



Falk Lab School

[www.falkschool.pitt.edu](http://www.falkschool.pitt.edu)

# Aim

- History and structure of Falk Lab School
- Organization of resources
  - People
  - Time
  - Space
  - Money



- 430 students in grades Kindergarten – 8 (5- to 14-years old)
- Tuition-based, independent school on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Founded in 1931 by the Falk family

**Progressive. Experimental. Demonstration.**

# Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School Is Born

- **Falk School Charter Agreement**

- This agreement, made this 22nd day of July AD., 1930, by and between Mr. Leon Falk, Jr., Marjorie Falk Levy, citizens of the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the City of Chicago, Illinois, respectively, (hereinafter called the Donors), parties of the first part, and the University of Pittsburgh, a corporation of the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (hereinafter called the University), party of the second part.

- WHEREAS, Mr. Leon Falk, Jr., and Mrs. Marjorie Falk Levy are interested in the promotion of progressive methods of teaching children of nursery, kindergarten, and elementary school grades and, also, in affording the students of the University who expect to follow teaching as a vocation the opportunity to observe these methods of teaching in an elementary school controlled by the University, and

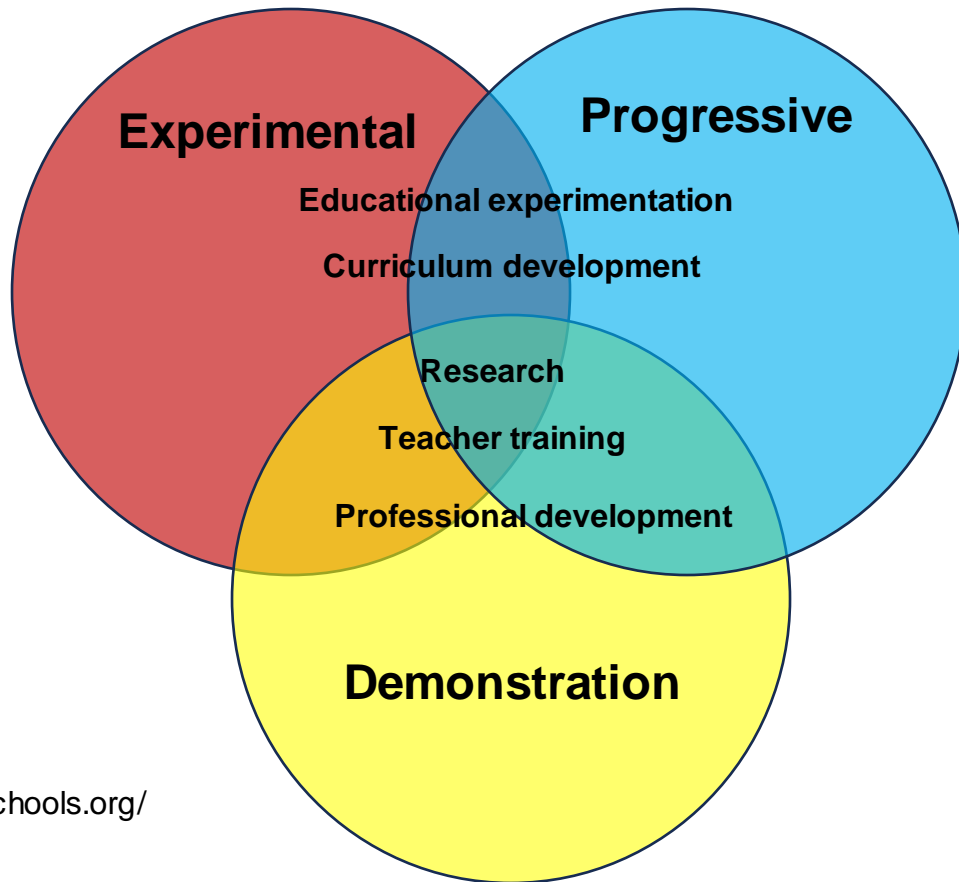
- WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh wishes to establish and maintain a progressive experimental and demonstration elementary school as part of the activity as an educational institution,

