



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

COMMUNITY QUARTERBACK INFORMATION

Eligible Community(ies): Penn Hills [includes some overlap with Wilkinsburg (eligible) and City of Pittsburgh (not eligible)—based on known youth/young adult travel patterns]

Proposer/Community Quarterback Name: Penn Hills School District

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Dr. Nancy Hines/Superintendent

Address: 260 Aster Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Telephone: (412)793-7000, ext 1282

Email: nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us

Website: www.phsd.k12.pa.us

Legal Status: ☐ For-Profit Corp. ☐ Nonprofit Corp. ☐ Sole Proprietor ☒ Partnership

Date Incorporated: N/A; Public School District

Partners, stakeholders and/or subcontractors included in this Proposal:

- Imani Christian Academy/Street Ministry Institute (Anwan Wesley)
- Neighborhood Resilience Project (Fr. Paul Abernathy/Dan Emerick)
- Penn Hills Municipality, including Penn Hills Police Department (Chris Blackwell)
- Penn Hills Library (Tina Zins/Christine Taylor)
- The Fold/ Monroeville Assembly of God (Reverend Andy Hoover) *still considered tentative
- Ruth's Way (Isis Chatman)
- Community and Family Builders (Diane Powell)
- St. James Episcopal Church (Reverend Canon Eric McIntosh)
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Reverend Linda Theophilus)
- RSG Consultants, LLC (Richard Garland/Dr. Staci Ford)
- Pressley Ridge (Jesse McLean/Michele Woodward)
- Krise Transportation (Kelly Wood)
- KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund (Joel Niecgorski/Tom Sommers)
- Beulah Presbyterian Church (Alex Ruzanic)
- A Second Chance (Dr. Sharon McDaniel/Dr. David Brock/Aquieda Lawson)
- Hosanna House (Randy Goodnight/Christin Robison)

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- Allegheny Intermediate Unit (Dr. Licia Lentz)
- Magisterial District Judge Anthony DeLuca (05-20-6)

***Current members of our community collaboration respectfully ask that we might have discretion to add new partners once we launch and/or as new opportunities present.**

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Ross Watson and Nick Cotter shared preliminary information about this potential opportunity with us following Superintendent Nancy Hines' collaborative meetings with Ross Watson to discuss strategies for reducing youth violence within Penn Hills School District, Penn Hills community, and throughout Allegheny County. We continued to learn more and more about this grant opportunity via formal FAQ sessions hosted by Allegheny County that were accessible to all qualifying community representatives.

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing? ☒ Yes ☐ No

COMMUNITY QUARTERBACK REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Dr. Nancy Hines	(412)793-7000,ext 1282	nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us
Contract Processing Contact	Dayne Dice, Solicitor	(724)733-3080	ddice@dicelaw.com
Chief Information Officer	Dr. Nancy Hines	(412)793-7000, ext 1282	nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us
Chief Financial Officer	Eileen Navish	(412)793-7000, ext 1231	enavi@phsd.k12.pa.us
MPER Contact*	Nakita LaPrade	(412)793-7000, ext 1253	nlapra@phsd.k12.pa.us

* [MPER](#) is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

COMMUNITY QUARTERBACK BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

Erin Vecchio
Jackie Blakey-Tate
Joseph Capozoli
Evelyn Herbert
Marisa Jamison
Dr. Robert Marra
Nicole Richardson
Elizabeth Rosemeyer

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Meryl Thomas

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Erin Vecchio

Board Chairperson Address: c/o Penn Hills School District, 260 Aster Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Board Chairperson Telephone: (412)793-7000

Board Chairperson Email: evicch@phsd.k12.pa.us

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

Senator Jay Costa
PA Senate District 43rd District
jay.costa@pasenate.com
(412)241-6690

Dr. Elizabeth Miller
UPMC Children's Hospital
elizabeth.miller@chp.edu
(412)692-8504

Jamie Baxter
Allies for Children
jamie.baxter@alliesforchildren.org
(412)586-0880

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted: 5/4/2022

Amount Requested: \$868,689

CERTIFICATION

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

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☒ I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

☒ By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

☐ My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

☒ My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Partner and stakeholder commitment letters (included as part of separate, bulk electronic attachment)
- MWDBE and VOSB documents (included as part of separate, bulk attachment)
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form (included as part of separate, bulk attachment)
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years (included as separate, unique attachments due to document size).
- W-9 (included as part of separate, bulk attachment)

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REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 160 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 20 pages.

A. Stakeholder Commitment (35 points possible)

1. Please list the partners and stakeholders that support your CVRP. For each, provide an explanation of how they participated in developing the CVRP and how they will support its implementation. Attach a signed letter of commitment from each partner and stakeholder listed.
 - Imani Christian Academy/Street Ministry Institute (Anwan Wesley-PHHS Alumnus): will host a Safe Spaces program offsite that may include art therapy, youth basketball, parenting classes, fatherhood workshops, healthy workouts, conflict resolution skills development, etc.
 - Neighborhood Resilience Project (Fr. Paul Abernathy/Dan Emerick): will continue to provide mentoring and support services in Penn Hills HS New Directions Room and may extend services to include support of our Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension program.
 - Penn Hills Municipality, including Penn Hills Police Department (Chris Blackwell): will continue to supply active duty police officers who want to build relationships with local youth by rotating shifts through Penn Hills HS according to an overtime model.
 - Penn Hills Free Library (Tina Zins/Christine Taylor): will host a Safe Spaces program offsite.
 - The Fold/ Monroeville Assembly of God (Reverend Andy Hoover): will potentially host a Safe Spaces program off site. *This program may include present Hoops for Jesus Saturday program design, or may include a modification of that design.
 - Ruth's Way (Isis Chatman): will continue to support our Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension Program but also host a Safe Spaces program offsite. Ruth's Way will continue current inschool programming that includes weekly services that are an intentional tool focusing on violence prevention. It is also intended that Ruth's Way will develop and sustain their capacity for consultation on cases involving domestic violence via Ruth's Way Consulting Services for Parents Who Want Their Daughters to Succeed, LLC.
 - Community and Family Builders (Diane Powell): will participate in active mentoring of Penn Hills HS students via Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension and New Directions programming
 - St. James Episcopal Church (Canon Eric McIntosh): will host a Safe Spaces program offsite that will likely include culinary training and/or access to certified athletic trainers.
 - Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Reverend Linda Theophilus): will help generate staff support for afternoon Homework Help at Penn Hills HS, along with offsite Safe Spaces programming and supervision.
 - RSG Consultants, LLC (Richard Garland/Dr. Staci Ford): will continue to offer school- and home-based counseling, mediation, and grief support, and expand services to include community-based services. Part of their expanded work will include identification and

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progress monitoring of Penn Hills HS students deemed to be at-risk based on regular review of grades, attendance, behavior, and connections to community/school tensions among youth.

- Pressley Ridge (Jesse McLean/Michele Woodward): will continue providing Youth Engagement School Staffing support at all schools within Penn Hills School District and will continue to follow a de-escalation and mediation model that will be expanded to incorporate Cognitive Behavior Intervention.
- Krise Transportation (Kelly Wood): will provide discounted shuttle services to/from programming sites, to include home drop-off at the end of programming sessions to ensure safe return home for program participants.
- KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund (Joel Niecgorski/Tom Sommers): will provide industry-based textbooks, resource materials, and trade-specific instructor staffing for elective coursework to be offered at Penn Hills HS after-school for current students initially and young adults within the community, eventually. Penn Hills School District will offer elective credit that may be applied to graduation requirements.
- Beulah Presbyterian Church (Alex Ruzanic): will host a Safe Spaces program off site that may include the option of roller skating and/or other activities.
- A Second Chance (Dr. Sharon McDaniel/Dr. David Brock/Aquieda Lawson): will host a Safe Spaces program off site.
- Hosanna House (Randy Goodnight/Christina Robison): will host a Safe Spaces program off site for Penn Hills students and engage in a reciprocity agreement that allows Hosanna House youth participants to attend select Penn Hills-based Safe Spaces program events.
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU/Dr. Licia Lentz): AIU will help facilitate GED instruction onsite at Penn Hills HS in Year 2. We will also work with Program Directors to grant access to Safe Spaces Programming for students enrolled in the AIU's Community Schools East Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Program that services students not only from Penn Hills but also students from neighboring districts and others throughout Allegheny County.

Penn Hills School District has had an established relationship with Penn Hills Municipality, Penn Hills Clergy Association, Ruth's Way, Pressley Ridge, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, and Krise Transportation prior to its awareness of this grant opportunity. Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) is a relatively new relationship that was forged at the end of the 21/22 school year after the untimely death of four students enrolled at Penn Hills HS. Our community's relationship with NRP extended into the summer and was enhanced to include local fire/police/EMS, along with Allegheny County Juvenile Court representatives and Judge Dwayne Woodruff. Together, we hosted a midsummer event 7/26/21 whereby we celebrated community and recognized the role each stakeholder plays in establishing and maintaining community safety and prosperity. A Second Chance also partnered with us on this summer peace project, and Dr. David Brock served as a guest emcee.

After a rough start to the 21/22 school year, stemming from a return to onsite learning for the masses and a series of violent events in our Penn Hills community and beyond, our Board of School Directors authorized contracted services with RSG Consultants, LLC to provide school and home-based support, mediation and grief counseling. (It is intended that services will be expanded and include community-based support through application of grant funds.) In this same

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timeframe, a Penn Hills alumnus and affiliate of Imani Christian/Street Ministry Institute reached out and offered to provide Safe Spaces access to our Penn Hills students, although their facility is across the Penn Hills border and is technically in the City of Pittsburgh.

Penn Hills School District has worked collaboratively with Diane Powell and Pittsburgh Chapter of Black Women for Positive Change over the past several years. Shared activities have included annual recognition of the Month of Nonviolence in October. During the course of this collaboration, Penn Hills HS students received shuttle services from Krise Transportation in order to view *The Drop* at a local movie theater and to engage in meaningful dialog with one of the main actors after. Diane has also secured guest speakers who have promoted a message of nonviolence via building-level assemblies, and Pittsburgh Police Commander Lavonnie Bickerstaff has addressed youth on police-youth relations. Diane is continuing her mission as part of a new organization (Community and Family Builders). Her work with Penn Hills youth has been expanded to include mentoring and support as part of our Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension Program and New Directions classroom, both of which serve our high school students.

As part of the Penn Hills School District Emergency Operations Plan, we have become acquainted with Reverend Andy Hoover and Tina Zins. The Fold (former YMCA) and Penn Hills Library are designated gathering sites for students/staff of Penn Hills HS and Linton MS, respectively, should an emergency evacuation be required during the school day. We intend to expand student access and interest in these two sites which will serve as Safe Spaces for our students during after-school hours and according to a regular programming schedule. We are very much aware that our youth have felt a sense of loss following the closure of our former YMCA. Reverend Andy's group, as of February 2022, expanded use of their Fold facility (former YMCA) in Penn Hills to include basketball programming for youth that includes a mentoring component. This program, known as Hoops for Jesus, may be included as is, or a modified version may be included in our Safe Spaces initiative.

Hosanna House is our newest partner, and we are organizing a reciprocal arrangement whereby Penn Hills HS students will have the opportunity to visit their Wilkinsburg site on select occasions and that our Penn Hills Safe Spaces will be accessible to Wilkinsburg students via Hosanna House, on select occasions as well.

A generic outline of relevant individual and group meetings with community stakeholders + other key events in our nonviolence programming development are referenced below.

*Please note NH = PHSD Superintendent Nancy Hines. We have also included as supplements to our grant application various documents that verify several key entries listed below:

- 14/15 Initial pilot of PHHS Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension Program endorsed by (former) District Judge Leonard HRomyak
- 15/16 PHSD Board of School Directors modified policy to include mandatory mediation for most hands-on incidents among students
- 3/3/16 Mtg between NH + (new) District Judge Anthony DeLuca to discuss alternatives to suspension, along with continued collaboration between his court (05-2-06) + PHSD
- 5/27/21 Community Prayer Vigil (NRP + ACHD Cure Team + others)

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- 6/21/21-7/3/21 and 8/2-8/13/22 PHSD Summer Program – community healing (violence + COVID); incorporated community members + PHSD alumni as guest classroom speakers
- 6/21/21 NH visited A Second Chance as the guest of Dr. David Brock
- 7/24/21 Midsummer Community Event hosted at PHHS
- 7/31/21 Trades/Job Fair hosted at PH Gov Ctr
- 9/2/21 NH + PHPD Chief Burton + Lt Myers (met to discuss increase in OT rate for PHPD Officers who choose to work PHHS during the school day; Board-approved)
- 9/17/21 PH-WH Football Game converted to No Spectators (following shooting at North Versailles Haunted Hayride Event; ACHD Cure Team met with both football teams combined)
- 10/5/21 NH + Joel Niecgorski met to discuss Math for the Trades – KML Carpenters Fund
- 10/11/21 Richard Garland, Dr. Staci Ford, NH, PHSD Board Pres + VP met to discuss more therapeutic interventions to curb aggression being displayed in school + community
- 10/12/21 NH, Jesse McLean/Pressley Ridge, Richard Garland, & Dr. Staci Ford met to discuss merger of RSG/PR YESS Model
- 10/15/21 NH + Tom Sommers met to discuss Math for the Trades/KML Carpenters Fund
- 10/15/21 PHSD Notice given to families that PHPD is following a more therapeutic model that incorporates multiple stakeholders and is trauma-informed
- 10/25/21 NH + Anwan Wesley met to discuss space available at Imani for after-school programming and Imani's willingness to partner with PHSD.
- 10/28/21 NH + Young Life reps Rev Jay Mitlo + Vivi Riguro met to discuss opportunities for collaboration. Vivi will work on informal mentoring.
- 11/8/21 NH + Ross Watson met to discuss community status/concerns
- 11/9/21 NH introduced in PHSD Safety/Bldgs & Grounds Comm mtg opportunity to apply for grant funds thru Alleg Co to fund a Safe Spaces project to benefit PH & neighboring youth.
- 11/15/21 NH + Ross Watson + Jesse McLean met to discuss possible funding available to extend + coordinate multiple nonviolence efforts under a single umbrella
- 11/18/21 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #1 with community partners
- December 2021: Safe Spaces Survey open to all PH students in grades 6-12
- 12/6/21 NH + Ross Watson met to discuss community update; thoughts on coord of effort via funding from Alleg Co
- 12/8/21 PH Kick-off Mtg Hosted by Alleg Co RFP Framework (Jessica Ruffin + Nick Cotter)
- 12/16/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #2 with community partners
- 12/20/22 NH with PHHS Student Leaders – discussed Youth Survey responses + Safe Spaces Project
- 1/12/22 NH provided an update in PHSD Safety/Bldgs & Grounds Comm mtg on our Safe Spaces project that may benefit PH & neighboring youth.
- 1/18/22 Alleg Co PreProposal mtg
- 1/20/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #3 with community partners
- 1/21/22 NH + Isis Chatman/Ruth's Way met to discuss collaborative efforts.
- 1/26/22 Alleg Co RFP Mtg: BAM + READI + Cure Violence

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- 1/28/22 NH + Dr. Liz Miller/UPMC Children's (Reviewed concept of a Community School)
- 2/7/22 NH + Ross Watson Community Check-In
- 2/9/22 NH + Hosanna House reps Randy Goodnight + Christina Robison discussed potential collaboration to include, minimally, HH's new aviation project
- 2/9/22 NH provided an update in PHSD Safety/Bldgs & Grounds Comm mtg on our Safe Spaces project that may benefit PH & neighboring youth, including Teams mtg with Hosanna House partner site reps.
- 2/11/22 NH participated virtually in session hosted by Vanderbilt Univ: How Urban Social Problems Affect Student Outcomes *Nashville Metro Public Schools also appears to be working on a Community School Project
- 2/17/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #4 with community partners
- 2/22/22 NH participated in DOJ Virtual mtg to discuss coordination of nonviolence effort across Alleg Co
- 2/25/22 NH met with Darnell Dinkins + Jim Little/Massaro to discuss workforce development, including Math for the Trades and other project-based courses for PHHS youth + local young adults.
- 3/9/22 NH met with Diane Powell to discuss status of mentoring efforts.
- 3/11/22 NH met with Pressley Ridge reps (Michele Woodward + Luke McDonough) to discuss status and challenges of modified security programming.
- 3/16/22 NH provided an update in PHSD Safety/Bldgs & Grounds Comm mtg on our Safe Spaces project that may benefit PH & neighboring youth.
- 3/17/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #5 with community partners
- 3/18/22 NH met with PH community members Mark Banner + Fred Leverett to discuss facilitation of after-school programming onsite + during summer at PHSD.
- 3/24/22 NH + Renel Williams met with Dr. Jay Huguley/Pitt team to discuss restorative justice practices at PH Elem as of 22/23—to be funded by Pitt grant; will enhance current programming
- 3/28/22 NH + Renel Williams rec'd tour of Hosanna House by Randy Goodnight
- 3/17/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #6 with community partners
- 4/21/22 (Jace Ransom-facilitated) Safe Spaces mtg #7 with community partners
- 4/26/22 NH shared with PHSD Board of School Directors in Executive Session outline of budget + planned activities.

B. Summary of Community Violence Reduction Plan (75 points possible)

2. Specify the Eligible Community(ies), and any specific focus areas within them, included in your CVRP. Describe the characteristics and strengths that you see as defining the community.

While core programming will be offered at Penn Hills HS, which is more centrally located within Penn Hills, some programming will be offered across the Penn Hills/City of Pittsburgh border and within Wilksburg. These inclusions are logical due to known travel patterns among community members, namely our youth and young adults. Other field trip opportunities will be facilitated as well based on student interest/identified need.

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3. Describe the Community Violence that you see in your community(ies) and the factors you think are driving it.

Penn Hills School District lost three, 17-year old black males who were enrolled in our Penn Hills School District in presumed-to-be separate incidents involving gun violence that occurred over a period of two weeks in May of 2021, near the close of the 20/21 school year. One of these homicides occurred in Penn Hills proper, one occurred close to the Penn Hills/City of Pittsburgh border, and one homicide occurred in Wilkinsburg.

Shortly after the 21/22 school year started, another black male who attends Penn Hills HS was shot during a Halloween event hosted in a nearby community. Our student survived and was able to return to school; however, his friend who has numerous relatives in Penn Hills but attended a school outside of Penn Hills, did not survive. Based on concerns about possible retaliation and witness intimidation, a football game between Penn Hills HS and a rival school that also had students present during the shooting at the Halloween event, was converted to football players, coaches, and essential staff only. Members of Allegheny County's Cure Team were onsite with us during this football game and addressed both teams in common sessions aimed at reducing violence.

