

The Teacher Academy Site Proposal
Empowering Effective Teachers
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)
July 19, 2010

The following FAQ was prepared regarding the Pittsburgh Public Schools presentation at the July 19th, 2010 Education Committee meeting regarding the proposal to locate the District's Teacher Academy, a cornerstone of the Empowering Effective Teachers plan, at Pittsburgh Brashear High School and Pittsburgh King K-8 for the 2011-12 school year.

Q. What is The Teacher Academy model?

A. At The Teacher Academy, new and experienced teachers will come to enhance their instructional practices and deepen their ability to build relationships with students to engage them in learning. Teachers will engage in rich experiential learning and have opportunities to participate in customized professional development seminars and courses while working in classrooms with highly-effective teacher mentors.

The Teacher Academy will include four main programs:

- 1) **Enhanced Induction for New Teachers** - All new teachers will receive three weeks of training during the summer and at least 10 days of induction training during the year.
- 2) **A New Teacher Residency Program** - New core content teachers will complete a 13-month residency program at The Academy prior to placement in the classroom as teacher of record.
- 3) **An Alternative Certification Pathway** - Opportunities will be available for career changers and recent graduates to pursue alternative certification in Math, Science and/or Special Education.
- 4) **An Experienced Teacher Immersion Program** - Experienced teachers will have the opportunity to visit the Academy for up to six weeks to spend time sharing and improving teacher practices.

Q. Who will be taking part in The Teacher Academy?

A.

- **All new teachers** will receive three weeks of training during the summer and at least 10 days of induction training during the year.
- **New core content teachers** will complete a year-long residency program at The Academy prior to placement in the classroom as teacher of record.
- Opportunities will be available for **career changers and recent graduates** to pursue alternative certification in Math, Science and/or Special Education.
- **Experienced teachers in core content areas** will have the opportunity to visit **The Academy** for up to six weeks to spend time sharing and improving teacher practices.
- **Approximately 50 highly-effective teachers**, Clinical Resident Instructors, will serve as classroom teachers at The Teacher Academy and mentor new and experienced teachers who visit.

Q. When will The Academy sites open?

A. Both sites are proposed to open for the 2011-12 school year.

The Teacher Academy Site Proposal
Empowering Effective Teachers
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)
July 19, 2010

Q. How many novice/experienced teachers will be attending The Teacher Academy each year?

A. The District will work over the course of the next year to determine how many teachers will be attending The Teacher Academy. This will, in part, depend upon how many new teachers the District hires in any given year, so the total number will vary depending upon the year.

Q. What is the process of selecting experienced teachers to attend The Academy?

A. During the first Immersion cycle, beginning in the second semester of the 2011-2012 school year, each school will be able to send a select number of teachers to The Teacher Academy each quarter. The exact number of teachers from each school who will visit the academy each quarter is yet to be determined.

Q: Who replaces teachers when they take part in the Immersion program at The Teacher Academy?

A. When experienced teachers leave their classrooms to take part in the Immersion program at The Teacher Academy during the second semester, they are replaced with resident teachers. Resident teachers are certified teachers who are in their first year of teaching in Pittsburgh Public Schools and participating in the 13-month Teacher Residency Program.

At the time when residents replace experienced teachers, they will have taught side-by-side with the experienced mentor teachers at The Teacher Academy, called a Clinical Resident Instructor (CRI), for at least one semester and consistently demonstrated effective teaching. Residents will continue to receive support from the Clinical Resident Instructor during their placement/field experience.

We believe that providing residents the opportunity to work in classrooms outside of The Teacher Academy will enrich their experience and give the residents a more holistic understanding of what is needed to be an effective teacher in Pittsburgh.

We will work with the residents to ensure the transitions are smooth and student learning is not compromised.

Q. Why did the District choose to put The Teacher Academy in Brashear and King?

A. In order to identify the best possible sites for the new Teacher Academy, the District identified several criteria to guide the site selection process including status of student achievement, an adequate school population and student cohort size, a high needs school with a large population eligible for free and reduced lunch, academic disparities within the school or District, a suitable facility that does not require significant capital investment, eligibility for funding under the U.S. Department of Education's new accountability standards and an academic program that supports the Academy model.

The Teacher Academy Site Proposal
Empowering Effective Teachers
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)
July 19, 2010

An Academy Design Team, made up of District staff and PFT members, was responsible for considering the options for possible locations. After thoroughly reviewing all available high school and lower grades locations, the District is recommending **Pittsburgh Brashear High School and Pittsburgh King K-8**. Through these schools, the District will be able to reach a significant population of high-needs students to dramatically improve student performance.

