



Contact: Carey Harris, A+ Schools
(412) 697-1298
charris@aplusschools.org

**A+ Schools Releases 2011 Report on School Progress in Pittsburgh
*Achievement Gap Narrows, More Students Show College and Career Readiness***

PITTSBURGH, PA – Nov. 14, 2011 – A+ Schools, Pittsburgh’s community alliance for public education, today released its *Seventh Annual Report to the Community on Public School Progress in Pittsburgh*. The report provides parents, community leaders and others interested in public education with a fair and comprehensive look at the progress of each school in the Pittsburgh Public School District.

Carey Harris, executive director of A+ Schools, said schools across the district are showing signs of positive change, including an increase in student achievement and a narrowing of the achievement gap — the difference between the percentage of black and white students who scored proficient or advanced on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests. Other signs of progress include increases in the graduation rate, SAT participation and scores, and students qualifying for Pittsburgh Promise scholarships.

“We found more progress last year than we’ve seen in any previous year since we began publishing this report,” Harris said.

“We congratulate students, teachers, principals, families and the community in Pittsburgh for the hard work that has produced great results. But, much work remains to be done to make sure school works for every child in every school.”

However, Harris says the good news in the report should not diminish the continuing struggles of the district’s juniors and the racial achievement gap that “is still far too large.”

Overall, more Pittsburgh students scored in the proficient and advanced ranges for reading and math compared to four years ago — until they reached high school, where 11th-grade math scores declined for the second consecutive year. Pittsburgh students also made greater gains than students across Pennsylvania in all grades, except for 11th-grade math.

— more —

**2011 Report
Page Two**

Harris cited continuing improvements in the achievement gap, highlighted by a rise in black student achievement that helped narrow the gap to its lowest point in four years: 30.6 percent in reading and 27.2 percent in math.

Other findings in the report show:

- Enrollment declined last year by 453 students to 25,582.
- The district graduation rate rose 6.8 percent to 89.2 percent.
- Nearly 65 percent of the district's seniors took the SAT test — a 4.2 percent increase.
- About 59 percent of Pittsburgh seniors earned a grade point average that qualified for the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship — a 4 percent increase.
- The number of students enrolled in one or more AP courses increased by nearly 3 percent to 14.5 percent.

Published annually, the A+ Schools *Report to the Community* provides information on PSSA achievement based on the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS), which analyzes whether or not selected grade levels in a school have made at least a year's worth of progress, regardless of the starting point. The A+ report also shows how students performed across the four PSSA score ranges by race and family income status.

Harris urged the Pittsburgh community to review the report as a tool for asking questions and seeking information about the quality of city schools. A+ Schools will mail the report this week directly to 20,000 city households with children enrolled in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and children ages 5 and under. In addition, the report will be available in local libraries, city schools and at elected officials' offices, or by calling A+ Schools. The report also can be accessed online at www.aplusschools.org.

Opportunities to Learn More

A+ Schools is offering tailored presentations to school and community groups interested in learning more about the report and how to use it. To arrange a presentation, contact A+ Schools at 412-697-1298, or visit the A+ Schools Web site at www.aplusschools.org.

A+ Schools is an independent community advocate for improvement in public education. Its vision is a community mobilized to improve public education to produce successive generations of young people who thrive and who build their families and futures in Pittsburgh. Its purpose is to be a community force advancing the highest educational achievement and character development for every public school student in Pittsburgh. For more information, contact A+ Schools at 412-697-1298 or visit www.aplusschools.org.

###