



School Works Meeting Report: *Effective Teaching*

from the meeting on February 14th, 2011

Upcoming Meetings:

Behavior and Drop-Out Support (2 locations)

Tues., March 8th- 5:30pm-8pm: Oliver HS library

Thurs., March 10th- 5:30pm-8pm: Carrick HS library

Courses and College/Career Prep (2 locations)

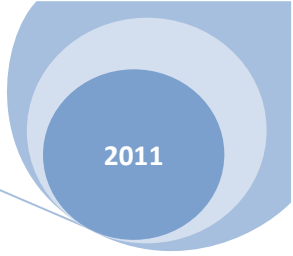
Tues., March 29th- 5:30pm-8pm: Oliver HS library

Thurs., March 31st- 5:30pm-8pm: Carrick HS library

Cosponsors:

Black Political Empowerment Project
Communities in Schools
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers
Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network
Pittsburgh Promise
Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project
Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh





Meeting Report Outline

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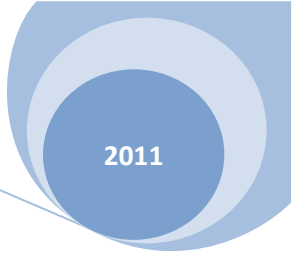
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Background on School Works

School Works is community action research aimed to assist the public in understanding what resources and opportunities exist for students in Pittsburgh Public Schools. The goal is to develop a plan for community action to ensure we have an equitable school system in Pittsburgh. The initial phase of A+ Schools' School Works program was to train volunteers to conduct interviews with each principal from Pittsburgh Public middle, high, 6-12 and charter high schools. Based on last year's responses and the community's priorities, this year we interviewed the same schools again and expanded the project to include interviews with counselors in addition to principals.

Volunteers interviewed 20 principals and 18 counselors from PPS schools and the principal and counselor in 2 charter schools. School staff responded to 64 yes/no or short answer questions asked by volunteers, and A+ Schools staff compiled and analyzed the results with assistance from a consultant. The question topics covered the following categories: teaching, behavior management, drop-out prevention, student courses and college/career preparation. Principals' and counselors' responses will be report publicly in increments during the months of February and March. The schools and volunteers are described below.

Pittsburgh Public Schools Interviewed:

School Level

- Grades 9-12: 8
 - Graduation Rate Categories
 - < 69.8%: 3
 - 70-84.9%: 2
 - > 85%: 1
- Grades 6-12: 5
- Grades 6-8: 7

Magnet School

- Full magnet schools: 7
- Non-magnet schools: 13

Public Charter Schools

- 2 Charter High Schools – however, they were not group with Pittsburgh Public Schools for any of the comparisons

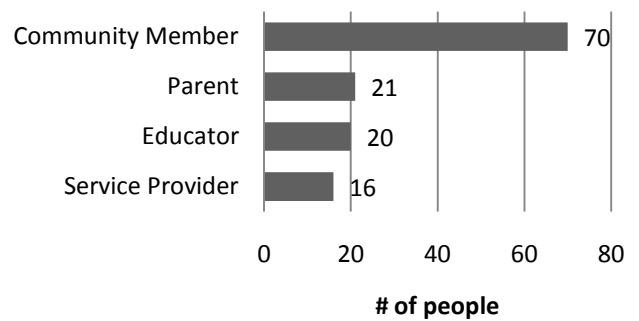
Volunteer Fast Facts:

- 138 were trained
- 42 interviews were conducted by a team of 3 or 4
- 113 volunteered

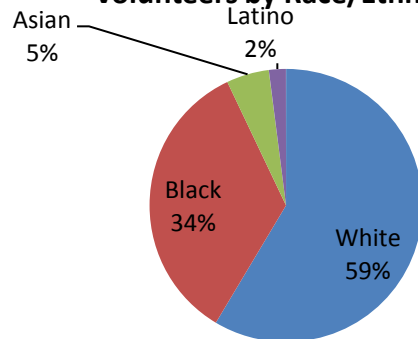
Volunteer Demographics

How do volunteers identify?

(some fall into more than one category)



Volunteers by Race/Ethnicity



School Works 2009-10

Last year, extensive research was done by the Learning Policy Center at the University of Pittsburgh on behalf of A+ Schools regarding the system in which teachers work in Pittsburgh. The study entitled Tools, Rules and Schools, which focused on elevating the quality of teaching in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, examined teacher distribution and movement as well as the staffing rules and working conditions influencing these trends. The result was an endorsement of the district's Empowering Effective Teachers Plan and encouragement to both the Pittsburgh Public Schools and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, which collaborated on the plan, for focusing on the following items:

- Changing the hiring process to give both candidates and schools more time, information and freedom of choice;
- Establishing a core team of highly effective and committed teachers at the most vulnerable schools;
- Addressing specific needs at vulnerable schools to provide their teachers with the learning environment and resources they need to deliver quality instruction.

The School Works results substantiated all of what we learned in Tools, Rules and Schools, as well as many components of the Empowering Effective Teachers Plan. We presented all of this work in our first School Works community discussion with over 80 participants. Together, these results built a compelling case for changing the teaching system in Pittsburgh, and participants supported A+ Schools' recommendations to the District to ensure that the most vulnerable schools had access to effective teachers.

Community members shared that their main concerns around the District's EET Plan were overall implementation and teacher support, and they called for monitoring the Plan's progress as well as hearing from teachers about their needs.

