



WE RISE WE BUILD WE WIN
412JUSTICE.ORG   

412-204-7137
600 PENN AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15221

Disrespected, confused, humiliated, and alarmed!

Open Letter To the Pittsburgh Public School Board of Directors and Superintendent Dr. Wayne Walters,

We have just been informed of and read an ANONYMOUS proposal to begin the process of closing public schools in PPS titled “Facility Utilization Plan” that will be voted on 2 days from now on Wednesday, January 24th, without normal community input, data, research, or transparency. You must think that we are stupid. We are very clear about what this is. In November, a community process began for the District’s strategic plan, where 1 of 4 themes focused on potential “consolidation.” You reached out to many trusted community and grassroots organizations, including our organization, 412 Justice/ Education Rights Network, to facilitate a strategic plan framework community input process. We hosted two Parent & Community Input sessions to get feedback for the proposed strategic plan framework. We committed to participate with our members in what we now know was an insincere and non-authentic process. We used our organization's resources to hold these sessions collecting input that was not considered by the Board! This harms relationships with parents who trusted us. You are cutting the strategic planning community process off at the knees and forcing through a last-minute Resolution to begin the process of closing our cherished neighborhood schools.

The Education Committee meeting Strategic Planning Update is scheduled for February 6, 2024, weeks AFTER the vote on this Resolution. We expect the community input generated by the many different partnering community groups, including ours, to be shared at the February 6th meeting. The community input sessions and survey just closed on January 19th. Aren’t you curious about what the community said? Our members strongly disagree, with the Resolution statement “the Board believes that proper utilization of facilities and personnel will result in increased educational opportunities and achievement for all students in the District.”

This is an unacceptable non-transparent backroom deal. The community doesn’t know which Board member or members put this Resolution on the Legislative Agenda at the last minute. **Where is democracy in this process?** It’s problematic that we have a Board and Superintendent, Dr. Wayne Walters, who doesn’t value meaningful community input and misses the opportunity for innovation and critical thinking in addressing budget deficits. It is lazy to close schools and move students around like widgets when data show the devastating consequences and impact for all students, and the most detrimental for poor Black students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.



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At no point did the Board take the time to discuss the harmful impacts of school closures and consolidation. You must look at what happened to students, families, and staff the last time PPS closed and consolidated schools!

Whoever votes to approve this Resolution will have blood on your hands.

We will hold you accountable because Pittsburgh families, students, and staff deserve better.

Our Demands:

- **Vote no on the Resolution or take it off the table.** We understand that this Resolution is not necessary for the Superintendent to do a FACILITIES UTILIZATION PLAN. The Resolution was not available to the public in time for discussion at the January 17, 2024, Agenda Review meeting, which doesn't comply with Board Policy 001.
- **You must consider data and research for past school closures and consolidations in PPS, and nationally** and have discussions about this statement: “the Board believes that proper utilization of facilities and personnel will result in increased educational opportunities and achievement for all students in the District;”
- **You must consider the community input on the proposed strategic planning framework**, scheduled to be presented at the upcoming February 6, 2024 Education Committee meeting.

Do Better!

Your Community Partner,
412 Justice & Education Rights Network

