



## Teachers union is first donor to scholarship fund

Thursday, January 11, 2007

By Joe Smydo and Rich Lord, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The first donation to the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship program is coming from people who know the city's high school students well -- their teachers.

The Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers will present the check at 11:30 a.m. today to school Superintendent Mark Roosevelt and Mayor Luke Ravenstahl. The presentation will occur at the union's South Side offices.

"We want to be the first to make a contribution and show the support of the PFT," union President John Tarka said yesterday. Teachers, he added, want their students to "have every benefit they could possibly have."

Mr. Tarka declined to reveal the amount of the donation until today. Mr. Ravenstahl said the gift would represent a fraction of what's needed to sustain the program, which could cost several million dollars a year.

Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Ravenstahl unveiled the Pittsburgh Promise last month, saying students who follow the rules and work diligently would get scholarships to help cover tuition at accredited colleges and trade schools in Pennsylvania.

Many details have not been finalized, but Mr. Roosevelt yesterday said the program could provide a student with \$5,000 of undergraduate tuition assistance per year.

He said Pittsburgh Promise would offer "last-dollar money," helping students close gaps in aid packages. He said the program also would assist students in tapping other sources of financial aid and guide them in making necessary preparations for college, such as making sure they take the SAT.

Besides being a reward for hard work, the program is a public relations tool for luring families to the city and inducing them to stay. Mr. Roosevelt sees the program as one component of his plan to revitalize the city's high schools, which have been losing students to suburban, charter and private schools.

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### Survey lauds Carnegie Mellon faculty

■ Carnegie Mellon University faculty placed sixth among large research universities in a ranking of scholarly productivity released this week.

■ The ranking of doctoral programs by Academic Analytics considered faculty publications, citations and financial and honorary awards won.

■ Harvard University was first, followed by a tie for second by California Institute of Technology and the University of California, San Francisco. Massachusetts Institute of Technology was fourth and Yale University fifth.

■ Academic Analytics, formed in 2005, represents a collaboration between faculty and researchers at

With his high-profile position, Mr. Ravenstahl is serving as chief fund-raiser. But the first check is arriving without any prompting.

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Mr. Tarka said the union will make a grant from its Quality Educational Standards in Teaching, or QuEST, scholarship fund. He said the fund, supported with donations from union members and proceeds from fund-raisers, was created about 35 years ago to provide scholarships to city students.

Mr. Roosevelt called the donation "a great token of the teachers' contribution to the future of the Pittsburgh Public Schools." Mr. Ravenstahl said the teachers' donation "symbolizes that they're on board with the idea and they understand that it's important to really establish, and re-establish, the strength of the Pittsburgh Public Schools."

But Mr. Ravenstahl said a broader base of contributors is needed to support the program.

"This has to be a widespread effort from a bunch of different communities throughout Pittsburgh. Obviously, the Federation of Teachers is one of those, but we'd never envision them as one of the primary funders of the Promise. That would obviously be the corporate and/or foundation community, so we'll continue to work that end as well."

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