

Pittsburgh Conroy

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Welcome!

Pittsburgh Conroy is a special education facility located in Pittsburgh's Manchester community. We offer a positive learning environment which provides all participants a variety of opportunities to maximize their academic, emotional and social success. Each student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which drives the curriculum decisions for the students.

SCHOOL MASCOT

Our mascot is a blue jay. He makes an appearance at all official activities and performances. His primary personality is that of our art teacher. On occasion, several students have assumed his character.

SCHOOL MOTTO

"Growth Towards Independence"

The PSE philosophy states that "All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day." Our programming projections follow the district motto of Excellence for All.

SCHOOL PLEDGE

We have a pledge that is part of our morning ritual. It says:

We Pledge to: Do Our Best
We Pledge to: Learn
We Pledge to: Work Hard
We Pledge to: Keep our school safe
We Pledge to: Be positive and happy
We Pledge to: Respect one another
We Pledge to: Listen and try new things
T ogether, we can achieve "Excellence For All"

OUR HISTORY

Pittsburgh Conroy, a special place for special people, has a long and distinguished history in education. Formerly the John M. Conroy, Jr., High

School, Pittsburgh Conroy perpetuates the name of John M. Conroy, the first principal who served from 1868 to 1878 and whose initiative established the first manual training school (Fifth Ward Manual Training School, 1895).

The John M. Conroy School was formerly located in the old Borough of Manchester which was later annexed to the City of Allegheny, now known as the North Side, Pittsburgh. A two-story brick building, 35 ft. by 63 ft., accommodated the 600 children then enrolled. The building consisted of four poorly furnished rooms, partitioned with unpainted boards.

The building was replaced in 1869 by a second building which cost \$77,646.40, including grounds and equipment. It was dedicated and opened on September 2, 1869. The first day of school, September 6, there were 612 pupils enrolled. Fire destroyed the second and third stories of the school on December of that same year. The building was repaired and ready for opening in August, 1870. In 1886, the school became overcrowded. Additional ground was purchased and a second building containing 12 rooms was erected. This three-story building became known as the Number 2 building or annex.

A fourth floor for additional school rooms was constructed in 1897. At the time of its construction, this school was considered to be one of the most modern buildings in the city, i.e. hot air-heated, lighted with gas and equipped with speaking tubes which connected the principal's office with every room in the building.

In 1895, the Fifth Ward School, now the John M. Conroy School, was built and was fully equipped as the first manual training and Household Economy School building ever erected in what was then known as the City of Allegheny and the City of Pittsburgh. It may well be that this school was the first school building of its kind ever erected and operated in connection with any public elementary school in the country.

On March 1, 1907 fire again destroyed the Number One building of 1869 to such an extent that the local

school board decided at once to replace this building with a modern structure which was completed in 1908. At that time, this new building was considered to have been one of the "most substantial buildings in the City, being strictly fire-proof."

The new school was used as an elementary and junior high school with vocational shops until the 1974-75 school year. That school term saw the birth of Conroy as a setting for special needs students.

A massive remodeling project was begun in the spring of the 1974-75 school year. The center building of the Conroy complex was torn down and construction began that spring. A specially constructed passageway connected the two remaining Conroy buildings.

The major part of the new construction and renovation was completed in September, 1976. Students and faculty from the East End Center were moved to Conroy, thus completing the transitional process of creating a school for special-needs students.

Special education funds totaling some \$160,000 were utilized to purchase the equipment for the city-owned McKnight Playground, adjacent to the school. Under a special agreement with the city, the board purchased the equipment.

The city installed the equipment, including the playground equipment and the large Astroturf area and was responsible for its maintenance. The playground is utilized by Pittsburgh Conroy School pupils during school hours and is available to the community at large during non-school hours.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

School Uniform

Pittsburgh Conroy follows the Pittsburgh Public Schools Dress Code. No uniform is needed.

Program Offerings/School Departments

Currently, all students attending Pittsburgh Conroy Education Center are classified as Life Skills Support, Autistic Support, or Multiply Disabled. This classification and the age of the student are utilized to place the student in a homeroom. The classrooms for elementary and middle Life Skills Support, Autistic Support, and Multiply Disabled students are self contained. Secondary Life Skills students are afforded classrooms that specialize in Community-based Instruction, Functional Academics, Activities of Daily Living, and Vocational Training. It should be noted that all Pittsburgh Conroy students possess an

Individualized Educational Plan. The IEP determines the focus goals and objectives for each student.

