



A Place to Learn and Live.

The Residence at WPSD.





Dear Friend,

Since the first day of its founding 144 years ago, the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf has continually striven to provide the finest education and social experience possible to our students. This includes a safe, welcoming, and nurturing residential facility for those students who come from throughout Pennsylvania to live on our main campus during the school week.

Our Board of Trustees shares our total commitment to optimizing the experience and achievements of all of our students. Consequently, I was gratified when the Board made it the highest priority to replace the aging dormitory at WPSD with a new, modern, attractive, and well-designed and equipped Residence for our students. As of today, every member of our Board of Trustees has made a generous personal donation to launch the A Place to Learn and Live: The Residence at WPSD fundraising campaign. These donations total more than \$100,000. Our employees are matching this commitment by making generous contributions of their own. And, the WPSD Alumni Association is conducting a special fundraising initiative to benefit the project.

I am truly grateful to all of these wonderful people for their dedication to the well-being of our students and our School and their generous support of the Residence campaign.

The new Residence at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf will be a tremendous addition to our campus. It will feature six residential suites equipped with private bathrooms and kitchens, community and family gathering spaces, a central entry hall and common facilities area, advanced communication technology, and a groundbreaking geothermal heating and cooling system. We are seeking LEED certification for this modern, highly energy-efficient building.

The new Residence at WPSD will complete the build-out of our 21-acre, 21-building campus, which has been decades in the making. It will provide a beautiful, safe, comfortable, and family-like environment for our residential students that will bolster their learning, facilitate after-class study, and improve educational outcomes. The building's modern technology will facilitate communication among students and between the students and their families. And, the wide range of energy efficiency features will reduce operating costs for the school, while cutting energy usage and reducing our carbon footprint.

On behalf of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and the many students we serve, I hope that you will find this brochure informative, and that you will choose to learn more about the Residence at WPSD. We invite your interest in and support of the one-year campaign to raise the funds needed to complete this important project.

Sincerely,



Donald E. Rhoten
Chief Executive Officer



The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Innovation and Service Since 1869

The story of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) begins in 1868 in a Pittsburgh church, which was operating a Mission School for children. One day, Henry Bell, a young African-American boy, arrived at the school. He was bright and active, but no one could communicate with him because he was deaf. The church pastor contacted William Drum, a deaf graduate of a Philadelphia school, and asked him to teach Henry Bell.

One year later, The Pittsburgh Day School for the Deaf opened as the first day school for the deaf in the United States with nine students and two teachers. By 1876, the number of students had grown to 29 and the School moved to Turtle Creek and opened a dorm for boarding students. By 1877, there were 51 students from 12 counties.

In October of 1884, the School and its 120 pupils moved to the present location in Edgewood Borough, east of the city of Pittsburgh. The original building burned to the ground in December of 1899, with no injuries to students or staff. The School continued in temporary housing until the campus was rebuilt and two years later an impressive, three-story building was completed. This building, listed as a historical landmark by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, remains in use and is one of 21 buildings on the 21-acre campus.

Today, WPSD, with four locations, is the largest comprehensive center for deaf education in Pennsylvania. It provides tuition-free services and instruction to more than 350 children from 54 counties across the Commonwealth.

Our family has been involved with WPSD since our daughter Maggie was 8 months old. They taught us a language to communicate with and a culture to embrace. They've given our daughter the support and tools that she needed to become a strong, intelligent, confident, proud, and successful young deaf woman. Maggie is studying at Rochester Institute for Technology now and the world is her oyster! This is due, in a huge part, to what she received from WPSD!

*– Lillian Donaldson,
WPSD Parent*

A Leader in Deaf Education

WPSD is uniquely qualified to provide for the educational needs of the population it serves and its highly trained faculty and staff have compiled an exemplary record of supporting positive learning outcomes and post-graduate success among this special needs population.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students are visual learners. It is easy for these young people to “tune out” traditional didactic teaching. Consequently, their learning environment must be predominantly visual in order to engage them, retain their interest, and enhance their educational outcomes.

WPSD prepared me for life on many different levels, but the biggest impact was being around other people who use ASL – knowing I wasn't the only one who was “different” in the world. This had an extremely positive impact on my self-esteem.

