's Beechview neighborhood.

Each weekday, light-rail cars packed with a total of 13,000 commuters rumble through the Beechview business district, which is dotted with vacant storefronts.

Buses haul another 30,000 riders on the Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway, passing the Homewood station, surrounded by long-standing blight and decay.

Can railcars and buses be engines of rebirth for those and other struggling communities? A growing body of planners, nationally and locally, thinks so.

They have embraced a concept they call transit-oriented development, the aim of which is to create and sustain walkable neighborhoods with a mix of housing and retail development and transit hubs -- light-rail or busway stations -- at their core.

"If the single-family home in the suburbs was the American Dream of yore, the new American Dream also includes lofts, townhomes, live-work spaces and apartments in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods near high-quality transit," says Reconnecting America, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that promotes transit-oriented development.

An audience of 170 government and transit officials, planners, private developers and community leaders attended a symposium on the concept last week at the Regional Renaissance Tower, Downtown.

Soaring gasoline prices and traffic congestion have boosted public transit ridership to the highest levels in 50 years and helped to fuel demand for living space that is closer to work and shopping.

The increase in ridership has, in turn, boosted the value of housing and commercial space that is within walking distance of transit.

People in transit-friendly neighborhoods spend an average of 9 percent of their incomes on transportation; those living in auto-dependent places spend an average of 25 percent, according to Reconnecting America.

Even with the recent drop in gasoline prices, the American Public Transportation Association estimated the annual savings from using transit rather than driving at nearly \$8,400 -- more than what a typical household spends a year on food.

Add concerns about fossil-fuel pollution and the nation's reliance on imported oil, and "all of the elements point to transit-oriented development as the wave of the future," Sam Zimbabwe, a technical assistance director for Reconnecting America, told the symposium.

Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl said the event was the first attempt to bring together the varied regional interests with a

stake in transit-oriented development.

The General Assembly in 2004 enacted legislation to promote development around transit hubs.

It allows for creation of Transit Revitalization Investment Districts -- zones within a half-mile radius of those hubs -- where increased tax revenues from development can be earmarked for transit, infrastructure and streetscape improvements.

Several efforts are under way locally to create such zones.

In May, Mt. Lebanon and Dormont completed a joint study on prospects for transit-oriented development around the Potomac, Dormont and Mt. Lebanon light-rail stations.

In Pittsburgh, studies have begun in East Liberty, Homewood and Allentown/Beltzhoover/Beechview/Mount Washington.

East Liberty has launched the \$51 million Eastside V development at Penn Circle East and Penn Avenue, steps from the East Busway. It will be anchored by a 156,000-square-foot Target store.

Neighborhood leaders hope to team with the Port Authority to develop a state-of-the-art transit center there to better integrate the busway with the retail district.

"There are dysfunctional areas of the city with great transit assets," said Ernie Hogan, deputy director of East Liberty Development Inc., who addressed the symposium and helped narrate a bus tour of transit-friendly neighborhoods.

The tour helped illuminate the enormous challenge facing community planners, developers and government and transit officials.

In Pittsburgh's Allentown section, where a little-used light-rail line cuts down the main street, vacant and blighted storefronts abut vibrant businesses. Just repairing the crumbling surface of Warrington Avenue was estimated years ago at \$11 million, said Breen Masciotra, of the Mount Washington Community Development Corp.

Vacant lots and boarded storefronts dominate Homewood, a 12-minute busway ride east of Downtown.

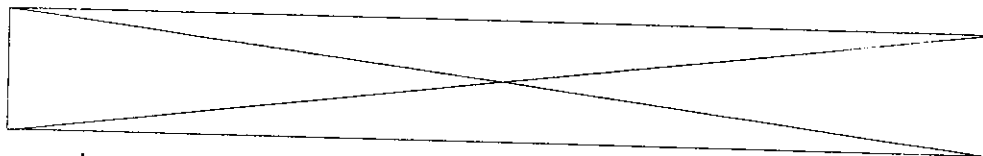
In Beechview, several nuisance bars hugging the light-rail line were closed more than four years ago as part of a redevelopment push that has yet to flower.

