



August 6, 2022

Dear SciTech Families:

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Pittsburgh Science & Technology Academy, I am pleased to welcome our new and returning families to the 2022-2023 academic year. We hope our families have had a healthy, safe, and enjoyable summer. As I enter my tenth year as principal of SciTech, I am thankful to work with such dedicated educators who are committed to ensuring that all students experience academic success within an environment that is safe, supportive, and responsive to the needs of our students and families.

It is important to us that our school community is aware of the goals that we have for our school's growth and how we will continue working toward equity. We remain unwavering in our goal of providing a socially just learning environment that embraces the values of equity and high-quality teaching and curricula that allow students to feel safe, seen, heard, and valued.

Additionally, an essential goal for our school this year will be ***Building a Learning-Focused School Climate***. Our consistent focus will be on instruction, educator learning, student learning and reflection. As we focus on building a learning-focused school climate, it is important to communicate and clarify what is expected of educators within the classroom as well as expectations for students. We believe that providing consistent and unbiased expectations regarding school norms and routines that reinforce the values of the school will support our goal of building a learning-focused culture. Some of these expectations have been shared during the summer, such as our cell phone policy and expectations for daily dress. Additional expectations such as the implementation of classroom agreements developed collaboratively by teachers and students and the use of restorative practices as part of the classroom routines will further support this area of focus.

We believe that the start of the school year provides a great opportunity for all members of the SciTech school community to reflect upon our school goals. Please take some time to review these policies and personally reflect on the goals shared in this letter.

Thank you for your support as we continue this journey together. I encourage you to utilize our school website to access resources and receive the latest school information. We will keep everyone updated through email, so please join our email list. Enjoy the final few weeks of your summer vacation and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Dr. Shawn McNeil
Principal

Equitable and Restorative Grading Practices

As we are working toward equity in our school community, we have spent a considerable amount of time learning about the importance of implementing equitable and restorative grading practices. Your student's teacher will discuss the expectations for grading that will be implemented based upon our collective learning last school year. I am sharing some of the important procedures below which are intended to provide further clarity and support as we continue to refine our equitable and restorative grading practices during the 2022-2023 school year. Please note that *teachers will continue to follow the specially designed instruction as described within the IEP for students who receive these services and students who receive services under section 504.*

General Expectations for Deadlines, Feedback and Retakes

- Late assignments will continue to be accepted without a grade-based penalty, but the deadline to submit graded assignments will be the final day of Interims and the end of each Quarter. No revisions/retakes are available after the final day of Interims and

The Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries may be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Title IX Coordinator or the Section 504/ADA Title II Coordinator at 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, 412.529.3950, TitleIXCoordinator@pghschools.org, or 412.529.HELP (4357).

Pittsburgh
Science & Technology
Academy 6-12



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Quarters. Graded assignments where feedback will be given and opportunities to redo the assignment are available, must be submitted one week prior to the end of Interims/Quarters. (Assessments are given a few days prior to the closing of grades, to allow for feedback and retakes)

- Teachers may continue to require students to engage in additional learning tasks prior to completing the redo or retake. This is at the discretion of each teacher.
- The 50% rule will be used to correct the 100-point scale's disproportionality toward failure even when a student doesn't complete an assignment.
- Formative assessments such as homework are not graded.
- Student behavior (participation/effort) is not incorporated in a grade.
- CHS courses, graded through the University of Pittsburgh and taken for CHS credit, must follow University standards for grading.

Cell Phones, Headphones, AirPods and Other Electronic Devices

Students are allowed to carry cell phones as long as they are **SILENCED and are not visible. Students should not use their cell phone for social media, as a camera, calculator, or text messaging, etc. from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day.** This includes smart watches and airpods/earphones. In addition, cell phones are not permitted during lunch and activity. Students may only use their cell phones before and after school. If parents/guardians must reach their student in case of an emergency, they may call the main office. A student is allowed to come to the main office to use their phone. Parents can also email their student on the student's school email address.

Discrimination and harassment are prohibited within our school community and our school district provides clear procedures for the investigation of discrimination and harassment. Please review the board policy below:

Policy 102 – Non-Discrimination in School and Classroom Practices

Board Policy 102 states in part: The Board declares it to be the policy of the District to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability.

The District is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the District and is prohibited at or, in the course of, District-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities. Discrimination is also prohibited in any remote learning program or activity of the District.

Discrimination shall mean to treat individuals differently, or to harass or victimize based on a protected classification including race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, or disability.

For the full text of Board Policy 102-Non-Discrimination in School and Classroom Practices, please visit: <https://www.pghschools.org/nondiscrimination-policy>

For information about our Title IX procedures, please visit: <https://www.pghschools.org/titleIX>

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