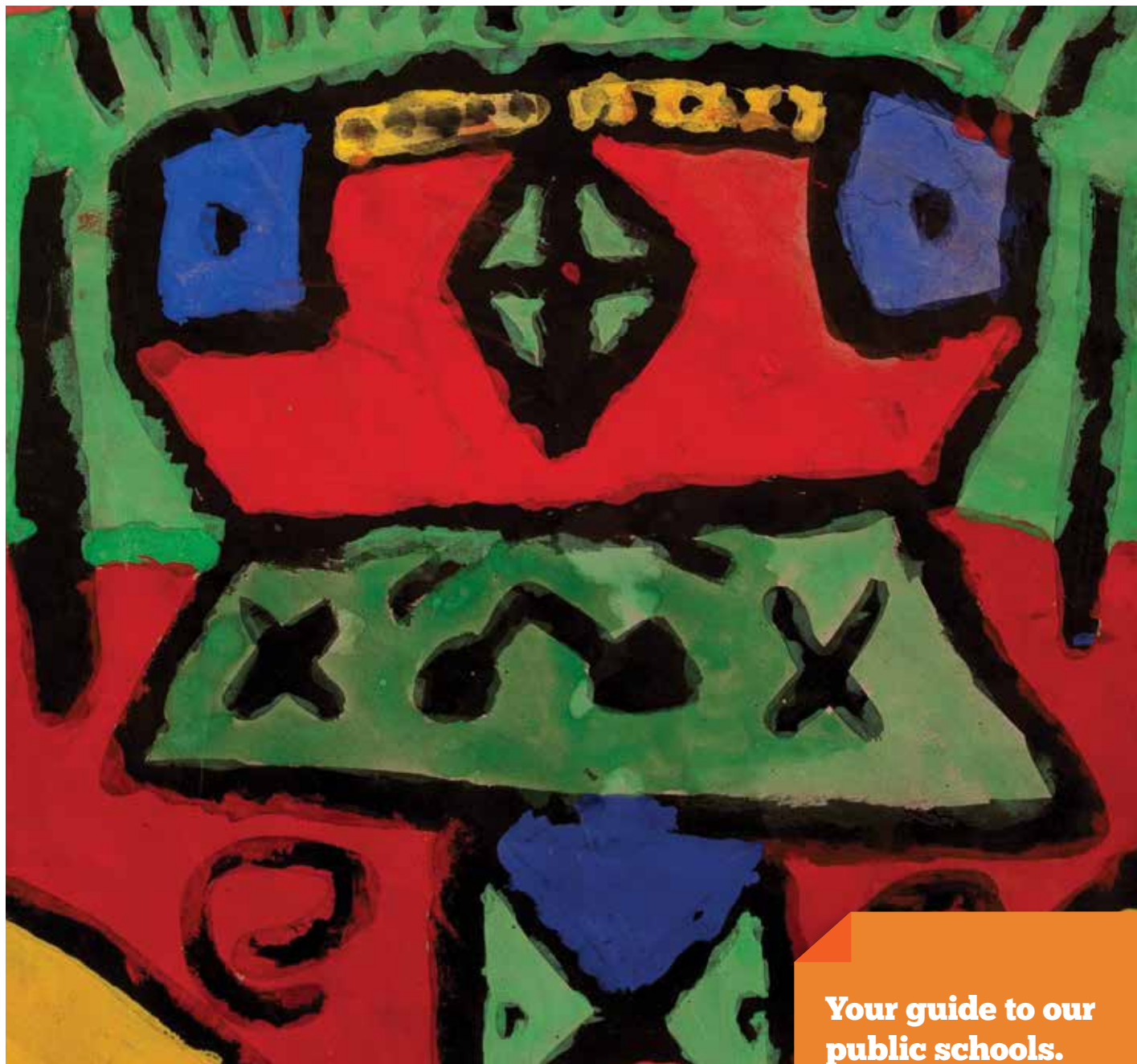


2016 Report to the Community on Public School Progress in Pittsburgh



**Your guide to our
public schools.**

 **A+ Schools**
Pittsburgh's Community Alliance for Public Education

www.aplusschools.org

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The artwork on the front cover, "Random," was created by Henry Presser, a third grader at Pittsburgh Montessori PreK-5 last year. Henry was the first-place winner of our **Your Art, Our Schools** cover competition. The artwork on the back cover, "Tattoo Boy," was created by our second-place winner, Jada Dillard, a third grader at the Urban Academy of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School last year. For information about how to submit work to the 2016-17 Your Art, Our Schools cover competition, please contact James Fogarty at jfogarty@aplusschools.org or 412-697-1298. Photography by Greg Blackman.

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How to use this report

This report is intended to provide you with common, accessible information about Pittsburgh Public Schools and the city's charter schools. We hope it will help you to monitor school progress and to define questions and identify areas where you need more information. Here are some ways you can use the information presented here, as a parent or caregiver and/or a concerned citizen.

1. **Parents/caregivers:** If you have a child in school, ask the principal, a teacher, or your local school board member for more information about the data reported here.

High-performing schools focus on student outcomes and hold students to high expectations. You might ask these questions about **student achievement**:

- How do you monitor student achievement?
- What strategies are in place to make sure students make at least a year's worth of growth?
- How do you help children who are falling behind?
- What is being done to address chronic absenteeism?
- How does the school keep students on track for the Pittsburgh Promise college scholarship? How do you help students plan for their lives after graduation?
- Which students have access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses?

High-performing schools have principals who coach and support teachers to help them improve. You might ask these questions about **instructional leadership**:

- What is being done to ensure that each child is benefiting from excellent teaching?
- How do you help teachers improve? What is the area of focus for this year?
- How do you support new teachers and keep effective teachers? How do you know that your system is working?
- How do you monitor student suspensions? What kinds of interventions or supports do you provide for students who need them?