Less than two weeks later, another black male age 17 who attended Penn Hills HS was shot multiple times at a local gas station near the Penn Hills/City of Pittsburgh border. Fortunately, this student survived; however, he and his family have since relocated due to fears of retaliation.

It seems clear that our black males are especially vulnerable to acts of violence at this time, and it is not immediately clear the root causes of all aspects of violence affecting our Penn Hills community and surrounding neighborhoods. We believe there are many contributing factors that are likely exacerbating the traumatic effects of isolation and anxiety experienced during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, none of which our community group can cure directly.

Given the closure and subsequent sale of our local YMCA in 2019, following Penn Hills School District's dissolution of Family Fun Nigh/Open Gym several years earlier, our teens have nowhere to spend time under the direction supervision of positive role models. PHSD students in grades 6-12 who responded to our December 2021 survey inquiries about what types of activities would lead them to come back to school after hours, they listed the top three as:

- More competitive-type recreational activities, such as basketball, kickball, volleyball, etc.
- Electronic gaming opportunities
- Opportunities to dance, play music, and other creative arts

We have made assumptions that partial-day summer activities would be similarly appealing to most in this age group, and our community partnership members remain mindful of a major consensus that transportation to/from would likely be needed in order to engage.

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The majority of survey respondents also made clear that they and their peers would benefit greatly from increased mental health support, although our survey did not specifically ask for clarification of what types of mental health supports are needed. Therefore, we will want to utilize an assessment tool to allow program participants access to the most appropriate supports available via our community partners.

We believe strengthening adult-student relationships within our schools, utilizing community members as role models and mentors, and creating safe spaces for our students to visit after school hours and summer will help to promote peace and safety among all at risk. Helping to create a direct pipeline between young adults and local employers/trade unions will help us refocus those in our community (and beyond) who are in need of meaningful employment that will help them reach and maintain their preferred lifestyle.

4. Identify the strategies you have chosen to implement to address Community Violence. Be sure to include at least one EBP listed in the RFP. For each strategy, please include:
 - a. If the strategy is currently in place or if it will be new.
 - b. If the strategy is: 1) one of the EBPs listed in the RFP, 2) a current violence prevention effort that shows results or promise or 3) a group or activity that brings people together.
 - c. If you are asking DHS to fund the strategy and/or if you have other funding to support it. If a strategy is already funded, please provide details on this funding.
 - d. The names and roles of the partners/stakeholders who will carry out the strategy.
 - e. An explanation of why you chose the strategy and how you think it will make a measurable difference on the Community Violence that you see in your community.
- I. BAM: We believe our Penn Hills HS Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension Program will benefit from adoption of the Becoming a Man curriculum that has been highly successful in Chicago. Our current program is meant to limit time out of class for students who are not responding to New Directions (modified inschool suspension) programming during regular school hours. So far, our Alternatives to Suspension Program curriculum has been more informal. Our Saturday program introduces struggling students to targeted reflection and regular contact with community mentors. We would like DHS to cover costs associated with BAM staff observation of our current practices, completion of a needs assessment, and staff training specific to BAM curriculum, along with cognitive behavior training for our Youth Engagement School Specialists (YESS team) and School Counselors who work in our high school Monday-Saturday. Penn Hills School District will continue to fund the School Counselor and Youth Engagement School Specialist positions. However, we are seeking DHS grant funds to help us to maintain the second Penn Hills Police Department Office position at our Penn Hills HS for 22/23 and beyond. This second position was added for the 21/22 school year after we experienced great unrest among students when they returned to onsite learning 5 days per week. This second position has helped to build relationships between municipal police and our youth, and our police officers are now acting as mentors. Our police officers have offered numerous examples of how contact with students during the day has helped de-escalate domestic situations during their regular work shift that have included households of our high school students. Once COVID support dollars are

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exhausted, we have serious concerns that we will not be able to retain this second municipal officer position.

- II. READI: Similar to what is being implemented in Chicago, Penn Hills School District has been working to build a relationship with Carpenters and Joiners of America Local Union 432/KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund. We have been planning to offer a Math for the Trades courses to interested Penn Hills HS students, along with 3 additional elective courses that are specific to the trades. While we are part of a larger vocational education consortium of schools, we realize that many of our students do not want to spend the bulk of their day offsite at the Career and Technology Center in Monroeville. Our Board of School Directors has given permission to proceed; however, the Carpenters Union has been unable thus far to provide an instructor. It is our expectation that we will be up and running for 22/23, and the first course will be offered after-school hours. Given the success of the READI Chicago program, we would like to explore having an adult cohort organized as well, with instruction to occur onsite at Penn Hills HS. The benefit of full course completion (4) is that “extra credit” is awarded in the apprentice selection process. Job shadowing and visits to their larger training center in Robinson Twp are also anticipated. We are seeking DHS funding to help cover Trade Union instructor costs for both a youth and adult cohort, textbook purchase for both cohorts, and public transportation costs for adult cohort participants. We would welcome a site visit from Chicago READI staff to help assess needs once the new program is launched, and, as noted, we would like READI staff to provide cognitive behavior therapy training for our Youth Engagement School Specialists (YESS team).
- III. Cure Violence: We hope to continue the services of Richard Garland + Dr. Staci Ford and their ongoing consultation with ACHD Cure Team. Due to budget constraints, we will need DHS funding support to continue these services into 22/23 and beyond. We expect expansion of services to include more home-based mediations, grief counseling, and facilitation of larger community conversations about the effects of trauma. We are also exploring the design/purchase of universal signage that can be displayed at various sites throughout our community and neighborhoods that border the western Penn Hills boundary. The goal is to remind travelers in the area of our shared need for peace and sense of community, and where to turn for support when they are feeling worried, afraid, etc. The signage may be orange in color to discourage gun violence, and contact information for the Allegheny County CACTIS Team and/or the Big Burgh app may be included as well. Our faith-based organizations have expressed interest to displaying a graphic sign of solidarity and community support. DHS funds will be needed to support purchase.
- IV. Our Safe Spaces project, while not one of the EBPs, will be used to help our students blend with other youth from nearby communities in a peaceful setting that is productive and supervised by community mentors. It is intended that students from our Penn Hills HS will have active homework support onsite and then be given the option to remain or travel to designated activity sites Monday-Thursday during the school year and during designated times in the summer. *We have included a tentative framework of program design concept as part of our grant application materials.

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5. Describe the process you used to choose the Community Quarterback: Penn Hills School District was selected due to capacity and access to youth who are most vulnerable to violence.

Because students enrolled in the Penn Hills School District were affected most recently, modified programming was already in progress. This grant opportunity will allow for a main coordination point and will bring service providers under one community umbrella. The School District is familiar with grant reporting and associated obligations and will be able to serve as an objective program manager and ensure equity among service providers, along with meaningful programming that will directly benefit our students and young adults. Penn Hills School District will be able to help measure school-based outcomes (academic, attendance, and behavior) for all high school students who participate.

6. How will the Community Quarterback ensure that the CVRP is well implemented? It is anticipated that a supplemental site-based coordinator position will be created to assist the Superintendent with program supervision at Penn Hills HS and off site.

7. Provide an implementation plan and timeline for your CVRP that describes how the community will organize and carry out its strategies over time. If your CVRP includes adopting one of the EBPs, please include time to work with the model developers and participate in their technical assistance and training.

- Summer 2022: Grant award/Penn Hills Board of School Direction acceptance of funds
- School year 22/23: Continued implementation of YESS, New Directions Rooms, therapeutic services by Richard Garland + Dr. Staci Ford; launch of 1st youth cohort who will begin completion of trade union coursework; launch of Safe Spaces/Homework Help; design/production of Safe Spaces signs; and BAM training
- Summer 2023: Safe Spaces programming—based on student interest
- School year 23/24: Launch of 1st adult cohort who will begin completion of trade union coursework; Cognitive Behavior training for YESS

***We have included for your review a sample budget document that outlines the core components of our total design, along with anticipated costs over the next 2 years.**

C. Community Quarterback's Organizational Experience (40 points possible)

8. Why does the Community Quarterback want to serve in the role for the Eligible Community(ies)? Which parts of the CVRP will the Community Quarterback directly implement?

Penn Hills School District's interest is to ensure quality programming for students and young adults that is compatible with School District efforts. Our high school is centrally located and easily accessible. It houses space for both learning and recreation, which are key components of our community plan. Many of the service providers included in this plan already have familiarity with this same space and students/families. The District will be able to host various sessions and also help coordinate transportation to/from other host sites.

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9. Provide two examples of how the Community Quarterback has successfully served the target population/community.

Penn Hills School District serves more than 3,000 students directly and provides transportation services to approximately 1,500 additional students who reside within our community.

10. Provide two examples of how the Community Quarterback has successfully convened stakeholders, built partnerships and coordinated large-scale initiatives.

Penn Hills serves as the steward for approximately \$1.7 million in federal Title dollars. Of this current allocation, \$175,198 is shared among local nonpublic schools who enroll Penn Hills School District students. The District is required to facilitate regular consultation these nonpublic entities and to monitor their spending.

Penn Hills School District formerly received more than \$300,000 annually as part of a multiyear 21st Century grant award. Some aspects of this programming including coordination provided by a specific contracted services provider. The District completed/submitted all required program and fiscal reports and reported out publicly with regard to evaluation of program outcomes. Penn Hills School District actually dissolved associated programming and declined to use remaining funds when the program was shown to have virtually no impact on student outcomes, and there were concerns about substandard student supervision. While this example may seem negative, it actually demonstrates the District's commitment to high standards, regardless of funding loss. Remaining grant funds were returned to Pennsylvania Department of Education.

11. Describe the Community Quarterback's organizational structure and how the CVRP responsibilities will fall and be managed within it. Please include:

- a. The staff positions needed to implement the CVRP and if you will need to hire and/or reassign staff.
 - i. If the Community Quarterback will hire staff, include the education and/or experience you will require and the traits you will emphasize in hiring decisions.
 - ii. If the Community Quarterback has already identified individuals to staff the CVRP, include their names and a short description of their qualifications.
- b. Examples of specific strategies the Community Quarterback uses to retain staff.
- c. How the Community Quarterback uses IT to track and report service delivery data and outcomes.

Our community partnership will include a universal fee schedule for payment of services according to the following model that assumes no more than a 20 student:1 adult ratio. Our community partners have agreed that our rates must be competitive to secure and retain the services of high-quality candidates:

- \$15/hr General Student Supervision
- \$20/hr General Homework Help
- \$30/hr Specific Tutoring/Mentoring
- \$80-160/hr Therapeutic Services (by a licensed therapist)
- 10% Administrative/Coordination Fees
- 100% Reimbursement for Staff Clearances

RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

- \$7,500 COVID set-aside for all partner spaces, in the event COVID-related professional cleaning services are needed.

Similarly, our proposed budget assumes program supplies will not exceed:

- \$20 Per youth basic meal/refreshments OFF SITE
- \$15 Per youth basic snack in lieu of meal OFF SITE
- \$25 Per youth supply cost
- \$45 Per person maximum charge for larger, community events
- Penn Hills School District will provide onsite meals after school as part of programming. Based on designation as a public school district and our community's poverty rate, students will not be charged; however, PHSD will have to satisfy associated labor charges.

***We have included for your review of sample invoice document that has been drafted to demonstrate anticipated checks and balances to ensure grant funds are applied appropriately.**

Penn Hills School District Superintendent (Nancy Hines), Superintendent Secretary (Nakita LaPrade), and Business Office Manager (Eileen Navish) will work collaboratively to review receipts submitted for payment/reimbursement from each site. Individual “workers” at each site will submit their payment requests via their designated offsite coordinator, using a common payment voucher form that will be used among all sites. Once reviewed, Penn Hills School District will make payment to each site, and it will be incumbent upon the site to disseminate payment to those who performed services and/or purchased necessary supplies. Services performed onsite at PHSD will be paid in the same fashion but directly to the provider, including but not limited to RSG Consulting, Penn Hills Municipal Police Department, and Krise Transportation. Spreadsheets will be used to help manage site submissions.

Trade textbooks will be purchased via grant funds, and trade instructor services will be managed in the same context as onsite providers at PHSD. Port Authority Connect Cards will be purchased by the PHSD Transportation Coordinator, with the intention that the cards will be used to facilitate travel to/from trade-prep classes and job shadow sites.

Our community goal is to recognize those who have a commitment to our youth and to sustain these efforts via conversion to paid positions. Beyond that, it is expected that our core group will help secure the employ of additional community stakeholders.

Student outcomes for those enrolled with PHSD will be measured via collection and review of academic attendance, and behavior records already collected via our student database (Skyward).

12. Describe and provide examples of how the Community Quarterback is committed to providing high-quality services to all individuals and families so that everyone with feels welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

Penn Hills School District is fully immersed in active reform specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our student demographics are such that more than 2/3 of our student body identifies as black, and we are about 12% above the PA average with regard to confirmed students with disabilities. Students enrolled in each of our three schools qualifies for breakfast and lunch at no charge, regardless of income, due to our USDA guidelines specific to community poverty levels. We readily acknowledge and embrace that we are a public school, and we are committed as public servants. We recognize the value of education and the impact it can have on community poverty and violence. Penn Hills School District continues to evaluate disproportionality as it is represented in attendance, behavior, and academic data. We have taken decisive action to include alternatives to suspension in our daily practices and to broaden our curriculum and instruction to more accurately reflect and celebrate the culture of our community. Our HR Department has enhanced recruitment strategies in an attempt to identify qualified candidates who share a cultural identity that matches the majority of our students.

Penn Hills School District remains open to serving as an action research site for Allegheny County and beyond. We continue to participate in research projects facilitated by Dr. Elizabeth Miller of UPMC Children's Hospital and Dr. Ming T Wang from University of Project, and we look forward to our Penn Hills Elementary School becoming an active partner to Dr. Jay Huguley's University of Pittsburgh-based restorative justice project in 22/23 and beyond.

D. Budget and Participant Estimates (10 points possible)

13. Complete the following chart for all violence reduction strategies that you are asking DHS to fund. (Add rows as necessary. **Please do not** provide a budget, just the number of participants by strategy, by year.)

Strategy Name	Estimated number of participants served	
	Year 1	Year 2
BAM (folded into PHHS Alternatives to Suspension/Saturday Program)	120	120
READI (Math for the Trades/other Performance-Based Course Completion)	30	60
Cure Violence (Use of RSG Consulting to Coordinate Violence Interruption)	1100	1100
2 nd Police Officer at PHHS during the school day to promote youth-police relations	1100	1100
Safe Spaces *not including are students received from A Second Chance, Imani, and/or Hosanna House	60	80

RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

14. Provide a line-item budget for the Community Quarterback's coordination work for years one and two. Include a narrative to explain the line-item budget.

- a. **Please do not** include any program costs. For example, if the Community Quarterback will be implementing BAM, do not include those costs. Just include expenses and revenues related to the Community Quarterback's coordination.

Penn Hills School District Superintendent, Superintendent Secretary and Business Office Manager will work together to review and process requests for payment from all service providers. Occasional site visits will be completed as well, and there will be no compensation for these services. However, primary coordination will be provided by a single District designee. This school-based Coordinator will be paid a stipend of \$6,300 per term: Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer. A 2% increase is expected for 23/24.

- b. **Please do** include additional revenues you can bring to the CVRP. List the sources and amounts of money local government, community-based organizations, foundations or other entities will contribute during the first two years.

Penn Hills School District remains committed to employing one Home School Visitor/Social Worker in each of our three schools and one School Counselor position that is exclusive to student behavior management at our middle and at our high school (approximately \$100,000 per district position = \$500,000).

The district also remains committed to covering costs for Youth Engagement School Specialists at all three schools (approximately \$900,000 per school year), and one rotating active duty Penn Hills Police Officer to work according to an overtime model at Penn Hills High School (approximately \$65 per hour/\$81,900 per school year). We will also cover 50% costs of the second police officer assigned to Penn Hills HS in 22/23 and 23/24.

Penn Hills School District will provide on-site meals after school as part of programming. Based on designation as a public school district and our community's poverty rate, students will not be charged; however, the District will have to satisfy associated labor charges (approximately \$16/hour per employee).

Penn Hills School District property will also be used to support grant-related activities and to host associated events with no remuneration expected or required, including but not limited to gym, field, auditorium and classroom space (\$40-\$100 per hour).

As noted previously, Penn Hills School District will continue its commitment to action research and will continue to host visits to our site as requested by other school district and community representatives in Allegheny County and beyond.

RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

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RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

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As noted previously, Penn Hills School District will continue its commitment to action research and will continue to host visits to our site as requested by other school district and community representatives in Allegheny County and beyond.

Staff

Dr. Nancy J. Hines
Superintendent

Nakita LaPrade
Board/Superintendent Secretary

Bruce E. Dice & Associates, P.C.
Solicitor

PENN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

260 Aster Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235
412-793-7000 – Telephone
412-793-1787 – Fax
www.phsd.k12.pa.us



Board of Directors

Mrs. Erin L. Vecchio, President
Ms. Jackie Blakey-Tate, Vice President

Mr. Joseph Capozoli
Mrs. Evelyn Herbert
Ms. Marisa Jamison
Dr. Robert Marra
Mrs. Nicole Richardson
Mrs. Elizabeth Rosemeyer
Mrs. Meryl R. Thomas

Allegheny County DHS Community Violence Reduction Plan Reviewer:

Based on anticipated approval by our Penn Hills School District Board of School Directors to implement BAM Curriculum in our Saturday/Alternative to Suspension Program, the District is willing to enter into an MOU with Youth Guidance pending final PHSD Solicitor approval. It is anticipated that said MOU will specify a mutual understanding that data will be shared with Youth Guidance and PHSD will collaborate on integrating BAM into our existing program framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nakita LaPrade'.

Nakita LaPrade
Penn Hills School District Board Secretary

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

ANTHONY DELUCA

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE

Magisterial District 05-2-06
85 Universal Road
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15235
05-2-06@allegheycourts.us

PENN HILLS
VERONA
WILKINS

OFFICE:
TEL 412-731-0100
FAX 412-731-1986

April 22, 2022

Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of District Court 05-2-06, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.


Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all.

School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,


Anthony L. Deluca
Magisterial District Judge

ALD/am



ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

475 East Waterfront Drive | Homestead, PA 15120 | 412-394-5700 | aiu3.net

April 20, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

The Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU)/Community School East is pleased to support The Penn Hill School District's proposal to the ACHD Community Grant to help support the community efforts occurring within the district. Penn Hills community's collaborative efforts to reduce violence through trauma-informed care, restorative justice, alternatives to suspension, increased access to safe spaces, and job-readiness training is the foundation for enhanced school, family and community engagement.

The AIU will help facilitate GED instruction onsite at Penn Hills High School in Year 2 of the grant. The District will work with AIU Program Directors to grant access to Safe Spaces Programming for students enrolled in the AIU's Community Schools East Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Program that services students from not only Penn Hills but also students from neighboring districts and others throughout Allegheny County.