School Works 2009-10 Findings

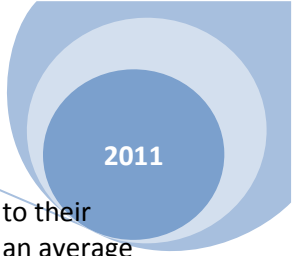
In the 2010-2011 School Works interviews, the questions asked by volunteers regarding teaching were geared towards developing an understanding of what, if any, progress has been made. Below are School Works responses that relate to teaching; responses related to other topics will be addressed in March.

What Progress Have We Seen in the Results of School Works 2011?

Hiring Process:

- 90% of PPS principals completed their hiring of teaching staff for the first day of school for teachers, compared to 81% last year.
- For the 2010-2011 school year, the schools we interviewed had an average of 6.3 new teachers per school, compared to 4.4 last year.
- Schools had a range of 0% to 45% of their staff new to their building. Vacancies were not related to magnet status, school type, school population or graduation rate.

Improving the Hiring Process: The schools we interviewed had more new teachers this year compared to last year, the majority of teachers were from within PPS, less principals reported challenges in hiring staff, high schools had particular challenges and almost all principals were able to have all of their teaching staff in place for the first day of school for teachers.



Out of 126 teachers new to their schools in 2010-2011:

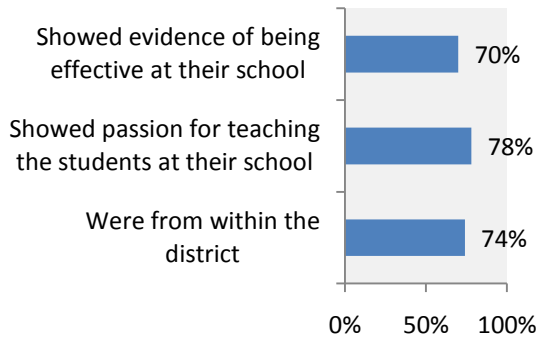


Figure 1

- Of the total of 126 new teachers to their school this year, principals reported that an average of 74% were from within the district. (Figure 1)
 - Hiring challenges were reported by 16%-42% of principals this year compared to 33%-57% last year.
 - HR being too slow to process paperwork was reported by 36% fewer principals.
 - Not having enough quality candidates was reported by 19% fewer principals.
 - Not having enough candidates to fill positions was reported by 15% fewer principals, but more often in High Schools

- Not being informed early enough by staff who were leaving was reported by 9% more principals, but more often in High Schools with the lowest graduation rates

Core Teams of Effective Teachers:

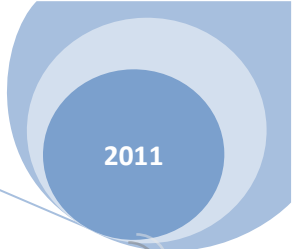
- Of the total of 126 new teachers to their school this year (Figure 1), principals reported that an average of 78% showed a passion for teaching students at their school and 70% were able to provide evidence that they'd be effective.

Developing a Core Team of Effective Teachers in Every School: Teachers new to buildings are most likely to be from within PPS and were thought to be passionate and effective, all schools have begun a system to identify and develop effective teachers through RISE, high schools have teachers working in teams to support small groups of students through the Promise Readiness Corps and Charter schools use specific strategies to develop teachers in their schools that they feel are also highly effective

- All 20 schools interviewed have begun implementing RISE- Research-based Inclusive System of Evaluation- to identify and develop effective teachers. Of all the schools interviewed, 9 were in their second year of implementation and 11 were in their first year. Of those principals in their second year, 8/9 said they felt that RISE was highly effective in helping them identify and develop effective teachers.
- All 9-12 schools have Promise Readiness Corps teams in place in schools. These teams consist of 6-8 teachers and a counselor who focus on the needs of approximately 100 9th

graders. Schools have as many teams as they need to cover all 9th graders in the school and they will remain with students through their 10th grade year.

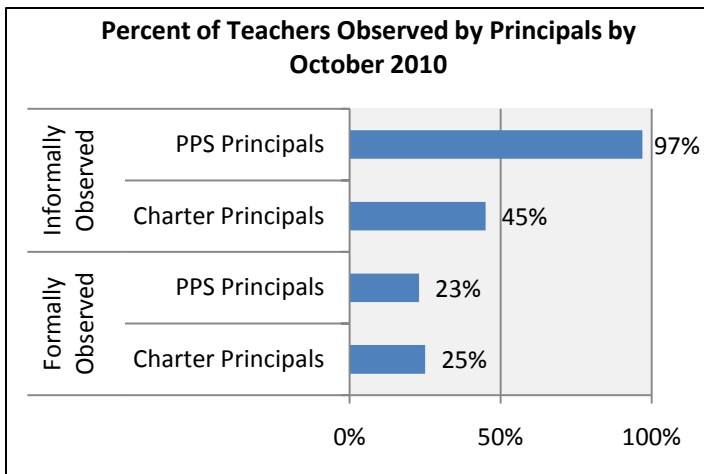
- Principals reported the average highest percentage of core teachers absent in a single day was 18% and the lowest was 0%. No principals listed absenteeism as a barrier to providing effective teaching to every student.
- Charters reported they were able to identify and develop highly effective teachers to a very high degree, with the most effective strategies being curricular coaching, involving an academic team to support staff with walk-throughs and data analysis, featuring teachers at professional development, and having highly qualified administrators to observe and evaluate staff.



Structures that Support Teaching:

- Schools with school wide behavior management plans in place were more likely to report that their teachers were more effective in classroom management
- By the time of the interview, principals reported they had informally observed an average of 97% of their staff for an average of 21.6 minutes. (Figure 2)
- Principals in 6-8s reported observing their staff for significantly longer than principals in 9-12s. Principals in 6-8s reported spending an average of 30 minutes observing each teacher compared to the average 15.9 minutes reported by 9-12 principals. Charter school principals reported they had informally observing an average of 45% of their teachers for an average of 20 minutes.
- By the time of the interview, principals reported they had formally observed an average of 23% of the staff for an average of 47 minutes. (Figure 2) Charter school principals reported they had formally observed an average of 25% of their teachers for an average of 35 minutes.