- NOW, in consideration of the covenants by each of the parties to be carried out and performed, as hereinafter set out, it is hereby mutually agreed as follows:



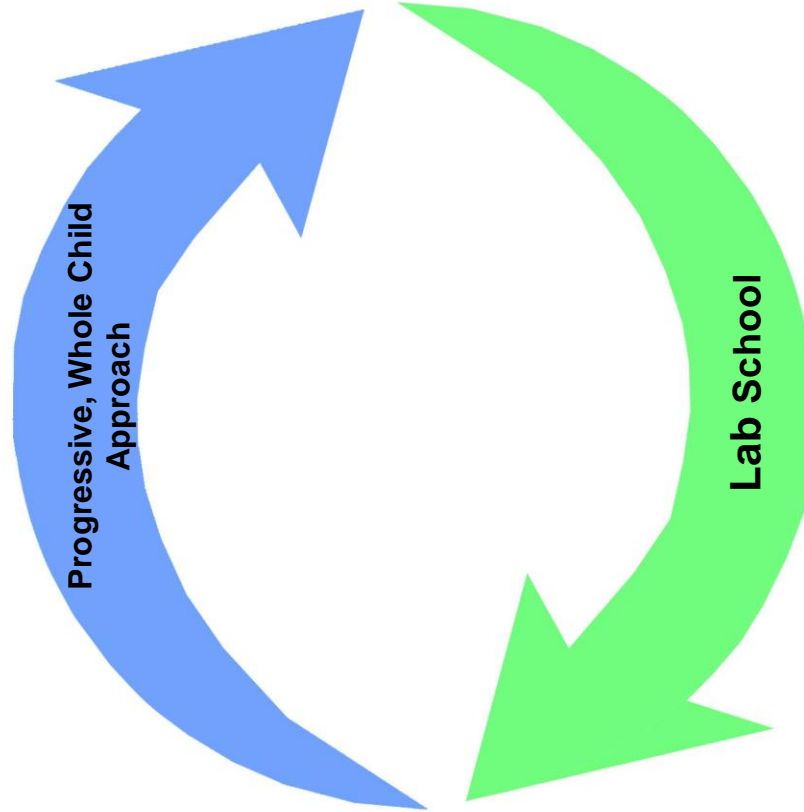
—Post-Gazette Photo.  
Marjorie Falk Levy is shown laying the cornerstone of

# Lab School Mission



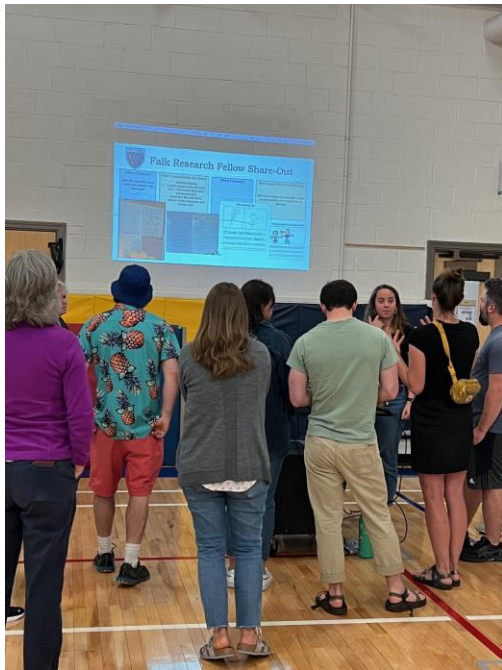
## How is a lab school different than other schools?

Whole child approach: We attend to the social, emotional, mental, physical, and academic development of children. This is evident in our curricula, our use of space, our budget, and our human resources. Progressive educational principles inform how we do this work.