The community services rendered through the Penn Hills School District will have a positive impact on the students and the community as a whole. We look forward to enhance our services to meet the needs of the district. The AIU/Community School East is proud to partner with the Penn Hills School District to increase community impact efforts.

Thank you,

Licia L. Lentz, EdD.
Director of Alternative Education
Early Childhood Family and Community Services Division
Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Licia.lentz@aiu3.net

Mayor
Pauline Calabrese

Council
Deputy Mayor
Frank Pecora
Catherine Sapp
Joanne Fascio
Jim Getsy

Controller
Nicholas Futules, Jr.

Municipality of PENN HILLS
A HOME RULE COMMUNITY

GOVERNMENT CENTER

102 DUFF ROAD • PENN HILLS, PA 15235

www.pennhills.org



Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of the Mayor and Council of Penn Hills, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing the Municipality of Penn Hills' support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all.

School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

Christopher C. Blackwell,
Planning Director

cc: Pauline Calabrese, Mayor
Scott Andrejchak, Manager



April 25, 2022

Re: Letter of Support - Penn Hills High School (PHHS) Application
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support of the Penn Hills High School (PHHS) Application for Allegheny County Department of Human Services Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas. The Neighborhood Resilience Project has been working with Penn Hills School District for many years. Most recently, our organizations have partnered together to roll out a Trauma-Informed Peer to Peer Leadership Program in Penn Hills to empower the youth most likely to shoot or be shot in the school to more positive behaviors and activities to reduce gun violence. Thus, it is with this great partnership that I write in full support of their application for this proposal as a Community Quarterback.

Their proposal will aim to accomplish the following:

- Maintenance of a Lead Youth Engagement School Specialist at both Linton MS + PHHS for the next 2 years
- Maintenance of a 2nd PHPD Officer at PHHS for the next 2 years-- to promote student/police relations
- Maintenance of support for their version of Cure Team
- Creation/Rotation of Safe Spaces for after-school + summer activities for local youth over a 2-year period. Likely sites are: Homework Help at Linton/PHHS; PH Library; The Fold; St James; Ruth's Way; Imani Christian; A Second Chance; and Hosanna House
- Facilitation of 3 large community-wide events per year over the next 2 years (to include NRP's involvement)
- Facilitation of trade-specific courses in the afternoon/evening at PHHS for interested current students/young adults
- Implementation of Becoming a Man curriculum (out of Chicago) as part of our Saturday/Alternatives to Suspension program at PHHS

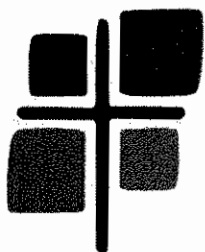
As an already existing partner of Penn Hill High School, we are looking forward to continuing this partnership as they work to accomplish the tasks set out above as a Community Quarterback in their proposal for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Community Violence Reduction Plans from High-Priority Areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Paul T. J.", written over a horizontal line.

Rev. Paul T. Abernathy
CEO
pabernathy@neighborhoodresilience.org
412.261.1234 x 123

Neighborhood Resilience Project
2038 Bedford Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
www.neighborhoodresilience.org



HOSANNA HOUSE

Fostering Education • Inspiring Hope • Celebrating Life

March 04, 2022

Penn Hills School District
CVR Grant Division

Dear Dr. Nancy Hines

This correspondence is to convey our support for the Penn Hills School District and what a positive impact the CVR Grant will have on our community and the students and families which we dually service. The various educational programs offered by the Penn Hills School District are truly an enhancement to the students who are served and will be additionally served through this grant. The educational options are implemented with high quality academic rigor, which meets the nationally recognized standards.

Students are provided with social and emotional, life skills preparation, as well as academic enhancements. This program would enhance what is already being done in Penn Hills School District to educate the whole child.

As part of this grant program, Hosanna House would offer our CATT; Center for Technology & Training, to students who participate exposing them to flight and aviation as a career path through active engagement in flight simulations and drone flight. This unique program challenges youth to learn the principles of the Tuskegee Airmen and put them into practice.

HHI would love to bring our teen co aviators (class of 15) to participate in the CVR grant and would also welcome youth two days a week at Hosanna House's CATT Museum.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Steve Hellner-Burris
Chief Operations Officer



Sharon L. McDaniel, MPA, Ed.D.
president & ceo

Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of A Second Chance, Inc., I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our organization's support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all.

School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sharon L. McDaniel, PhD, EdD, MPA
President and CEO, A Second Chance, Inc.

Corporate
8350 Frankstown Avenue
Pittsburgh PA 15221

TEL 412.342.0600
FAX 412.342.0402

Regional
1341 North Delaware Avenue-Suite 101
Philadelphia PA 19125

TEL 215.564.0790
FAX 215.564.0652

asecondchance-kinship.com



The official registration and financial information of A Second Chance, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



Krise Transportation, Inc.

Business Office
1325 Scotland Ave. Ext.
Punxsutawney, PA 15767
Office: (814) 938-6200

Fax: (814) 938-7545
tkrise@krisetran.com

Penn Hills School District
Attn: Dr. Nancy Hines, Superintendent
260 Aster St
Pittsburgh PA 15235

February 17, 2022

Re: Community Violence Reduction Plan

Dear Dr. Hines,

Krise Transportation, Inc., is proud to support and partner with the Penn Hills School District and its partners/stakeholders in the project, Community Violence Reduction Plan.

Krise Transportation has committed to providing discounted shuttle services to/from programming sites and to provide home drop-off services at the end of programming sessions to ensure safe return home for program participants.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Krise'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Tim' and last name 'Krise' clearly visible.

Tim Krise
President

Saint James Episcopal Church



Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of the Beloved Community Initiative of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing St. James' Episcopal Church, Penn Hills support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all. School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis. The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

St. James' is implementing a Beloved Community Program which seeks to integrate wholeness and community by providing programming focusing on mind, body, and soul. Students will have access to a license fitness and nutritionist instructor, a self defense instructor, a licensed professional counselor, and a Strengths Based Worker Pastoral Care Counselor. We believe we can provide multiple avenues of fun and health for students in the Penn Hills community.

We look forward to continued partnership with the Penn Hills School District and community at large.

Respectfully,



The Rev. Canon Eric McIntosh

11524 Frankstown Road • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235-3199 • (412) 242-2300

SMI Partnership with PHSD Program Service Overview

Wan Wes <[REDACTED]>

Wed 1/26/2022 1:46 PM

To: Nancy Hines <nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us>; Ransom, Jace <Jace.Ransom@alleghenycounty.us>

Hello,

Here is my document to show you what can be done through our space. I also attached a Budget Overview to run the program for a year. If you have any questions let me know.

--

WAN WES



MAP Program- Anwan Wesley PCCD Grant Partnership with Penn Hills School District- Nancy Hines

Mentoring through Athletics and Public Service

Location: Eastgate Outreach at Petra 235 Eastgate Dr, Pgh Pa 15235

Can teach (20) youth how to be leaders in sports and in life through sporting and enrichment activities.

1 DAY A WEEK

- Youth Basketball 6th-12th
- Art Therapy- create art to relieve stress
- Create your Brand Groups- make t shirts, logos, greeting cards and more
- Personal Assessments- getting to know yourself better
- Player Development- learning the process, standards and requirements of student scholarship athletes
- Personal Development- Goal planning for school, home and business, talk groups
- Fatherhood Workshops- teen fathers, fathers to be, young fathers
- Parenting Classes- teen mom classes and workshops
- Run The League- Workforce Development, sports management
- Free Recreation- Game room, Game Consoles (PS4/PS5/XBOX Tournaments)
- Healthy Workouts
- Conflict Resolution- groups, peer mediation training
- Biomechanics of Sports Camps

Budget Overview for Program: \$25,000/yr

2 Executive Administrators

2 Program Coordinators

4 Consultants- (2)Conflict Resolution Trainers, Personal Assessment Trainer, Sports Biomechanics Camp

Supplies- Art, Media, Health and Safety supplies

Equipment- Sports Balls, Board/video games, T shirts, (2) Video Camera, Photo camera

Space Rental

Letter of Commitment Ruth's Way

This agreement, while not a legally binding document, establishes roles and responsibilities of project partners for funding from the Allegheny County Community Violence Reduction RFP that is defined in a mutually binding agreement between the Penn Hills School District and Ruth's Way.

The designated agent of this entity who has signed this document affirms the willingness of the program or organization to carry out the following tasks based on the agreement of the Penn Hills School District to include a specific line item for Ruth's Way within the proposed budget submitted within the proposal submitted for the Allegheny County Community Violence Reduction RFP:

1. Create and support organizational processes to sustain child welfare domestic violence practice development and effective collaboration with key partners.
2. Facilitate after-school sessions at both PHHS (grades 9-12) + Linton MS (grades 6-8), beginning in 22/23. The first order of business will likely include a meal, along with about 60 mins or so of homework help.
3. We will generate a schedule of activities to follow (initially based on Dec 2021 grades 6-12 survey results). Some activities will be onsite, most likely at Linton MS. However, older students will have the option to travel to designated Safe Spaces in PH with one of those designations being Ruth's Way main office location. Ruth's Way will also provide site-based staff at Penn Hills schools.
4. Programming offered onsite + offsite, although having the appearance of fun and entertainment, will include reinforcement of nonviolence, goal setting, etc.
5. Ruth's Way will continue to facilitate Ruth's Way, Inc.'s Fabulous Forums at the Penn Hills Senior High School's Alternative To Suspension/Saturday program and provide
6. Make practice enhancements to serve families involved in the child welfare system who are experiencing domestic violence.
7. Develop and/or sustain their capacity for consultation on cases involving domestic violence, Ruth's Way will provide these services via Ruth's Way Consulting Services for Parents Who Want Their Daughters To Succeed, LLC.
8. Examine and address disparities in practice, access to services and resources, and outcomes for families.
9. Participate in a rigorous research project, and collect data to complete evaluations.

Designated agents who have signed this document also commit to fully participate in the following activities of the Project of the Allegheny County Community Violence Reduction RFP:

10. Participate on a management/governance team for the Project.
11. Participate on an Implementation Team for the Project.
12. Actively support, facilitate, and complete tasks required to implement rigorous outcomes and implementation.
13. Facilitate the evaluators' implementation of rigorous evaluation methods and direct data collection.
14. Provide estimates of costs associated with a collaborative, adult and child-centered

approach and service enhancement utilizing a strengths-based perspective.

I affirm that Ruth's Way understands and is committed to the proposed Project for the Allegheny County Community Violence Reduction RFP, and that we will be fully engaged in Project activities and plans. We will follow through on these commitments, regardless of changes in agency leadership, budget modifications, or other foreseeable events.

Isis L. Chatman

(Signature)

Isis L. Chatman, CEO

(Name and title)

2/15/2022

(Date)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Eastmont

1229 Jefferson Heights Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
412-824-4525
eastmontelc@hotmail.com

March 30, 2022

Last fall I was approached by a mother whose son had attended our Vacation Bible School. "Does Emmanuel have an afterschool program with tutoring? Do you know of one that my son can go to?" We do not and I did not know where to refer them.

I am now passionate about expanding tutoring opportunities in Penn Hills.

This mother did not ask because her son is struggling with a particular subject. He is actually quite bright. She asked because she know he needs to stay focused to succeed in school. He needs productive and challenging activities. He needs caring adults in his life. She knows it is easy for good and bright kids to go astray.

My congregation is one of many congregations in Penn Hills that cannot run an afterschool program on our own. What we can do is commit to help recruit leaders and participants. Many of us have space to host a program whenever space is needed in our neighborhoods. We care passionately about the well-being of the youth in our congregations and community.

Therefore, on behalf of my congregation (Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Eastmont) and on behalf of the Penn Hills Association of Christian Clergy, I am eager to offer this letter of intent to support community violence reduction plans in Penn Hills.

The Emmanuel congregation council approved this on March 29, 2022.

The Penn Hills Association of Christian Clergy, at their meeting on March 29, also voted to provide a letter of intent. Congregations which intend to host programs within the overall plan are submitting their own specific letters. The vote on March 29 affirms the support of the ministerium to promote, recruit and support this plan within our congregations, neighborhoods and the Penn Hills community.



Rev Linda Theophilus

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, pastor

Penn Hills Association of Christian Clergy, secretary

3/30/2022

Dear Dr. Hines,

As _Thursday, March 30, 2022_ I am pleased to support your application for Department of Human Services funding to support street intervention and firearm violence prevention in our community. I understand that my support in this grant is to use the CURE violence model in dealing with youth and families involved in the disease of violence.

The proposal has a number of strengths relevant to our community. The deployment of local residents as violence-prevention interrupters that will work both in the school and community.

Under the direction of Richard Garland who has many years of experience in the violence prevention world, he has been trained and followed the implementation of the cure violence model here, when he was Executive Director of One Vision One Life, and since has been involved in violence prevention while at the Graduate School of Public Health. Re-Imagine Reentry is working with men and women returning citizens, and is involved in community violence Prevention activities, under Richard Garland.

He also has been running the G.R.I.P.S. – Gun-shot Recurring Injury Prevention Services a Hospital-based violence prevention Initiative for the past eight years, and as the Director of RSG Consultants Inc.

We are excited to partner with you in this effort. As partners, we agree to detail a staff member to attend the weekly advisory group meeting and share data as appropriate to coordinate street outreach. We look forward to a productive partnership as we work together to reduce firearm violence in McKeesport. In this proposal to DHS , are working in the Penn Hills school District, with students and families. This grant will enable us to continue the work we've have started in the school district, and the Penn Hills Community.

Sincerely,

Richard Garland MSW
President of RSG Consultants

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Community and Family Builders

In Affiliation with: The Pittsburgh Contingency

412-302-2952

February 9, 2022

Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

Community and Family Builders is pleased to offer a letter of support for the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Since 2012, we have been actively working to identify and facilitate the implementation of strategies and initiatives to address the issue of violence that plagues many of our neighborhoods and communities in Allegheny County and the nation. Our vision is to build more peaceful communities and our mission is to "create sustainable, long-term solutions to deep-rooted problems by moving from marches and rallies to planning, implementation and mobilization.

Our goals include providing safe space and opportunities for youth engagement through mentorship and after school programming which will offer viable alternatives for youth to gather, relax, and engage in positive constructive activities. Students will also have an opportunity to interact with older adults. Through a variety of hands-on experiences, students will acquire tools for healthy lifestyle choices, learn important leadership development skills, and form meaningful intergenerational connections.

To that end, we are in alignment with the mission and the approach taken by the Penn Hills School District for the Violence Reduction Project.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

Diane Powell, Executive Director

Community and Family Builders (Former - Black Women for Positive Change)



Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of Pressley Ridge, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our organization's support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all.

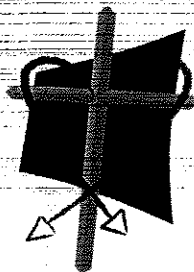
School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement Support Services (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J.M.L.', written in a cursive style.



Beulah
Presbyterian
Church

Beulah Church - reaching out... to welcome
and serve others in the name of Jesus Christ

Alexander W. Ruzanic, M.Div.
Director of Youth and Missional Outreach
Executive Director East End Youth Ministry

Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of Beulah Presbyterian Church and the East End Youth Ministry, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our organization's support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all. We believe partnering with Penn Hills School District can be a vehicle to chance and address the greater needs of our community.

School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

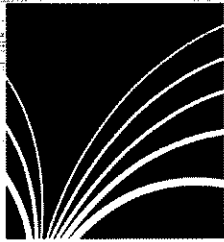
The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours. There is a need for this and we are excited to a part of this programming.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Ruzanic".

Alexander W. Ruzanic



Penn Hills Library

March 29, 2022

Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services Review Committee,

On behalf of Penn Hills Library, I am pleased to provide this letter expressing our organization's support of the Community Violence Reduction Plan that Penn Hills School District is helping to initiate.

Providing programs and supportive services to students can offer not only fun and entertainment, but also include reinforcement of nonviolence and goal setting that is imperative to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy community for all.

School-based programming components such as the Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) model and New Directions rooms in lieu of traditional security services and punitive sanctions for all student offenses can limit time out of class and provide mediation and de-escalation support that is based on root-cause analysis.

The continued goal of these new elements of the school experience is to promote healthy relationships between our Penn Hills youth and local law enforcement, by creating a sense of community as well as providing safe spaces they can visit after school hours.

We look forward to supporting and learning more about this community project that is being based on successful practices originally piloted in Chicago.

Sincerely,

Tina Zins
Executive Director



ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

Between

THE KML CARPENTERS APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING FUND

&

Penn Hills School District

260 Aster Street Pittsburgh, PA 15235

(412) 793-7000

CARPENTRY CAREER CONNECTIONS

This articulation agreement between **Penn Hills School District** and The KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund, one of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters' Training Funds, enables high school students enrolled with **Penn Hills School District** to receive credit for the competencies listed herein upon evidence of mastery as outlined in the attached competency list. There are no fees required to obtain these credits.

The credits may apply with the following diplomas or certificates:

DIPLOMAS: High School/GED

CERTIFICATES: Career Connections Books I, II, III, towards apprenticeship with The KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund or any other Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters' Training Fund located in another geographic area of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters.

Penn Hills School District, nor the KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund (KML Fund), will discriminate against students on the basis of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, as required by law. It is the express intent of the School Board and the KML Fund that every policy, practice, and procedure shall conform to all applicable requirements of federal and state law.

This agreement is exclusive to **Penn Hills School District** and The KML Fund. No assurance is given that courses awarded credit through this agreement will transfer to any other post-secondary institution.

The parties agree to the following articles:

1. The student must meet apprenticeship eligibility criteria and be accepted into the program before any review of skills and award of advanced standing will take place. Apprenticeship eligibility criteria and the procedures for selecting applicants into the KML Fund apprenticeship program are set forth in the registered Apprenticeship Standards. As of the date of this Agreement, individuals interested in applying for the KML Fund apprenticeship program must:

- a. Visit our web site at www.kmltf.org
- b. Register and attend an information session
- c. Interview and test at one of our training centers
- d. Receive a favorable recommendation from our apprentice committee
- e. Pass our drug screening and physical requirements.

2. Students enrolled under this agreement at **Penn Hills School District** may be eligible for advanced placement with the apprenticeship programs named above for all competencies successfully mastered. "Successful mastery" means the student scored 70 or higher on the written test and passed a required performance evaluation. Performance evaluations are graded Pass or Fail.

3. All students desiring to earn articulated credit for previous related training shall demonstrate achievement of the trade-specific competencies prescribed in course material (a) as follows:

- a. Career Connections Certificates of Completion
 - i) One Trade Many Careers and Project Book 1
 - ii) One Trade Many Careers, Project Book 1 and 2
 - iii) One Trade Many Careers Project Books 1, 2 and 3
(project book 3 residential, project book 3 commercial or both)

All three Career Connection Certificates will serve as proof of competency.