Our Vocational Department is separated into two categories. Our school-based program is comprised of our Food and Consumer Science Program. This program is further divided into Food Service and Sanitation. Our Community-based Vocational Training Program is led by one teacher and five paraprofessionals. The paraprofessionals provide on-site, community-based vocational instruction in a variety of community settings. These external teaching environments assist our students in developing the dexterity and appropriate social skills needed for successful post-school integration into the real world.

Athletic Programs

Our athletic offerings are intramural basketball, soccer, basketball, and flag football. Our intramural basketball differs from the school basketball program. The intramural program has been specifically designed as a behavior modification reward for behavioral compliance. The school basketball program is open to everyone. The intramural activities are during the day. Students are afforded an opportunity to learn the game and sharpen their skills for several weeks prior to the competitions. These activities are open to everyone. During the pre-game learning phase, students become part of a team and practice drills and their skills. The culmination of each activity is a game. Every participant is recognized for his/her participation and individual accomplishments within their ability classification. Examples include but are not limited to the longest throw, longest kick, and most field goals within a minute.

To date, our athletic programs are intra-school. We are currently in negotiations to play other schools and programs. It is expected that during the 2007-2008 school year, we will begin interschool competitions on a limited basis.

After-School Programs

At this time, Pittsburgh Conroy does not have an extensive after-school program. Presently, the Special Olympics' bowlers travel to the North Side Elks to hone their skills prior to bowling competitions. Our PSCC hosts a bowling group on Sunday mornings at the Noble Manor Bowling Lanes for all interested students and their families. Other after-school programming is informal. Examples of these activities are trips to the professional and amateur sporting events, home parties, theater and movie outings, dinner, and other activities as they

become available. In these cases, staff makes individual arrangements to take students to a particular event.

Extra-curricular Activities

Pittsburgh Conroy's student body resides throughout the city of Pittsburgh. As such, our extra-curricular activities are limited. The predominance of our activities revolves around our Special Olympics Program. Currently, we belong to the Allegheny County Special Olympics. We participate in inter-league bowling, cross country skiing, basketball, and track and field. These programs take place at participation facilities throughout the city of Pittsburgh. The track and field program is the largest group. Approximately 75 students and faculty take part in this program.

Additionally, children may elect to participate in a Girls Social Group; HIS Club—a male social group; Art Club; Junior Chorus and Senior Chorus.

Field Trip Guidelines

Our staff attempts to expose the students to a variety of cultural and community activities throughout the year. The most common trips that we take are to the Zoo, Arts Festival, PPG Christmas Tree Exposition, Sports Museum, Aviary, Children's Museum, Romp n' Roll Roller Skating Rink, Shrine Circus, Heinz Hall, Benedum Theater, Schenley Park Ice Rink, Carnegie Science Center, local parks, Phipps Conservatory, and other community events as scheduled and affordable. Trips occur when scheduled by an individual for a small group, or as an all-school activity. Individual teachers participate as they deem the activity appropriate for their classrooms.

The procedure involves filling out a Field Trip Request Form and submitting it to the appropriate ITL. The ITL forwards the information to the Principal with his/her recommendations. If approved, the information is published and affected personnel, like the cafeteria manager and specialty staff are notified if meals will need to be modified or preps cancelled as a result of the trip.

Parental Involvement

There are numerous opportunities for parental involvement at Pittsburgh Conroy. The PSCC sends out a request for volunteers and new members at the beginning of each school year. Additionally, a PSCC member attends all school activities to talk to parents about joining the organization. Parents are encouraged to join us for Open House, Conference Day, field trips, IEP meetings, spaghetti

dinners, talent evenings, PSCC meetings (which are conducted the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m.), flag football, basketball, and soccer tournaments. We request volunteer assistance for all our school activities like Family Fun Day, Fun in the Sun Day, our own Special Olympics Tournament, our spring musical, and holiday program. Due to hectic schedules and other obligations, parents who cannot come into the school may participate from home through the completion of a counting or cutting activity not appropriate for some students.