High-performing schools engage students, their families, and their communities, providing meaningful ways for all to be involved in students' success. You might ask these questions about **parent/caregiver engagement**:

- What parent organization can I join to be more involved in the school? (If the school doesn't have one, contact us to see if we can help you start one!)
- What are all the ways that parents can be involved in the school?

2. **Community organizations:** If you work for a community organization, consider how you can contribute to the success of a school. Ask the principal or a teacher about the school's overall goals and its plan to raise student achievement. Compare the plan to the information in the report. Does the plan appear to address school needs? Are there gaps that your organization could fill?

3. **Volunteers:** Connect with a school near you to find opportunities to mentor, tutor, or volunteer in other ways.

Call A+ Schools at 412-697-1298 if you need help interpreting this report, to discuss school improvement strategies, for help making a connection as a volunteer, or to request a presenter or facilitator for a parent or community meeting.

If you'd like to share your views on this report, contact us at 412-697-1298 or info@aplusschools.org. If you find this report valuable, please let us know! Your interest will help us raise resources to continue its publication.

Your Art, Our Schools Cover Competition

We know that student art is flourishing in our schools, and we're looking for the best to feature on the covers of our next report. Any Pittsburgh Public Schools student or charter school student in the city is eligible to submit work by **January 27, 2016**. A panel of experts will select finalists, whose work will be displayed at a gallery. During the opening reception, the public will vote for first- and second-place winners. Winners and finalists will receive cash prizes. To submit your art for consideration, go to <http://bit.ly/yourartourschools>. For more information, please contact James Fogarty at jfogarty@aplusschools.org or 412-697-1298.

Five ways A+ Schools makes a difference

A+ Schools works with the community to improve excellence and equity in our schools. We serve as a resource and a catalyst for change, collecting and distributing critical information and providing specific ways for the community to help make our schools great.

Here are five key ways we partner with the community to improve Pittsburgh's schools.

1. We keep watch over Pittsburgh's schools.

A strong public school system has effective leadership that is fully accountable, fiscally responsible, and focused on providing a high quality education for all students. Our work provides important oversight and helps ensure accountability at all of Pittsburgh's public schools.

- In 2014, A+ Schools led the effort to rally community support to secure a multi-year approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for **Pittsburgh Public Schools' new teacher evaluation system**. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of our community, this system is now approved until 2017. Students in Pittsburgh are benefiting from teachers who receive accurate, reliable feedback for improvement and are held to high standards.
- Through our **Board Watch** program, volunteers attend school board meetings, serving as independent observers and evaluators of the board's performance. Because of the work of **Board Watch** volunteers, board meeting agendas are posted online and the doors are open to the community. We issue quarterly report cards and recommendations based on Board Watch reports. The school board has responded to 60% of Board Watch recommendations over the past six-and-a-half years, resulting in better governance.
- Throughout our twelve-year history, you have counted on A+ Schools to keep an eye on the educational landscape and keep you informed when big changes are on the horizon—such as superintendent transitions, budget issues, school board elections, and state policy changes—that require community input and attention. We've hosted town hall meetings, and published reports and position papers on these important issues over the years.

2. We mobilize the community.

In the quest for quality public education, we strive to involve the entire community—students, parents, the general public, neighborhood associations, religious groups, and non-profit organizations, as well as school administrators, teachers, and public officials. We partner with a wide range of community organizations.

- This past school year, parents contributed over 14,000 volunteer hours at schools through **Parent Nation**. Our school teams hosted more than 30 events and trainings to build school communities and to support parents' growth as leaders within the district. Trainings and workshops covered a variety of topics, including parents' rights, restorative practices, and fundraising. All of this hard work is paying off as we see improvements in relationships and collaborations among parents and school staff.
- **TeenBloc** brings together high school students from across Pittsburgh to participate in leadership development and community organizing aimed at improving public education in Pittsburgh. In 2015, TeenBloc and the Black Political Empowerment Project registered 225 18-year-olds to vote through an outreach campaign in PPS high schools. In 2014, students engaged over 1,700 of their peers to support the adoption of a **Student Bill of Rights**, portions of which were ultimately approved by the Board of Education. In addition, thanks in part to TeenBloc's advocacy, 22 schools are in the process of implementing restorative practices with the help of a Department of Justice grant.
- Our **School Works** program recruits and mobilizes community volunteers to conduct confidential interviews with teachers, principals, and guidance counselors. These interviews let us gather information on the inner workings of Pittsburgh's schools and make recommendations for improvements. More than 600 volunteers have interviewed over 300 school staff in the past six years. This election year, we will be surveying voters to understand their views on education. **You can participate by going to www.aplusschools.org to sign up.**
- A+ Schools is part of the **Campaign for Fair Education Funding**, a state-wide coalition with more than 50 members that advocates for equitable, adequate, predictable, and sustainable school funding for all Pennsylvania districts. In the past year, the legislature enacted a funding formula for distributing state basic education funding and

increased the annual state contribution to K-12 education by \$200 million. We participate in several other statewide coalitions that work for policies such as college- and career-ready academic standards, and protecting excellent teachers.

3. We collect critical data.

As an independent community advocate for improvement, **we serve as a resource for facts, evidence, best practices, and research**, with a focus on equitable outcomes for all students in Pittsburgh's public schools.

- Our independent analysis of the evaluation system created under the **Empowering Effective Teachers Plan** laid out recommendations for ways to improve the system so every child can benefit from great teaching in every classroom every day. We learned from teachers, principals, and parents about how this work has an impact on the classroom.
- In the past year we have provided community research briefs about **Positive School Climates** and **Student-Based Budgeting**. Our research takes a deeper look at what's working in schools, and provides the community and board with actionable ideas for improvement.

