



# SciTech Parent Newsletter

August/September 2015

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## Helpful School Contacts

**Principal**-Mr. Shawn McNeil

**Director**-Mr. James McCoy

**Secretary**-Mrs. Jacqueline Bowman-Porter

**Guidance Counselor**-Mrs. Elaine Ashcom

**Social Worker**-Mrs. Holly Blattler Eiding

**Nurse Practitioner**-Mrs. Bridgetta Devlin

**PSE teacher**-Ms. Angela Stubbs

**PSE teacher**-Mrs. Marlene Cabiness

**CAS Facilitators**-Mrs. Shelbie Nocera, Mr. Tyler Hofer, Ms. Juliette Hill, Mr. Jonathan Edwards, Mr. Brian Rose, Mrs. Wendy Moore

**Athletics**-Mr. Kevin Shevitz

**Family and Community Engagement Coordinator**-Mrs. Stephanie Theuret

**Student Data Systems Specialist**-Mrs. Kimberly Reddy

**Technology Specialist (laptops)**-Ms. Kimberle Mitchell

## School Address and Phone Number

Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy

**Address:** 107 Thackeray Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**Phone:** 412-529-7620

**Website:** [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com)

## Grade Level Labels

SciTech utilizes labels for each of the traditional grade levels. These labels are consistent with the levels that many students may find themselves moving through in their professional careers.

Novice (grade 6)

Apprentice 1 (grade 7)

Apprentice 2 (grade 8)

Associate (grade 9)

Manager (grades 10-11)

Executive (grade 12)

## Bell Schedule

The Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy will utilize multiple bell schedules during the school year. The “regular” bell schedule will be used on Monday’s, Tuesday’s, Thursday’s and Friday’s. On these days, students are permitted to come into the building starting at 7:10 and first period begins promptly at 7:36 AM with the last period of the day ending at 2:46 PM. All of our schedules include four academic periods, one lunch period and one activity/advisory period.

Every Wednesday, there is a one-hour early dismissal for students. On these days, students are permitted to come into the building starting at 7:10 and first period begins promptly at 7:36 AM with the last period of the day ending at 1:46 PM. The early dismissal every Wednesday allows us to engage in weekly professional development with our staff members. With so many of the unique things that we do at SciTech, our professional development program is vital to the success of the school.

Included in this mailing is a copy of the bell schedules for the 2015-2016 school year. Please note that the schedule for students in grades 6-9 is slightly different than the schedule for students in grades 10-12.

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## Students Leaving the Building

Students are NOT PERMITTED to leave the school campus during the school day. Students who leave the campus without an appropriate early dismissal will be disciplined in accordance with the School Discipline Code.

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## Visiting the School

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the school. All visitors must check in at the main office. If you are interested in meeting with a particular individual, please call ahead to ensure that the individual is available to meet. If a parent or guardian is interested in observing their student’s class(es), he or she must provide 24-hours notice to the teacher. This is to ensure that appropriate seating is available in the classroom.

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## Closing and School Delays

Sometimes it is necessary to close or delay the opening of school when extreme weather or building emergencies make it impossible to open. If you suspect that school might be delayed or closed due to inclement weather, **please do not call the school**. Announcements will be made on television and radio stations. In addition, the school district will post all school closures and delays on the school district website [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us). In the event of a 2-hour delay, students’ buses will arrive 2 hours later than usual and first period will begin at 9:36 AM.

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## Student Schedules

Student schedules will be mailed to families during the week of August 17th.



## Transportation



The Pittsburgh Public Schools provides transportation for high school students who live 2 miles or more from the school and for middle school students who live 1.5 miles or more from the school. Please reference the section on “Building Access” which notes the specific door students will need to enter in the morning. Board policy states that “the privilege of being transported shall be withdrawn in respect to any pupil who is unmanageable or by his/her conduct endangers the property or safety of others.” Once students are dropped off school, they are not permitted to leave school property.

### **Novice and Apprentice Levels (Grades 6-8)**

Students at the Novice and Apprentice Levels are picked up at or near their homes via yellow school buses and transported to SciTech. This process is coordinated through the Pittsburgh Public School Transportation Department. The transportation department can be reached by calling (412) 529-8125

The transportation department sends out a mailing to all families that will tell you the bus number, pickup and drop-off time, the place to catch the bus, the telephone number to the bus garage and all other information that you might need. You will receive this mailing prior to the start of school. Once students are dropped off school, they are not permitted to leave school property.