Down the light-rail line is South Hills Junction, through which 50,000 bus and rail passengers travel each day.

The Mount Washington group sees potential for development around the site, but for now, said Ms. Masciotra, "it's visually and physically difficult to access and anecdotally unsafe."

Jon Schmitz can be reached at jrschmitz@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1868.

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New homes to transform tawdry streets in East Liberty

Monday, December 22, 2008

By Diana Nelson Jones, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The house Ophelia Coleman lived in for 20 years sits across from a now-vacant house baited with rat poison, a danger sign posted on its facade.

The whole 700 block of North Euclid Avenue seemed to warn people away as owners boarded up one house after another. Since the early 1990s, Ms. Coleman said, gangs, absentee landlords, trash and drug raids stained the scenery.

Into this picture steps the "100-year house," a statuesque prototype that will soon make the block unrecognizable. Early next month, East Liberty Development Inc. will begin marketing six new houses and demolishing boarded-up buildings to make way for nine more.

This complete transformation of one block is part of a long-term strategy to return stability to a cluster of blocks near Highland Park. East Liberty Development, a nonprofit working with the builder S&A Homes, has control of 40 properties on North Euclid, Hays Street and North St. Clair Street. Five homes will be rehabilitated.

In a block where occupied homes are now valued in the \$40,000s and \$50,000s, the prototype's price tag is comparatively staggering -- from \$240,000 to \$295,000.

"It is an aggressive price, but the first six will set the market for future phases," said Eric Jester, project manager for East Liberty Development. "We've sold homes in that range in East Liberty."

Ms. Coleman said that in the long run, the new construction "should" help current property owners. "I hope and pray it does."

Mr. Jester said the strategy for the new homes is to market lots the way suburban developers do. S&A Homes has experience selling lots in planned developments with names like Seaton Crest, the Oaks and the Plantation. The difference in the city is that the neighborhoods and its water and sewer lines already exist.

Mr. Jester said ELDI's study of home types and maintenance pointed out that buildings made well earn better stewards.

To get a prototype it hopes to dot the East End landscape with, ELDI worked with two architectural firms -- Moss Architects and Pfaffmann + Associates -- the engineering firms IBACOS and Comfort Home, the city and the builder. They came up with a formula for variations on the same four houses, with pre-built parts to streamline manufacturing and construction. They chose materials that would last at least a century, since longevity was a big part of the solution.

The house promises to be 40 percent more energy-efficient than code requires. It is close to being LEED certifiable, said Mr. Jester, "but we didn't apply for certification" because of the cost.

The two plans each have two facades and two floor plans to choose from. Nearly all have a salt-box top. One plan has an interior courtyard; one has a two-story living room with a overlooking balcony.

The houses are made with hardwood interiors and exterior wood cladding with protective screens.

"It's a \$500,000 house, considering the quality," said Mr. Jester. "I wouldn't be surprised if a developer were to get that price [for this house] in Cranberry."

ELDI won a funding award last year for its design from design centers in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, which set up a one-time fund of \$1.5 million to reward three proposals.


With support from the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, ELDI will sell the first seven homes with deferred second mortgages, "then we'll go straight-out market," said Mr. Jester. "We will put stickers

Todd Winnor, urban division manager for S&A, based in Valencia, said East Liberty and the North Side's Federal Hill housing are the company's first urban forays.

"In the city it's hard to get things to roll because you need a lot of help with infrastructure," he said. "That's why it's good to step in with ELDI, where they can help get costs down. There is a gap" between the cost of building and the cost of buying, he said, "but in the next five to 10 years, we will see the gap close in the city."

Diana Nelson Jones can be reached at djones@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1626.

First published on December 22, 2008 at 12:00 am

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

East Liberty group wins design grant

Wednesday, December 17, 2008

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

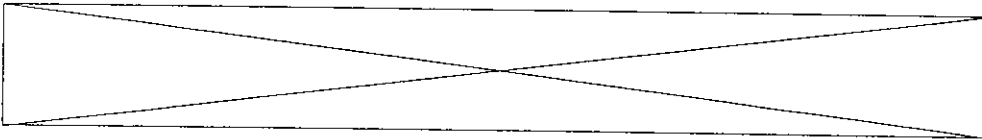
The Community Design Center of Pittsburgh has awarded its first Civic Design grant to East Liberty Development, Inc. for a green, market-based land use master plan for the Larimer Avenue Corridor in the Larimer and East Liberty neighborhoods.