4. We keep you informed.

Parents and community members need facts to understand what is being proposed, to talk things through, and to provide feedback on important issues. A+ Schools provides information and brings the public together in community meetings to discuss the findings and determine priorities.

- Every two years, we work with organizations across Pittsburgh to reach more than 10,000 likely voters with information about school board elections through our **voter education** work. We provide voter guides and policy information to voters through direct mail, community centers, and candidate forums throughout the City.
- Over 1,600 people have participated in city-wide meetings to hear the findings of our **School Works** research. School Works reports are distributed to thousands each year.
- This annual **Report to the Community** provides detailed information so families can monitor progress in each of Pittsburgh's public schools and charter schools, and make informed decisions on their choices of schools. In 2014, we significantly revised the report to provide readers with critical information

related to the equity issues we care about.

- Every day we provide **regular updates** on news and research through our social media presence on Facebook ([facebook.com/aplusschoolsfans](https://www.facebook.com/aplusschoolsfans)) and Twitter ([@aplusschools](https://twitter.com/aplusschools)). On a bimonthly basis, we email to over 6,000 followers updates on critical issues, events, and news of interest. Finally, when there's an issue of critical community importance, we directly mail, canvass, and call residents to have a conversation about equity and excellence in our public schools. **You can sign up for regular updates at www.aplusschools.org.**

5. We inspire community action.

A+ Schools uses the data generated from our projects to **create political pressure that influences policy and creates change that improves our schools**. Our members, volunteers, partners, staff, and board members organize community outreach events, engage the media, and testify at hearings before the school board and other elected officials. We encourage the public to get involved.

- **Parent Nation** supports and develops parent leaders who demand equitable and excellent education at some of Pittsburgh's most vulnerable schools. Parents have been successful at getting transportation for their children, starting volunteer programs that help support teachers and staff, and getting additional staffing for their schools. Parents for whom English is a second language now have access to important school documents and can access the PPS Web site in their native tongue, thanks to organizing by the Latino Parents United in Action, a group that is supported by A+ Schools organizers.
- We mobilized buses of people to rally and speak to legislators in Harrisburg as part of the **Campaign for Fair Education Funding**. Together we fought for a fair funding formula and additional state funding for education to make the financing of public schools in the Commonwealth more equitable.

We keep watch over Pittsburgh's schools, mobilize the community, collect critical data, keep you informed, and inspire community action.

Introduction

This year's publication of our annual *Report to the Community* marks a turning point in the history of Pittsburgh Public Schools and A+ Schools. Over the summer, our long-time executive director, Carey Harris, announced her departure to head the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. And Dr. Linda Lane left the superintendent's position at Pittsburgh Public Schools. The school board selected their first choice for superintendent in Dr. Anthony Hamlet. And A+ Schools' Board chose James Fogarty to be our new executive director.

In addition to these leadership changes, we saw the passage of a new Basic Education Funding Formula (which attempts to make state funding for schools more equitable) and the approval of additional state funding for schools. In local policy, the district amended the Collective Bargaining Agreements with its unions to increase pay, but left some critical issues unresolved for now. Also, the school year began with more than 200 students from Wilkinsburg now attending Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6-12, precipitated by the closing of Wilkinsburg High School.

What are the PSSA tests and Keystone exams?

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, or **PSSA**, is the state test for 3rd through 8th graders. Testing takes place in the spring.

PSSA content area	Grades tested
English Language Arts (ELA) & Math	3–8
Science	4, 8

The **Keystones** are state end-of-course exams, given at various times throughout the school year. In 2015-16, students took Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone exams. Students may take the exams more than once. Keystone exams for other courses may be developed.

Scores for both PSSA tests and Keystone exams are rated "Advanced" (above grade level), "Proficient" (at grade level), "Basic" (not consistently at grade level), or "Below Basic" (below grade level).

A small number of students who receive special education services take an alternate test.

You can count on A+ Schools to be your independent advocate for equity and excellence in Pittsburgh's public schools. We will continue to ring the alarm about persistent gaps in opportunities and student achievement. We will continue to provide the key research, analysis, and engagement you have come to rely on to improve our schools.

Our advocacy efforts with the Campaign for Fair Education Funding this past year led to the passage of a basic education funding formula that pushes out new education funding based on the number and need of students in a given district. We will continue to work in coalition with over 50 other organizations statewide to increase funding for public education from the state and to make spending more equitable for students.

As candidates get organized to run for one of five school board seats that are up for election next year, we are going to find out what voters think about public education in Pittsburgh through our School Works program (see our Web site for how you can get involved). As the spring rolls around, we will again create candidate guides and host a candidate forum so you can get to know the people who will control a budget larger than the City of Pittsburgh's.

At the center of all we do is our students, and we will advocate for programs and policies that improve their options now and in the future.

PSSA tests and Keystone exams

As these major changes were happening in our district, students took for the second time the revised Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests last spring. The tests, given in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in 3rd through 8th grades, were revised to align with the state's new academic standards, the Pennsylvania Core Standards (descriptions of what students should know and be able to do before they graduate). As was the case in 2015, more items on the new PSSA tested problem solving and critical thinking skills and required written responses, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Some content is now being tested in an earlier school year. Also, the scores students need to earn to fall within the "Proficient" or "Advanced" score ranges have been adjusted to reflect more rigorous standards.

Key dates for school choice

When to register your child for a magnet or a Career and Technical Education program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools

Registration for magnet and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs takes place the year before a child enters the school or program.

Deadline for registration: December 9, 2016.

Applications for Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 closed on October 21.