### **Associate through Executive Levels (Grades 9-12)**

Students in the Associate through Executive Levels will be picked up at or near their homes via yellow school buses and transported to SciTech, provided they live more than two miles from school. This process is coordinated through the Pittsburgh Public School Transportation Department. The transportation department sends out a mailing to all families that will tell you the bus number, pickup and drop-off time, the place to catch the bus, the telephone number to the bus garage and all other information that you might need. You will receive this mailing prior to the start of school. The transportation department can be reached by calling (412) 338-8125

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## 9th Grade Nation

As part of our 9th Grade Nation transition program, students have the opportunity to participate in the Pittsburgh SciTech Prep 9: Freshman Focus program. This program is especially important for 9th grade students that are new to SciTech. Our Prep 9 program is held at SciTech Thursday, August 27th and Friday, August 28th. During this two day orientation, students will be introduced to the technology skills that are essential to our SciTech program and additional study skills that are necessary for success in high school. Students will also learn about the specific expectations for graduation and be introduced to their principal, teachers and counselor.



All of our 9th grade students (class of 2018) are part of 9th Grade Nation. We look forward to seeing you on Friday, August 28, 2015 for your first day of school at SciTech! On this day, you will have an opportunity to meet your new teachers, tour the building, and connect with new and old friends. We look forward to your attendance! The doors on the Thackeray Street entrance will be open from 7:18-7:38 AM and the day's activities will end at 10:59 AM. Breakfast and lunch will be available for students.

## Building Access

You will receive a notice from the Transportation Department prior to the start of school regarding whether you are a walker, receive a PAT bus pass or will ride a yellow bus. The school does not have this information.

Please read the procedures below regarding the arrival to school. The building will open at 7:10 AM for student entry. For the safety and security of our students, metal detectors will be used at all entrances.

### **Entrance Procedures for Grades 9-12 students (Walkers or PAT Bus Pass)**

These students will enter through the Bouquet Street entrance and move into the cafeteria where breakfast will be available.

### **Entrance Procedures for Grades 9-12 students (Yellow Buses)**

These students will be dropped off on either the Bouquet Street entrance or Thackeray Street entrance and move into the cafeteria where breakfast will be available. The exact side of the drop off will be determined closer to the start of school.

### **Entrance Procedures for Grades 6-8 students (Yellow Buses)**

These students will be dropped off on either the Bouquet Street entrance or Thackeray Street entrance and move into the cafeteria where breakfast will be available. The exact side of the drop off will be determined closer to the start of school.

### **Entrance Procedures for all students being dropped off by a parent**

All parent drop offs will take place at the Thackeray Street entrance. Students will then move into the cafeteria where breakfast will be available.

### **Arriving Late to School**

If any student comes to school after 7:29 AM, he or she must enter through the Thackeray Street entrance. Students that arrive to school after 7:36 AM will check in at the tardy desk.

### **Visitors**

All visitors must enter through the doors on Thackeray Street. If you require an ADA accessible entrance, please call the main office before you arrive and a staff member will meet you at a ground level entrance in the main parking lot facing 5th Avenue. An elevator is available.

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## Field Trips

Given our unique program, and the fact that we are located in the heart of Oakland, our students are often learning outside the classroom walls. We refer to these experiences as “walking field trips” given that our proximity allows us to walk to and from the activity. Teachers may not always send home information regarding walking field trips.

Students will also take part in more traditional field trips that will require transportation and may take a longer period of time. In these cases parents will be informed of the trip.

## Special Education

Middle and high school special education delivery is completely aligned with that of the District, focusing on inclusion and support. Our PSE teachers are responsible for the development of student Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and ensure that teachers are implementing the specially designed instruction. Special programs for academic support, such as Read 180, are available to students in certain grade levels, and not exclusive to students with identified special needs. Additionally, students may use their third period for additional academic support if needed .