– Ryan Layton, Class of 1989



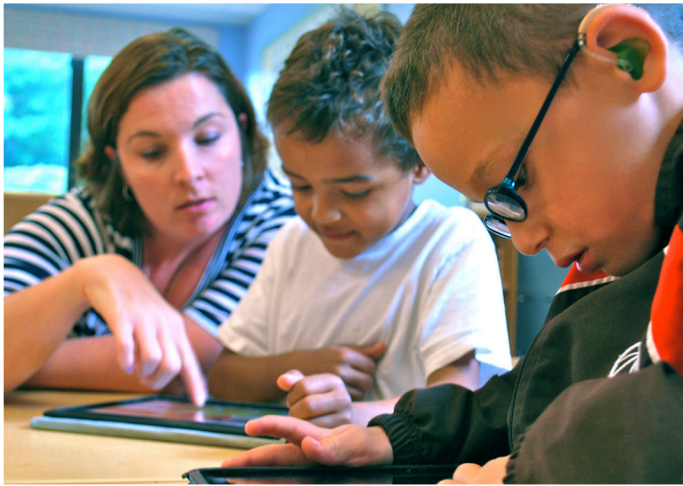
While technological advances have helped to level the playing field for these students, computers, Smartboards, and closed captioning technology alone are inadequate to the task. The interactive technology must be combined with educational and support services provided by specially trained faculty and staff in an integrated All-Inclusive Communication Environment (AICE). In this environment, where all modes of communication are offered and determined by the individual's needs, student achievement can be optimized.

WPSD offers a wide range of support services, including those listed below, to all enrolled students:

- Speech therapy
- Linguistic and sign language instruction
- Audiological services
- Psychological Counseling
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Visual support

Because these services and specialized facilities are absent or in short supply in most public and private schools, schools like the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf are the most reliable and effective means of educating and preparing deaf and hard-of-hearing students for fully inclusive, productive, and financially secure lives.





At WPSD, students' needs and corresponding services are identified through the Individual Education Plan (IEP). This planning process is conducted through an interactive team approach that includes input from parents, the student, the home school district, the WPSD teacher, support staff, and administration.

Throughout its storied history, WPSD has kept pace with the many changes that have occurred in education.

In 2003, to address the nation's increasing focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education, the School built a Math, Science, and Technology Center that remains one of the finest in the area.

Today, iPads, Internet access, Smart Boards, closed captioning, and document cameras are an everyday part of the educational environment. In 2006, the School renovated a building on the Pittsburgh campus for the Children's Center preschool program. The renovation included modular learning centers and upgrades for educational technology in support of the curriculum for the School's youngest students.

In 2006, WPSD built and equipped a new student and staff-operated television recording studio in which students gain practical experience in broadcasting. Students participating in the recording studio technology program have received 15 awards for programming.

Lionworks Printing & Graphics, opened in 2008, is a revenue-generating social enterprise venture is also a technical training facility and worksite for vocational students.

The next major milestone in the School's development occurred with the 2009 opening of The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children (SSDHHC). The Scranton School serves 60 students from

age 3 through the 8th grade. The 100-acre Scranton campus houses a dormitory for residential students and a 68,000 square foot education building. Services at The Scranton School include a high-quality academic and extracurricular program and specialized audiological, medical, residential, and psychological services.



The Scranton School Campus in Clarks Summit, PA



Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, stated, “Starting with the 2009-10 school year, the acclaimed Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf will begin providing education to deaf and hard-of-hearing students...” This announcement stressed that, for the first time in the 130-year history of deaf education in northeast Pennsylvania, a private, non-profit school would also serve hard-of-hearing students, including those with hearing aids and cochlear implants.

In 2010, the high school program transferred from Scranton to the Pittsburgh campus, connecting students with WPSD’s broad range of specialized academic and support services and extensive campus. The critical mass of students in the high school, with its homogenous groupings and more diverse course offerings and electives, is better able meet the needs students in grades 9-12.

WPSD has compiled an exemplary record of preparing graduates for full participation in postsecondary education, in the world of work, and in the broader community. Significant features and accomplishments include:

- Pennsylvania State Accreditation for the High School Program
- Accreditation by the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)
- Student/faculty ratio of 6:1
- 45% of WPSD’s faculty and staff hold post-graduate degrees with specialized training and experience
- Advanced educational technology and equipment
- WPSD students have received membership in the National Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society
- The Broadcast Production Class has won 15 awards in regional competitions against other private and public schools
- During the past 10 years, WPSD doubled the reading scores for its graduates
- 99 out of 140 WPSD graduates from 2007-2013 (71%) had plans to enroll in post-secondary education and training programs

WPSD helped me transition from high school to college at Gallaudet University by encouraging independence and living skills such as budgeting. I have many wonderful memories made with friends and staff during all 16 years of school at WPSD.

