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341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**For Immediate Release**

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## **All In to Reopen Our Schools Committee Shares Preliminary Report**

### ***District to Recommend First Day of School Move to August 31***

PITTSBURGH July 14, 2020 – More than 300 participants, representing the voices of students, parents, teachers, community partners, health and government officials, and local leaders, joined Superintendent Anthony Hamlet for the preliminary report of All In to Reopen Our Schools. The effort, held in partnership with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) and One Pa, leveraged the Pittsburgh community's expertise and resources to develop recommendations for the safe and successful reopening of schools. Tonight, members of 14 subcommittees highlighted vital recommendations as the public viewed the meeting live on the District's Facebook page and website.

"Since my arrival, I have stressed that in order for Pittsburgh Public Schools to meet the varying needs of our students, we must listen to the voices of all stakeholders," said Superintendent Anthony Hamlet, Ed. D. "This meaningful work has resulted in more than 400 thoughtful recommendations to ensure a safe reopening of schools for all students and staff. I am grateful for our partnership with the PFT and One Pa that has brought so many voices to the table."

"The top priority for everyone has been, and should remain, the safety of each and every one of our students and educators in the Pittsburgh Public Schools," said PFT President Nina Esposito-Visgitis. "The subcommittee recommendations for the All In to Reopen Our Schools initiative reflect an authentic collaboration among professional educators, district administration, community activists, health experts and business leadership striving to bring back our schools safely, meaningfully and effectively."

Among the 407 recommendations, immediate actions for the start of the 2020-2021 school year include:

- Choice for families between a full-time E-Learning option or a mix of in-school instruction and E-Learning. To date, close to 700 students have enrolled in full-time E-Learning.
- The switch to Schoology as the District's online Learning Management System, with the integrated use of Microsoft Teams to support communications. Schoology, currently used at the Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy, rated high for its ease of use, accessibility, technical integration and content management.
- An AA/BB schedule for in-school instruction to limit the number of students in the building at any one time. This would mean students in one cohort may attend school Monday and Tuesday and



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participate in E-Learning on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, while some students attend school on Thursday and Friday and have E-Learning on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. AA/BB is preferred over AB/AB to support in-depth cleaning requirements between cohorts.

- No in-school instruction at the Gifted Center. All classes will be held virtually.
- All students and staff wear masks all day and practice social distancing. While on a school bus, students sit one to a seat. The District will survey families on plans for utilizing District transportation to schedule bus routes effectively.

“We don't know what will happen in the end of August; however, we still felt the need to make a localized plan instead of being given one from outsiders, said Angel Gober, Western PA Organizing Director, One Pa. “The plan will not be perfect, but I believe the folks who participated in this process showed up in a big way!”

The recommendations also include moving the first day of school for all students from August 26 to August 31, to allow for a total of six professional development days for teacher professional development on Schoology and Teams and safety protocols. Kindergarten students would also start later on Thursday, September 3.

Even with the new start date, Dr. Hamlet warned of the possible start of the school year entirely online should COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Allegheny County.

"Our number one priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. We will only reopen schools when we can assure our families, students and staff that all social distancing and health and safety measures are in place and can be followed. Based on the condition of COVID-19 in our area, we will be ready to pivot and offer full-time E-Learning to all students," said Dr. Hamlet. "I am confident that regardless of the condition of the coronavirus in Allegheny County, we will be prepared to provide our students with the high-quality learning experience they deserve."

As the District continues to monitor the spread of COVID-19, a final recommendation for the start of school will be shared at the Board's August 4, Education Committee. In the meantime, the District will continue to distribute technology to students so that all students are ready to begin learning, whether in school or remotely.

A complete listing of the full All In to Reopen Our Schools recommendations will be posted on the District's website tomorrow evening at <https://www.pghschools.org/ALLIN>. The Board will vote to approve the required Safety Plan at its July 22, Legislative Meeting for submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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