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Groups urge kill school board deal

Proposal called 'devastating to minority contractors'

by Christian Morrow
Courier Staff Writer



NICHOLS

Reacting to a Courier article about the Pittsburgh School District's plans to eliminate minority- and women-owned businesses from its pool of suppliers by giving all contracts in excess of \$25,000 to union firms, two major Black business

groups are calling for the deal to be killed.

The African American Chamber of Commerce and the Pittsburgh Regional Minority Purchasing Council are asking members to show up at tonight's school board meeting en masse to prevent a scheduled vote on the plan.

"The board has got to vote this down,"

said purchasing council President and CEO Alexander "Nick" Nichols. "The minority business community is outraged that the district would replace their minority and women contractors with union-only firms. That's outrageous."

Nichols noted the district spent \$36

SEE SCHOOL BOARD A4



WILLIAMS

pool, the only city pool in the serving about 100 kids this for additional children.

uation is not unique to Pitts-

ming, he said. "Our membership rates are affordable and give access to all the facilities, and that's for a whole year. I think it's the best deal in town—and our pool never closes."

Groups oppose school board's union deal

CONTINUED FROM A1
million on construction last year. Of those, 99 percent were above the proposed \$25,000 threshold.

In exchange for getting all the school district's contracts, the proposed Project Labor Agreement asks the Pittsburgh Regional Building and Construction Trades Council to make an unspecified number of apprenticeship slots

available to district students. The week after the Courier exposed the deal, Nichols began having his members email School Board Director Randall Taylor to express their opposition to the agreement and his support for the agreement.

"The unions are promising pie in the sky. They've said this before and it's never happened," he said. "And there is nothing to stop the cancellation of current minority con-

tracts. So, Randall Taylor supports the promise of future opportunities that this contract eliminates."

Under the agreement, non-union firms winning contracts in excess of the \$25,000 threshold would have to replace 90 percent of their workforce with union labor.

Chamber President Doris Carson Williams said though she is generally supportive of unions, this agreement "would be devastating to minority

contractors."

"This should require a public hearing. I know I'd like to comment," she said. "There's nothing to stop this from being applied to professional services and I think our members should be free to bid and choose their own employees. That place should be packed with people. This deal should be stopped."

(The Pittsburgh School Board meets at 7:30 p.m. tonight at 341 S. Bellefield Av-

Kingsley's annual membership rates are \$150 for a family, \$100 for adults and \$50 for senior and youth memberships. Kingsley also offers summer camp and Freedom School programs for youths.

(For information about Schenley Heights programs call 412-621-3341. or Kingsley summer programs call 412-661-8751.)

(Send comments to cmorrow@new-pittsburghcourier.com.)

Foreclosure also strands some tenants