– Timothy Putt, Class of 2005

Addressing the Need

Non-specialized public and private schools are rarely efficient learning environments for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. In these schools, relying on interpreters in mainstream or inclusive programs, students still miss much of the communication that takes place among classmates. Students may not even learn the names of their classmates because not all teachers have the skills for including and communicating with deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Classroom acoustics may cause added difficulty for hard-of-hearing learners and the children may easily become “lost” in a classroom relying on auditory instruction. Participating in the total learning environment at WPSD can change a family forever by opening up the world of possibilities up to their children.

Students using cochlear implants and/or hearing aids have widely varying audiological needs and cognition issues. WPSD’s educational program addresses the full range of communication options – American Sign Language, sign-supported English, and spoken English. The School’s admission policy does not discriminate for or against students in any auditory category. With its roughly 6:1 student-to-teacher ratio and advanced classroom technology, including sound-filled classrooms with identical sound in all locations of the room and acoustically treated floors, walls, and ceilings, WPSD faculty and staff can successfully communicate with students at all auditory levels.



Of the School’s 170-member student body, 31% have cochlear implants, 53% use hearing aids, and 16% are unaided.

Moreover, at WPSD a certified audiologist is on-site during the school day to ensure immediate response to student needs, including a loaner program for implants and hearing aids, and a full supply of parts on-hand for these devices. In a traditional school setting, with an average class size of 35 and no specialized acoustical technology,

surface noise and distractions from other students can be considerable, and teachers cannot provide the level of individualized instruction and attention that prevails at WPSD. Moreover, in these schools, a student who experiences a problem with his or her implant or hearing aid can wait days to see an audiologist, and even longer for repairs to be effected.

Many of WPSD’s students, are mainstreamed in their home school districts or with other local outside schools, with on-site support provided by WPSD staff. For example, nine WPSD students attend East Catholic School in nearby Forest Hills; 13 students attend the Forbes Road Career and Technology Center

“We began to look for a good school for the deaf, first through the Internet and then by talking to deaf friends. WPSD was the first school we visited and I was impressed with the facilities and the staff. But it was the overall philosophy that students are expected to learn and reach their full potential that impressed me the most. We knew it was the place our children needed.”

*– Beth Carr,
WPSD Parent (of three students)*

in Monroeville (including non-traditional learners, such as the senior girl who is studying Automotive Technology; another senior student at Forbes Road holds a part-time outside job while he pursues his vocational studies); and other students are taking classes in Plum Borough, South Butler County and Pittsburgh Public school districts.

The Residential Program Is Key To Student And School Success. Families taking advantage of WPSD's residential program make the difficult decision to sacrifice time with their children in order to ensure that they receive the best in education, socialization, and care. As one parent said, "How can I not send him here? This is exactly the education he needs."

Residential life has been a proud tradition for much of WPSD's history. Today, 40% of the students enrolled at WPSD use the residence facilities and that number continues to grow. Students come from every corner of Pennsylvania, with one-third from eastern parts of the Commonwealth.

Providing a high-quality residential experience is vital to the well-being of students and the continued growth of the School as it enrolls students from throughout the Commonwealth and beyond. For those families, their children's needs beyond the classroom are of paramount importance. Parents must be secure in the knowledge that



Having grown up on the WPSD campus, I have seen how vital the dorm is to our residential students and their parents. For the students, this is their home away from home. My father began working at the School as a houseparent, then progressed to Dean of Boys, and later, Dean of Students. The majority of his work (and personal) life was centered around the residential program. From what I have witnessed over the years, the residential staff members have always made it their mission to create a family-like, safe atmosphere for their students. Parents entrust the School with their children. The staff members at WPSD embrace this responsibility conscientiously every day.

*– Sarah Bartlebaugh,
WPSD employee*

their children have every opportunity to learn, thrive, and be safe. Extracurricular programs and social activities that engage and enhance the students' social development – all within an environment that meets the need for belonging, friendship, and respect – are key to each student's success and fulfillment at WPSD. Knowledgeable and caring staff members must be available around the clock to supervise and counsel students.

The recent establishment of The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children will generate increased enrollment from middle school students matriculating from Scranton to the high school on

the main campus. WPSD's Choices for Children early intervention program has also increased demand for enrollment. Consequently, the need for residential space is growing.