The \$40,000 matching grant will help the agency create a long-range plan that develops green strategies for blighted and vacant land as a way to link the neighborhoods and restore community pride. Considerations will include recreational space for youth; a stakeholder and market-driven housing strategy that respects the community's history and provides housing for every type of resident; and land use concepts for large vacant swaths, unused buildings, and out-of-date abandoned housing.

The Community Design Center established the grant in recognition of the 20th anniversary of its Design Fund, which has awarded more than \$1 million in catalytic grants to community-based organizations. The Civic Design matching grant can award up to \$50,000 and leverage another \$50,000 in matching community investment for a total of \$100,000 per project.

"The investment of a Civic Design grant will result in a greater impact on planning, design and the community process of larger projects such as corridors, gateways, and commercial districts," said Anne-Marie Lubenau, president and chief executive officer of the Community Design Center. "We distinguish Civic Design grants as community visioning opportunities rather than site-specific projects."

First published on December 17, 2008 at 1:54 pm



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Target on track for East Liberty store

Thursday, November 13, 2008

By Mark Belko, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It's been a badly kept secret for much of the last year. But now it's official: Target is headed for East Liberty.

The retailer plans to open a two-level store at Penn Avenue and Penn Circle South in the fall of 2010, Ernie Hogan, deputy director of East Liberty Development Inc., said yesterday. City planning commission members will be briefed on the development at their meeting next week.

"We're excited about it. It's going to be a great opportunity for the neighborhood, creating 240 jobs," Mr. Hogan said.

The East Liberty store will be different than many of its suburban counterparts in that it will be two levels. The first level will provide parking for about 475 vehicles and feature a glass entry with escalators or elevators. There also will be an escalator for carts.

The 156,000-square-foot store will be a full-service Target. It marks the latest addition to the booming East Liberty commercial corridor, which features a Home Depot, a Borders bookstore, and a Whole Foods Market. Also, three new hotels are in the works.

"I think East Liberty is following its mantra, which is to become the East End regional shopping district," Mr. Hogan said.

He said that Target officials liked the strong residential base and population density in the area, as well as the nearby East Busway. East Liberty officials are working with the Port Authority and the Mosites Co. on an integrated transit-oriented development in the area.

Target officials could not be reached for comment.

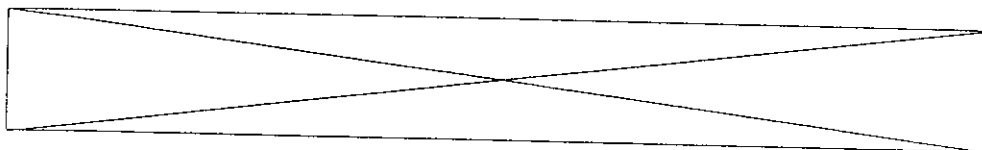
The new store will be the anchor for the proposed 4.75-acre Eastside V development at Penn and Penn Circle South.

Before construction can begin, Mosites and East Liberty Development plan to demolish the vacant Penn Circle apartment building and acquire two commercial structures at the site.

The city Urban Redevelopment Authority has authorized a \$6.4 million bridge loan from the Pittsburgh Development Fund to help with site acquisition and preparation.

Mark Belko can be reached at 412-263-1262.

First published on November 13, 2008 at 12:00 am



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Leaders say East Liberty can handle hotel boom

Saturday, October 18, 2008

By Mark Belko, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

At first blush, it might sound like a bit of folly.

Three new hotels being built in East Liberty, within a couple of blocks of one another, in the midst of a troubled economy?

But local development officials and the operators themselves say the construction of hotels so close to one another isn't as surprising as some might think, particularly given the nearby medical centers and universities and studies showing a need for as many as 450 rooms in the area.