Providing the Structures that Support Teaching: Having behavior management plans, observing teachers and establishing school based practices and structures contribute to effective teaching in schools.



- The majority of principals (12/20) thought that the school practices or structures were the top contributors to effective teaching in their building. They included having a well structured discipline system, being flexible, fostering collaboration, establishing high and shared expectations and having small class sizes and enough space in the building. (Figure 3)
- 6/20 PPS principals reported that the physical resources and/or the overall environment of their school were among the highest contributors to effective teaching. (Figure 3)

Figure 2

- 5/20 PPS principals reported that the students were among the top contributors that enabled effective teaching most and 4/20 reported teacher skills, ability, or dedication or the level of support from central office. 3/20 PPS principals reported that support from school administrators or parents were at the top. (Figure 3)
- In April and May of 2010, The New Teacher Center conducted an anonymous confidential survey to PPS teachers. More than 2,150 teachers (85% of all staff) completed the survey and shared their views on the teaching and learning conditions in the schools where they teach. Among many other findings, the top 3 conditions Pittsburgh teachers

What Principals Think Contributes the Most to Effective Teaching in Their Building

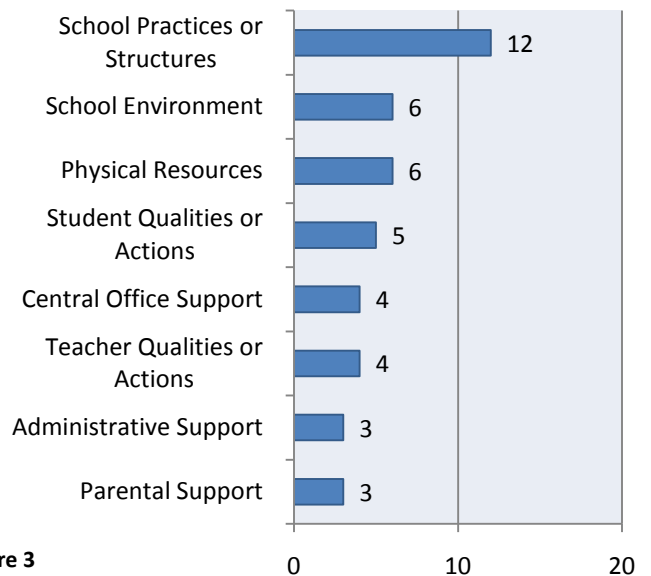


Figure 3

perceived as being most important to continue teaching at their school was school leadership, managing student conduct and instructional practices and support. More information can be found at: <http://teachingconditions.org/Pittsburgh>.

What Did Principals Cite as The Barriers to Providing Effective Teaching to Every Student?

- 9/20 principals reported specific teacher behaviors such as not adopting new practices, not building relationships with students, not implementing the curriculum or having low expectations. (Figure 4)
- 6/20 principals reported practices or structures such as not having enough planning time and class sizes being too big. (Figure 4)
- 4/20 principals reported district control of curriculum and hiring, while 3/20 principals reported people such as students, student services, parents or the Union were barriers. (Figure 4)
- Only 2/20 principals felt as though they had no barriers at all. (Figure 4)

What Additional Supports Would Principals Like to Provide?

- 15/20 principals said they wanted to provide teachers with more support in their classroom including differentiated instruction, classroom management, classroom-based professional development and writing support across the curriculum. (Figure 5)
- 9/20 principals said they wanted to provide teachers with more staff who could serve as mentors, reduce class sizes, provide mental health or counseling to students, curriculum coaching, and provide special-ed support. (Figure 5)
- 8/20 principals said they wanted to provide teachers with more time, such as non-instructional time, time for cooperative planning and more ownership over their professional learning time. (Figure 5)
- 5/20 principals wanted the district to provide more resources such as technology and classroom materials or general support or rewards for teachers. (Figure 5)