4. Validation of the attained competencies must be provided by a certificate of completion from the Career Connection Program.

5. The student earning Career Connections Certificates and accepted into one of the apprenticeship programs participating in this agreement, may obtain advanced standings with 3 Career Connection Certificates. All advance credit for placement will be determined by KML Fund.

6. Apprentice applicants, including applicants with a Career Connections Certificate, with previous knowledge and skill acquisition in the construction trade can ask for and have such knowledge and skill evaluated by the KML Fund, prior to signing an Apprenticeship Agreement. If the Evaluation determines that the Apprentice is going to be credited training hours, he/she will be eligible to skip the course for Basic Skills 1, and possibly for Basic Skills 2, depending on his/her skill level. The Apprentice will be required to attend a 30-minute Orientation at the Training Center with the Training Director, to become familiar with the rules and regulations of the Training Center, and to learn what is expected of them as an Apprentice in the Carpenters Union. Council Representatives are welcome to be present for the Orientation. Thereafter, the Apprentice will be assigned to a training class and receive their schedule for the duration of the training year. Any Apprentice foregoing a Basic course will be required to register online for night/weekend OSHA 30 training via our website at www.kmltf.org.

In the event the candidate is evaluated as a First Year Apprentice, they will be required to attend both Basic Skills 1 & 2, which occurs as two (2) consecutive weeks of training. They will not be required to attend the 30-minute Orientation as the information will be covered during the Basic Skills classes. They will receive their OSHA 30 training during these first two (2) weeks; therefore, consecutive attendance for the full 80 hours is mandatory. Apprentices are typically notified via email when they are scheduled for this initial training. Upon successful completion of Basic Skills 1 & 2, they will be assigned to a training class and receive their schedule for the duration of the training year.

7. This Articulation Agreement is subject to annual review by all parties. All changes will be made and reflected in a new agreement. If no changes are indicated by the annual review, continuance of this agreement as outlined within will remain in effect. Any party to the agreement can terminate it with thirty days' notice to the other parties, provided that any student from **Penn Hills School District** who is then currently enrolled and taking coursework toward earning competencies for an apprenticeship program when notice of termination is given will be still be eligible for advanced placement with the apprenticeship program upon his/her completion of such coursework pursuant to this Agreement. This Agreement shall be terminated immediately if either party's certification of license to operate is repealed or suspended by any governmental licensing authority or certifying agency or either party's accreditation is repealed or suspended by any accrediting organization.

8. Competencies outlined in this Articulation Agreement will comply with any requirements of the **Penn Hills School District** curriculum.

9. As a component of this agreement, high school instructors will schedule at least one visit per school year (preferably October or later) to the apprenticeship training site. High school instructors will also schedule at least one classroom visit per year (at each grade level) by a representative of the apprenticeship program.

10. Each training facility may have an "Area Coordinator" who may be working alongside the education programs to assist with the coordination of the following:

- (a) Assist with the arrangement of guest speakers in certain areas of the trades.
- (b) Facilitate tours of UBC training centers annually.
- (c) Provide instructors who can assist classroom instructor with hands on instruction/demonstrations/skills.
- (d) Assist with possible internship opportunities.
- (e) Provide enrollment assistance with information session and application process.

11. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State in which it has been signed. Any action arising out of this Agreement shall be filed in either the county court or the United States District Court.

12. The parties agree to comply with all federal, state and local statutes and regulations applicable to the operation of this Agreement, including without limitation, laws relating to the confidentiality of student records, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

13. Nothing herein shall in any way be construed or intended to create a partnership or joint venture. Rather, each party shall be considered to be an independent party and shall not be construed to be an agent or representative of the other party. Neither party, nor any of its employees, agents or subcontractors, shall be deemed to be employees or agents of the other party. Therefore, neither party nor any of its employees, agents, or subcontractors, shall be entitled to workers' compensation or employee benefits of the other party by virtue of this Agreement.

14. Neither party shall be responsible for personal injury or property damage or other loss except that resulting from its own negligence or the negligence of its employees or others for whom the party is legally responsible, and nothing in this Agreement shall serve as a waiver of the sovereign immunity enjoyed by either party in their respective State.

15. No waiver, alteration, or modification of the provisions in this Agreement will be binding unless in writing and mutually agreed upon. This Agreement, together with any attachments hereto and any amendment or modification that may hereafter be agreed to by each party in writing, constitutes the entire understanding and agreements, oral or written, relating hereto. The parties will incur no obligations pertaining to this Agreement as a result of any promise, representation, or statement by anyone without the actual authority to do so. The provisions of this Agreement shall inure to the benefit of and shall be binding upon the successors of the parties hereto. Neither this Agreement nor any of the rights or obligations hereunder may be transferred or assigned without prior written consent of the other party.

16. Notices under this Agreement shall be mailed or delivered to the parties as follows: [Complete for each party and provide contact information for each party's designated contact for Notices (i.e., for termination or request for modification)].

17. To the extent that any services are performed by Partner virtually using the internet or some other remote means of electronic transmission, Partner shall ensure that any online internet providers, platforms or other remote means of electronic transmission that it may use to deliver said services are sufficiently secure and adequately safeguard student information, is compliant with all relevant state and federal laws including COPPA, and must be compatible with and comply with the technical requirements of the Board's computer network and/or must be on a Board pre-approved online platform.

18. Partner shall ensure that each worker(s), subcontractors(s), agent(s) and representative(s) assigned to a school location or to a project involving contact with children will comply with the Board's Conduct policy as well as all local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including those related to public health. Partner also agrees to abide by any safety regulations, executive orders and/or state mandates that may be issued by any state or federal agency governing and/or relating to maintaining the public health and safety including, but not limited to, the use of temperature checks, masks, gloves, and social distancing. Should any of Partner's worker(s), subcontractors(s), agent(s) and/or representative(s) violate any Board policy or public health and safety policy, the Board retains the right to request and have Partner remove said worker(s), subcontractors(s), agent(s) and representative(s) from the school location and/or the program altogether.

Area Coordinator and School Contact Person

The KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund

Contact: Brent Sopko

Address: 650 Ridge Road Pittsburgh PA 15205

Phone: (412) 713-5193

Email: bsopko@eascarpenters.org

Penn Hills School District:

Contact: Dr. Nancy Hines

Address: 260 Aster Street Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Phone: (412) 793-7825

Email: nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us

This Articulation Agreement is hereby approved and agreed upon by the signatures below:

Dr. Nancy Hines / Superintendent
Penn Hills School District

Date: _____

Renel Williams / Chief Academic Officer
Penn Hills School District

Date: _____

William R. Waterkotte
Co-Treasurer, The KML Carpenters Apprenticeship and Training Fund

Date: _____



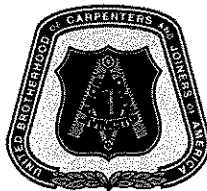
Thomas J. Sommers Director of Outreach and Development
Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters Training Funds

Date: 8/30/2021

Northeast Carpenters Apprenticeship Fund

Thomas J Sommers
Director of Outreach & Development

Email: tsommers@ncatf.org
Web: www.ncatf.org



75 Fieldcrest Avenue
Edison, NJ 08837
Middlesex County
Phone: 732-372-6020

Penn Hills School District
260 Aster Street Pittsburgh, PA 15235
(412)793-7000, ext 1282
FAX: (412)793-7825

Review Order:

Product	Quantity	Unit Price	Extended
Career Connections Math for the Trades (Teacher Annotated Edition)	1	\$50.72	\$50.72
Career Connections Math for the Trades	30	\$19.15	\$574.50
Net Total:			\$625.22
Shipping:			\$112.53
Total Price:			\$737.75

DO NOT PAY FROM THIS QUOTE - A STATEMENT WILL BE MAILED TO YOU

The above Quote is good for 60 days from 03/17/2022

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Open Gym at The Fold

Pastor Andy Hoover <andy@maog.org>

Tue 1/11/2022 11:08 AM

To: Nancy Hines <nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us>

Cc: jeffrey.ruffing@lfg.com <jeffrey.ruffing@lfg.com>

Dr. Hines

I wanted to let you know that we are starting up basketball open gyms on Saturday nights at 8:00 at The Fold for 14 year olds and up. We are expecting to start on Feb. 14th. We have a group of men who will be running the program. We are calling it "Hoops for Jesus." Two of the guys are graduates from Penn Hills. Jeff Ruffing and Warren Wilson III. All of our volunteers will be background checked. We will have prayer and a short devotional during the night. We want to provide a safe place for these guys to come and stay out of trouble on Saturday nights. Is there any way we can pass this info on to your basketball coach/team or others who may want to be a part of this? I copied this email to Jeff Ruffing (Penn Hills graduate 1981) who will be the main contact for this ministry. Please feel free to reach out to him or myself if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks!

Andy Hoover

Monroeville Assembly of God

Lead Pastor

Andy@maog.org

412-856-7900 ext. 27

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<https://archive.triblive.com/local/penn-hills/penn-hills-school-district-student-mediation-program-nets-fewer-fights/>

Penn Hills School District: Student mediation program nets fewer fights

TRIBLIVE CHRISTINE MANGANAS | Tuesday, June 27, 2017 1:00 a.m.

A Penn Hills School District initiative aimed at preventing or controlling confrontations between students is reaping improvements in behavior, officials say.

The Mediation Model took effect in the just-ended 2016-17 school year. A core group of staff members in the district's three schools was trained by an outside mediation specialist to handle situations such as fights and social media issues.

"The idea is to educate, rather than sanction," Superintendent Nancy Hines said. "And the goal is to get kids to see that there's a better way to deal with anger."

In a supervised session, trained staff members sit down and talk with the students involved rather than send them toward suspension or other punishments.

Discussions depend on the situation, and kids sometime are given time, whether it's an hour or a day, to cool down and relax in order to appropriately deal with the confrontation.

"This core group is able to jump in and facilitate mediation between the kids," Hines said. "And if it was a really heated battle, we maybe step back and delay if the kids just need some time to calm down."

Many of these disagreements stem from social media, Linton Middle School Principal Katie Friend said.

"A lot of situations are centered on something that was posted online the night before," Friend said. "This model is here to give them a good sense and a clear head knowing that the adults are here to help."

Linton Middle School recorded the most fights consecutively for the past five years, with a total 158 in 2015-16 and 69 this past year under the mediation initiative.

Friend attributes these numbers to behavior by members of an age group of kids that are going through emotional and social changes.

Penn Hills has more than 1,000 students in fifth through eighth grades, Friend said, adding, "It's a very trying time. ... Middle school is challenging in nature, but students have been willing to mediate and listen."

Linton conducted 80 mediation sessions, followed by the high school with 52 and the elementary with 22.

"We've seen great improvements," Friend said.

Since the model was introduced, fights in the high school were almost cut in half from 65 recorded fights in 2015-16 to 37 by the end of the most recent academic year.

The initiative originally was school board-driven, said Hines, as discussion rose among members regarding kids showing increased signs of aggression.

"I think it's helping a lot because our kids are not fighting as much anymore and it calms them down," Board President Erin Vecchio said.

"It gets them a chance to release and address their problems. Any time you have a person who's good at talking to a kid it helps them because not that many kids get listened to. Some parents don't have time. It's good that these kids can solve their problems without fighting."

Because the program resulted in significant signs of improvement, Hines said the district is working on getting more staff members trained for these situations.

Christine Manganas is a Tribune-Review contributing writer. Staff writer Mike DiVittorio contributed.

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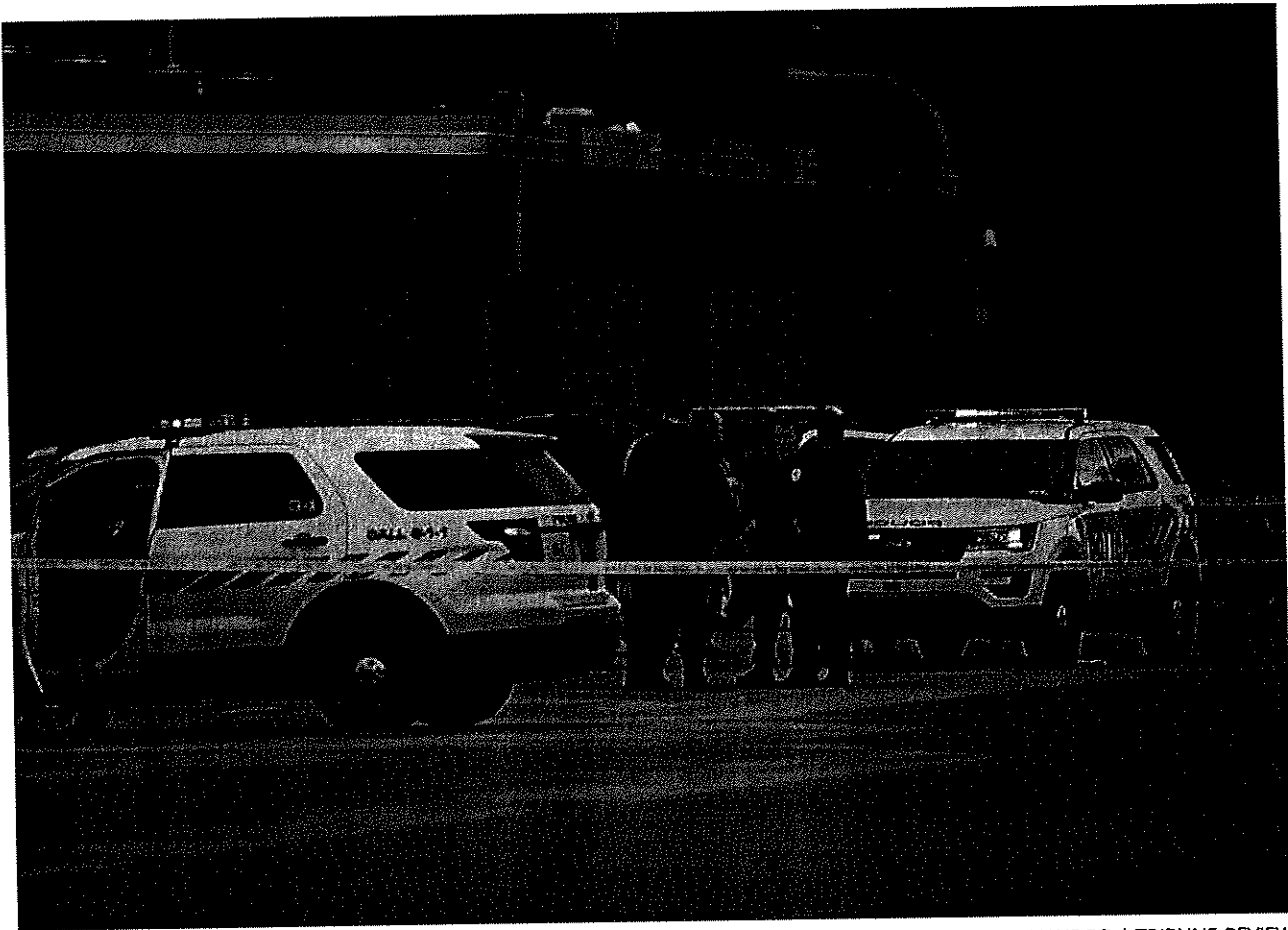
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<https://archive.triblive.com/local/penn-hills/district-attorney-says-deven-holloways-shooting-death-outside-penn-hills-school-was-justified/>

District attorney says Deven Holloway's shooting death outside Penn Hills school was justified



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | Tuesday, October 31, 2017 7:57 p.m.



NATE SMALLWOOD | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Officers stand by at the scene of the deadly shooting at Linton Middle School in Penn Hills on Tuesday, March 28, 2017.

A Plum man was justified in fatally shooting a Penn Hills teen outside of Linton Middle School in March, according to Allegheny County District Attorney's Office.



Manko said the decision was made within the past two weeks and declined further comment.

Holloway, 16, was found shot to death in a playground near the school on Aster Street on March 28 around 4:30 p.m. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Knight, 23, is charged with possession of a weapon on school property and tampering with physical evidence in connection with the incident. He waived his preliminary hearing before Penn Hills District Judge Anthony L. DeLuca on Oct. 16.

Online court documents show Knight posted \$50,000 bond on Sept. 8. His arraignment is scheduled for Dec. 19.

According to the criminal complaint, Holloway suffered multiple gunshot wounds and a .45 caliber handgun was found next to his body.

Knight turned himself in to county police the same day and surrendered his semi-automatic pistol.

A witness told county detectives he, Knight and two others went to Linton to play basketball, according to the complaint.

He said after they pulled into a parking spot, Holloway got into the car with Knight and the two others, pulled out a gun and said, "Give me everything you got."

Holloway hit Knight with the gun, stepped out of the vehicle and fired a shot into the car, the complaint said.

Another witness was in the car said Knight then pulled out his gun and shot at Holloway.

County police photographed the vehicle and found a possible bullet strike in the driver's side rear door, but no casings.

The complaint states "it is believed spent cartridge casings were discarded from the vehicle between the time of the shooting, Knight fleeing" and showing up to county homicide headquarters with his attorney, Phillip DiLucente.

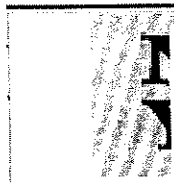
"We were very pleased with the investigation and the outcome obviously," said DiLucente. "It was based upon Mr. Knight being attacked. He was charged with having a gun on school property."

DiLucente said he did not want to speak directly about those charges, but "there needs to be some changes made to the law on who can have a gun on school property. Whether it be off-duty officers or others."

He said the next step is to check any updated case law and try to bring a defense for his client.

Michael DiVittorio is a Tribune-Review staff writer. Reach him at 412-871-2367 or mdivittorio@tribweb.com, or via Twitter @MikeJdiVittorio.

