



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2019

**Catalyst Academy Charter School Reaches Agreement with Pittsburgh Public Schools.
Pittsburgh’s first new K-8 public charter school in six years.
Catalyst Academy will offer a college-preparatory public school option for underserved
East End communities.**

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania —

Earlier tonight, the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) Board of Directors approved a charter agreement with Catalyst Academy Charter School. This ends a two-year process that began with the submission of the Catalyst Academy application on November 15, 2017. Timeline of key events:

Nov 15, 2017	Catalyst Academy submits a comprehensive 3,000+ page application for a K-8 public charter school focused on underserved East End communities
Feb 5, 2018	PPS experts determine Catalyst met ALL 9 review categories, an unprecedented accomplishment
Feb 21, 2018	PPS Board denies Catalyst Academy’s charter application
Jun 12, 2018	After receiving over 2,000 petition signatures, the Allegheny Court of Common Pleas enters a consent order permitting Catalyst Academy to file an appeal with the PA Charter Appeals Board
Jan 22, 2019	The PA Charter Appeals Board holds a hearing on Catalyst Academy’s appeal.
Feb 26, 2019	The PA Charter Appeals Board votes 3-2 to grant Catalyst Academy’s appeal
May 21, 2019	The PA Charter Appeals Board decides it needs to re-vote, and reaffirms their original vote by a vote of 4-2
July 15, 2019	The PA Charter Appeals Board issues order for PPS to issue Catalyst Academy a charter
Oct 30, 2019	PPS approves a negotiated charter agreement with Catalyst Academy

The charter agreement between PPS and Catalyst Academy contains performance measures including student scores on PA standardized tests, providing more accountability than prior Pittsburgh charter agreements.

Catalyst Academy Founder & CEO Brian Smith remarked, “From the beginning, we have been laser-focused on providing a great public school option to the families in underserved, disadvantaged neighborhoods in the East End. Though this has been a lengthy, costly process, we are excited that we are finally able to tackle the hard work of providing a world-class school that prepares students for college, career, and life. Additionally, we embrace the spirit of accountability in this first of its kind charter agreement. Indeed, we believe all public schools should be accountable to parents, the state, and to taxpayers.”

Catalyst Academy has been diligently preparing for their opening this coming August. Darren Gray joined the organization this past summer as Founding Principal. Darren came to Catalyst Academy from Nashville's Liberty Collegiate Academy, where he was an Assistant Principal focused on teacher development. Liberty Collegiate, which serves predominantly low-income families of color, is recognized for academic growth in the top 5% of schools in Nashville. Founding Principal Darren Gray, remarked, “I am excited to engage with families and learn how Catalyst Academy can help to fulfill their hopes and dreams for their children's future.”

Catalyst Academy also announced today that they will be opening in the former Lemington School in the Lincoln-Lemington neighborhood of Pittsburgh. The East End neighborhoods that Catalyst Academy is focused on include the Hill District, Garfield, East Liberty, Larimer, Lincoln-Lemington, Homewood, and East Hills.

Catalyst Academy will open in August 2020 with kindergarten and 1st grade classes, and will grow a grade per year to eventually serve kindergarten through 8th grade. Parents can learn more and apply online at CatalystAcademy.org

More About Catalyst Academy Charter School

Catalyst Academy Charter School's mission is to prepare all students for college, career, and life. The school will serve children in underserved East End communities that today lack high-quality neighborhood schools.

Catalyst Academy Charter School's motto is *Belong. Grow. Achieve.* This reflects the school's deep commitment to cultivating an inclusive supportive school community where everyone – children and adults – is focused on learning every day, in order for all students to define and achieve their dreams.

Catalyst Academy Charter School's education model is designed to close both the achievement and opportunity gap. The approach couples rigorous core academics with a broad offering in

the arts and sciences. Students will experience STEM learning daily and arts programming four days per week.

For more information, please visit our website at www.catalystacademy.org or contact Brian Smith at (412) 684-2400