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City teachers carry out 'Promise'

By Bill Zlatos
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The Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers gave \$10,000 as the first donor to a program that will give college scholarships to all graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools.

"This is a good example of how serious teachers are about their students' achievement," PFT President John Tarka said after he had presented a check Thursday to Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and city schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt at the teacher union's headquarters on the South Side.

Called "The Pittsburgh Promise," the program might pay high school graduates -- beginning with the class of 2008 -- \$5,000, about the amount of a year's tuition at one of the universities in the State System of Higher Education. Roosevelt said that the exact guidelines for the fund have not been finalized.

Charlynn White, a junior at Perry Traditional Academy, and Andrew Karas, a junior at Langley High School, attended the news conference.

White, 16, said, "Not only will it help those that need money for school, but it's also a reward for those who are doing good in school."

Karas, 16, said one of his brothers is considering attending a college that costs \$60,000 a year.

"Being one of three brothers," he said, "my family can't do that three times."

Tarka said the teachers union may provide more money to The Pittsburgh Promise. The \$10,000 comes from Quality Educational Standards in Teaching, a fund established 35 years ago.

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