Note: A child who attends a Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood program (preschool) has a better chance of being accepted into an elementary or K-8 magnet program. For more information about “preference” and the magnet/CTE application process, visit the district Web site at www.pps.k12.pa.us, or contact the parent hotline at 412-529-HELP or parenthotline@pghboe.net.

While we continue to provide historical data about gaps in student achievement for your reference, we note that we have only two years of PSSA data that reflect the new tests, which are not enough to see a trend.

Students in upper grades take the Keystone exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. Although PDE has postponed passing the Keystone exams as a requirement for graduation, Pittsburgh Public Schools students are required to pass them, or demonstrate proficiency in an alternative way, before they can graduate.

What’s in the report?

This report is organized around equity indicators that research has identified as important. On our school pages, we identify and highlight data about *teaching, student academic growth, school climate, and readiness*. Rather than including all tests results, we report on “key indicators:” 3rd grade reading proficiency, 8th grade algebra taking, and Keystone exam achievement by 11th grade. We also show the *racial achievement gap*, which we define as the difference between black student achievement at the school and white student achievement in the district overall.

This year we report *academic growth* as measured by **PVAAS**—the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System. PVAAS reports on whether or not a school met the state’s

standard for growth in PSSA and Keystone achievement: at least a year’s worth of growth in scores for a year’s worth of schooling. Unlike the district’s measure of growth—VAM, or Value-Added Measures—PVAAS is reported for public schools across the state. Therefore it allows us to look at district schools and charter schools using the same measure.

On the comparison chart pages (15-19), readers can *compare schools of different types* and view additional indicators, such as each school’s site-based budget. Please note: while the district spent **\$23,065.49 per pupil in 2014-15** based on its Average Daily Membership according to PDE, we are only able to provide each school’s site-based budget, as many of the school-based costs of educating students are not accounted for at the school level by Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Last year, we didn’t report student survey responses because the data were not provided in a way that would be meaningful to readers. This year, we report these data in the comparison charts. However, we are only able to report how each school compared to a national average. We hope that in the future, more detailed information from the surveys the district administers to students will be made available to us.

We also include a report from the **Healthy Schools Working Group** (page 107), a call for **greater budget accountability** (page 4), and a **short overview of “school pushout”** (page 8), which disproportionately affects African-American girls.

The report also contains data for **all of the charter schools within the city**. (Charter schools are free, public schools operated independently of school districts.) We thank the schools for providing information.

This year we provide basic information about the district’s **special education centers and schools** and the **Hill House Passport Academy Charter School**, which serves a special population of students (page 88). Due to the lack of meaningful achievement indicators for groups of students with diverse special needs at these schools, we do not provide additional information. (Test scores and proficiency levels we report for each school include all students who took the PSSA or Keystones, regardless of special education status.)

Again this year, the report includes an **executive summary**. The executive summary, beginning on page 9, is an analysis of some aspects of the reported data and an examination of trends.

The report also contains:

- Data about each school for the **2015-16** school year
- Comparisons of each school to district averages
- Achievement information: how each school measures up to state “proficiency” levels on PSSA tests and Keystone exams
- Information about each level (elementary, K-8, middle, 6-12, and high) on the cover page of each section, along with comparable state-level data
- An index of schools grouped by region (page 116)

Information that reflects the **current year** as a service to readers includes:

- School names, names of principals/administrators, and contact information
- “English as a Second Language” program sites, magnet programs, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) program sites
- Building accessibility

The **indicators of school progress** were originally selected by an A+ Schools committee headed by Alan Lesgold, Ph.D., dean emeritus of the School of Education, University of Pittsburgh. The indicators in our revised report (starting in 2014) were developed with the help of Dr. Shula Nedley and the A+ Schools board and staff. We thank the Pittsburgh Public Schools for its cooperation in making data available.

Reporting by race and economic disadvantage

Readers may wonder why we report some test results and other indicators by students’ race and economic disadvantage. We draw these comparisons for two reasons. First, as is the case nationally, Pittsburgh has a large achievement gap between African-American and white students and between students from low-income families and other students. Yet the report shows that in some schools, African-American students and students from low-income families do better than city averages. Second, initiatives and interventions led by former Superintendent Linda Lane and the Pittsburgh Board of Education were designed to close the race and income achievement gaps and to raise achievement for students overall. Over time, we hope readers will be able to use information from these reports to judge for themselves whether or not these strategies are working.

Interpreting the report

With our revised report, we have tried to offer readers more contextual information to provide a clearer picture of each school. Still, much of the report is based on test scores. We urge readers to approach test scores with caution. Test results may not adequately represent students’ achievement due to personal factors such as students’ test anxiety, and/or technical reasons for score fluctuations.

This report isn’t a substitute for visiting schools and observing in classrooms. We hope readers will consider the report as a tool for framing further questions as they continue to seek information about the quality of our schools.

See pages 114-115 for more information about any indicator.

Call A+ Schools at 412-697-1298 to schedule a presentation on this report for your school, community group, or agency. We’ll review the report, explain how to use it, and answer your questions.

Art teachers: Please encourage your students to enter our Your Art, Our Schools Cover Competition by submitting their work to <http://bit.ly/yourartschools> by January 27, 2016. Students may submit work they completed for assignments.

Please visit our Web site at www.aplsschools.org to support the publication of this report and our other programs and publications through a donation.



Be there. Join us and inspire kids to be in school.

Did you know?

Missing just **two days** of school a month, or **18 days** in a school year, is enough to negatively impact student learning.

Students with poor school attendance in early years are more likely to fall behind in reading and math.

Join us! The Be There School Attendance Campaign is a coalition of school and community partners working together to improve school attendance. For more information: @betherephg or Shauna.McMillan@uwac.org.