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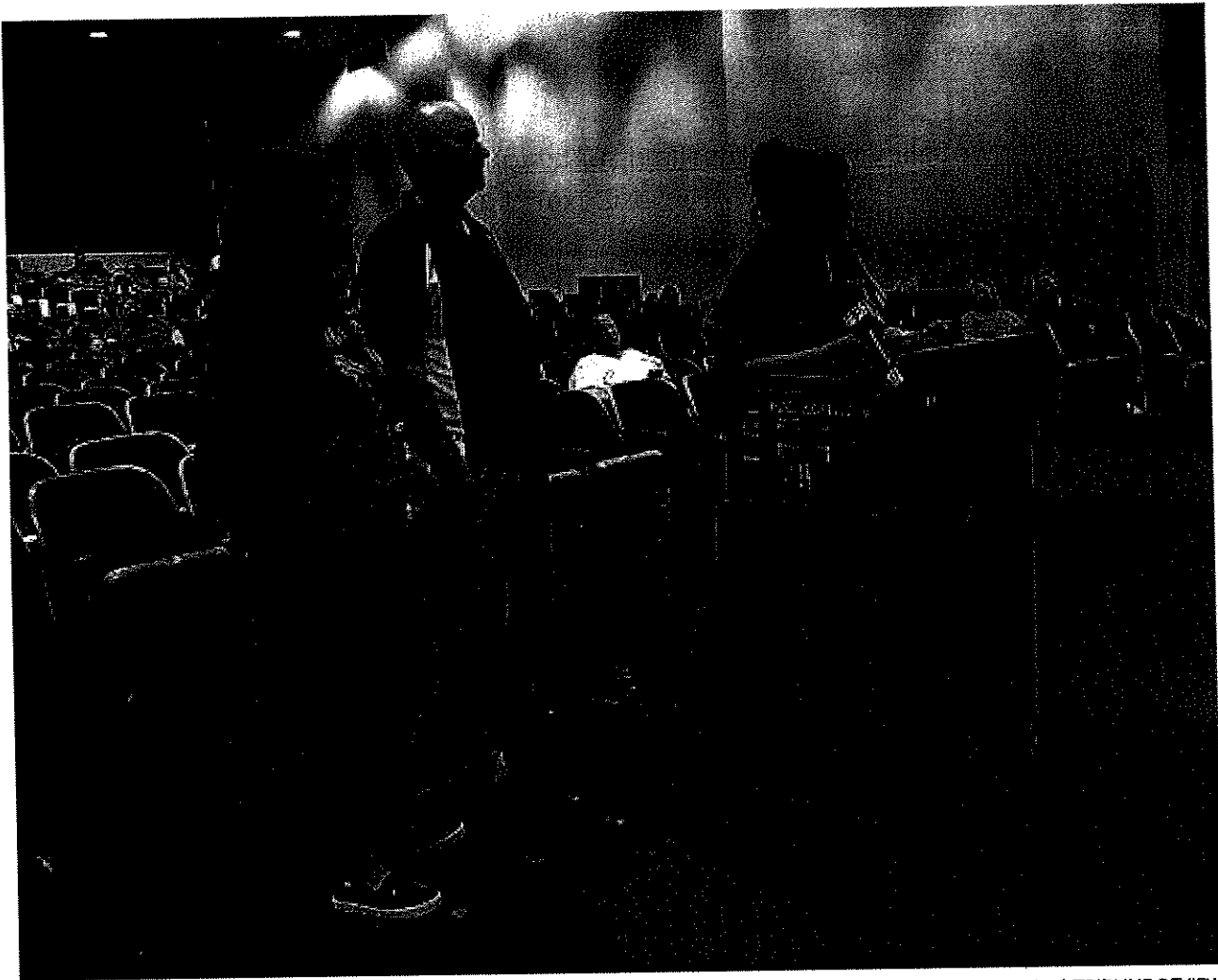
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<https://triblive.com/local/pittsburgh-allegheeny/penn-hills-town-hall-echos-pleas-for-discipline-at-linton-middle-school/>

Penn Hills town hall echos pleas for discipline at Linton Middle School



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | Tuesday, March 10, 2020 3:59 a.m.



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Linton Middle School teachers Karen Halbleib, John Bilsky and Amanda Powers speak at a town hall meeting at the school Monday night.

Penn Hills School District officials are developing a new security model at Linton Middle School to help address fights and other student behaviors.

Superintendent Nancy Hines said the district is exploring adding youth engagement specialists next school year. They are specially trained to deescalate situations and build rapport with juveniles.

Having retired police officers at the front door to help screen visitors and assist with student arrival and dismissal is also part of the proposal still being crafted by administrators.

"I think we universally agree the current security model is not working," Hines said.

District officials also are exploring moving fifth grade to the elementary school and making Linton grades 6-8, and other ways to help separate the grade levels at the school.

The announcement was made at a town hall meeting Monday night in which parents said middle schoolers fight every day, show a lack of accountability, receive very little discipline and do not have the tools necessary to succeed.

"When you come into an environment and you hear children using foul language, talking to teachers disrespectfully, and then you say, 'That's OK because that's the way they are,' you are in error," said Arnita Stagger, retired high school principal. "Mediation does not take the place of discipline. There's no way ... Are you training them for the corporate office or are you just training them for prison?"

Stagger, who is also the mother of school board vice president Yusef Thompson, was one of at least a dozen speakers at the town hall designed to discuss various middle school issues.

Administrators and other Penn Hills officials implored parents to get involved in their students' lives, check their phones and be cognizant of what they do on social media.

"We're dealing with kids who are very technologically savvy," Penn Hills police Chief Howard Burton said. "They can do stuff with the phones and computers I can only dream of, but they're still kids who don't have the mentality to realize what they're doing and what they're getting involved with."

He said detectives have been in the schools to talk to students about bullying, cyber crimes and other subjects.

Penn Hills Mayor Pauline Calabrese, accompanied by councilman John Petrucci, suggested the district look into implementing a dress code similar to East Allegheny School District.

About 30 Linton teachers attended the town hall wearing red tops and holding signs that read "Linton Teachers Care."

Pennsylvania State Education Association spokesman Matt Edgell spoke on behalf of the teachers union.

He said things have gotten to the point where it's difficult to teach classes and help students. Two words that showed up most often in a recent Linton staff survey and subsequent interviews were "students need."

"Students need guidance," Edgell said. "Students need structure. Students need more opportunity. Students need more resources and offered more courses, and students need discipline. Those were the needs."

Teachers John Bilsky and Karen Halbleib said students cannot take certain textbooks home because there's not enough of them to go around.

"We haven't had textbooks for all of our students in seven years," Bilsky said. "This is not a new thing. We've ordered them many, many years ago ... When we brought that up, we were told because of the economic situation that's not an option."

The district is more than \$172 million in debt largely due to construction loans for the high school and elementary school. School directors have authorized bond refinance in an effort to save more than \$10 million.

Board president Erin Vecchio requested teachers send her information on what textbooks are needed. She plans to ask for state assistance for books and other financial matters later this month.

Vecchio blamed Harrisburg and its financial recovery plan for forcing the district to make drastic cuts in both spending and staffing and raising taxes.

"This whole financial recovery plan has totally ruined this district," Vecchio said. "We cannot continue down this path by hurting the kids' education, by putting people out of their houses because of people's mistakes ... We will not put a teacher or student in danger because of their cuts."

She also recommended a three-strike policy when it comes to fighting.

"You can get caught three different times and, if you go above that, you're gone," she said. "I'll expel as many kids as I have to to make these schools safe."

Thompson commended Vecchio for calling the town hall meeting and sympathized with the parents.

"We can sit here and talk all day, but if we don't take any action, then there's nothing that's going to happen," he said.

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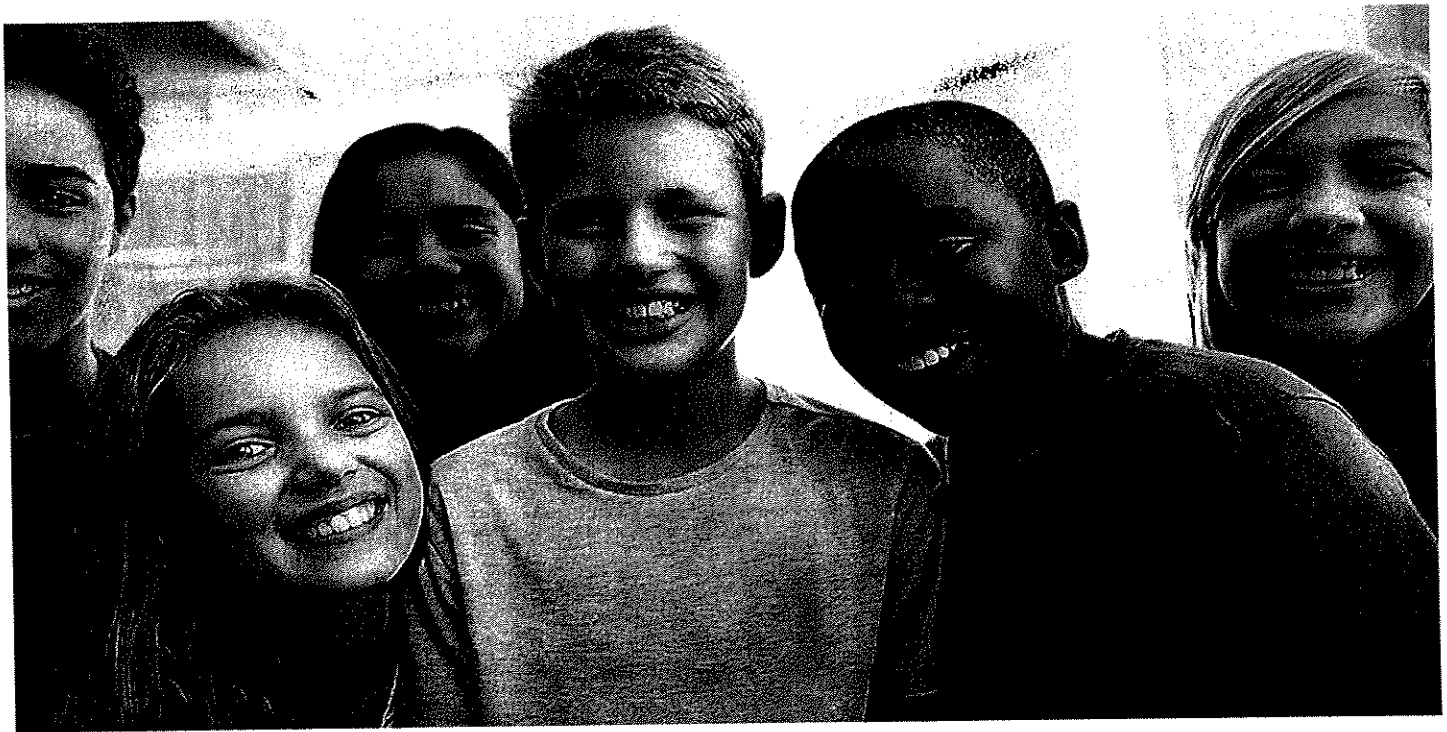
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School Safety

Penn Hills Middle School to Replace Officers with Youth Specialists

The decision to remove security officers from Linton Middle School is part of the district's plan to increase restorative justice initiatives.



🕒 July 08, 2020 👤 Amy Rock 💬 Jump to Comments

PENN HILLS, Penn. — A Pennsylvania middle school will replace its **security officers** with youth engagement specialists better equipped to handle the needs of students in that age group.

Officials at Linton Middle School said although the announcement comes amid nationwide protests calling for schools to remove or reevaluate police in schools, it is a move that has been in the works for over a year, reports **The Post-Gazette**.

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(individualized Education Program) team meeting for a disabled child who's maybe struggling and needs more support."

The Penn Hills school board unanimously voted on June 29 to bring in seven specialists from the Pressley Ridge child care and consulting agency to replace approximately the same number of security officers for the upcoming school year. Each grade will be assigned two specialists and the remaining specialist will float around as needed. Linton and Penn Hills High School already have Pressley Ridge specialists working in two classrooms geared toward students with disabilities and those who require extra emotional support.



Related: Should Campuses Defund the Police?

The district will also hire a retired police officer to check in visitors at the main lobby and monitor the school while students are in class, according to **WTAE**.

Hines said the decision to replace most security officers is part of the district's approach to increasing **restorative justice** initiatives, and much of the focus has been placed on the middle school since it is an important and often difficult time in a child's development.

"Kids are finding themselves, they're very cognizant of peer pressure, now you throw in social media, people saying things," she said. "It's just a hard time to get kids to focus, to be confident and so forth."

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went to the students and there was very little social interaction.

"Last year, we moved forward and implemented this new directions classroom where we said when you are assigned to in-school suspension, it's going to be meaningful," she said. "We're going to bring kids together who are having the same issues, struggling with the same decision-making, and talk through what the issues and problems are."

Hines said the elementary school is also set to pilot a similar classroom program in the fall.

🔖 **Tagged with:** Campus Police • De-escalation • Restorative Justice • School Resource Officers (SROs) • School Security • Security Officers • Student Safety

About the Author



AMY ROCK, Senior Editor

Contact:

Amy is Campus Safety's Senior Editor. Prior to joining the editorial team in 2017, she worked in both events and digital marketing.

Amy has many close relatives and friends who are teachers, motivating her to learn and share as much as she can about campus security. She has a minor in education and has worked with children in several capacities, further deepening her passion for keeping students safe.

In her free time, Amy enjoys exploring the outdoors with her family.

Related Content



Hundreds call for healing, community action at vigil in wake of 4 Penn Hills students' deaths



NICK TROMBOLA
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

MAY 27, 2021

9:38 PM

"We love you. We're here for you."

Those words were chanted over and over again by parents and community members to students and young people gathered outside Penn Hills High School on Thursday evening.

Several hundred people had gathered outside the high school for a vigil held in memory of four Penn Hills High School students who died in a little over a month, including three who had been fatally shot since May 16.

All four students who died recently were 17 years old.

Jason Hubert Jackson Jr. was found dead from gunshot wounds shortly after 7 p.m. Monday on Gibson Street in Penn Hills. Police said he had been shot on nearby Frankstown Road.

Less than 24 hours earlier, police said, Darin Hobdy was shot multiple times and killed in the 2100 block of Vantine Street in Wilkinsburg.

On May 16, police found DayMeir Boyd fatally shot in a vehicle in the 7900 block of Frankstown Avenue in Homewood. Police said he had been shot in another location, but the driver of the vehicle drove to Frankstown.

The fourth student, Jason Lott, was found dead April 18 at a residence in the 400 block of Janice Drive in Penn Hills. He died of a drug overdose, according to Pittsburgh Post-Gazette news partner KDKA-TV.

"I'm honestly just shocked," said Hollis Mathis, a 2019 Penn Hills High School graduate who attended the vigil. "It's just sad that it's happening in our community. You see this kind of stuff on TV, but it doesn't really hit you until it happens in your community."

Following an opening prayer, school district officials, members of community organizations, Penn Hills residents and U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb spoke about the epidemic of gun violence, trauma and the need to come together to heal in the wake of the tragedies. Family members of the four students who died sat together and listened at the front of the crowd.

During her speech, Superintendent Nancy Hines noted that the district has crisis resources to help students cope with trauma — but students must do their part to seek help if they need it. She pleaded with the young people gathered at the vigil to help keep themselves and each other safe.

"This does not have to continue. This should not continue," Ms. Hines said.

Mr. Lamb offered his condolences to the affected families and said the shootings will be on his mind the next time he is in Washington.

Some of the people gathered at the vigil, however, called for community action. Ebony Gaston, who lives in Penn Hills and who also lost a young family member last year, said there needs to be more after-school programs and activities for young people to help keep them off the streets, along with cultural enrichment programs to teach youth more about their heritage.

Ms. Gaston said the school district must also allow grassroots community leaders to come into schools to connect and relate with students in order to provide them role models and guidance.

Mr. Mathis agreed — he added that young people must also make sure to take care of each other as well.

“[The community] needs to continue to push youth to make good decisions to make our community exactly the way we want it to be,” he said.

After water was poured out in memory of those who had died, local clergy ended the vigil with another prayer, along with closing statements from Denise Graham-Shealey, a former Penn Hills school board member and emcee of the event.

“I hope you leave here a little lighter,” Ms. Graham-Shealey said to everyone gathered outside the high school. “Today, we start to heal. ... We will no longer tolerate this in our neighborhood.”

Nick Trombola: ntrombola@post-gazette.com.

First Published May 27, 2021, 9:38pm

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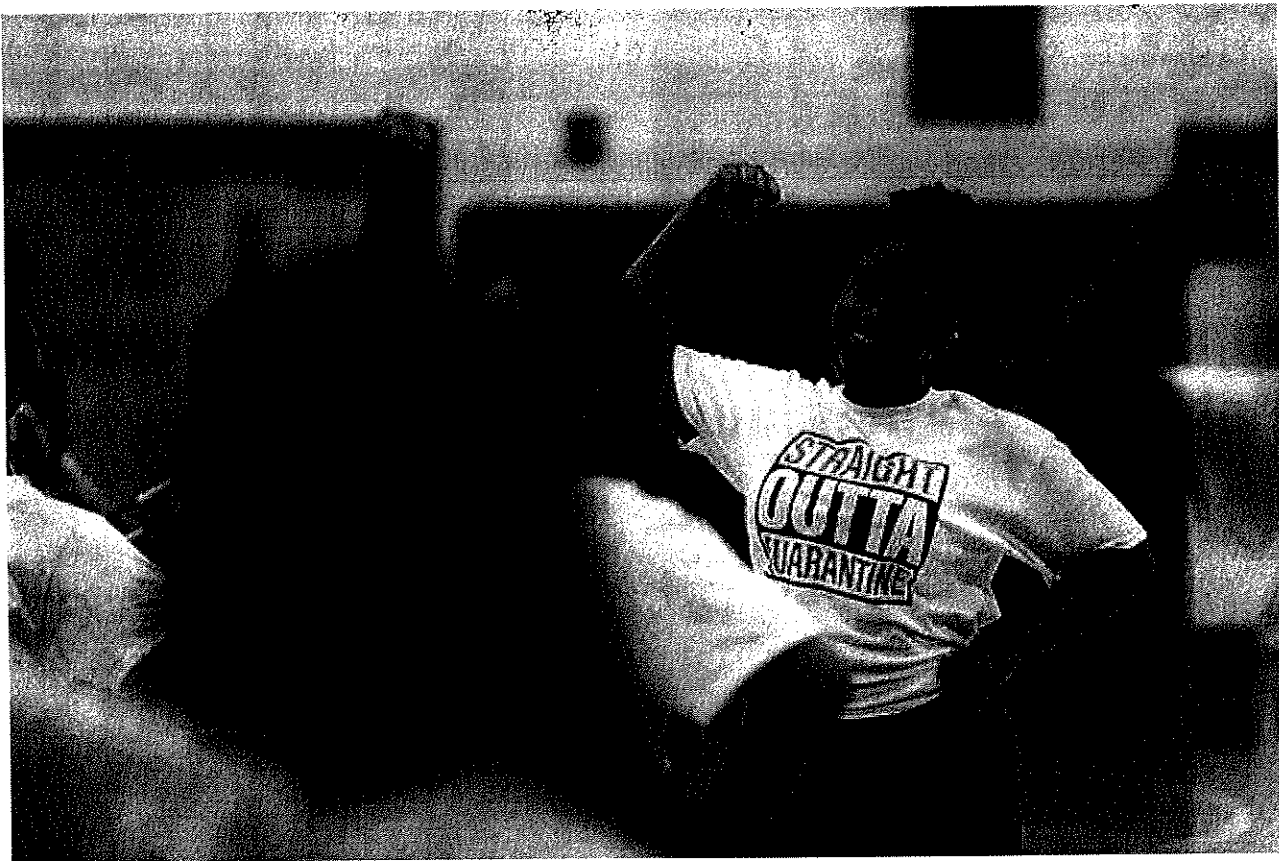
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Penn Hills High School hosts sports event aimed to bring together the community, first responders



TANISHA THOMAS | Monday, July 26, 2021 1:45 a.m.