"We believe East Liberty is well-positioned to accommodate the hotel base," said Ernie Hogan, deputy director of East Liberty Development Inc., the agency that's been the driving force behind much of the neighborhood's rebirth.

Developer Governor's Hotel Co. LP has plans for a \$21.4 million, 140-room Hotel Indigo at North Highland Avenue and Broad Street in the heart of East Liberty's commercial corridor.

Another developer, HSH Liberty Suites LP, is planning a \$42 million development on South Highland that includes a 105-room Homewood Suites hotel and an adjacent 113-room Hampton Inn, both part of the Hilton chain.

Mr. Hogan sees the hotels drawing business from the new Children's Hospital in nearby Lawrenceville, which he said could attract up to 100,000 visitors a year, as well as UPMC Shadyside and the Hillman Cancer Center, where UPMC is mulling a possible 300,000-square-foot expansion.

In addition, Chatham University last spring acquired an office building at Fifth and Penn avenues near East Liberty that will house several graduate programs. The University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University also could provide a base, Mr. Hogan said, particularly given that land for new hotel development in Oakland is scarce.

In studies conducted a couple of years ago, East Liberty Development found that between the medical institutions and universities, the area could support more than 400 new hotel rooms. Mr. Hogan noted that the only hotel now in the area is a 132-room Courtyard by Marriott across from UPMC Shadyside.

There's also potential, he believes, for the hotels to serve Downtown, particularly the convention center area, via the East Busway and a new transit portal in the works. And none of that counts the blossoming commercial development taking place in the neighborhood.

"We're optimally placed within the region's market to really seize that opportunity," he said of the hotel developments.

Cindy A. Murphy, vice president of operations for InterContinental Hotels Group, which will operate the Hotel Indigo, said the company was aware that other hotels were in the works in the same area when it committed to the development.

She said that is not a problem because the three attract different customers. Hotel Indigo is more upscale, in the \$140 to \$150 a night price range, while Homewood Suites is geared toward those staying more than a couple of days. The Hampton Inn is a mid-priced alternative to Hotel Indigo.

Ms. Murphy said InterContinental did its own feasibility studies to determine demand before committing. The company sees East Liberty as an up-and-coming neighborhood that will be very attractive to visitors by the time Hotel Indigo opens in May 2010.

Still, David Sangree, president of Hotel & Leisure Advisors, a hospitality consultant, said that the 358 rooms proposed between the three hotels "is a lot of rooms in a neighborhood like that." He said much may depend on the demand generated by the nearby medical centers and universities.

Hotel & Leisure Advisors did a feasibility study in 2006 for a proposed hotel as part of the Bakery Square project at the former Nabisco plant bordering East Liberty and "in general we thought there was demand," Mr. Sangree said. Whether the hotel would be financially viable depended in large part on the cost of construction, he said.

The three East Liberty hotels, plus one planned at Bakery Square and another proposed for the old Don Allen Auto City site on nearby Baum Boulevard could push total rooms close to or above the maximum 450 pinpointed in marketing studies.

That, said Denis Rudd, professor of hospitality and tourism management at Robert Morris University, "could be a little dangerous."

"I certainly wouldn't want to build to the upper limits," he said.

"I don't think it's eyebrow raising. I hope they did their homework, that's all. If they did the background, they'll be fine. I think it will help the community."

Mark Belko can be reached at mbelko@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1262.

First published on October 18, 2008 at 12:00 am

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Officials pledge better city for cyclists, walkers

Monday, August 11, 2008

By Rich Lord, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Cyclists today lauded a pledge by Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and Councilman Patrick Dowd to make the city more friendly to bicyclists and walkers, and they urged officials to get moving on adding more bike lanes, improving links to public transportation and encouraging motorists to respect their two-wheeled fellow travelers.

"It's such a great day for cycling in Pittsburgh," said Scott Bricker, executive director of Bike Pittsburgh, as cyclists packed Enrico's Tazza D'Oro, a Highland Park coffee shop, to hear Mr. Ravenstahl and Mr. Dowd outline their plans for improved urban cycling and walking.