Lab School components: Innovation, reflection and study result in the ability to address the whole child.

# Research Fellows Program



# Innovative Curricula



Yoga and  
Mindfulness

WonderLab



# Experimentation, Inquiry and Research

## Types of Research at Falk

Tier 1	Research authored, designed, and/or led by Falk Faculty (or in direct collaboration with Falk Faculty). This tier requires a Falk Teacher as a PI or co-PI and would fall into the natural sequence of the curricular framework. If the research question is not part of a unit of study, investigators should meet with Curricular Chairs at the inception of the project's methodology to ensure minimal disruption to the typical classroom routines and curriculum.
Tier 2	Research that is in direct alignment with our interests, values, and philosophy of education and child development. The study is proposed by an outside researcher who looks to develop and sustain relationships with Falk Faculty/School. Falk Faculty is consulted as a protocol is developed and piloted, and results and conclusions are shared.
Tier 3	Research from outside Falk that is proposed to and vetted by the Research Committee to be conducted at Falk with the teacher's permission (and consent of participating students). This work needs to be in direct alignment, or not in direct conflict, with the faculty's planned progression of curriculum.
Tier 4	Research that meets our standards for best practices with children but is not sponsored or conducted by the school during regular school hours or as part of any classroom activity. These protocols must have IRB approval to be considered.