SHANE DUNLAP | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Asya Murray, a junior at Penn Hills High School, performs a pep dance with members of the school cheerleading squad on July 25 at Penn Hills High School between volleyball and basketball games involving members of the Penn Hills community.

Penn Hills School District officials hosted a family-fun event showcasing community building Sunday

Participants ranged from the Penn Hills Fire and EMS to police and Allegheny County juvenile probation officers.

Athletic Director Stephanie Strauss worked with PHSD Superintendent Nancy Hines to orchestrate the event. Strauss said the unique matchups were an opportunity for the community to bond with those serving and protecting their area.

"We wanted to do a midsummer event that brought together everyone and civil servants in the area to build community," she said.

High school principal Eric Kostic had fun officiating the volleyball game.

"It was great to see so many people and alumni come out here. This turned out really well," Kostic said.

Allegheny County probation officers enjoyed the opportunity to show another side of themselves outside of their job.

"It was amazing and super dope to be able to mingle with the community," said Jon Bradford, an Allegheny County probation officer who played in the volleyball game.

Fellow probation officer Monique Jones joked about being able to at least hit the volleyball over the net after not playing the sport since high school.

"This gives the community a chance to see police officers in another light and realize they're people too," she said.

There was plenty to do at the event for Penn Hills residents who could choose to attend the games, watch the marching band and cheerleading team perform or talk to the various vendors and booths present in the school. UPMC representatives offered T-shirts and cooling towels to the first 100 attendees.

Meta Johnson of Wilkinsburg arrived for the volleyball game to support her granddaughter, who was on the cheerleading squad.

"I am very impressed with the amount of people that came out to the event," she said.

Lauren Javens of Rosedale saw the event advertised on Facebook and wanted to support the community. She was rooting for the students to win.

"I think it came out very organized and a lot of fun is happening," Javens said.

Booster groups from the cheerleading team, boys basketball team and band, sold food to help raise funds. Alumni also had the opportunity to purchase their jerseys for \$5 from the rummage sale offering old and retired school sports jerseys.

Representatives from different organizations — Neighborhood Resilience Project, A Second Chance and the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement — were on site to offer community support resources.



There were a few notable appearances at the event. Penn Hills Fire Marshal Chuck Miller; David Brock of A Second Chance; and Kim Booth, Assistant Chief Probation Officer Allegheny County Juvenile Court, were a few notable figures.

Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge Dwayne Woodruff, a former Steelers cornerback, was the celebrity referee for the basketball game. No matter who came out victorious in the games, Woodruff said the true winner was clear.

"The community of Penn Hills is the big winner today," he said.

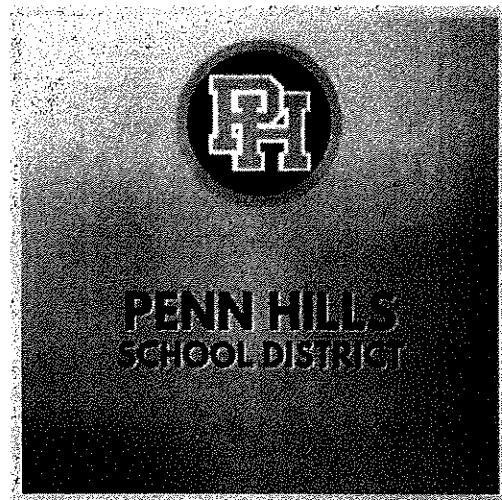
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UPDATE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT - SEPT. 15, 2021

After consultation with our law enforcement contacts and violence prevention experts who are active throughout Allegheny County, the Penn Hills School District is restricting attendance at our Friday, September 17 home football game versus Woodland Hills. We believe restricting those allowed onsite to football players, coaches, and essential event staff only is prudent given recent events that have affected many youth in the Pittsburgh Area, and not just those enrolled at Penn Hills and Woodland Hills School Districts.



We have been advised that unresolved feelings and emotions about what happened last weekend in North Versailles are being further fueled by a county-level police investigation that remains open. Beyond the obvious consideration of public safety, we believe this event restriction will give both football teams the opportunity to enjoy being kids for the night and to engage in healthy competition that is free of worries about who might be onsite during the game and for what purpose.

As part of increased game security, gates surrounding our high school and athletic complex at Parkridge, Garland, Harvard, Collins, and the Fralic Center will be locked at 4:00 pm on Friday, with no through-traffic allowed while the kids are playing their game on our field.

We apologize to our bands, our cheer teams, our families, and our fans for your exclusion, and we invite you to tune into the game via the following live stream options starting at 6:00 pm:

- YouTube- Penn Hills Football Network:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCge68pZH02QM3Kl3AFYn5HQ>
- Roxamore
Sports: <https://roxamoresports.com/how-to-watch.html>



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Directions

The winners of our vaccination challenge between PH and WH football and cheer teams will not be affected by the game restriction. Dr. Crossey and Premier Medical will still treat the football team with the highest percent of vaccinated players to a pizza party after the game, and pizza vouchers will be forwarded to the winning cheer team.

We thank our local communities for your support as we try to mitigate recent events and allow our local youth additional time to process and to heal.

Sincerely,
Nancy

Published September 15, 2021

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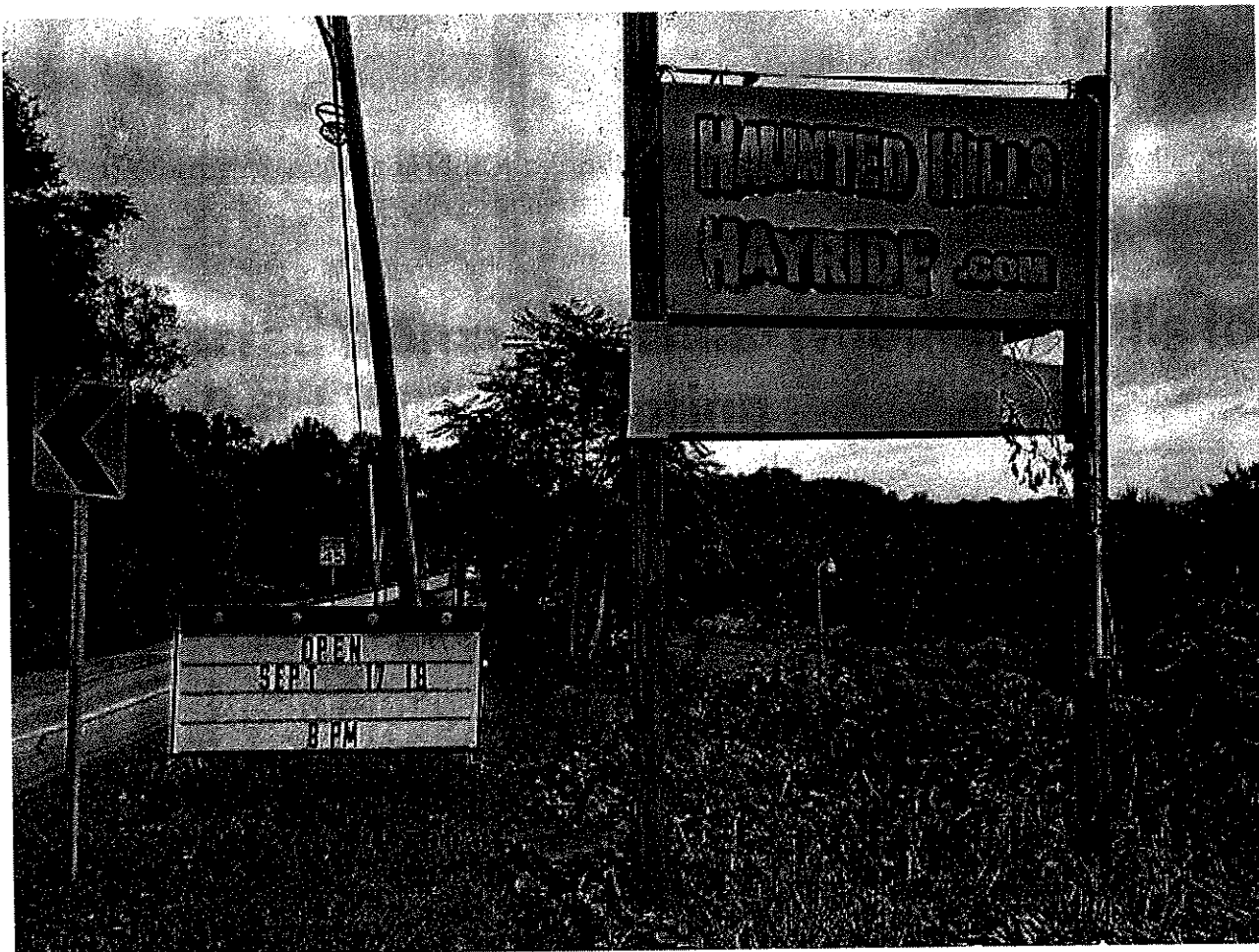
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Fans barred from Penn Hills-Woodland Hills football game after hayride shooting

TOM DAVIDSON | Wednesday, September 15, 2021 3:17 p.m.



TOM DAVIDSON | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The entrance to the Haunted Hills Hayride on Mossie Boulevard in North Versailles

Fans won't be allowed and security will be increased at the Woodland Hills Penn Hills high school



Id

"We believe restricting those allowed onsite to football players, coaches and essential event staff only is prudent given recent events that have affected many youth in the Pittsburgh area," Penn Hills Superintendent Nancy J. Hines wrote in a letter posted on the district's website and shared on social media.

Steven Eason of Wilkinsburg, a student at Central Catholic High School, died in the shooting. The wounded teen, who has not been identified, is a student at Penn Hills High School.

The Woodland Hills-Penn Hills game is set to kick off at 7 p.m. at Yuhas-McGinley Stadium in Penn Hills. Fans can listen to the game via the TribLIVE High School Sports Network.

"I think it's the right decision," Woodland Hills Superintendent James Harris said Wednesday. "We want to keep everyone safe."

It will also allow the players to focus on what's happening on the football field in this rivalry game and not what's happening in the stands, both superintendents said.

RELATED: Police seek cellphone video evidence of fatal North Versailles hayride shooting

The teens were shot about 8:15 p.m. Saturday during the opening night of the Haunted Hills Hayride in the 500 block of Mossie Boulevard in North Versailles, police said.

Eason was with a group of friends who casually knew the other boy, police said. When Eason saw that boy involved in a confrontation with the teen suspected of firing the shots, Eason and his friends tried to help him, according to police.

Police don't know what the confrontation was about, they said.

"Our investigation is active and moving forward," Allegheny County Police Lt. Venerando Costa said Wednesday.

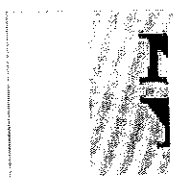
Police are seeking witnesses and cellphone video of what happened as between 50 and 100 people were in the immediate area when the shots were fired.

The suspect, believed to be a teen, fired a handgun three times, hitting Eason and the other boy, and ran toward the parking lot at the hayride, police said.

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Penn Hills, Woodland Hills Football Teams Meet At Midfield For Show Of Unity, Eat Pizza Together After Game

No spectators were allowed at the game due to safety concerns surrounding a recent deadly shooting in North Versailles.

September 18, 2021 at 10:29 am

Filed Under: High School Sports, Local News, Local TV, Penn Hills High School, Woodland Hills High School, WPIAL

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'I Want To Make Sure That My Children Feel Safe:' Freeport Police Chief Quits After Just One Day On The Job



One Person Dead, 7 People Injured In Wrong-Way Crash In Westmoreland County



At Least One Person Shot, One Person In Custody In Shooting At Upper Burrell Bar



2 People Transported To Trauma Centers After Crash On Route 51



Pittsburgh Area, Western Pa. Get First Snowfall Of The Season



Bodies Of Couple Missing 3 Years Believed To Be Found In Ohio River



Pittsburgh Weather: Snow Chances, Windy Conditions

By: KDKA-TV News Staff

PENN HILLS (KDKA) — Friday's football game between Penn Hills and Woodland Hills had no spectators in attendance due to safety concerns, but the two teams didn't allow that to deter them from uniting together.

The decision to not allow spectators to attend the game was made in the fallout of a shooting in North Versailles that left a 15-year-old dead and another teen injured, with no arrests being made yet.

Attendance for the game was limited to players, coaches and essential event staff.

Spectators weren't allowed at the game between Clairton and Leechburg due to similar safety concerns, with the game's host being swapped, out of an abundance of caution.

Prior to Friday's game between Penn Hills and Woodland Hills, the two teams met at midfield for a show of unity.

PENN HILLS INDIANS FOOTBALL

@phqbclub



A show of unity between the Indians and @WoodyHigh before tonight's game.
#IndiansNation



6:03 PM · Sep 17, 2021



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Ben Roethlisberger Placed On COVID-19 List After Reportedly Testing Positive For Virus



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After the game, the teams shared more time together, sitting in the stands, enjoying post-game pizza.

PENN HILLS INDIANS FOOTBALL

@phqbclub



The Indians and @WoodyHigh enjoying post game pizza together in the stands. This. Is. Awesome.
#IndiansNation #WoodyHigh



8:42 PM · Sep 17, 2021



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Penn Hills Athletics

@PH_Athletics



Thank you to Dr. Crossey and Premier Medical Assoc. for sponsoring the post-game pizza party and helping us bring together both teams. Thanks to @CureViolence for your guidance and supporting the young men of @phqbclub and @whfootball.

9:27 AM · Sep 18, 2021 from Penn Hills, PA



49



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Penn Hills was victorious in the game, winning 14-13.



Bodies Of Couple Missing 3 Years Believed To Be Found In Ohi...

The bodies of an Ohio couple missing since 2018 are believed to have been found Thursday in a car submerged in the Ohio River, authorities said.

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Wife Goes To Bathroom, Waitress Tells Husband This

The waitress had been closely watching the husband and wife, taking the opportunity to tell the husband when his wife went to the bathroom.

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October 15, 2021

Dear Penn Hills School District Family Member:

I am reaching out with some very important updates. The topic for this communication is much more personal and deserves greater attention. So, we are going “old school.” As many are aware, our Penn Hills community has been rocked over the past six (6) months by the loss of four (4) young lives at the end of the 20/21 school year and then, again, by two (2) separate shootings that occurred over the past month or so. These incidents have seriously affected our students and our staff too, many of whom continue to question, “Why?” and “When will this senseless violence stop?” Emotions have been further heightened by US and worldwide events that continue to make us question who we can trust. We have been further challenged by this ongoing pandemic and trying to settle back into a daily routine that includes more people onsite, but also continued use of masks for protection and reduced opportunities for positive social interaction.

PHSD made a commitment a few years ago to examine how we do business. That commitment was not only about changing our spending habits but also about changing culture and climate. I am happy to report PHSD is now operating in the black. We seem to have dug ourselves out of a huge hole that at its deepest was about negative \$18 million. Although final numbers have not yet been confirmed, it appears we ended the 20/21 year with a surplus of about positive \$8 million. That’s all well and good and certainly something to be proud of, but it means nothing if we can’t at the same time manage a safe and healthy learning environment for our students.

Targeted initiatives launched over the past few years have focused on improving trust and strengthening relationships among our PHSD stakeholders. To this end, we have fully embraced a philosophy of mutual respect and more meaningful interventions for students when they struggle with decision-making. These interventions include the Cool Zone at our PH Elementary School which is facilitated by UPMC Mathilda Theiss and a New Directions Room at Linton MS and PH High School. These areas created for our older students are primarily supported by certified School Counselors and our Home School Visitors/Social Workers. We have also reintroduced and expanded an Alternatives-to-Suspension model at PH High School that was abandoned for financial reasons after its very successful launch in 14/15. This Saturday program will be up and running in November and has been expanded to include new community service and Adopt-a-Cohort components to ensure our students are supported after they complete their more formal programming.

Beyond that, we have reformed our traditional security model at each of our three (3) schools. We first launched our new model at Linton MS in 20/21 and have now expanded it to include our two (2) other schools as well. This model still includes more traditional school security officers provided by OSA Global Security, and the primary role of these officers is to help check-in students and visitors who are attempting to enter our schools, to monitor internal and external camera footage during the school day, to perform regular perimeter checks of the schools/grounds, and also to be on standby for extra support should members of our Youth Engagement School Specialist (YESS) Team need assistance in the classrooms, cafeteria and/or school hallways.

The spirit of this model is to ensure the use of physical force is a last resort. We are well aware of recent events across the US that have demonstrated how easily things can escalate when encounters with authority figures go wrong. Our Youth

Engagement School Specialist (YESS) Team members are provided by Pressley Ridge, and their primary role is to build relationships with our students, and our staff too, and to recognize when someone or something doesn't seem

right. They are trained to provide immediate interventions, which often include removing a student from the situation, deescalating the student, helping to identify the root causes for upset, and helping the student develop more effective coping strategies. Members of our YESS Teams are also trained to take more decisive action, in the event such action becomes necessary.

YESS Teams have been building-specific; however, our Board of School Directors recently authorized the development of a PHSD YESS Team to help coordinate the activities of our school-level teams, including not only the aforementioned players but also our larger school staff, families, and community-based organizations. This expansion of the YESS Team will also be coordinated by Pressley Ridge but now includes the leadership of local youth violence experts Richard Garland from the University of Pittsburgh and his colleague Dr. Staci Ford. Richard and Dr. Staci have been leading behind-the-scenes efforts that include both proactive and responsive strategies to curb youth violence across Allegheny County for many years. Both have visited Penn Hills HS in recent weeks and engaged openly with our students and staff about the impact of these events and how trauma may affect decision-making, along with what to do when you recognize the signs of trauma in yourself and/or in others. Richard and Dr. Staci will be increasing their time onsite within the PHSD. We expect them to host staff meetings in the near future, along with classroom visits and even community-level conversations about how to identify and address fears, concerns, and other emotions related to trauma. Their expanded involvement will help us extend support beyond-the-school day.

I also want to recognize our continued collaboration with Penn Hills Police Department. Our revised security model continues to include the opportunity for an active duty officer to work onsite at our PH High School; however, our Board recently approved the addition of a second active duty officer option at the school. No particular officers are assigned daily, and this option is open for those who enjoy working with our youth. While this adjustment offers a definite advantage in the event a threat is posed from the outside or additional support is needed inside, most importantly, it allows our older students to get to know better those who are attempting to maintain safety at our larger school events and throughout our PH community.

