

# PROBLEMS WITH THE PROPOSAL

*This proposal will hurt the students, families, and teachers of Pittsburgh Public School.*

**Consolidation will overwhelm the existing schools.** PPS buildings are, on average, about 90 years old. Buildings of this age are limited in terms of what kinds of renovations or expansions are possible to accommodate huge influxes of new students. We can expect that class sizes will explode under these conditions, jeopardizing the safety and education of every student involved.

**This plan will also harm students' ability to access school.** The issue of transportation was the number one listed concern among Parents, Guardians, & Community Members when surveyed about the proposal. The current plan will require many students to travel far greater distances to get to and from school. These issues are further exacerbated when considering our students with disabilities who often require Special Transportation to safely access school.

Lastly, with school closures looming, **teachers and staff at PPS are preparing for incoming layoffs.** PPS leadership has provided little to no communication as to what their plans will be with the staff currently running the schools on the chopping block. These staff members are left wondering whether they'll have a job to return to after summer break these next couple of years. Meanwhile, the remaining teachers prepare for the worst: virtually every PPS school lacks resources, and many expect huge increases in student populations in the next couple of years.

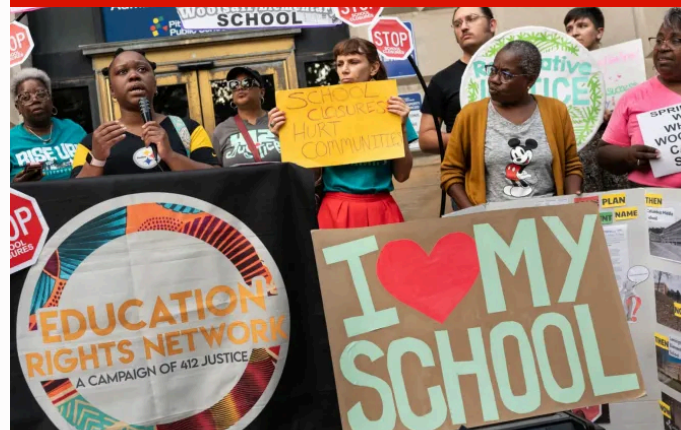
# WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

On the ground, community activists like 412JUSTICE have done a tremendous job pushing back against these proposals by protesting hearings and centering the voices of the families and students involved. Community members even proposed a tangible alternative plan that would address many of the district's problems while only closing 10 schools. *To make lasting and impactful improvements to the experiences of our students in Pittsburgh, though, more work is needed.*

The city must hold its large corporations accountable and discontinue the tax incentives that leave our schools massively underfunded. If UPMC was forced to pay property taxes, it would add nearly \$14 million to the city's coffers -- enough to cut PPS' projected \$23 million budget deficit by over half. Pittsburgh must immediately reinvest in its public schools, services, and infrastructure to allow for updated buildings, reasonably sized classes, and fully staffed buildings. Lastly, the city needs to ward off predatory consultant groups like ERS, whose motives seek to privatize every public utility that working people benefit from. ***With city representatives beholden to capitalist interests, none of this can happen.***

The families, workers, and children of Pittsburgh need a socialist reconstruction of our schooling system. We need massive public investment in our public schools, we need to discontinue the charter school system that has been siphoning public funds away from PPS, and we need to combat all private groups and individuals that push austerity onto our city's children.

Instagram: @pslpittsburgh  
Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pghpsl>  
PSLNational: <https://pslweb.org/>



## PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS LOOK TO CLOSE UP TO 14 SCHOOLS

***Pittsburgh Public School's leadership remains committed to following through with the Educational Resource Strategies (ERS) proposal that would result in major school closures and consolidation in the district.***





## FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) face a difficult financial situation. The district expects an annual deficit of \$23 million for fiscal year 2025. Additionally, the district's buildings have an average age of 90. Of these, 21 school buildings are over a century old, and many have not seen significant renovations or investment in years. These circumstances led PPS to pay the Boston-based private consultant group Education Resource Strategies (ERS) \$250,000 to propose a massive restructuring plan to close many schools and consolidate neighboring ones.

### ***What caused PPS's dire financial situation?***

Across the nation, our public school system has faced a relentless attack from the capitalist class seeking to privatize education, break up teachers' unions, and delegitimize any public institution that meets the needs of poor and working Americans.

The city of Pittsburgh has exacerbated this phenomenon with its specific decision-making. Pittsburgh enticed hundreds of corporations with major tax breaks. Its largest employer, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), pays zero dollars in property taxes. These massive corporations spurred a population boom but contribute little to the public funds necessary to school the city's children adequately.

## WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES?



Educational Resource Strategies (ERS) is a private education consultant group located just outside of Boston that prides itself on proposing "transformative shifts in resources, structures, and practices" in American schools. In practice, school districts contract ERS out to send representatives to their schools to analyze how best to cut costs. ERS takes a check while the district outsources the difficult job of deciding what specific schools need to be closed and which specific workers need to be laid off.

One quick look at the ERS's Board of Directors provides insight into how strong their connection is to the most predatory elements of the capitalist class. Marcia Blenko serves on the ERS Board and also works as an Advisor Partner at Bain & Company. Bain & Company (father company of Mitt Romney's Bain Capital), is a global consulting firm with a rich history of taking huge contracts to devise plans to gut public services at the expense of poor and working class people.

***Given this background, are we supposed to believe that the ERS has the working people of Pittsburgh's interest in mind when they tell us that we need to close 14 of our schools?***

## THE PROPOSAL: CLOSE AND CONSOLIDATE

On October 15, 2024, Educational Resource Strategies (ERS) presented its final proposal to the Pittsburgh Public School Board. They recommend closing 14 schools, opening 3 new schools, and consolidating students into 12 existing schools. The ERS plan is comprehensive: they name each school that will be closed, cite specific locations for new schools, and identify what types of renovations will be made to the existing schools. It is clear that this proposal involved plenty of cooperation from PPS, and it's even clearer that PPS intends to execute this plan.

### 14 SCHOOL CLOSURES

|                 |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Allegheny 6-8   | Arsenal PreK-5   | Fulton PreK-5     |
| King PreK-8     | Linden PreK-5    | Manchester PreK-8 |
| Miller PreK-5   | Milliones 6-12   | Roosevelt K-5     |
| Schiller 6-8    | South Brook 6-8  | South Hills 6-8   |
| Spring Hill K-5 | Woolslair PreK-5 |                   |