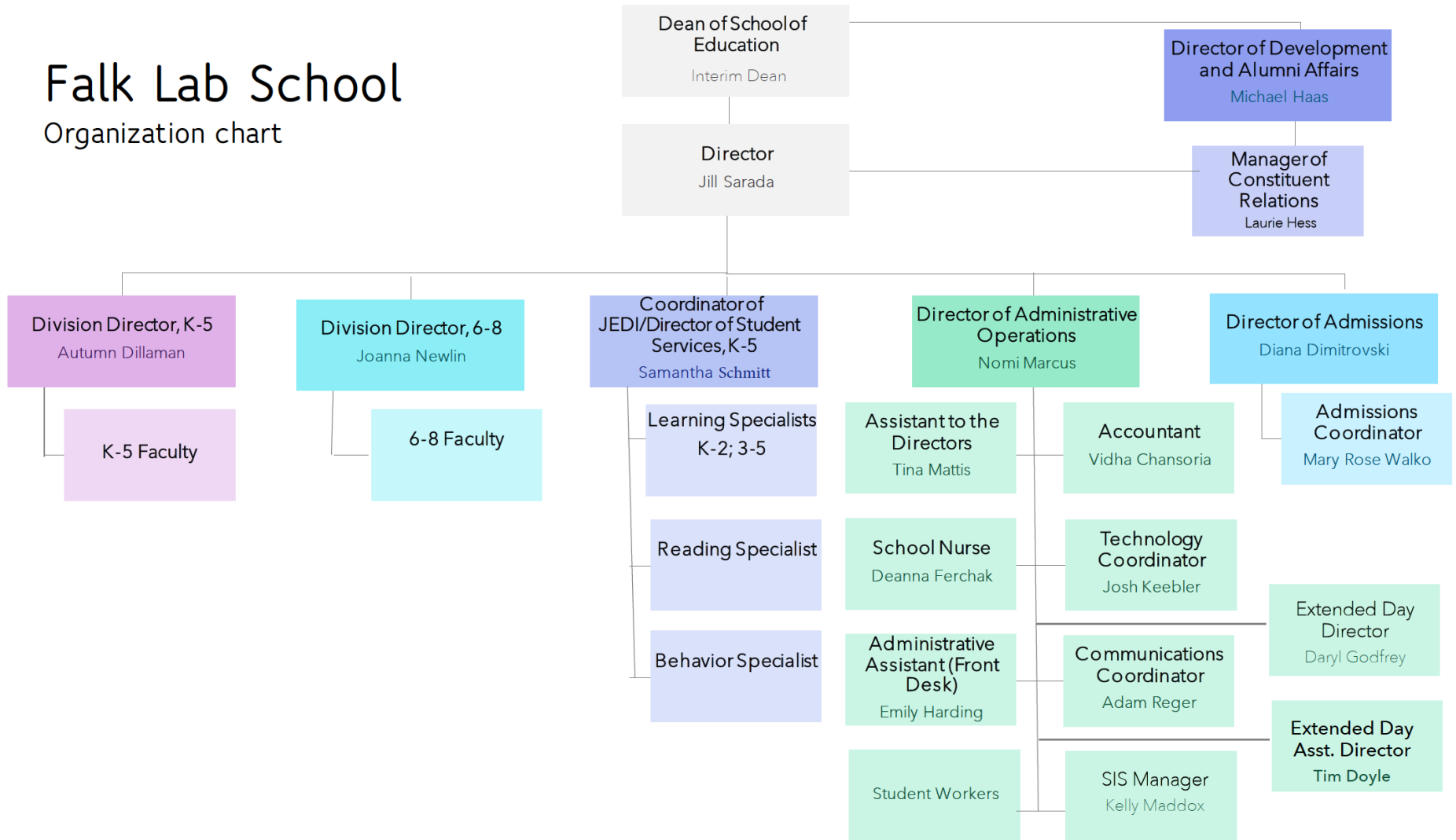




People

# Falk Lab School

## Organization chart



## Recruiting and Investing



# Four Levels of School-Driven Research @ Falk Lab School



# Four Tiers of Research @ Falk Lab School



Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4

<b>Description</b>	Learning about research (team/school meetings, general knowledge)	Support individual teachers with practice-based research questions	Research Fellows: Participate in ongoing PLC for school year; make connections with outside researchers	Those interested in publishing/presenting outside of Falk School
<b>Goals:</b>	Create a culture of teaching & learning centered on research/deep dives	Deepen knowledge of particular problems/inquiries of practice	Work as a collective to research practice and strengthen knowledge of research	Share learning outside of the immediate Falk community
<b>Who:</b>	Part of whole school culture <i>(Everyone)</i>	Subset of culture <i>(8-10 people)</i>	Smaller subset <i>(3-4 people)</i>	Smallest subset <i>(1-2 people, but not limited)</i>

# ■ Research Fellowship Program

- This is a vision for a process and professional development opportunity that will help us deeply integrate research for Falk teachers in sustainable ways. This opportunity would be offered to all faculty, but would not be a requirement on the part of any individual. Rather, there would be a cohort each academic year.
- The goals of this fellowship would be to:
- Develop a PLC (professional learning community) centered on praxis-based research
- Support individual teachers in deeply engaging in a question of practice throughout a school year
- Help teachers link their questions and research projects to broader fields of knowledge and educational research