The first agenda item -- hiring a coordinator to handle cycling and pedestrian efforts -- was completed a week ago with the hiring of Stephen Patchen, 32 and of the South Side Flats, to the \$45,000 position.

"We are the first city in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to ever have a full-time bicycle/pedestrian coordinator," said Mr. Ravenstahl.

Next up are zoning benefits and tax breaks for businesses that accommodate cyclists, better signage on bike routes, more bike racks, better tracking of car-on-bike and car-on-pedestrian accidents, increased enforcement of traffic laws near bike lanes, and events to showcase the city's bike friendliness. Some of that will require money that hasn't yet been identified.

"We don't actually have anything that we're delivering at this particular moment," said Mr. Dowd, who has been pushing a bike-friendly agenda in council. "This is a long-term project, and something that's going to continue."

There will be incremental improvements in the cycling infrastructure this summer, officials said. For instance, Public Works Director Guy Costa said he's working with East Liberty Development Inc. to put bike lanes on East Liberty Boulevard.

More details in tomorrow's Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

First published on August 11, 2008 at 1:07 pm



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Neighbors join to redevelop East End

Monday, July 14, 2008

By Diana Nelson Jones, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Leading community development organizations in five city neighborhoods have joined forces as the East End Partnership.

The Lawrenceville Corp., Bloomfield-Garfield Corp., Bloomfield Business Association, Friendship Development Associates and East Liberty Development Inc. "decided we are going to venture out as a regional group," said Rick Swartz, executive director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp., whose focus, despite its name, is on Garfield.

It is "a loose alliance" which has Penn Avenue in common, he said.

"We won't dispense with our separate boards of directors, but everyone is going to jump into the pool together. It's something we need to do -- to be more effective collectively."

Common goals do not end with Penn Avenue, he said. The group has targeted several areas for future investment, including Doughboy Square in Lawrenceville, a gutted gasoline station at Penn and Negley avenues in East Liberty, and parts of Butler Street.

"We also want to get beyond the realm of neighborhood boundaries counting for everything, to dispel the myth that you're someplace else when you cross the street," he said.

"We're trying to think a lot harder about how the neighborhoods can improve their economic situation without displacing people," Mr. Swartz said. An outgrowth of the partnership "could be a locally controlled development fund" to take the place of diminishing state and federal money.

Most of these groups have collaborated with adjacent neighborhoods on new housing, property rehabs, investment lures, crime and blight eradication, and small business and green-space development in the past. But this partnership is more official, with a \$150,000 grant from the Surdna Foundation, which helps to pay for a partnership director, Jonathan Cox.

Formerly a vice president of operations for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, Mr. Cox is based at the Lawrenceville Corp., he said, "but they all own a piece of me."

Surdna funded a Moss Architects study of Penn Avenue, from Doughboy Square to Penn Circle, that coalesced the groups earlier this year, he said. It showed how much neighborhood overlap there is in the use of Penn Avenue and how key the corridor is to all of them.

The partnership is pursuing money for streetscape improvements along Penn Avenue from Duquesne Light Co. and recently was one of three groups tapped as eligible for multilineighborhood corridor grants from the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development. The Oakland Planning and Development Corp. and North Side Leadership Conference are the other two.

Maelene Meyers, executive director of East Liberty Development, said the partnership can share each of its member's strengths.

"We do bricks and mortar, someone else does Main Street," she said. "The funding stream is not what it used to be, so we have to be more creative and work as a team."

She said she believes "this is the model that we should all be doing, but not everyone wants to. You have to want to share your plans, share your revenues" and not worry about who gets credit.

The Penn Avenue study will be available sometime next month at www.eastendpartnership.org, which is not yet up and running.

Diana Nelson Jones can be reached at djones@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1626.

First published on July 14, 2008 at 12:07 am

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08196/896906-52.stm>

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East Liberty YMCA building being converted into condos

Part of goal to build 1,000 housing units in city neighborhood

Thursday, January 24, 2008

By Mark Belko, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The YMCA building and four old dilapidated townhouses in East Liberty could get a new life as condominiums with the help of \$1.1 million in funding, most of it from a subsidiary of the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, U.S. Rep. Mike Doyle and other officials will hold a news conference this morning to acknowledge the \$885,000 loan awarded by the Landmarks Community Capital Corp. to help finance the projects. The city Urban Redevelopment Authority is supplying \$250,000 toward the YMCA project.

