

Definitions and sources of information

All information is from the **2007-08 school** year unless noted.

Abbreviations:

PPS: Pittsburgh Public Schools

RTI: Real Time Information, a PPS Web-based student information management system (A+ Schools was granted read-only access to RTI under a confidentiality agreement with PPS)

PDE: Pennsylvania Department of Education

School name, address, neighborhood, phone number, principal/administrator

Definition: The current school name and principal, acting principal, or administrator as of 9/08 is listed. “PreK” in a school name means the school serves children from ages three to five in an early childhood program.

Sources: PPS Web site and staff lists (9/08) and individual charter schools.

School description

Definition: “Magnet school” refers to a whole-school magnet (all students must apply to attend). “School with a magnet program” refers to a school with both magnet and neighborhood (feeder pattern) components.

Source: PPS Web site.

Number of teachers

Definition: Total number of classroom teachers in the school.

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

Enrollment

Definition: Total number of students enrolled in the school.

Sources: RTI (1/08) and individual charter schools.

Student race/ethnicity

Definition: PPS defines a student’s race as black, white, or “other,” based on parents’ identification. “Other” consists of American-Indian, Asian, and Hispanic students. Charter schools provided similar information. Percents may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Sources: RTI and individual charter schools.

Student stability rate

Definition: A measure of student stability during one academic year. The student stability rate represents the total number of students enrolled for the entire year divided by the total enrollment for the year. (A high number indicates a stable student population.)

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

Principal stability

Definition: Number of different principals/administrators in a school from the 2004-05 school year to the 2007-08 school year. Schools with “n/a” either opened after 2004-05 or were declared “new” in 2006-07 (see the Introduction for more information).

Sources: PPS’ “Public School Choices,” “Magnet Program Registration Guide,” staff lists, and Web site; individual charter schools.

Student daily attendance

Definition: Percentages were determined by dividing average daily student attendance by enrollment.

Sources: RTI and individual charter schools.

Teacher daily attendance

Definition: Percentages were determined by dividing average daily teacher attendance by the number of teachers. Non-attendance includes sick days, personal days, funeral leave, military leave, jury duty, and professional leave due to seminars, conferences, etc.

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

Special education

Definition: Special education services offered at each district school in the 2007-08 school year, excluding programs for students identified as “gifted.” For definitions of services, see “Special Education” on the PPS Web site (www.pps.k12.pa.us). *Note:* A+ Schools prefers to publish current special education information as a service to readers, but we were unable to obtain it for the 2008-09 school year.

Source: PPS Program for Students with Exceptionalities (10/07).

Family income status

Definition: Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (a measure of family poverty).

Sources: RTI and individual charter schools.

Student disciplinary actions

Definition: “Number of incidents” includes reported incidents of violence and possession of controlled substances or a weapon on school property (one incident may involve more than one offender). For a complete list of incidents at each school that were required to be reported to the state, including the category of “Other Misconduct” (not reported here), go to www.safeschools.state.pa.us, choose “School Safety,” then “School Safety Historic” to view reports. “Number of incidents per 100 students” represents the number of incidents divided by the total student enrollment multiplied by 100, so readers may compare data from schools of different sizes. “Number of expulsions” refers to expulsions related to reported

incidents (including expulsions that are less than, equal to, or more than one calendar year). Information is from 2006-07.

Source: PDE.

PSSA tests

Definition: Percentage of students at Proficient/Advanced achievement levels on PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) Reading, Math, and Writing tests, for identified grades; percentage of students at each achievement level on PSSA Reading and Math tests by subgroups* for identified grades. Levels (score ranges) include “Advanced,” “Proficient,” “Basic,” and “Below Basic.” Subgroups include student race/ethnicity, family income status, and IEP status.

- *Race/ethnicity* for district schools reflects PPS definitions (see page 106). Charter schools provided similar information. Test information for students in the “other” category was not reported by PDE for most Pittsburgh schools, including charter schools, due to their small numbers.
- “*Low-income*” refers to students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. (PSSA scores were not available by subgroup for students who are not low-income.)
- “*IEP*” refers to students with an Individual Education Plan for special education, excluding students identified as “gifted.”

Note: Subgroup scores are reported as “n/a” when that subgroup had 0-9 students (test scores of fewer than 10 students in a group or subgroup are not reported by PPS or PDE). If a bar in a chart does not include every score range (for example, it appears that no students were “Below Basic”), no students scored in that range. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

Source: PDE.

Special accomplishments

Definition: Awards, honors, and other kinds of local and national recognition for individual students, school teams, and schools; student participation in national and local community service and celebratory events; and noteworthy creative works produced by students.

Sources: Selected by A+ Schools from information provided by district and charter school principals/administrators and other school staff, and PPS Division of Communications & Marketing.

Graduation rate

Definition: The graduation rate was determined by adding the number of drop-outs in 9th grade in 2004-05, in 10th grade in 2005-06, in 11th grade in 2006-07, and in 12th grade in 2007-08 to the number of 2008 graduates, then dividing the number of 2008 graduates by that total.

Sources: RTI and City Charter High School.

Percent of seniors eligible for the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship

Definition: The number of seniors in 2008 with an overall grade point average of 2.00 or higher divided by the total number of seniors in 2008. This was one of several criteria for eligibility to receive funds from

the Pittsburgh Promise (see the district Web site for more information).

Sources: PPS and City Charter High School.

College-bound seniors

Definition: Percentage of graduates in 2007 who reported that they were planning to attend a two- or four-year college/university or an institution granting a specialized associates’ degree. No data were available for Pittsburgh Peabody High School. Information for City Charter High School is from 2008. No subgroup information was available for City Charter.

Sources: PDE and City Charter High School.

SAT scores

Definition: The SAT is an admissions test required by many colleges. Students may take the SAT more than once in a school year; averages represent each senior’s most recent score. “Critical Reading” was called “Verbal” until 2006.

Sources: 2005-08 SAT average Critical Reading and Mathematics standard scores for each school, PDE; national and state average scores, College Board.

Percent taking SAT

Definition: Number of high school graduates in 2008 who took the SAT at least once during high school divided by the total number of 2008 graduates.

Source: PDE.

Percent taking AP courses

Definition: Number of students taking at least one AP (Advanced Placement) course divided by total student enrollment.

Source: PPS.

International Baccalaureate

(Pittsburgh Schenley High School only)

Definition: Percentage of students taking at least one course in the International Baccalaureate program, offered only at Schenley.

Source: PPS.

Information by level

Special education: PSSA participation

Definition: Percentage of students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), excluding “gifted” students, who took the PSSA for Reading and Math.

Source: PDE.

Special education: PASA participation

Definition: Total number of students who took the PASA (Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment, for students with significant cognitive disabilities) for Reading and Math. Information is from the 2006-07 school year.

Source: University of Pittsburgh, PASA Project.

* “Subgroup” means a group within a larger group. For example, “white fifth-graders” is a subgroup of all fifth-graders.