# Research Fellowship Program

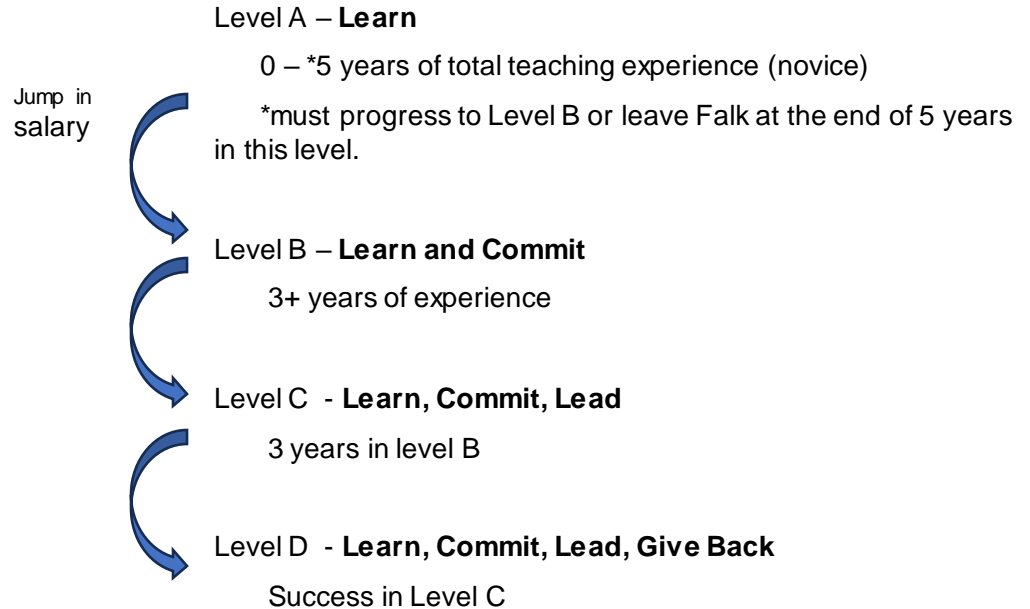
## Details of Participation

- 1 day kick-off in the summer (Before regular school prep – August 26, 2022)
- Monthly meetings as part of a research-practice learning cohort – most likely afterschool
- Regular (~monthly) meetings with the Research Coordinator to support ongoing research process
- Sustained engagement in classroom-based research throughout the year in the teacher's own classroom/context

## Supports for Participants

- Coverage one day a month for engagement in research activities outside typical responsibilities
- Funding to support research opportunities
- Ability to choose & attend a conference related to the research topic in order to deepen understanding

# Promotional Structure that Elevates Teacher Professionalism







Time

## Daily – Teachers

- 80 minutes of common planning time with grade alike teachers
- 30-minute break



## Daily – Students

### Kindergarten – 5th grade

Time	A	B	C	D	E	F
8:00-8:30	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:30-9:00	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
9:00-10:00	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic
10:00-10:20	Snack/Break	Snack/Break	Snack/Break	Snack/Break	Snack/Break	Snack/Break
10:20-11:00	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic	Academic
11:00-11:20	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
11:20-11:50	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
11:50-12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:20-1:30	Walk/Academic	Walk/Academic	Walk/Academic	Walk/Academic	Walk/Academic	Walk/Academic
1:30-2:50 (Prep Time)	Wonderlab/Library	Art	PE/Music	Wonderlab/Library	Falk Woods/Yoga	PE/Music
3:00-3:15	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

### Middle School

	A/D	B/E	C/F
8:00-8:30	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:30-10:00	Phys Ed	Chorus or Theater	Wonder Lab
	Social Justice	Band or General Music	
10:05-10:35	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
10:40-11:30	Language Arts	World History	Math
11:35-12:25	Science	Spanish	Information Literacy
12:25-12:45	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:50-1:25	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-2:20	Math	Language Arts	World History
2:25-3:15	Information Literacy	Science	Spanish
3:15-3:25	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
3:25 pm	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

# Yearly



End of August to Beginning of June - 170-173 school days for students



Teaching faculty have 10-month contracts – August 15 to June 15



Professional development days prior to start with students



Weekly faculty meetings, Mondays from 4:00 to 5:00



Once a month early dismissal for extended faculty meeting time



Space

Spaces for people,  
spaces for  
students, spaces  
that support our  
mission and  
wishes



# Authentic Learning Opportunities





**Working  
collaboratively**







Wish #8:

... to have  
reverence for the  
natural world.

Outdoors





... to  
experience  
the  
satisfaction  
of working  
with their  
hands.





Money

# THE LINE BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND FALK

SECOND: The University agrees to erect a suitable building and to establish and maintain a progressive experimental and demonstration school devoted to the teaching of subject matter appropriate for the nursery, kindergarten and elementary grades.



## Falk School Charter Agreement

This agreement, made this 22nd day of July A.D., 1930, by and between Mr. Leon Falk, Jr., Marjorie Falk Levy, citizens of the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the City of Chicago, Illinois, respectively, (hereinafter called the Donors), parties of the first part, and the University of Pittsburgh, a corporation of the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (hereinafter called the University), party of the second part.