Executive summary

This executive summary provides an overall analysis of trends across public schools in Pittsburgh, based on data in this and previous A+ Schools reports. While this summary does not address every indicator, we hope it will help readers who want to take a closer look at progress. Considerably more data are available now compared to when this report was first published. We can now look systematically at how schools are equipped to improve student outcomes.

This summary seeks to address the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of the district and its schools?
- How well equipped are schools to improve student outcomes?
 - What financial resources are being invested in schools to fuel teaching and learning?
 - To what extent do students experience effective teaching, and to what extent do teachers experience positive teaching and learning environments?
 - Do students attend school regularly? What is the relationship between suspensions and attendance?
- How do black and white students in the district compare with black and white students across the state on academic achievement as measured by PSSA tests and Keystone exam scores?
- To what extent are students reaching academic milestones: reading well by 3rd grade, taking algebra in 8th grade, and graduating ready for college and career as measured by the Keystone exams?
- Are students growing academically, according to value-added measures?
- To what extent are high school students being prepared for post-secondary education and training?

Findings for the 2016 Report to the Community

Characteristics of the district and its schools

Enrollment

The table below describes the general student population within each type of school configuration in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) in the 2015-16 school year. Compared to last year, the diversity of the PPS student population has remained about the same. Our former source for information about students' economic disadvantage was eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch. PPS no longer

collects free/reduced lunch applications because the District now provides free lunch to all students under the federal Community Eligibility Provision. As was the case last year, this information is based on the state's Direct Certification process, which has resulted in fewer students being identified as economically disadvantaged than in previous years.

Student demographic information at each grade-level configuration for 2015-16*

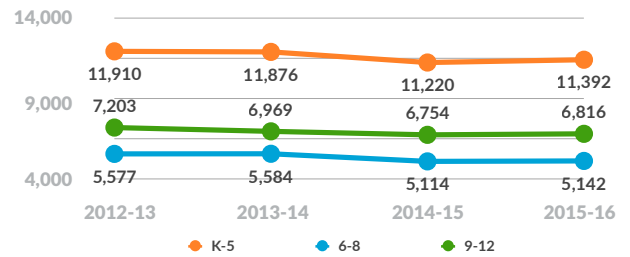
	Number of schools	Average enrollment	Range of enrollment	Percent black	Percent white	Percent multi-ethnic	Percent Asian	Percent Hispanic	Percent economically disadvantaged
District	50	450	151 to 1,435	52%	33%	8%	3%	3%	53%
K-5	23	323	157 to 544	55%	29%	8%	3%	3%	58%
K-8	11	494	198 to 867	50%	35%	10%	3%	2%	56%
6-8	7	306	151 to 494	53%	32%	8%	4%	3%	61%
6-12	5	696	167 to 950	62%	29%	6%	2%	1%	39%
9-12	4	1,008	473 to 1,435	42%	43%	6%	5%	3%	50%

* Based on October 2015 enrollment. Does not include special schools and centers or the Online Academy.

continued on p. 10

Enrollment change by grade level

The chart on the right shows that district enrollment increased slightly last year, though over four years, overall enrollment is lower. (This chart reflects October 2015 enrollment and includes students attending special schools and centers in the district that are not reported in this book.)



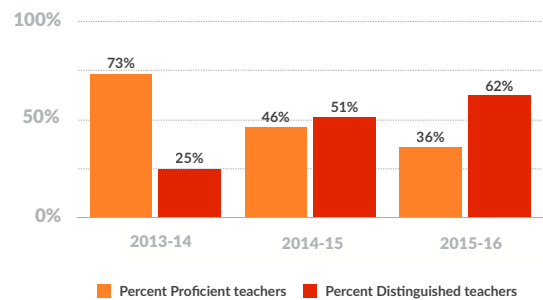
Teaching

The charts in this section show indicators related to instruction: teacher performance levels (which are derived from observation of teaching practice, student perceptions and student learning and growth data) and teacher survey responses. We looked at changes between 2013-14 and 2015-16.

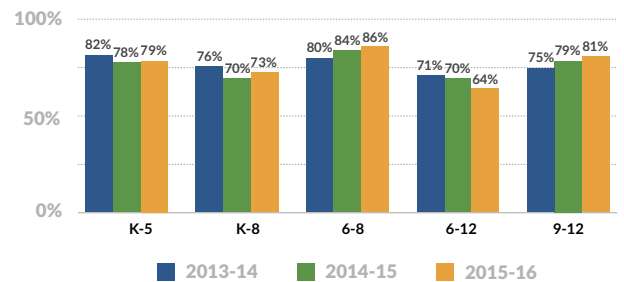
The chart on the right shows that the vast majority (98%) of PPS teachers performed at “Proficient” or “Distinguished” levels over the past year. Compared to last year, the overall percentage rose one percent. The percentage of teachers performing at the “Distinguished” level increased significantly, from 51% to 62%.

Each year, PPS teachers are asked to complete the district’s Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey. The chart on the right shows the percentage of teachers in 2014, 2015, and 2016 who agreed with the statement, “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.” Middle schools continued to have the highest levels of agreement, while K-8 and 6-12 schools had the lowest.