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## Gifted Education

The Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy will provide gifted education services designed to meet the individual needs of each identified student. Instead of attending the Pittsburgh Gifted Center, students will receive gifted services within the school. Specially designed instruction based on each student's interests and strengths will be offered on an ongoing basis. Gifted Individualized Educational Plans (GIEPs) will be written prior to school starting and in the fall by CAS facilitators at the school.

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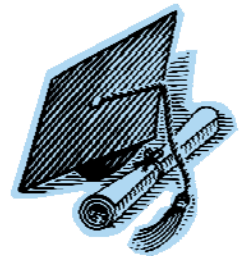
## Backpacks

It is the responsibility of all SciTech students to purchase an appropriate backpack for carrying a laptop computer throughout the day. If you are looking to purchase a replacement backpack for the coming school year, be sure that it is rated for a laptop computer. This often means that there is additional padding inside and usually includes a specific pocket or flap for the computer. Students that are new to SciTech will receive a laptop sleeve. Backpacks are checked and verified on a daily basis as students enter the building.

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## Three Year Graduation Information

SciTech provides the unique opportunity for students to graduate in 3, 4 or 5 years. The vast majority of students will still graduate in the traditional 4-year sequence, however some students may be interested in accelerating their graduation requirements and graduating in 3-years. Students must be in a higher-level math class (at least Algebra 2) during their Associate year in order for this to occur. If you are interested in exploring the 3-year graduation plan, please contact the guidance counselor. Ideally, this decision should be made prior to the start of the Associate year. The 5-year graduation plan is designed for those students who need additional time to master many of the math and reading concepts in school in preparation for their advanced science concentration course work.



## The Pittsburgh Promise

The Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy will provide gifted education services designed to meet the individual needs of each identified student. Instead of attending the Pittsburgh Gifted Center, students will receive gifted services within the school. Specially designed instruction based on each student's interests and strengths will be offered on an ongoing basis. Gifted Individualized Educational Plans (GIEPs) will be written prior to school starting and in the fall by CAS facilitators at the school.



## Science Forum

This ongoing forum will explore how science in the classroom connects to science outside the classroom. Guest presenters from an industry or university setting share their experiences in an interactive format. Most of our Science Forum activities will separate our high school (grades 9-12) and middle grades (grades 6-8) students. The high school Science Forums are typically held off-site and the middle grades Science Forum activities are usually held within the school and involve a number of competitions. Science Forum dates are noted on the bell schedule included in this newsletter.

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## Final Exams

Semester examinations are to be administered to high school students in all subjects. No student is excused from taking semester examinations for any reason. Students who are late for a final exam will not be permitted to take the test and will receive a zero for the exam. It is imperative that students arrive on time for end of semester finals.

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## Student Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker for the storage of books and other belongings. It is the student's responsibility to see that his/her locker is secured at all times. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen property. Students must only use their assigned lockers. Good judgment should be used in what you bring to school. Lockers are school property and may be searched at any time if reasonable cause exists to do so. Students are required to bring a lock from home. Locks are available for purchase in the main office.



## Pictures

All students must have their picture taken as they are used for student ID's. Students and their families will have the opportunity to purchase various picture packages from the photography company. Information regarding the date of the picture day will be communicated at a later time.

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## The 5P's

All students and parents/guardians signed the "compact of understanding" when accepting their placement at SciTech. This compact outlines the agreements students, parents/guardians and staff members make regarding their commitment to success at the Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy. All students agreed to the five P's:

- Be prompt**
- Be prepared**
- Be polite**
- Be productive**
- Be positive**

These five P's outline the responsibilities of each student every day. Students will see constant reminders of these five P's in classrooms and other areas throughout the building.

## Cell Phones, iPods and Other Electronic Devices

Students are permitted to carry cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices to and from school; however the phones, iPods, laser pointers and other electronic devices must be kept out of sight and turned off upon entry into the school and throughout the school day. Students who violate this rule will be subject to having the item confiscated and will be assigned Saturday detention if he or she refuses to handover the device as expected. These items will only be returned to a parent. **Juniors and seniors that have repeated violations of this policy will be subject to loss of privileges, such as Junior/Senior Prom.**

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## Dress Code

The Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy has a unique dress code exclusive to the school. We are working diligently to create a culture of high expectations and academic excellence for all learners. It is our hope that the dress code helps foster a positive learning environment free of distractions and disruptions.