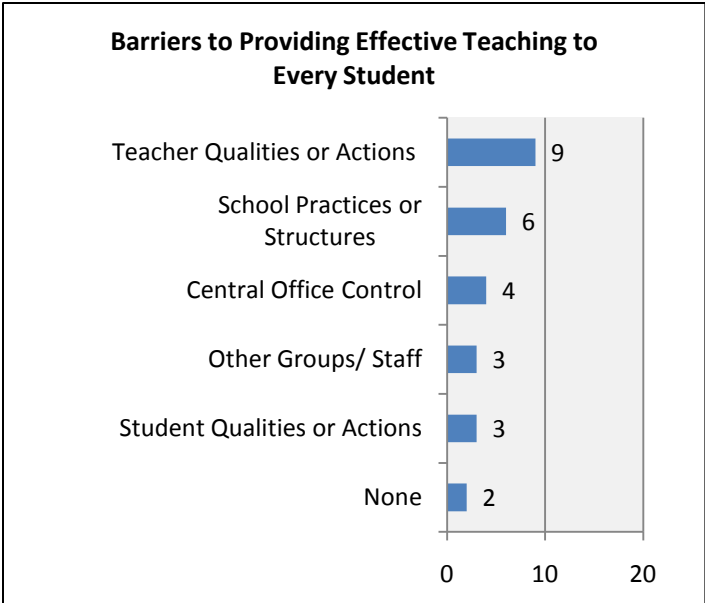


Figure 4

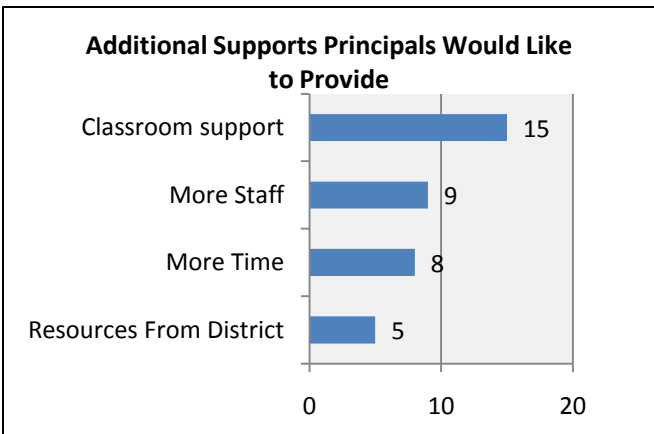
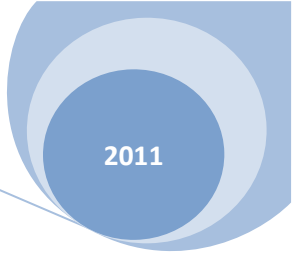


Figure 5

In Summary

We know how important effective teaching is to advancing student achievement. We also know that effective teaching involves more than teachers alone. If we expect high performance from students, we must expect it from teachers. If we hope to see effective teaching, we must assume our community responsibility to ensure that teachers have what they need to be successful. We know what it takes to see results. We can see progress in the areas of selecting and hiring people who are passionate and effective, putting together teams and plans to identify, develop and support effective teaching, developing teaching teams in schools, and providing instructional support in the classroom, time to plan and collaborate and having a well structured discipline system. A+ is committed to monitoring our schools and supporting their staff to ensure that all schools have what they need show results.



School Works 2010-11 Community Response

During the community meeting in February 2011, A+ Schools emphasized how important effective teaching is to advancing student achievement but also acknowledged that effective teaching involves more than teachers alone: it also involves assuming our community responsibility to ensure that teachers have what they need to be successful. A+ Schools shared the results of principals’ responses, which indicated that progress had been made in the following areas: selecting and hiring teachers who are passionate and effective, putting together teams and plans to identify, develop and support effective teaching, developing teaching teams in schools, providing instructional support in the classroom and time to plan and collaborate, and having a well structured discipline system.

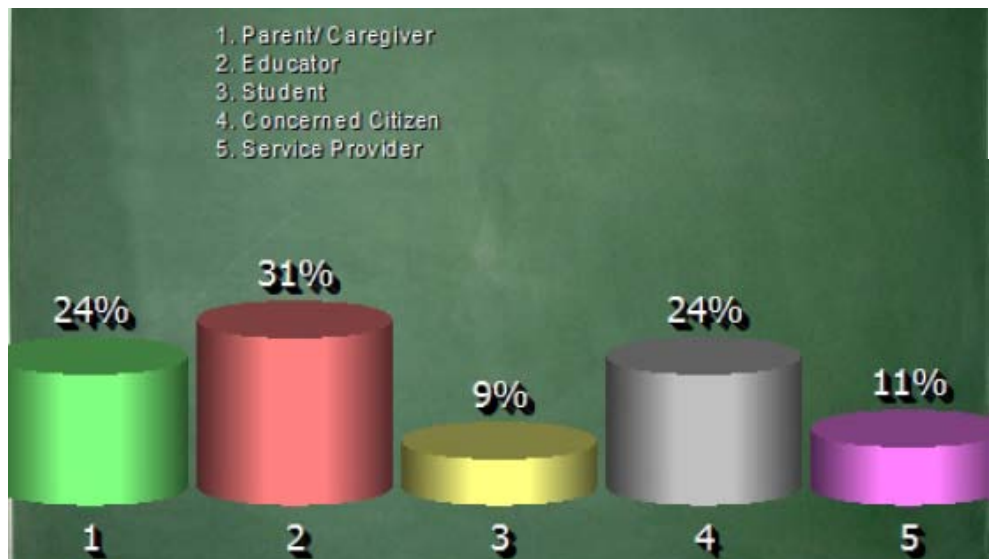
The Discussion

Because this year’s School Works interviews focused on monitoring the Empowering Effective Teachers Plan, we hoped to build people’s understanding of the EET Plan and to make it more accessible to meeting participants. We asked participants to read an overview of the plan, discuss what encouraged them most about it and share what questions they still had regarding the plan. They then heard from Sam Franklin of Pittsburgh Public Schools, Nina Esposito of the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, and Ms. Toni Kendrick, Principal of Allegheny 6-8, who shared more information about the EET and RISE and responded to questions. With an eye toward continuing to monitor the EET Plan through School Works next year, we asked community members to share with us what components of RISE and what practices at schools they believed were most important to effectively teaching students. Finally, because the community had prioritized learning more from teachers after last year’s results were released, A+ Schools asked participants to share what they most wanted to hear from teachers and what actions they would take to follow up.