As a final note, I have purposely not made mention of recent TikTok challenges until now. It continues to be my impression that our kids don't seem impressed by any of these, and they seem to understand fully and appreciate that vandalism and/or hands-on staff will never be acceptable. We are watching very closely, however, the effect of recent cell phone restrictions at Linton MS, and we are strongly considering a variation of this model for PH High School as early as mid-November when we begin the 2nd grading period. Minimally, it is expected that cell phone use will be restricted in certain areas at PH High School and at certain times. Mr. Kostic will be working with student leaders and staff to map out next steps. It is also expected that our final, regular-season HOME football game on Friday, October 22, 2021 will (again) include pre-ticket sales only for PHSD and VISITORS (Shaler Area) school-aged youth, with adults only having the option to purchase tickets at the gate. While extending the guest list to include other youth in adjacent communities has merit, our primary concern right now is keeping our PH community safe during this very difficult time.

We thank you for your ongoing support and continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



Nancy

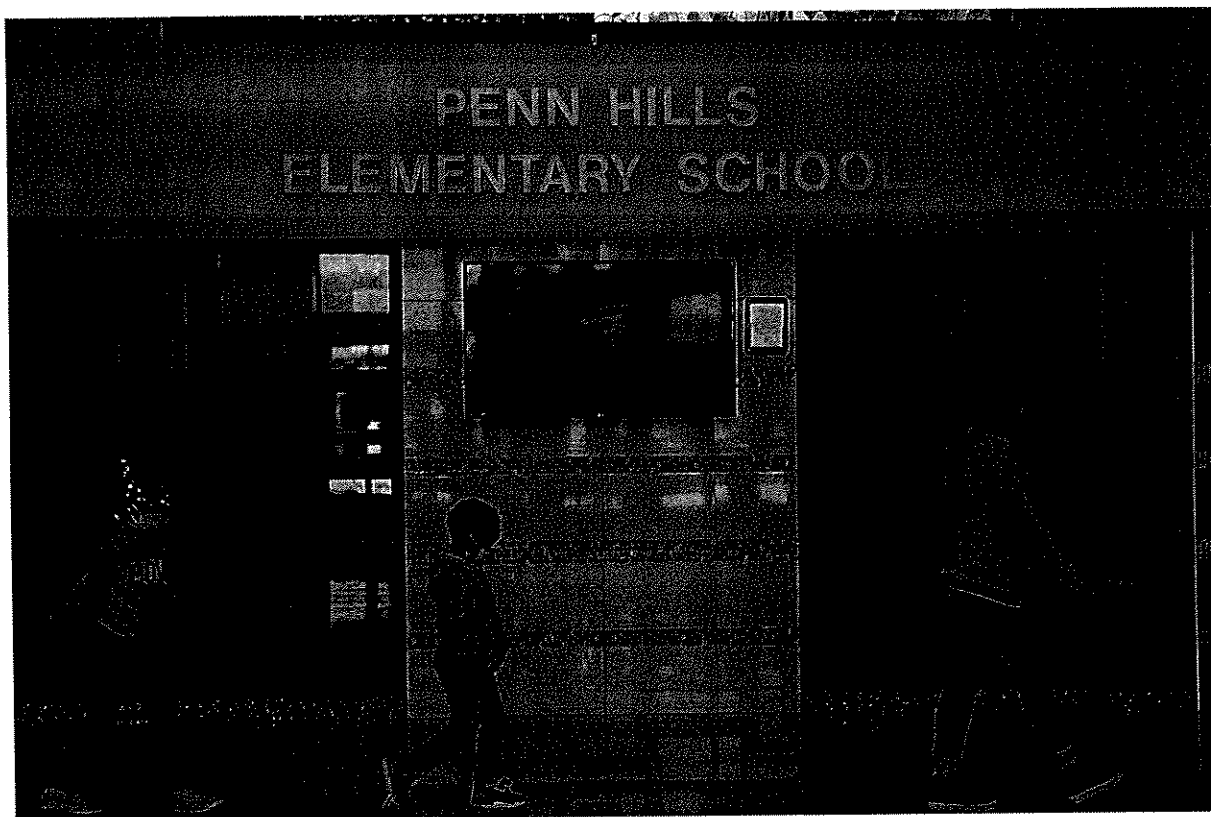
EDUCATION

Penn Hills superintendent looks to academic growth after seven years of financial calamity and controversies



Oliver Morrison

March 10, 2022



The tiles in Penn Hills Elementary School entryway were imported from Italy, a lavish reminder of the financial troubles the district found itself in after building two new schools without adequately identifying where the funds would come from a decade ago. (Photo by Oliver Morrison/PublicSource)

Nancy Hines, superintendent of the Penn Hills School District, didn't have a scheduled meeting until lunchtime on Jan. 20, but by 10 a.m., she had already met with a half dozen people.

The common denominator across many of her morning interactions was the previous night's board meeting. Several senior staff walked into her office to talk about the committee meetings. Their mood was upbeat: Eileen Navish, the business manager for the district, had given the most positive report in years.

When Hines took over as superintendent in 2015, the district was around \$19 million in the hole. But Navish reported that the district now had a positive balance of \$7 million, an amount that could increase as the district receives additional COVID relief funds.

The state auditor general first called out the district for financial mismanagement in 2016. Then, after two additional reports highlighting mismanagement, in 2019, Penn Hills was placed into financial distress by the state Department of Education, giving the state additional oversight.

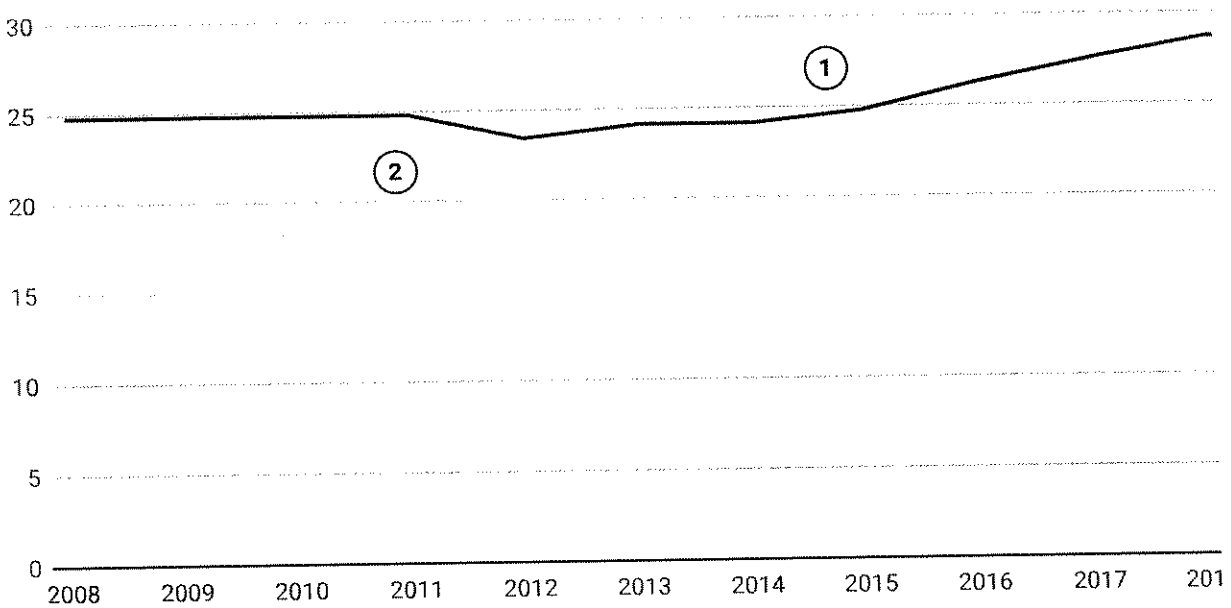
The district's property tax rate — above 30 mills — is now the second highest in the county after six years of tax increases. The district has rebuilt its finances by refinancing bonds, securing grants from the state, selling old school buildings, raising taxes and cutting staff. It then received an additional windfall in the form of COVID relief funds.

Penn Hills has scrapped its way back to solvency and found itself with savings that would've taken much longer to accrue if not for the pandemic.

But signs of its financial past are still evident among staff: teachers have missed out on the typical annual raise on their salary schedules. Some furloughed staff have had to change the subjects they teach to find a permanent position within the district. And class sizes have increased — a symptom of the staffing cuts they've made to try to balance the budget. And the district will have to raise taxes or make further cuts to balance its budget once its federal relief money is spent.

Penn Hills School District tax rate (in mills)

In mills

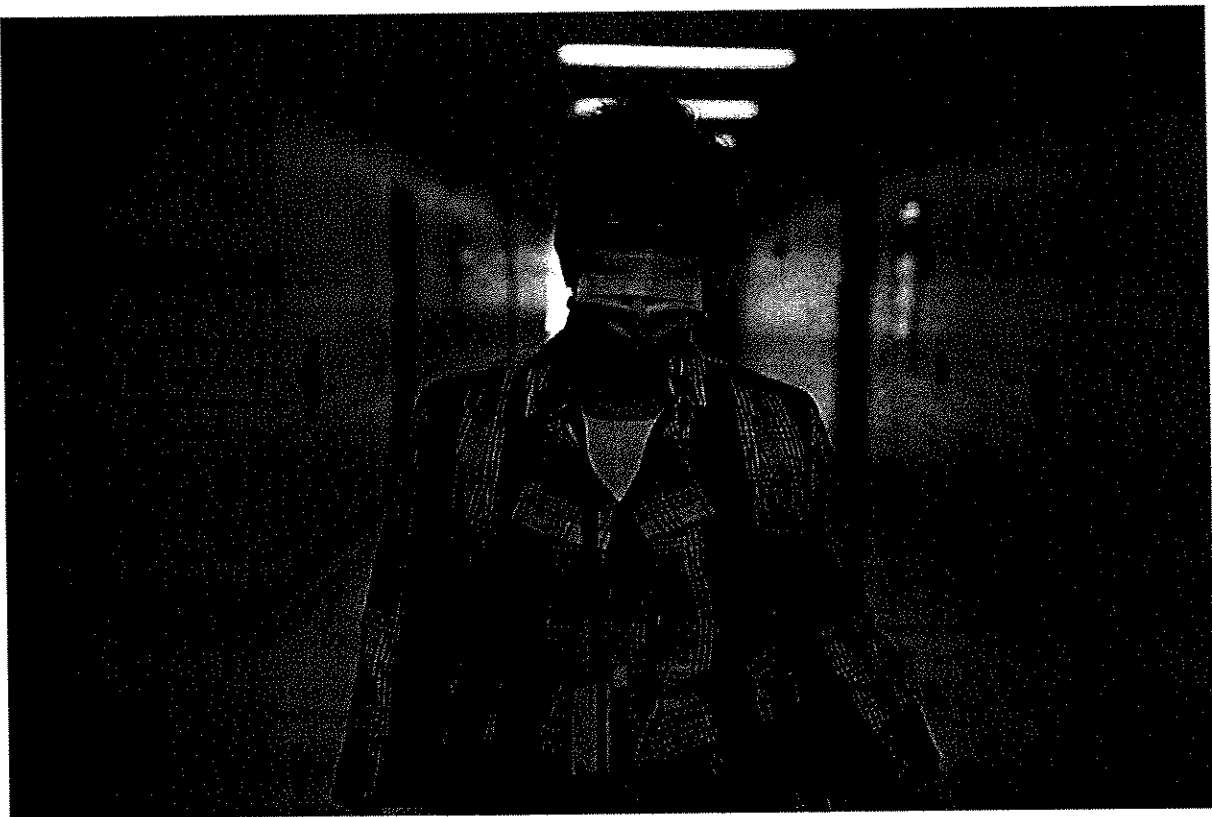


① Audit report shows \$19 million deficit

Hines said she believes the district has finally achieved the kind of stability that will allow it to focus on some perennial problems — changing its approach to discipline and improving its academics, especially at the middle school.

The reasons for the district's financial problems are clear now but it's not clear who was really responsible. The previous administration blamed the old board and the board blamed the previous administration. Now Hines said she sends detailed weekly reports to the board and has tried to change that dynamic.

"I'm going to tell them the good, the bad and the ugly and going to have a record that I told them," she said. "That's painful at times. That's how you have to do business."



Nancy Hines said she was originally hired by Penn Hills to focus on academic improvement but was forced to devote her attention to getting the district's finances in order. (Photo by Oliver Morrison/PublicSource)

How they got into this mess

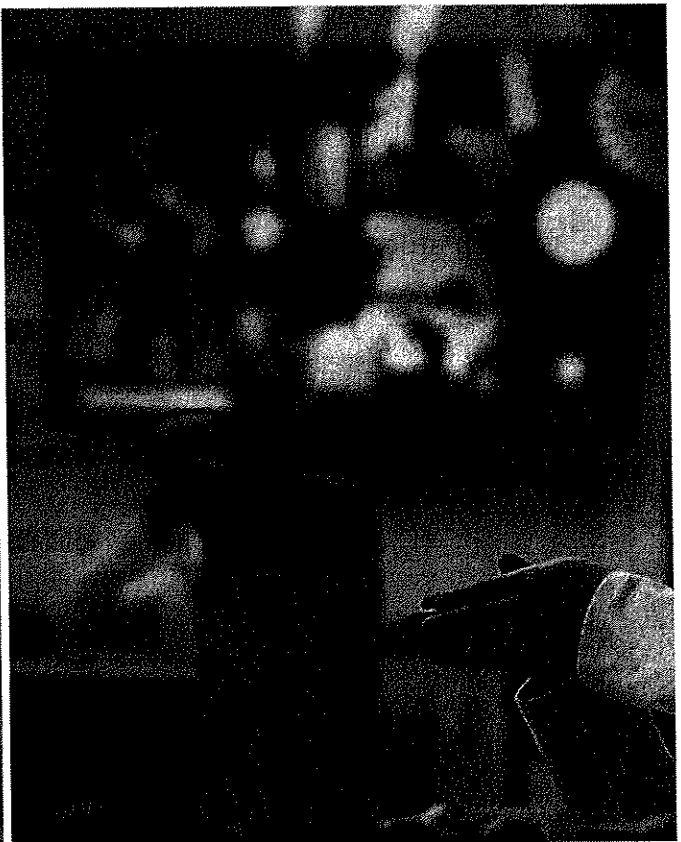
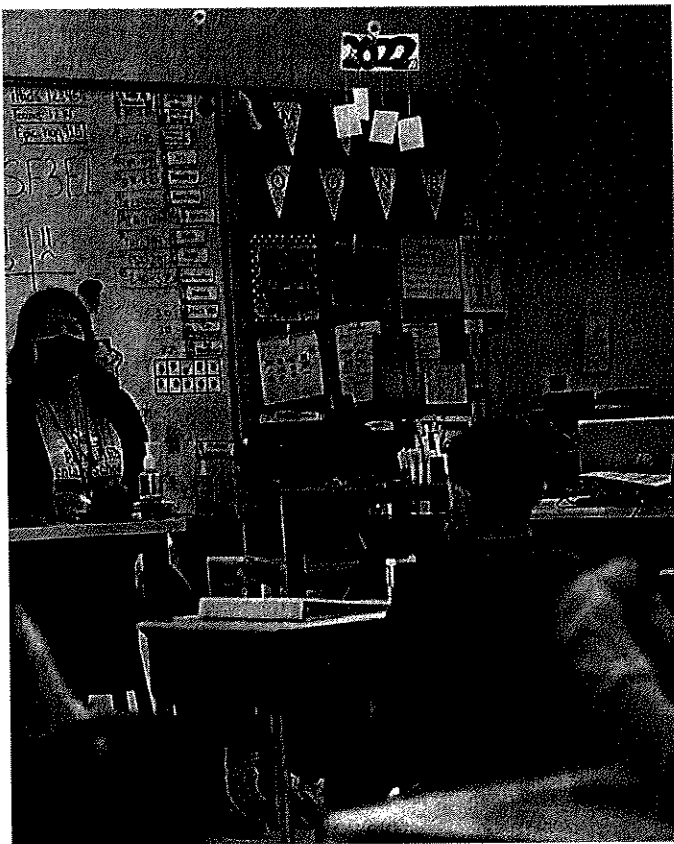
Back in Hines office, she took a moment to review some checks that were being issued in the afternoon before signing off on them. She looked to ensure there were three signatures and flipped through the pages of detailed explanations of what the money was for and who had approved it.

This kind of scrutiny was missing from the district when she arrived, Hines said. She said she realized early on she didn't know who she could trust from the old administration. She would have to scrutinize every aspect of the district's operations.

Hines didn't realize what she signed up for when she took an assistant superintendent job in 2014. She had previously worked in the district as a teacher and later as a principal before departing for jobs elsewhere. She thought the focus of her return would be improving the district's academics. She took over in 2015 after the previous superintendent resigned and learned in her second month that the district had about \$10 million less than had been reported.

She had to make an unusual plea to a judge to take out an expensive loan without collateral because otherwise Hines didn't know how the district would meet its payroll. The judge scolded her for being so irresponsible, even though she'd only recently taken over. A year later, she found herself standing next to the state auditor general at a press conference as the district was excoriated for financial mismanagement and serious ethical lapses.

"I just wanted to hang my head. It was just so shameful," she told PublicSource.





Lisa O'Connor waits for more first graders to show up on the video screen for her next lesson. Gisselle Perez Montoya works on a phonics lesson, while half of the class works on the same lesson from home. (Photos by Oliver Morrison/PublicSource)

Soon after, the Allegheny County District Attorney's office convened a grand jury and, in 2019, issued two scathing reports about the district's financial practices and conflicts of interest.

The reports revealed ethical problems, such as staff using district credit cards for personal items and board members getting jobs through connections to firms that the district hired. Many of those staff are no longer with the district, and the previous board members are all gone except the current board president, Erin Vecchio.

And then there was the big structural problem: The district had borrowed money to build two large new school buildings without properly accounting for where the money would come from. And then the board let the costs of construction balloon.

The consolidated elementary school was unpopular with just about everyone except the board who voted for it in 2011. Many parents and staff preferred the smaller, neighborhood elementary schools. The oversized new high school that opened in 2012 didn't draw back students from charter schools like the district had hoped. The district had been losing students without cutting back on staff for years, raising taxes or cutting other expenses, leaving it with multimillion-dollar budget deficits. And just as Hines took over, the district was facing large debt payments to pay for these elaborate buildings.