A copy of the dress code is included with this mailing. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the dress code. Our dress code is designed around a "business casual" framework. If a student is not dressed appropriately, the parent or guardian may be contacted to bring appropriate clothes to the school. The dress code can also be found at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com) under School Information. There are also colored photos of what is and is not appropriate.



Below are the dress code requirements for physical education classes.

### Expectations of Dress for Physical Education Class:

All students are expected to fully participate in physical education class wearing the following appropriate attire:

Athletic shorts or pants - Must be of appropriate length and worn at one's hips

T-shirt or sweatshirt - Long enough to cover the top of pants even when arms are raised above head

Socks and athletic shoes - Boots, sandals, or dress shoes will not be allowed

### Expectations of Dress for Swimming:

Boys- will wear swimming trunks (no athletic shorts)

Girls- will wear a one piece suit or a tankini (or a 2 piece with a dark non-see through t-shirt on top)

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## Code of Student Conduct

A copy of the updated Code of Student Conduct will be included either in a Welcome Back mailing from the Pittsburgh Public Schools central office or a packet of materials distributed to students during the first days of school. A copy of the Code of Student Conduct can also be found on the District website. It is very important that students and families familiarize themselves with this document.

## Attendance Reminders



We realize that it will be necessary for students to be absent on occasion when a student is prevented from attendance for certain reasons (illness, health care, bereavement, religious holidays, school activities). It has been proven, however, that students who attend school regularly achieve more than those who do not. Class attendance and participation are imperative for academic achievement and necessary for the accomplishment of curricular objectives, especially at SciTech where we implement a block schedule. Therefore, it is the policy of the School District that all students be in attendance unless absent for an approved reason.

Students must bring an excuse to school the day after an absence and turn it into the main office. Only ten parent excuses are allowed per year. If a student does not bring in an absent note from a parent or guardian after three days following the absence, the absence is then considered unexcused. Unexcused absences violate the Pennsylvania school compulsory attendance laws and can lead to a citation being filed with the local magistrate.

It is important to note that the Pittsburgh Promise uses attendance as one of several criteria when determining eligibility for scholarships. Suspensions and unexcused absences shall count against a student when determining eligibility for the Promise. All excused absences are not counted against a student in determining eligibility for the Promise.

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## Outstanding Obligations

(Textbooks/Calculators/Technology items)



Students are responsible for all school books, calculators and technology items issued to them. If damaged or lost, it is the student's responsibility to replace them. **The deadline to pay all outstanding obligations is Wednesday, September 30, 2015. If a returning student has not paid their obligation by this date, he or she is not considered in good standing until the debt is paid. While a student is not in good standing, he or she is not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, school dances, prom, commencement, etc.).**

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## Early Dismissal Policy

A request for an early dismissal must be submitted in writing to the main office the morning of the day of the dismissal. The request must include a telephone number at which the parent/guardian can be contacted to verify the early dismissal request. Students can then pick up their early dismissal pass after 2nd period.

**Please note that it is necessary for students to remain in class at the end of the school day. Early dismissals near the close of fifth period will not be given without the main office having received an early dismissal note in accordance with the school policy.**

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## Parent Involvement Policy

Please find the current "Parent Involvement Policy" on the SciTech website— [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com). Click on the Parents tab.



## Parent School Community Council (PSCC) Meetings

The purpose of the Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy PSCC is to provide ongoing communication between the school and parents, guardians and community groups regarding issues that are important to the success of our students. The council meets every other month and meetings are open to all those who are interested in attending. All PSCC meetings will take place from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the school and a light dinner is served. The dates for each monthly meeting are below. There is a separate flyer in this mailing that details all of the topics. We look forward to your attendance!

September 10, 2015

January 14, 2016

May 12, 2016

November 12, 2015

March 10, 2016

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## Parent Volunteers

We recognize that a great school has great parental support and engagement. We are working on developing a strong and active group of parent volunteers to help sustain the collaboration among staff members and our families. If you are interested in volunteering, please go to [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com) and click on Families then Volunteer. If you have any questions you can contact Mrs. Theuret at 412-529-7652 or [stheuret1@pghboe.net](mailto:stheuret1@pghboe.net).