Polling Results

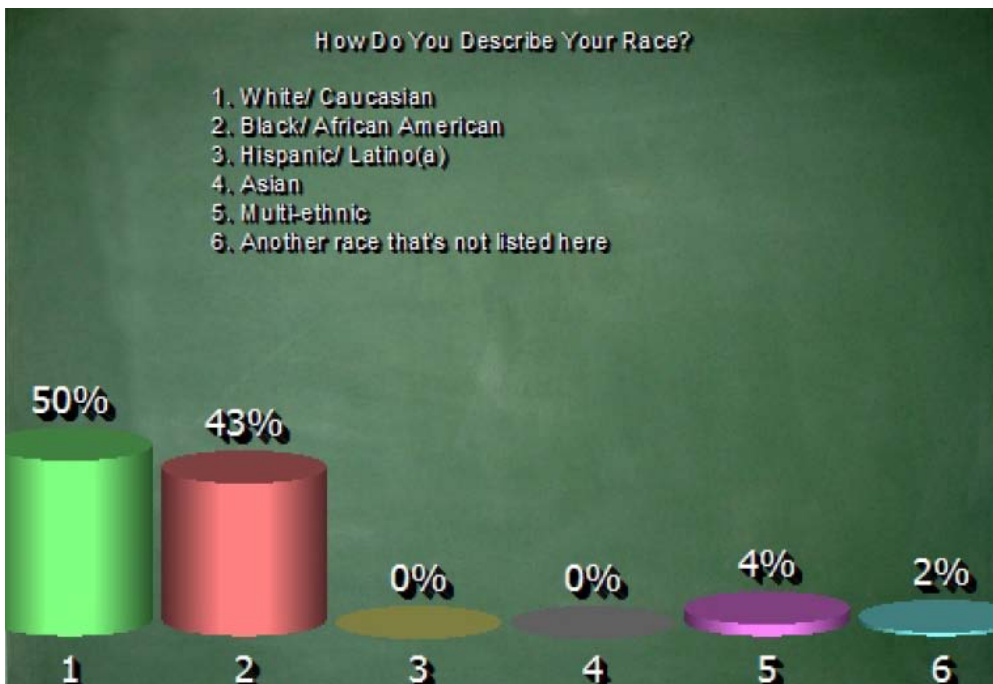
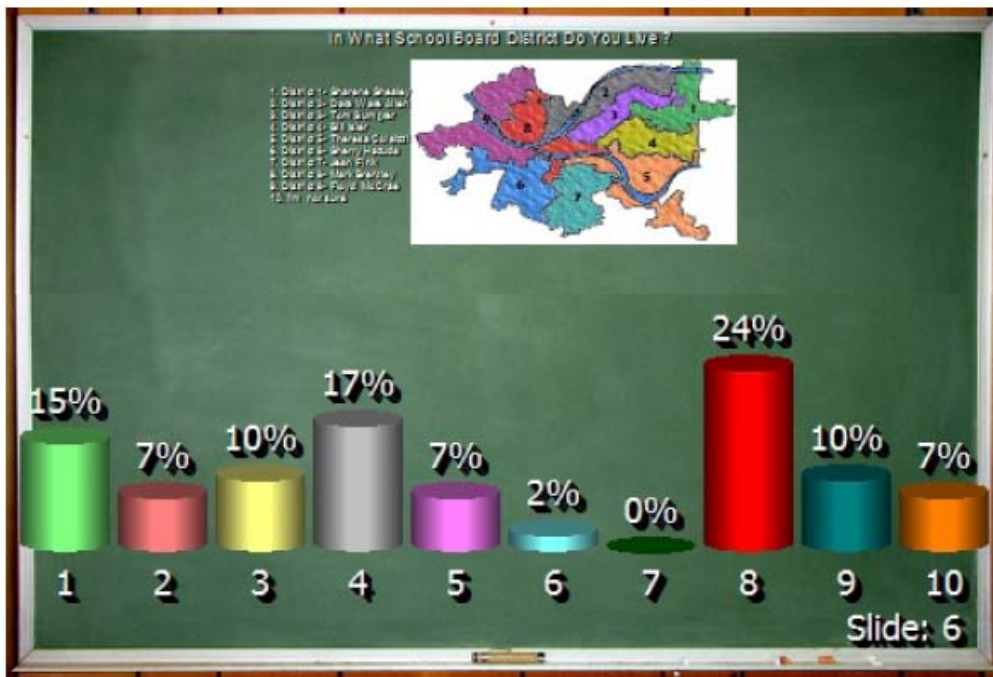
Who was there -

Approximately 50 people attended to discuss the importance of effective teaching to the success of students in Pittsburgh Public Schools. As seen in the following images, audience members reflected a diverse group of parents/caregivers, educators, students, concerned citizens, and service providers from all parts of the city who represented 9 of the 10 School Board Districts in Pittsburgh.