Penn Hills School District fund balance (\$s)



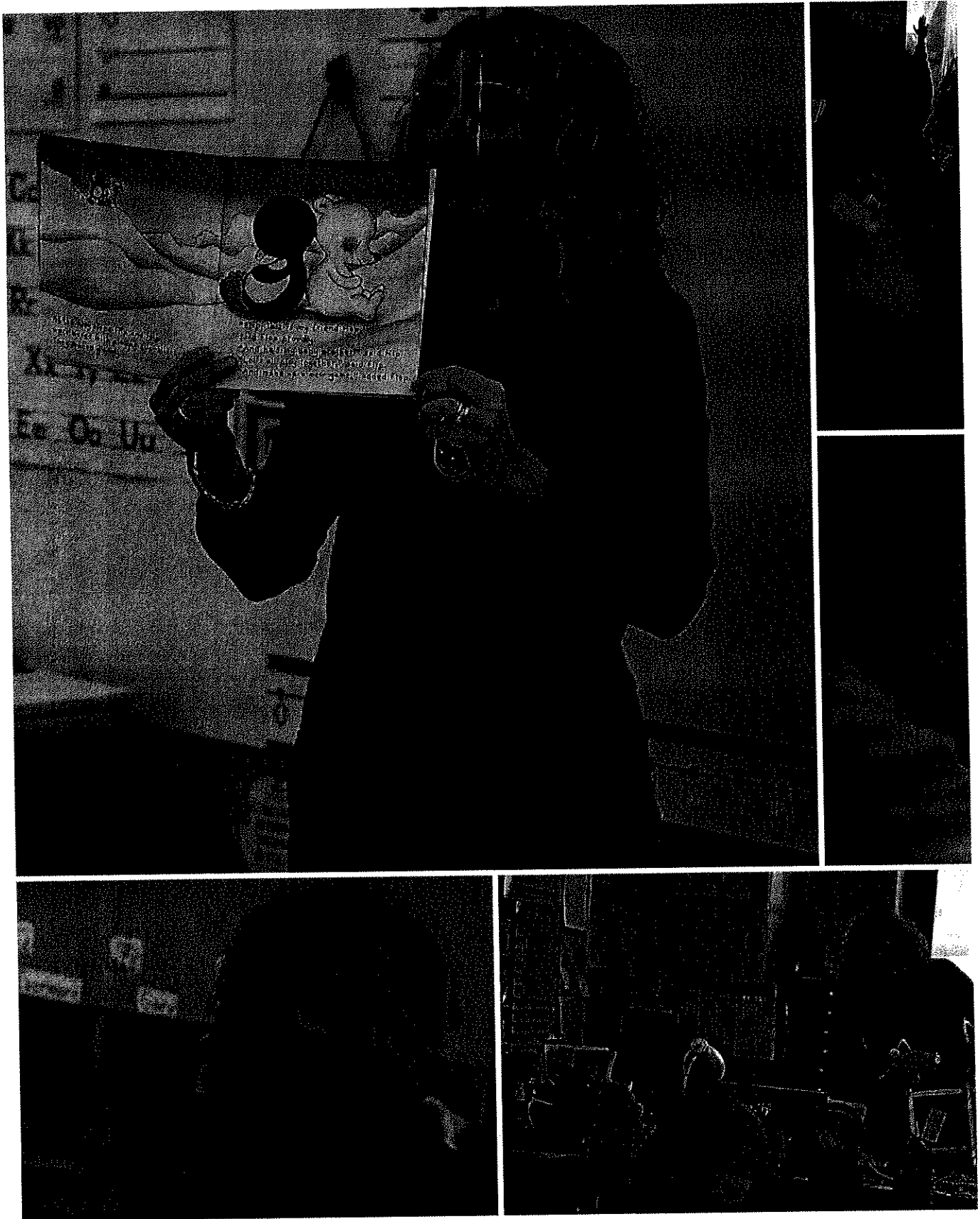
The mega-elementary school

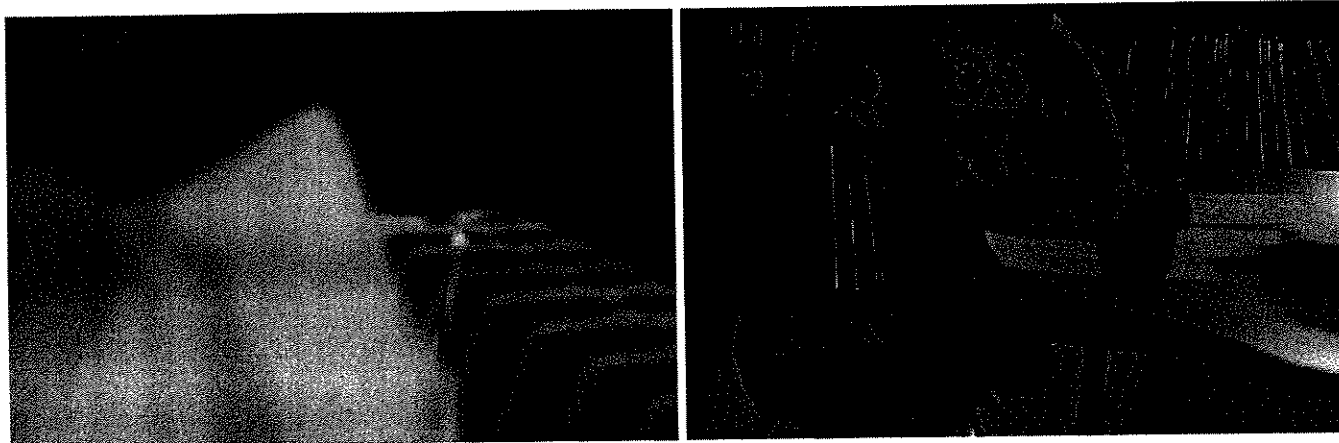
The pandemic has eased the immediacy of the district's financial challenges. But Daniel Matsook, the district's financial recovery officer, said the COVID relief money is papering over the fact that the district's regular income still doesn't cover its regular expenses. It will be up to the board, over the next few years, he said, to pass budgets that finally put the district on a path to long-term solvency.

Hines has had to walk a fine line of dealing frankly about the district's problems, she said, but also not highlighting them so much that it loses more students to charter schools.

Although the pandemic helped speed up the recovery financially, it also took a lot of attention away from basic academic improvements, the job Hines originally returned to the district to do in 2014.

“Now my focus is to get back to the academics,” she said.



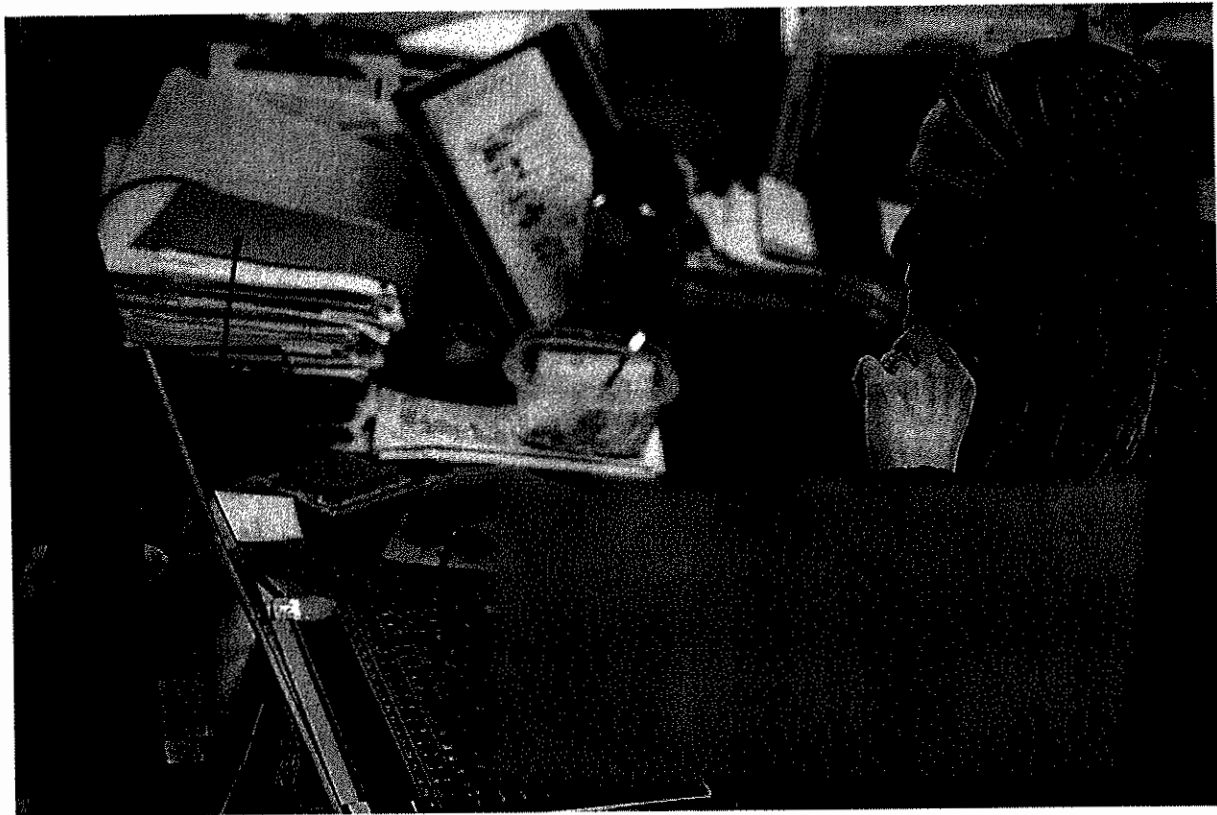


Cathy Eki reads a book about penguins and kindness to her kindergarten class. Eki's pre-K classes were cut four years ago when the district ran into financial trouble. COVID protocols meant the children are spaced farther apart and sometimes Eki uses a microphone so the whole class can hear her. The teachers told the district young kindergarteners need iPads, not laptops. But the large class size and lack of an aide means Eki has to do things like untangle headphone wires while her students wait. (Photos by Oliver Morrison/PublicSource)

Kristin Brown, the principal of Penn Hills Elementary School, said that over the years, she has tried to block out the background noise caused by the district's financial turmoil. She has been with the district since 1992 and previously served as the principal of one of its neighborhood elementary schools.

When the consolidated elementary school opened in 2014, she had her work cut out for her, building a sense of community among more than 1,300 students.

"Everyone loved their neighborhood schools, so it wasn't wildly, excitedly received to be coming into this new building," she said. "So there were a lot of naysayers and challenges to coming here."



"Everyone loved their neighborhood schools, so it wasn't wildly, excitedly received to be coming into this new building," said Kristin Brown, principal of Penn Hills Elementary School. (Photo by Oliver Morrison/PublicSource)

By one measure, she's had some success. The elementary school students showed growth in math, reading and science scores on their state exams between 2015 and 2019 even as the district lost staff. The middle and high school test results were more mixed.

A new approach to behavior

Mental health challenges during the pandemic have exacerbated behavioral issues across the country. One counselor stopped Hines early in the fall semester and said, "These kids have to relearn school."

Hines has been slowly rolling out a new approach to discipline, replacing security guards with counseling staff and trying to drive the number of suspensions down.

Penn Hills School District enrollment

In thousands



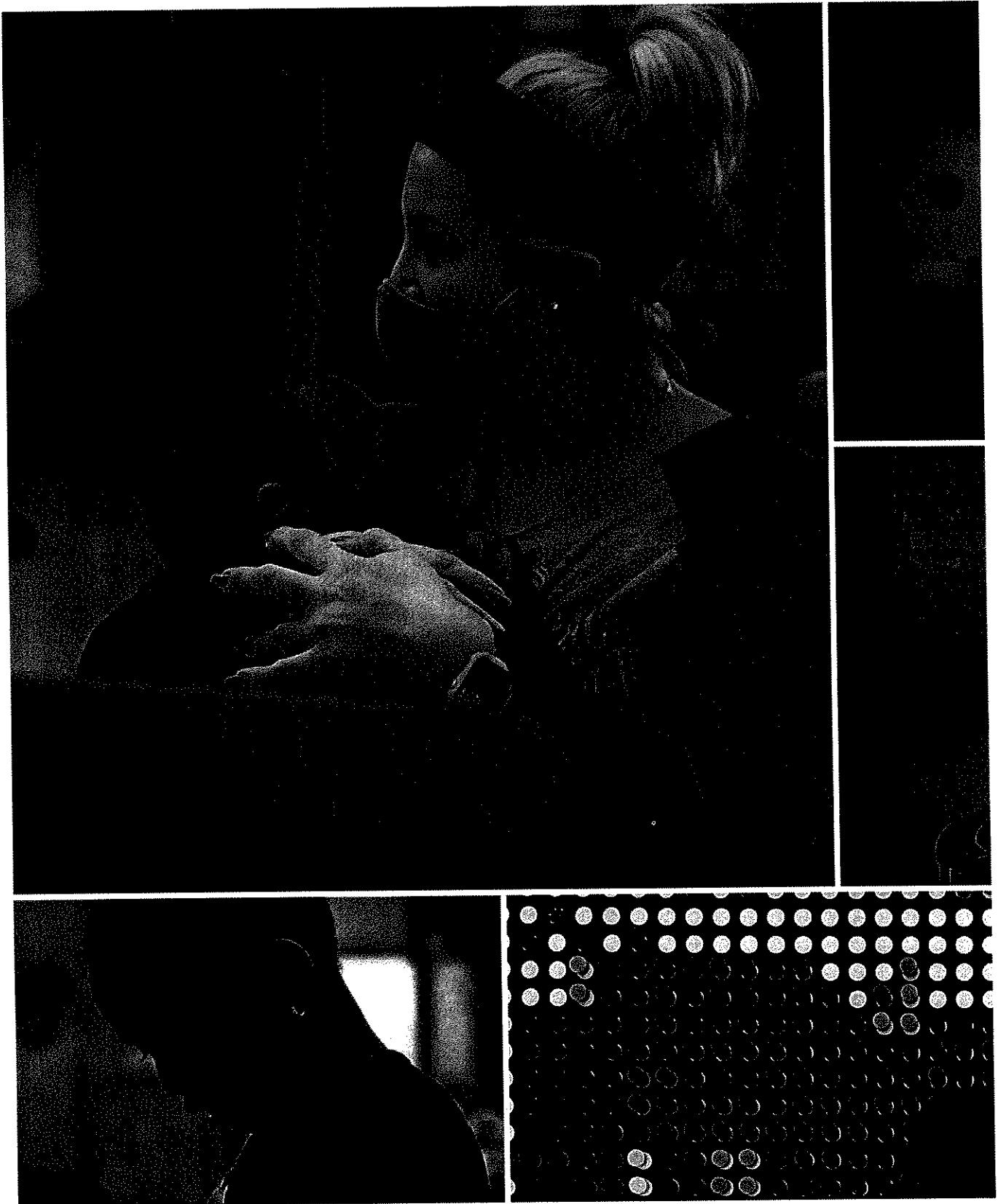
① New high school opens

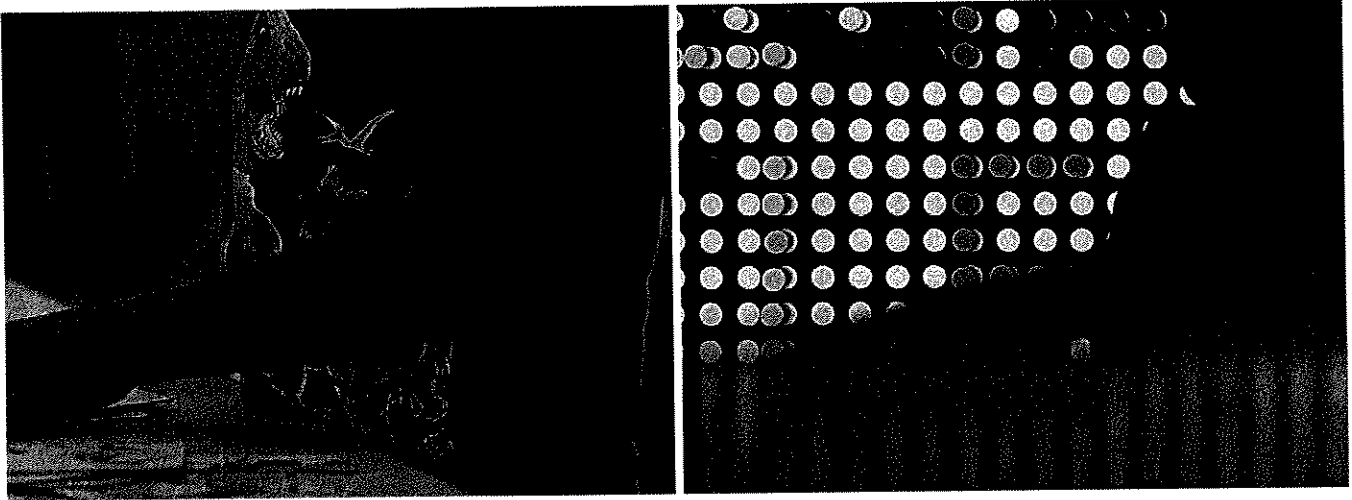
This year, the elementary school added a team of counselors trained in restorative practices. They have a special room where kids go to practice how they can avoid problems in the future. “We may not see a change today, next month, next year even,” said behavior management specialist Ruston Brown, who works with the counseling team. “But we know if we continue this, we know the changes will be made.”

Penn Hills suffered more from violence in 2021 than most districts its size: three students were murdered in shootings, another died of an overdose and another died of an accidental shooting. Although the violence occurred off campus, a shooting in the fall required the district to play a football game without fans.

Hines said she believes the district needs to figure out what’s driving student behaviors. “It’s time-consuming,” she said. “There are people who feel you are

being too soft, you need to set an example and publicly shame kids and that will be a deterrent. And the research says that's definitely not the case."





Stephanie Cucunato took over teaching a room dedicated to helping K-2nd grade students with autism after her previous job as a reading specialist was eliminated by the district during the district's financial problems. Cameron Mackey finished working on a word building puzzle while the other students started their choice activity time. (Photo by Oliver Morison / PublicSource)

Not everyone is fully onboard. Jackie Blakey-Tate, the school board's vice president and a former principal in Pittsburgh Public Schools, used to work with students with behavioral challenges. "You can't just smack a kid on the wrist and say don't do that again," she said. "You have to have consequences, especially for things putting others in danger. So, for me, the jury is still out."

At 12:30 p.m. Jan. 20, Hines finally had her first scheduled meeting of the day: a Zoom with a group of local ministers who are hoping to work with the district to create "safe spaces" for students to go after school. It would be funded by a county health department grant. Although details of the program are still being developed, Hines said the plan would provide a space for students to complete homework, get a snack or meal and eventually offer additional enrichment off campus.

"When kids feel alone, they're scared," Hines said. "That's when things happen."

Oliver Morrison is PublicSource's K-12 education reporter. He can be reached at oliver@publicsource.org or on Twitter [@ORMorrison](https://twitter.com/ORMorrison).