Teaching effectiveness by year



Teaching satisfaction by year



School climate

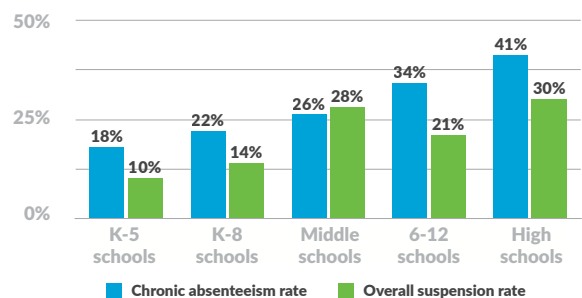
Student attendance and suspensions

The chart on the right shows the percentage of students who were chronically absent (missing 10% or more of days they were enrolled in school) and the percentage of students who were suspended at least once, by school configuration. The chart shows:

- High schools have the highest suspension rates at 30%, with middle schools at 28%.
- High schools have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism, with 41% of students absent more than 10% of school days.
- Compared to last year, suspension rates decreased by one percentage point for K-5, K-8, and middle schools, and by three percentage points for 6-12 schools.

- The rates for chronic absenteeism remained the same for K-5 schools. Compared to last year, the rates increased slightly in K-8, middle, 6-12, and high schools.

Chronic absenteeism and suspension by school configuration

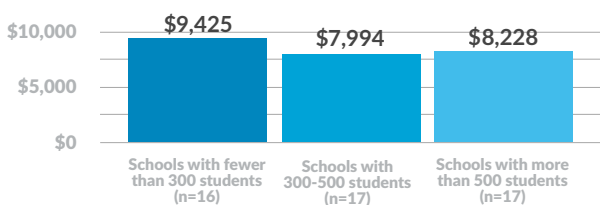


Resources

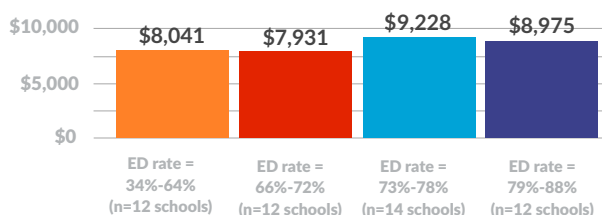
The chart below shows the average amount spent per student from each school's site-based budget (including the Title I allocation), by percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged (a measure of family poverty; see "Definitions and sources of information" starting on page 114). Please note: while the district spent **\$23,065.49 per pupil in 2014-15** based on its Average Daily Membership according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, we are only able to provide accurate figures for each school's site-based budget, as many of the school-based costs of

educating students are not accounted for at the school level by Pittsburgh Public Schools. The chart shows that the largest investments were made at schools falling within the top two quartiles of poverty (schools with 73% or more of students identified as economically disadvantaged). The next largest investments were made at schools with the lowest percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged. In the next chart, we show the same information by school size. As was the case last year, the largest investments were made at the smallest schools, those with fewer than 300 students.

Site-based per pupil spending by school enrollment



Site-based per pupil spending by economically disadvantaged



Academic achievement

PPS achievement on academic milestones

The district's Whole Child Whole Community Plan articulates three milestones for academic achievement: 3rd grade reading; 8th grade algebra; and proficiency in literature, algebra, and biology as shown on the Keystone exams. (Visit the report Web site for school-by-school Biology Keystone performance: aplusschools.org/2016-report.) The chart below shows:

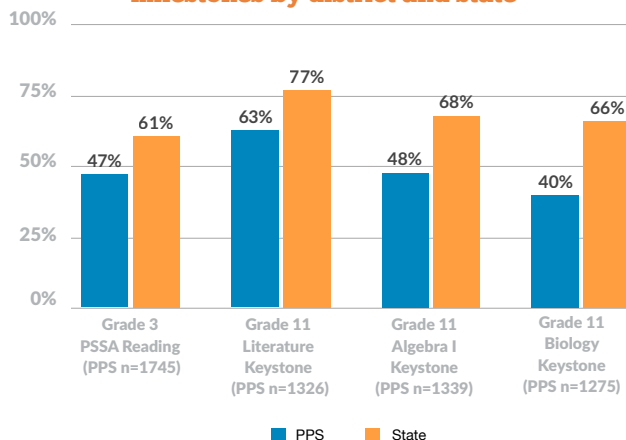
- 47% of PPS 3rd graders are reading at grade level or above, as shown by PSSA (PA System of School Assessment) English Language Arts (ELA) scores. By comparison, 61% of the state's 3rd graders achieved grade level performance.
- 63% of PPS 11th graders have scored Proficient or Advanced (passing) on the Literature Keystone Exam (their highest score by the end of 11th grade). 77% of the state's 11th graders have scored Proficient or above on this exam.
- 48% of PPS 11th graders have scored Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra 1 Keystone Exam. 68% of the state's 11th graders have scored Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra 1 Keystone. 52% of PPS 8th graders who took the Algebra I Keystone passed with Proficient or Advanced performance.

- 40% of PPS 11th graders achieved a passing grade on the Biology Keystone Exam, a ten percentage point improvement from last year. Statewide, 66% of 11th graders achieved a passing grade on the Biology Keystone.

We also looked at the numbers of students who took algebra by the end of 8th grade (including students who took algebra in 6th or 7th grade) in each K-8, 6-8, and 6-12 school, as a percentage of the school's total 8th graders. Those percentages ranged from 0% (three schools) to 100% (one school). Compared to 2014-15, one more school had students who took algebra by the end of 8th grade.