School Works Results: Teaching

2011

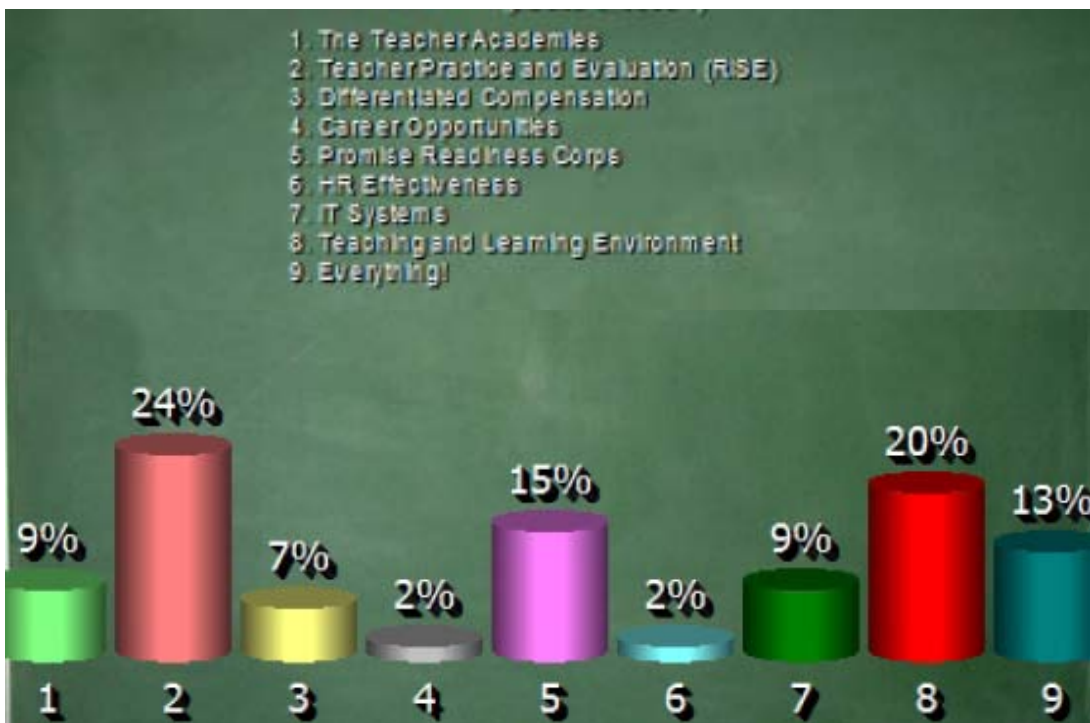


How did people express their opinions - Similarly to the previous year's community meetings, small table conversations were held and afterwards, hand-held polling devices were used as a way for each person at the meeting to express him/herself as an individual in response to the discussion questions. The community was asked to vote for either a single response or to rank their top 3 priorities for the question. For the priority questions, a person's first choice was worth 10 points, the second was worth 9 and the third was worth 8. The numbers in some of the following graphs therefore represent the average weight the item received from the group. The higher the number, the more important that item was to the community members who voted.

What did community members say about the EET and RISE – below are participants’ responses when asked which initiatives of the EET they still had questions about and which components of the RISE Domains they believed were most important to effectively educating students.

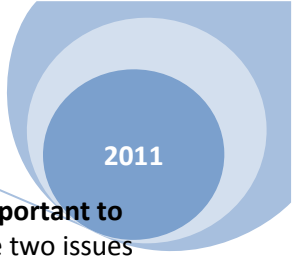
Question: Which part of the EET Plan do you have the most questions about?

→ *The majority wanted to know more about RISE, the Teaching and Learning Environment, and PRC*



Questions: Within Domain (1, 2, 3, or 4), which specific component of the RISE rubric do you think is most important to effectively educating students?

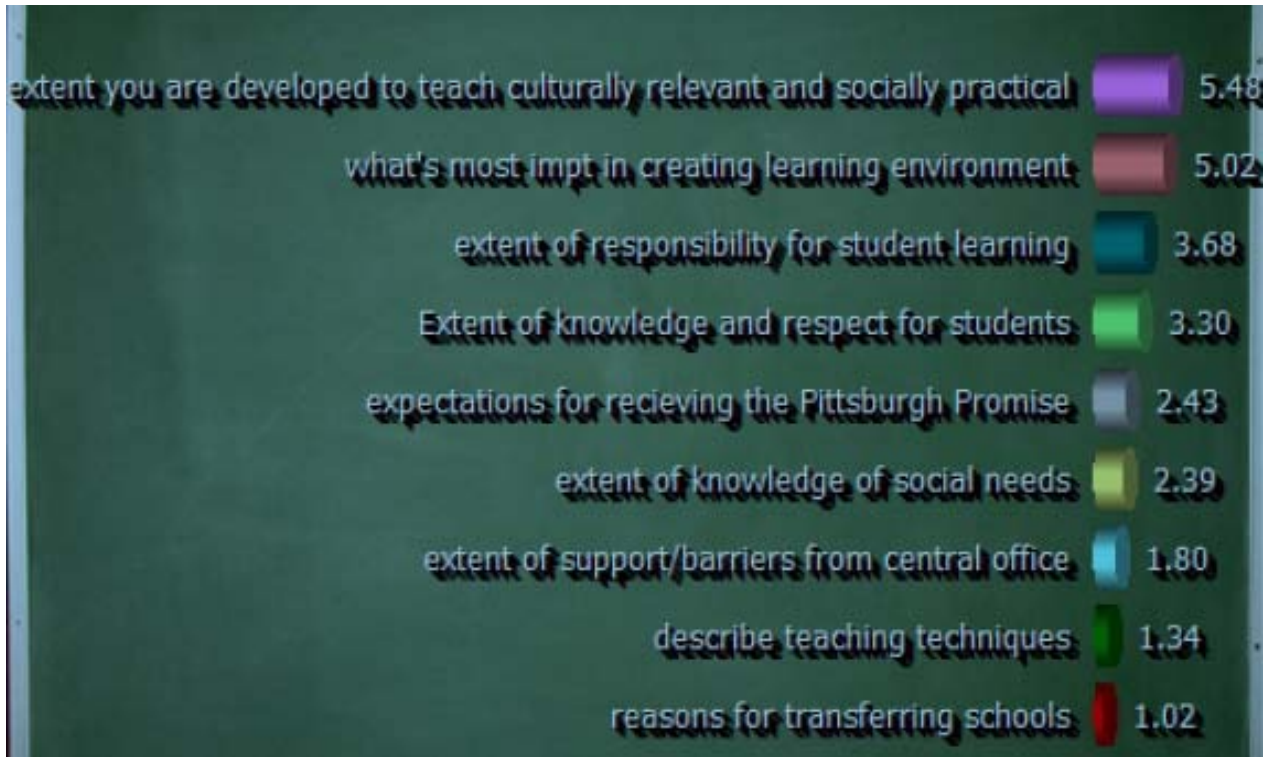
- *Within Domain 1 of RISE (Planning and Preparation), the majority believed the following practices to be most important to effectively educating students: designing coherent instruction, knowledge of content and teaching practices, or knowledge of students.*
- *Within Domain 2 of RISE (The Classroom Environment), the vast majority believed that establishing a culture for learning was most important to effectively educating students*
- *Within Domain 3 of RISE (Teaching and Learning), the majority believed that engaging students in learning was most important to effectively educating students*
- *Within Domain 4 of RISE (Professional Responsibilities), the greatest number believed that reflecting on teaching and learning was most important to effectively educating students*