The \$885,000 loan is the first awarded by nonprofit Landmarks Community, which came into existence about three months ago, and is the largest loan ever made by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation to a community-based organization.

"It's a smart investment on our part, working with a great organization that's committed to making positive changes in the East Liberty core," said Dr. Howard B. Slaughter Jr., Landmarks Community chief executive officer.

East Liberty Development Inc. has teamed with Denver-based MEIZ Development Co. to convert the vacant YMCA building at 120 Whitfield St. into 30 to 35 market rate condominiums plus ground-level retail and community space.

The \$7 million project is part of a town square concept built around the East Liberty Presbyterian Church and the Carnegie Library.

"This is the first market rate housing to happen in the core. We're really excited to save an old building and to breath new life into it," said Ernie Hogan, East Liberty Development deputy director.

With the help of the Landmarks Community loan, ELDI already has acquired the YMCA building for a little more than \$600,000. It and MEIZ hope to begin the development either this fall or in spring 2009.

The condos, which would range in size from 700 square feet to 1,500 square feet, would start at \$185,000. The YMCA building was built in 1908 and at one time was a major activity center for the neighborhood.

On Rippey Street, the historically significant Queen Anne-style houses date to 1892. They have fallen into disrepair in recent years.

ELDI already has started rehab work on the properties. It intends to convert the houses into eight market rate condos, each with 1,500 square feet and a sales price of about \$149,000.

It hopes to start construction of the units this summer and have them available for sale next year. The rehab is expected to cost about \$1.4 million, with help from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and the URA as well as Landmarks Community.

"These are very wonderful historical homes that are going to be converted," Mr. Slaughter said.

Mr. Hogan said the project is part of a commitment to the community to build 1,000 units of housing in the neighborhood. To date, 427 units have been completed.

"This is just continuing on that promise," he said.

Mark Belko can be reached at mbelko@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1262.

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\$1 million state grant to aid Bakery Square project

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By Elwin Green, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The state Department of Environmental Protection is kicking in \$1 million toward the redevelopment of the former Nabisco plant in East Liberty.

The grant to the Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania will be used to clean up the site, which the city declared blighted in December, clearing the way for the Urban Redevelopment Authority to pursue \$13 million to \$14 million in aid for what has come to be known as the Bakery Square project.

The \$105 million to \$125 million project, spearheaded by Shadyside-based Walnut Street Capital Partners, will transform the former bakery and surrounding land -- a total of 6.5 acres -- into a mixed-use complex that will include 223,000 square feet of office space, 165,000 square feet of retail space, and a 120-room hotel.



East Liberty development plan
Click image for larger version.

RIDC president Robert C. Stephenson said that the cleanup work on the property would remove asbestos, PCBs and lead-based paint and should begin within the next 30 days.

Walnut Capital principal Anthony Dolan said the company is seeking tenants for the retail and office portions of the development as it continues to finalize the purchase of the property from RIDC, which is expected to close this summer.

The site was home to a Nabisco bakery for 80 years before it closed in 1998. The RIDC took control of the building in 1999 as part of a complicated community-led arrangement to buy the facility from Nabisco and restart it as Atlantic Baking Group, which had the financial backing of investment funds associated with international financier George Soros.

The company grew to seven plants and 1,300 employees, changing its name along the way to Bake-Line. But citing lower-than-anticipated production volume, low prices and higher ingredient costs, the company filed for bankruptcy in January 2004, abruptly closing all seven plants. The building has remained vacant since then.

The Bakery Square grant is the latest example of a sustained push by Gov. Ed Rendell for the redevelopment of "brownfields," former manufacturing sites that require significant cleanup to be made suitable for other uses. Since its launch in 2004, the DEP's Brownfield Action Team has helped redevelop more than 4,500 acres of brownfields included in 32 projects in 22 counties.

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Elwin Green can be reached at egreen@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1969.