Q. How long is the Summer Induction program for new hires?

A. All new teachers will receive three weeks of training during the Summer Induction program.

Q. Will teachers currently at Pittsburgh Brashear High School and Pittsburgh King K-8 retain their positions?

A. The Teacher Academy sites will open as new schools in 2011-12, and therefore all teachers will be required to reapply for their jobs.

Q: How does The Teacher Academy benefit students?

A The District's work over the next several years, anchored around the goals set forth in the **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan, will fundamentally advance the teaching profession in a way that is aligned with improving student achievement.

As a cornerstone this work, The Teacher Academy will help to ensure our District is able to increase the number of highly effective teachers; increase the exposure of high-need students to highly-effective teachers; and ensure that the learning environment supports the ability of teachers to be effective.

District students who attend The Teacher Academy will experience a learning environment and school culture that fosters a life-long appreciation of learning for teachers and students alike. Energized by the ideas and hard work of the new and experienced teachers who rotate through the program, and anchored by a select group of highly effective teachers, The Teacher Academy will prepare students to take advantage of The Pittsburgh Promise®.

Q: What is the role of the Clinical Resident Instructor (CRI) at The Academy?

The Academy will employ approximately 50 highly effective teachers to serve as Clinical Resident Instructors or CRIs, the primary mentors and instructional coaches to novice and experienced teachers. In addition, CRIs will evaluate their mentees and work with other CRIs to evaluate other novice teachers as part of an aggressive tenure process.

During their non-teaching time, CRIs will provide teacher residents with an intensive pre-lesson, lesson, and post-lesson observation cycle.

The Teacher Academy Site Proposal
Empowering Effective Teachers
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)
July 19, 2010

In addition, the CRIs will provide a variety of professional development seminars at The Teacher Academy. CRIs also will deliver follow-up support, including building visits and distance-learning communication, to teachers upon their transition to their own school buildings. Finally, as Academy teachers, the CRIs also provide the added benefit of working with a large number of high-need students.

Q: What do teachers do while they are in The Academy?

A. The Teacher Academy will provide opportunities for experienced teachers to cycle through in intensive, six week-long immersions during the second semester. During these immersions, teachers will improve and reflect on their teaching practices through a combination of intense planning, observation, teaching, and learning. The diverse learning opportunities available at The Academy will provide rich experiential learning regarding:

- Instructional practices that maximize student learning and Promise-Readiness;
- PPS core curricula and programs that prepare students for college;
- Data-informed decision-making, including summative, formative, interim, and diagnostic assessments to monitor and adapt instruction;
- Race, race relations, and its implications for teaching;
- Cultural competence and culturally relevant pedagogy;
- Classroom management and student relationship building strategies;
- Student motivations and aspirations for college-readiness and completion; and
- Access to latest research from PPS' partners: the PFT's Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D); the University of Pittsburgh's IFL and Learning Research Development Center.

Although the specific schedule for the immersion experience is still being developed by the Academy Design Team, we anticipate teachers engaging in three distinct types of learning:

1. The Clinical Teaching Experience – A portion of the school day will be spent in the classroom with the Clinical Resident Instructor (CRI). During this time, teachers will participate in collaborative planning, classroom observation, teaching and reflection.
2. Recommended/Required Professional Development – Throughout the 6-week immersion, teachers will participate in professional development modules/seminars that are aligned to the RISE rubric. Specific professional development plans will be differentiated for each teacher.
3. Self-Selected Growth Studies/Externships – Teachers will have the opportunity to self-select/design an enrichment activity to complete during the immersion experience. This may include but is not limited to externships, leadership projects, research projects, and/or National Board pre-candidacy courses.

The Teacher Academy Site Proposal
Empowering Effective Teachers
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)
July 19, 2010

Q: How will the District decide whether new teachers go to The Teacher Academy or the classroom?

A. As noted in the **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan, all teachers new to PPS will be inducted through The Teacher Academy's three week Enhanced Induction Program, as well as ongoing seminars throughout the first three years of teaching. In addition, all novice teachers hired in core content areas (math, reading, social studies, science and special education) will be required to complete the 13-month Residency Program at The Teacher Academy. Depending on the need to fill vacancies in schools, newly hired teachers who have teaching experience in other districts may be placed directly into the classroom or participate in the 13-month Residency Program. Teachers new to the District who do not teach in core content areas will be placed directly in classrooms.

Q: Are teacher residents guaranteed a position after program completion?

A. The teaching profession can only be "mastered" through practice. Research supports this; however, few preparation programs prepare teachers with the classroom management and instructional skills and specific focus on teaching African American students so critical for an urban district. To ensure a systematic emphasis on instructional practice and college-going culture, the District will require that novice teachers in core content areas complete an induction/residency program at The Teacher Academy. Upon successful completion of the program, residents will be placed in a District classroom as teacher of record.