What did community members' want to learn from teachers and what did they think was most important to ensuring effective teaching in every classroom – each table held a facilitated discussion about these two issues and submitted their top response to us for each issue. We then created a separate poll for each issue with all of the responses as options and asked participants to vote on their top three choices.

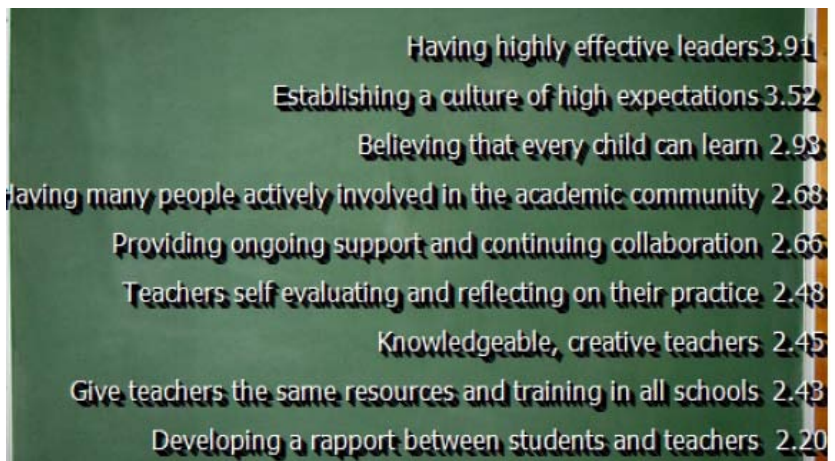
Question: What 3 things do you most want to hear from teachers?

→ The areas that attendees most wanted to hear about from teachers were the extent to which they are developed to teach in culturally relevant and socially practical ways, as well as what is most important in creating a learning environment



Question: What 3 things do you believe are most important to ensuring effective teaching in every classroom?

→ Meeting attendees believed that most important to effective teaching are having highly effective leaders, establishing a culture of high expectations, and believing that every child can learn

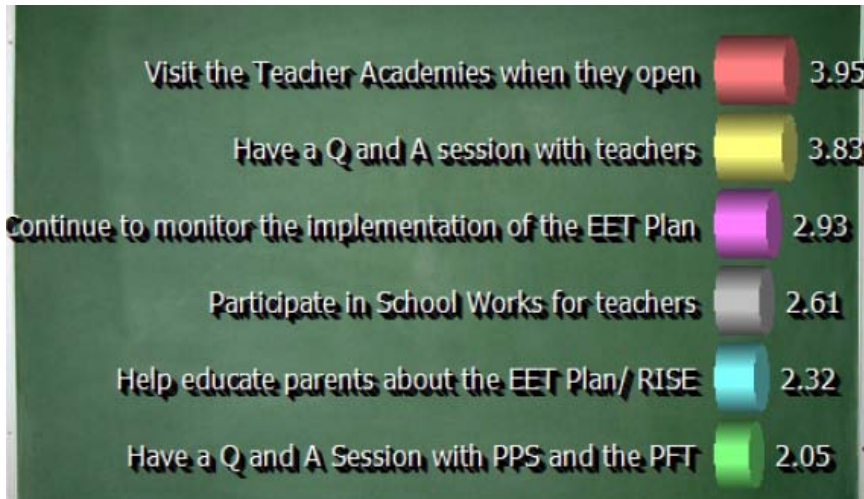


There was less agreement among participants on this question than the previous one, meaning participants felt that more of the options were very important.

What did community members want to do as next steps - We asked everyone in the room in which two actions they would like to participate as a follow up to the meeting. Different groups prioritized different choices, which told us that it could be useful to explore any of the below options as follow up steps.

Question: Which 2 things would you like to do as a follow up to this conversation?

→ *Visiting the Teacher Academies when they open, having a Q and A session with teachers, and continuing to monitor the implementation of the EET Plan were the top ways that meeting attendees wanted to follow up to the evening's conversation about effective teaching*



Summary - What Are A+ Schools' Next Steps?

A+ Schools is committed to monitoring our schools and supporting their staff to ensure that all schools have what they need show results. Since community members asked us to prioritize monitoring the EET plan last year, we have seen progress in multiple areas, including selecting and hiring teachers who are passionate and effective, putting together teams and plans to identify, develop and support effective teaching, and developing teaching teams in schools. A+ Schools will continue to check in on the progress of EET through the upcoming year's School Works and incorporate the priorities expressed by meeting participants into the interviews we hope to conduct with teachers. We will also explore the feasibility of implementing follow-up actions to support community members in gaining knowledge and a sense of accountability for helping Pittsburgh Public Schools ensure effective teaching in every classroom.