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Percent Proficient/Advanced on academic milestones by district and state

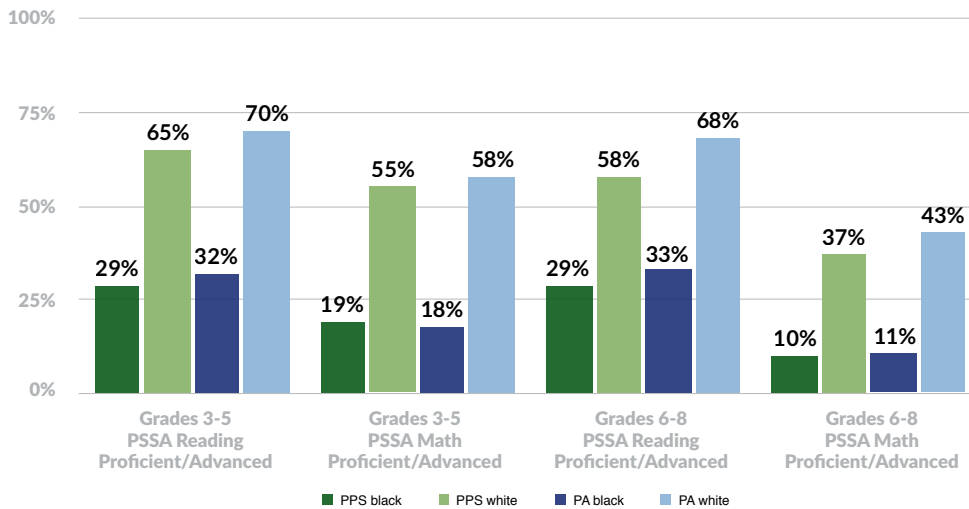


PSSA and Keystone: PPS students compared to PA students, and the black/white achievement gap

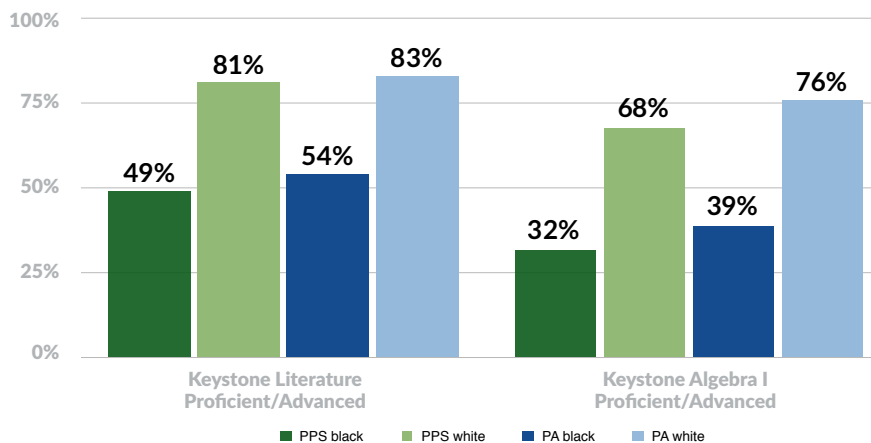
We looked at 2016 achievement on PSSA ELA and Math tests, and Keystone Literature and Algebra I exams, for all black and white students in PPS and all black and white students in Pennsylvania. We define the PPS/state gap as the difference between black student achievement in the district and white student achievement in the state. We looked at the gap by grade-level configuration.

The PSSA gap chart below shows gaps that range from 33 to 41 percent. Generally, black achievement in PPS paralleled black achievement in the state, and white achievement in PPS paralleled white achievement in the state, with PPS achievement being lower in all cases except for math in grades 3-5. Compared to last year, there have been slight increases across the board for the state as a whole, yet in PPS, there were slight declines in nearly all cases.

PSSA Reading and Math gaps



Keystone Literature and Algebra I gaps



The Keystone gap chart above shows a gap of 34 points for Literature, and a gap of 44 points for Algebra I. On both exams, black students in the district

scored slightly lower than black students in the state. White students in the district also scored slightly lower than white students in the state on both exams.

Achievement gaps in schools

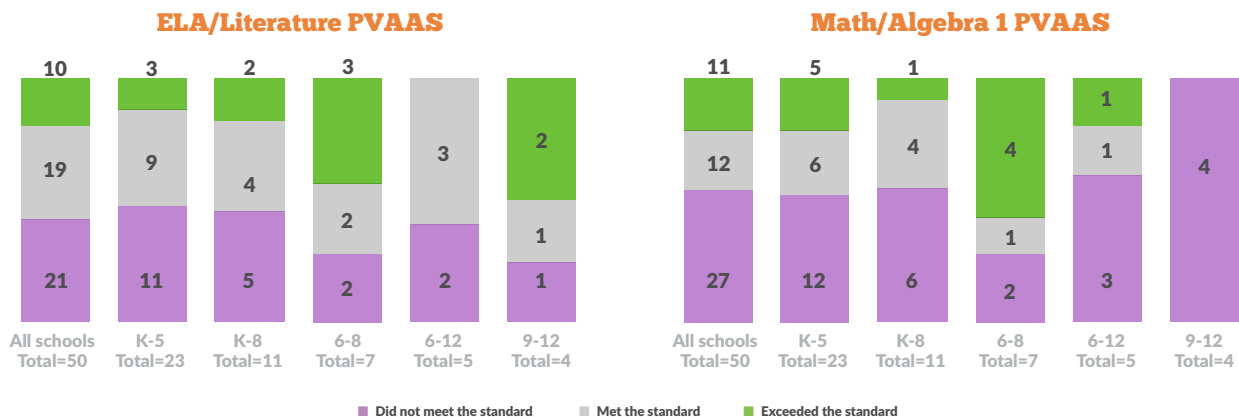
We also looked at the achievement gap within PPS schools and within the city's charter schools, which we define as the difference between black achievement at the school and white achievement at the district level on PSSA tests and Keystone exams. Six schools had gaps of 10 points or less in English Language Arts or Literature (Greenfield PreK-8, Sunnyside PreK-8, CAPA 6-12, Obama 6-12, Sci-Tech 6-12, and City Charter High School). Four schools had gaps of 10 points or less in Math or Algebra I (Greenfield, CAPA, Obama and Sci-Tech). At three of the district's 6-12 schools, black students achieved above the level of white students in the district on certain tests (CAPA, Obama and Sci-Tech).