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WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh wishes to establish and maintain a progressive experimental and demonstration elementary school as part of the activity as an educational institution,

NOW, in consideration of the covenants by each of the parties to be carried out and performed, as hereinafter set out, it is hereby mutually agreed as follows:

FIRST: Mr. Leon Falk, Jr., and Mrs. Marjorie Falk Levy agree to give the University the sum of \$125,000 for the erection of an elementary school building and to contribute \$10,000 each year to the maintenance of the proposed school until such times as they shall have capitalized this annual gift by a donation of \$200,000 for the endowment of the school. These obligations shall be incumbent upon the heirs and legal successors of the donors until they have been fulfilled.

SECOND: The University agrees to erect a suitable building and to establish and maintain a progressive experimental and demonstration school devoted to the teaching of subject matter appropriate for the nursery, kindergarten and elementary grades.

THIRD: The University agrees that the school shall be designated and known as the Fanny Edal Falk Elementary School, in memory of the donors' mother, and the fact that it has been made possible by the gift of the donors shall be indicated by a suitable tablet placed in the building.

FOURTH: The University agrees to set aside for use of the Fanny Edal Falk Elementary School and for its development a portion of a certain plot of land acquired from the Schenley Farms Company and described as follows: to wit:  
(Here follows a description of the plot of ground)  
Beginning at a point on the line of property of the Univer-

the center line is two hundred nine and seventy-two hundredths (209.72) feet south forty-seven degrees, ten minutes and forty-four seconds west (S.47° 10'44"W.) of the City monument on this center line of Allequippa Street; and from the aforesaid point on the curb line of the aforesaid upper section of University Drive thence three hundred twenty-three and twelve hundredths (323.12) feet south forty-two degrees, forty-nine minutes and sixteen seconds east (S.42° 49'16"E.) to a point on the northwesterly curb of another section of the University Drive (herein referred to as the lower section of University Drive); thence along the northwesterly curb of the aforesaid lower section of University Drive one hundred eighty-eight and fifty-one hundredths (188.51) feet south three degrees, forty-five minutes and forty-four seconds west (S.3° 45' 44"W.) thence continuing along the aforesaid curb eighty-six and ten hundredths (86.10) feet south twenty-five degrees, five minutes and forty-four seconds west (S.26° 5'44" W.) to another point on the northwesterly curb of the aforesaid lower section of University Drive; thence two hundred sixty-seven and fifth-three hundredths (267.53) feet north seventy degrees, thirty-six minutes and fifty-six seconds west (N.70° 36' 56"W.) to a point on the southeasterly curb of the aforesaid upper section of University Drive; thence in a northeasterly direction along the southeasterly curb of the aforesaid upper section of University Drive to the point of beginning and which enclosure comprises approximately two and fourteen hundredths (2.14) acres.

FIFTH: The University shall try to make arrangements with the Board of Directors of the Community School of the City of Pittsburgh that the said school may be absorbed by the proposed Fanny Edal Falk Elementary School in accord with an agreement which shall provide:

(a) that three members of the present Board of Directors of the Community School and chosen by the Board shall be elected members of the Fanny Edal Falk Elementary School Board as hereinafter provided for under Article IX.

(b) that as many as practicable of the members of the present teaching staff of the Community School shall be appointed as members of the teaching staff of the Fanny Edal Falk Elementary School, subject to the University's usual rules and regulations affecting appointments to its faculty.

(c) that the Community School agrees to assign and convey to the University all rights and privileges of their charter; also all assets such as it may possess as of property, including all cash, equipment, and supplies; also, all records of accounts which shall show that the University is assuming no obligations in the way of indebtedness incurred by reason of the past operation of the Community School.

- [www.falkschool.pitt.edu](http://www.falkschool.pitt.edu)
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THANK YOU