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## Communicating with Teachers

All teachers have their own phone extensions, voice mail and email. Teachers will provide all of their contact information to their students at the beginning of the school year and an updated contact list will be sent with the October Newsletter. Teacher email addresses are included on our website as well.

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## Athletics

SciTech students who are interested in participating in athletics have the opportunity to do so with our partner schools through a cooperative sponsorship. This is the arrangement that was utilized the last four school years and many of our students took advantage of these opportunities. Mr. Shevitz serves as our athletics liaison with these schools.

### **Associate, Manager and Executive Level (Grades 9-12)**

Our high school students partner with Pittsburgh Obama and University Prep for varsity athletics. Our students may participate in any sport that is offered. The following sports are available in the fall: Boys soccer, girls soccer, co-ed cross country, co-ed golf, girls tennis, girls volleyball and football.

The official start date for fall varsity sports is Monday, August 17th. If you have further questions, please contact the coach for the individual sport of interest to your student. Contact information for each coach can be found at [www.pittsburghscitech.com](http://www.pittsburghscitech.com) under the athletics tab. Students can only tryout or participate in practice after submitting a completed physical.

### **Novice and Apprentice Levels (Grades 6-8)**

Our middle school students partner with University Prep and information regarding the middle school athletic program will be available closer to the start of school. The location of all practices and games will be primarily at University Prep but will be determined on a sport by sport basis. Information will be available for students once the school year begins. Please direct any questions regarding the middle school sports program to the SciTech Athletics Liaison, Kevin Shevitz, at [kshevitz1@pghboe.net](mailto:kshevitz1@pghboe.net) or call 412-529-7658.

## Laptops

### Grades 9-12

Every 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade student at our school will receive a personal laptop computer to use at home and school throughout the school year. In addition to specialized technology classes and training for our students, we will offer on-site technology repair and assistance. **Given this, all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, and new 10<sup>th</sup> grade students, and a parent or guardian MUST attend one of our laptop program orientation meetings.**

These sessions are scheduled during the dates and times below at the school. Please call the school to RSVP for the date you plan to attend.

**9<sup>th</sup> grade and new 10<sup>th</sup> grade student Laptop Orientation Dates (you must attend either one)**

**Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM**

**Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>: 6:00 PM**

### Grades 6-8

All 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have access to a laptop computer throughout the school day. These procedures will be explained to students during special sessions occurring during the school day at the beginning of the year.

## Technology Use

A technology acceptable use policy (AUP) will be shared with students once the school year begins. Given that SciTech utilizes technology as a learning tool every day, communication of the AUP is incredibly important so that all students are aware of the policy. In the student handbook/planner there is a section titled "Laptop Program Guidelines and Agreements" that clearly outlines the acceptable use of technology at SciTech. A copy of the District's AUP is available on the Pittsburgh Public Schools website.



## Breakfast and Lunch Program

Breakfast will be available for all students in the cafeteria from 7:10-7:29 AM. No "snack" items will be sold during breakfast. Each student will have one lunch period in the middle of the day. Students may bring their own lunch to school or receive a free lunch in the cafeteria. Although all students are provided a free lunch, it is still necessary to complete the appropriate paperwork for the lunch program when you receive it for. Students may not take food out of the cafeteria area and must dispose of all items properly.



**All 9th Grade students and NEW 10th Grade students MUST attend Laptop Orientation.**

## Immunization and Health Information

The health and well-being of our students is very important. Please don't hesitate to inform our school nurse practitioner of any medical concerns that you may have about your student's health throughout the school year. Mrs. Devlin, the school nurse practitioner will be available to answer all health related questions beginning August 20, 2015. Mrs. Devlin can be reached by phone at 412-529-7654 and forms can be faxed to 412-224-4650.

All immunization information is due on the first day of school. Students entering 7th grade are required to submit documentation to the school health office of the meningococcal and Tdap vaccines.

All 6th and 9th grade students are required to have a physical examination. Any physical completed by your student's health care provider dated on or after June 1, 2015 will be accepted. All 7th grade students are required to have a dental examination. This examination will be performed at school unless a completed dental form has been submitted.

If your student requires the administration of prescription or over the counter medication during the school day, a completed medication administration form is required on the first day of school. All medication must be in the original prescription labeled container to be administered by the school health office.