Current students will benefit as soon as the doors open, but the largest group to benefit will be students who are not yet at WPSD. The new Residence will serve deaf and hard-of-hearing students from preschool through high school for many years to come. With more space to accommodate more students, WPSD's ability to fulfill its mission to provide academic excellence for deaf and hard-of-hearing students will grow exponentially.



The New Residence: Solutions through Design

In 2011, in keeping with the School's commitment to full inclusion and involvement, students, families, and staff participated in the design process for the new residence building. Planning revealed a shared desire for community spaces, a home-like environment, privacy and quiet spaces, and state-of-the-art communications and academic technology. These elements are all feasible in a building that will have a smaller footprint than the original. As part of its Master Plan, the School is decreasing its inefficient and wasted square footage and will more efficiently utilize space campus-wide.

The old dorm was constructed as classrooms in the 1960's and then renovated for dormitory use. It was costly to operate and maintain. Several renovations had been performed over the years to enhance the appearance and utility of the outdated space, but much of the internal infrastructure could not be altered. Air conditioning could not be installed due to the block and steel internal structure. The casement windows restricted airflow in warm months. The only feasible fix was to demolish the old building and create a new home for the residential students. The students moved into temporary housing and the existing dorm was demolished in the spring of 2013 to prepare the site for construction.

The new 30,000 square-foot, two-story brick and stone residence will occupy a two-acre site and will incorporate a storage basement level. Purpose-built for residential life, the building will contain six living suites, three per level, with boys and girls on separate floors. There will be private bathrooms for all, and each suite will hold a living room and a kitchen for communal meals.

I was a WPSD dormitory resident for nearly 15 years. I always looked forward to coming back to campus on Sundays and hanging out with my friends, socializing, participating in clubs, playing sports, working in the snack bar, etc. I am very excited to see the completion of the new residence. This is a home away from home for many of our students. It will make a difference in their lives.

– Todd Behanna, WPSD Class of 1988 and WPSD employee



Benefits For Students & Families

The New Residence will foster a comforting, welcoming, family-like atmosphere—so important to growing children, many of whom have never been away from home. A two-story entrance and gathering area with a rustic central fireplace will be the heart of the home. This great room will accommodate student and group meetings, encouraging collaboration in academics and socialization, and will provide to parents and families a warm welcome each time they visit.

I am really looking forward to the new Residence. It will be more like a home than a dorm. All of our friends will become family.

– Samantha Gibbs, Class of 2016

Projecting how to adequately support future communication and computer equipment needs is just as important as accommodating today's technology. The new residence will feature a state-of-the-art wireless information technology network, that will be used not only for academics, but will also provide a direct connection between students and their loved ones.

To attain LEED certification, an innovative geo-thermal heating and cooling system, Energy Star appliances, double-paned windows, and enhanced insulation will be incorporated into the design of building, which will operate with increased energy-efficiency and a smaller carbon footprint.

In addition to providing an attractive and functional new residential experience for students, the new facility will raise awareness of the School and its services among families with deaf or hard-of-hearing children throughout the Commonwealth and nearby states. By broadening WPSD's name recognition locally and elsewhere, this project will enable the School to reach new families that could benefit from the specialized education and support services available here.

Benefits For the Community

The administration, Board of Trustees, and alumni of WPSD recognize the value of the School as an educational and economic asset to Edgewood and contiguous municipalities. The School takes seriously its role as a leader in community development and recognizes the importance of stability and vitality in these communities.

Local residents refer to WPSD as “The Jewel of Edgewood.” Currently, the School has 177 employees (168 full-time and 9 part-time) and five contract staff members. An anchor institution of, and the largest employer in the immediate community, WPSD’s educational and business operations provide economic stimulus to the region, adding to its workforce and tax base.

WPSD is an active member of the Western Pennsylvania community; in 2006, the School founded the Commitment to the Community Initiative to enhance collaboration among the officials and residents of the communities of Edgewood, Swissvale, Wilkinsburg, and Forest Hills; to support economic development and beautification projects; and to discuss shared concerns, goals, and successes. In each year, membership in this unique forum has grown in number and reputation.

Several times each year WPSD hosts events such as the annual Eastern Schools for the Deaf Athletic Association tournament, the annual spring May Day, and the fall Homecoming Weekend. These and other events open the campus to large groups of students, families, and alumni who often stay to tour the region. Out-of-town visitors stay in local hotels and patronize local businesses and restaurants during these special event weekends.