Growth as determined by the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System

While changes in percentages of Proficient/Advanced students show school- and district-level change from year to year and provide important points for comparison, those changes do not show whether or not students have improved over time. Value-added measures do provide this information by measuring the growth of groups of students from one year to the next. This year we show this growth as measured by the

Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS), which estimates each school's contribution to student academic growth. (See page 15 for more information about PVAAS.)

The chart below shows the number of schools whose contribution to student academic growth is either above, near, or below the state's average, for each school configuration, on Reading and Math assessments in 2015-16.



Post-secondary readiness

We looked at three indicators to describe post-secondary readiness: graduation rate, percentage of students qualifying for the Pittsburgh Promise by grade point average, and percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) and Centers for Advanced

Study (CAS) courses (see the chart on page 14). We calculated a graduation rate that is an average of the 6-12 and 9-12 schools included in this report. It does not include students who graduated from the Pittsburgh Online Academy 4-12, special schools and centers, or external programs. For these indicators, we can look back over four years to see the trend.

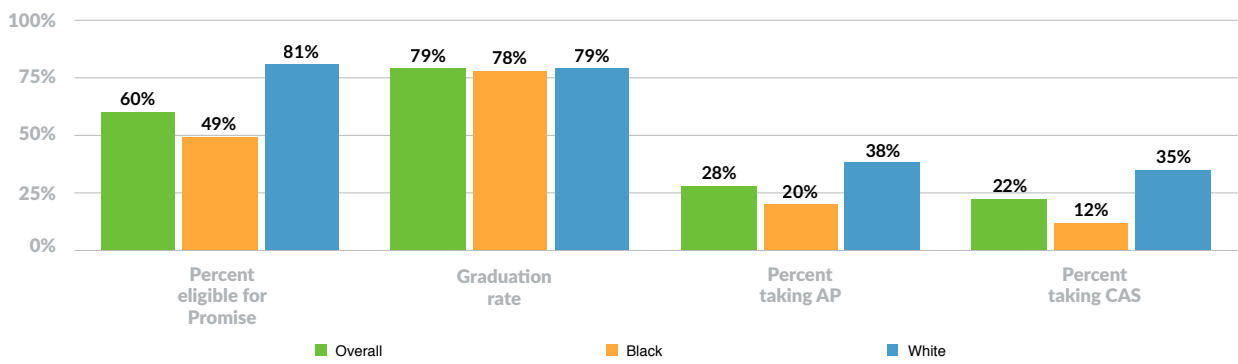
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- In 2014-15 (the most recent year available), the four-year cohort graduation rate was 79%. The rate in 2011-12 was 75%. Therefore, the graduation rate has increased by four percentage points.
- 60% of the district's seniors overall earned grade point averages that qualified them for the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship (2.5 or higher), 2 percentage points higher than in 2012. The increase included both white and black seniors, with qualifying white seniors increasing from 77% to 81% (4 points), and

qualifying black seniors increasing from 39% to 49% (10 points). The disparity between black and white students has decreased from 38 points in 2012 to 32 points in 2016.

- Districtwide, 28% of students in grades 9-12 enrolled in one or more Advanced Placement (AP) course. Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 students' participation in International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program classes is included in the AP calculations because IB classes are also advanced classes.

Post-secondary readiness



Closing

Over the past four years, the Pittsburgh Public Schools has seen a decline in the October enrollment at the elementary, middle, and high school levels of 1,340 students. Teacher satisfaction as measured by teacher surveys has stayed high with over 70% of teachers reporting their schools are a good place to work and learn in all configurations except the district's 6-12 schools.

PPS student achievement on key academic outcomes is slightly lower than the state's, with the exception of the English Language Arts PSSA exams in grades 3-5, where PPS black students outperform black students in the state. This is the second year PSSAs were based on the more rigorous PA Core standards. Student growth (measured by PVAAS data) in English Language Arts/Literature and Mathematics/Algebra did not meet the state standard in 21 out of 50 schools and 27 out of 50 schools respectively.

Graduation rates have increased, and disparities between black and white students qualifying for the Pittsburgh Promise by grade point average have decreased. Additionally, three magnet 6-12 schools, two

neighborhood schools, and one charter school have significantly closed gaps in student achievement between white and black students.

We hope this report motivates readers to act. Please consider what you can do, by becoming a tutor, a middle school mentor, a classroom volunteer, an investor, and/or an advocate for change. Visit our Web site at www.aplusschools.org for more information on how you can get involved.

Methodology

The executive summary analysis was conducted using data in the full report and previous reports, as well as additional public data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Web site and data from the Pittsburgh Public Schools. These data were collected from the Pittsburgh Public Schools, PDE, charter schools within the city, and other sources (see "Definitions and sources"). The executive summary findings were developed by Daniel Morrow.

A+ Schools

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Our Vision

A public education system in Pittsburgh where:

- Overall student achievement continues to rise, with 100 percent of students graduating and 80 percent completing a training program or two or four-year college or university program.
- Race is not a factor in determining which students are in the highest/lowest achievement categories, graduate from high school or matriculate into training programs or college.

Our Purpose

To be a community force advancing the highest educational achievement and character development for every public school student.

Our Focus

We focus on issues of educational equity because significant barriers exist that directly and indirectly deny groups of students a high quality education. To achieve educational equity in Pittsburgh Public Schools, policies and practices must be in place that specifically increase opportunities and resources for African-American students.

Our Work

To focus community attention on specific issues through research and policy analysis; to engage and elevate community voices from those communities most at risk; to create opportunities at multiple levels for community involvement aimed at removing barriers to student success; and to build broad community support to advance change in Pittsburgh Public Schools.