Empowering Effective Teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools: Overview

341 South Bellefield Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3516
www.empoweringpittsburghteachers.net | www.pps.k12.pa.us

A Bold Plan for Success

Pittsburgh Public Schools is choosing to lead the transformation of public education. In 2006, we embraced an ambitious reform agenda, reinforced by the belief that all children can learn at high levels. *Excellence for All* is designed to dramatically improve the performance of our students, staff and schools. Over the past several years, the District has improved student achievement by putting into place a series of strategies to achieve our ambitious goals, including:

- A new core curriculum to provide consistent and rigorous content in all of our schools;
- Ongoing professional development to strengthen our ability to deliver quality instruction;
- Improved school leadership through a comprehensive accountability system for principals;
- Alignment of our District with available resources; and
- Introduction of The Pittsburgh Promise®, a scholarship program to help students plan, prepare and pay for education beyond high school (www.pittsburghpromise.org).

Excellent Teachers Matter Most: Investing in Our Teachers is Our Focus

In Pittsburgh, we know that good teachers make the largest difference in student achievement. For many years, District teachers were evaluated annually with a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating that provided little opportunity for professional growth. In spring 2009 leaders from the District and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) collaborated with teachers to develop a new system of teacher evaluation, the Research-based Inclusive System of Evaluation (RISE).

Building upon the spirit of collaboration that guided the design of RISE, the District and the PFT co-authored the Empowering Effective Teachers plan. This plan, funded by a highly competitive \$40 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, transforms the way the District hires, supports, compensates and evaluates teachers.

The goals set forth in the Empowering Effective Teachers plan are now codified in a landmark five-year collective bargaining agreement, approved on June 14, 2010 in a 2 to 1 vote, and centered around a common mission of what matters most - advancing the teaching profession in a way that is aligned with improving student achievement.

With these pieces in place, including an additional \$50 million in state and federal grants, we will demonstrate that with the right conditions of support, effective teachers can move more than 80% of students to achievement levels that lead to college success or workforce certification.

Leading the Way Collaboratively

A national conversation is underway, focusing on teacher effectiveness, and emphasizing education as the key to our country's future. Rather than playing catch-up, Pittsburgh Public Schools is on the cutting edge of transforming public education. And we have chosen to do this work collaboratively, with our teachers, and our Union. Though it is sometimes difficult, the District and PFT are demonstrating that school districts and teacher unions can work together to achieve meaningful reform.



Implementing New Strategies to Improve Teaching and Learning

To achieve our vision – that 80% of students earn a post-secondary degree or workforce certification – we must ensure we have the right teachers, in the right places with the right supports. We will:

- Increase the number of effective teachers;
- Increase the exposure of high needs students to effective teachers; and
- Ensure all teachers work in learning environments that support their ability to be effective.

With the ongoing support and engagement of District and PFT leaders, administrators and teachers, we are implementing several initiatives to change the experience of teaching and learning in the District.

- **Teacher Practice and Evaluation:** An evaluation system that defines and measures effective teaching through multiple measures, including application of these measures to professional growth and promotional opportunities, performance-based compensation and more. Includes implementation of RISE, development of a Value-Added Measure and other measures of effective teaching.
- **Positive Teaching and Learning Environment:** An improved teaching and learning environment in every school that establishes and reinforces positive student behaviors, a culture of college-readiness, and creates safe and supportive environments for teachers and students.
- **Career Opportunities:** More flexible career choices for teachers with greater earning and promotional opportunities linked to evidence of effective teaching and student growth. Includes six new promotional Career Ladders roles, and access to several new types of performance-based compensation at the District, school, cohort, and individual level.
- **Promise-Readiness Corps:** Teams of effective teachers responsible for supporting students transitioning into high school and ensuring they arrive at 11th grade prepared to take full advantage of The Pittsburgh Promise®. Includes teaming, advising, and looping.
- **Human Resources Effectiveness:** A more effective District Human Resources Department that ensures greater efficiency in attracting, retaining and supporting effective teachers while enhancing services to our schools.
- **The Teacher Academy:** Housed in two high-need schools serving students in grades pre-Kindergarten through 12, The Teacher Academy model enables new and experienced teachers to grow and continuously improve their practice. Also includes Residency (www.teacheracademyresidency.org), Induction and Immersion programmatic elements.
- **IT Systems:** An information technology system of data tools reflecting the user needs of teachers and enhancing capabilities, decisions and practices of educators.

Research-based Inclusive System of Evaluation (RISE)
Domain and Component Overview

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reflects the many factors teachers consider when designing a lesson.</p> <p><u>Components:</u></p> <p>1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy</p> <p>1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students</p> <p>1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes</p> <p>1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources</p> <p>1e: Designing Coherent Instruction</p> <p>1f: Designing Ongoing Formative Assessments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Consists of the physical and emotional environment for learning</p> <p><u>Components:</u></p> <p>2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</p> <p>2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning</p> <p>2c: Managing Classroom Procedures</p> <p>2d: Managing Student Behavior</p> <p>2e: Organizing Physical Space</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Is made up of the “behind the scenes” tasks that teachers do as professionals</p> <p><u>Components:</u></p> <p>4a: Reflecting on Teaching and Student Learning</p> <p>4b: System for Managing Student Data</p> <p>4c: Communicating with Families</p> <p>4d: Participating in a Professional Community</p> <p>4e: Growing and Developing Professionally</p> <p>4f: Showing Professionalism</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Domain 3: Teaching and Learning</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contains the elements involved in the act of teaching</p> <p><u>Components:</u></p> <p>3a: Communicating with Students</p> <p>3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</p> <p>3c: Engaging Students in Learning</p> <p>3d: Using Assessment to Inform Instruction</p> <p>3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</p> <p>3f: Assessment Results and Student Learning</p> <p>3g: Implementing Lessons Equitably</p>