WPSD’s level of community involvement sets a standard for other institutions, civic organizations and its students to follow. As Mayor of Edgewood Borough, I know I can count on the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf to be an active participant and leader in our borough.

*– J. Edward Cook, Mayor,
Edgewood Borough*



Project Details

The cost of constructing, equipping, and furnishing the new Residence at WPSD is \$9.3 million, of which WPSD has been able to dedicate \$5.3 million from its endowment funds. The funding goal of *A Place to Learn and Live: The Residence at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf* is to raise the remaining \$4 million in funding needed for the project by December 31, 2014.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION LINE ITEM BUDGET

<u>WPSD Residence Demolition</u>	<u>\$139,270</u>
<u>Excavation and Site Preparation</u>	<u>\$831,665</u>
<u>Construction</u>	<u>\$6,759,990</u>
<u>Equipment</u>	<u>\$312,810</u>
<u>Furnishing</u>	<u>\$28,000</u>
<u>Landscaping and Paving</u>	<u>\$42,500</u>
<u>Soft Costs</u>	<u>\$1,203,918</u>
Project Budget Total	\$9,318,153

CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

<u>Site Preparation Begun</u>	<u>March 2013</u>
<u>Site Preparation Completed</u>	<u>June 2013</u>
<u>Foundation Work Begun</u>	<u>July 2013</u>
<u>Foundation Work Completed</u>	<u>October 2013</u>
<u>Paving, Landscaping, and Site Restoration Begins -</u>	<u>May 2014</u>
<u>Paving, Landscaping, and Site Restoration Complete -</u>	<u>July 2014</u>
<u>Building Construction Completion Date (Projected)</u>	<u>August 8, 2014</u>
<u>Equipment and Furnishings Installed</u>	<u>August 14, 2014</u>
<u>Project Occupancy Date</u>	<u>September 2014</u>

Summary

For several years, the members of WPSD's Board of Trustees have recognized the need for a new and well-equipped residence for our students. While our residential students have always thrived and received the best of care on our campus, the old dorm was beginning to deteriorate and it lacked some of the important features and modern comforts that students and their families want and need. Consequently, our board, in concert with WPSD's CEO, unanimously decided to construct and equip the finest facility achievable, and we are pleased that we will soon be able to welcome residential students to a more comfortable, welcoming, energy-efficient, and functional building in which to reside while availing themselves of the best education available. We are convinced that the new Residence at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf will help our students to achieve even greater outcomes in the future.

– Christopher McCrady, President, Board of Trustees

All children deserve the opportunity to realize their full potential. The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, an innovative, diverse, and compassionate Pre-K-12 grade educational program, is tuition-free and has been on the leading edge of children's education for nearly 150 years. To better serve the needs of 21st century children and their families, the School has committed to building a new Residence for its students. This state-of-the-art facility will further the School's mission of providing high quality education and social growth to deaf and hard-of-hearing children from throughout Pennsylvania and beyond.

WPSD's new residence will enhance the living environment of up to 88 students, support their educational achievement and social and affective growth, facilitate and bolster their academic achievement, ensure their safety and happiness during their years at the School, and build a greater sense of pride and personal investment in the entire student body, as well as the faculty and staff.

In addition, the new Residence will:

1. Build enrollment at the School, attracting to the Greater Pittsburgh area students from all regions of the State
2. Enhance the institution's reputation and long-term viability in the educational marketplace through providing increased enrollment and revenue.
3. Elevate the visibility and recognition of WPSD as an educational leader and significant employer in its region.
4. Increase the diversity of the student body.
5. Build a more robust, active, and stimulating campus for the betterment of all.

Invitation to Participate.

The future path of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is clear—like the many students it educates and cares for, the School must keep striving to reach its full potential, no matter how challenging the economic environment or how difficult the journey ahead. By continuing to do what it has done best for nearly 150 years – educate, innovate, and advocate—WPSD will continue to thrive.

The Board of Trustees and administration of WPSD invite you to learn more about this worthwhile and important project in any of the following ways:

- Visit the School for a campus familiarization tour.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution to A Place to Learn and Live:
The Residence at WPSD.
- Join the Fundraising Cabinet to help complete the fundraising for the project.
- Help raise awareness of the School and its Residence campaign.



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SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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