

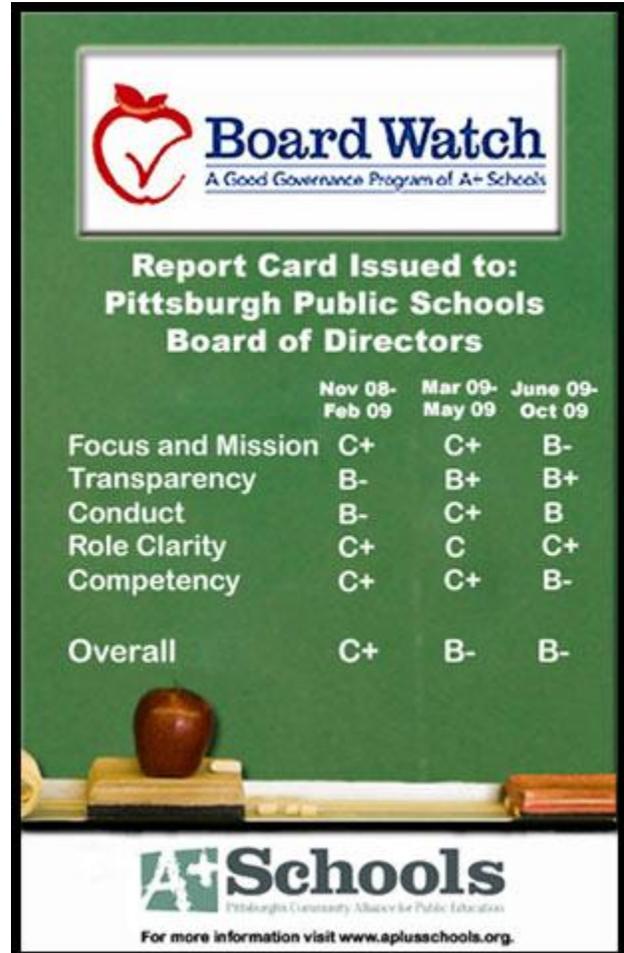
October 2009 Board Watch Report Card

June - October 09 Progress:

[June - October 09 Board Watch Report Card Press Release](#)

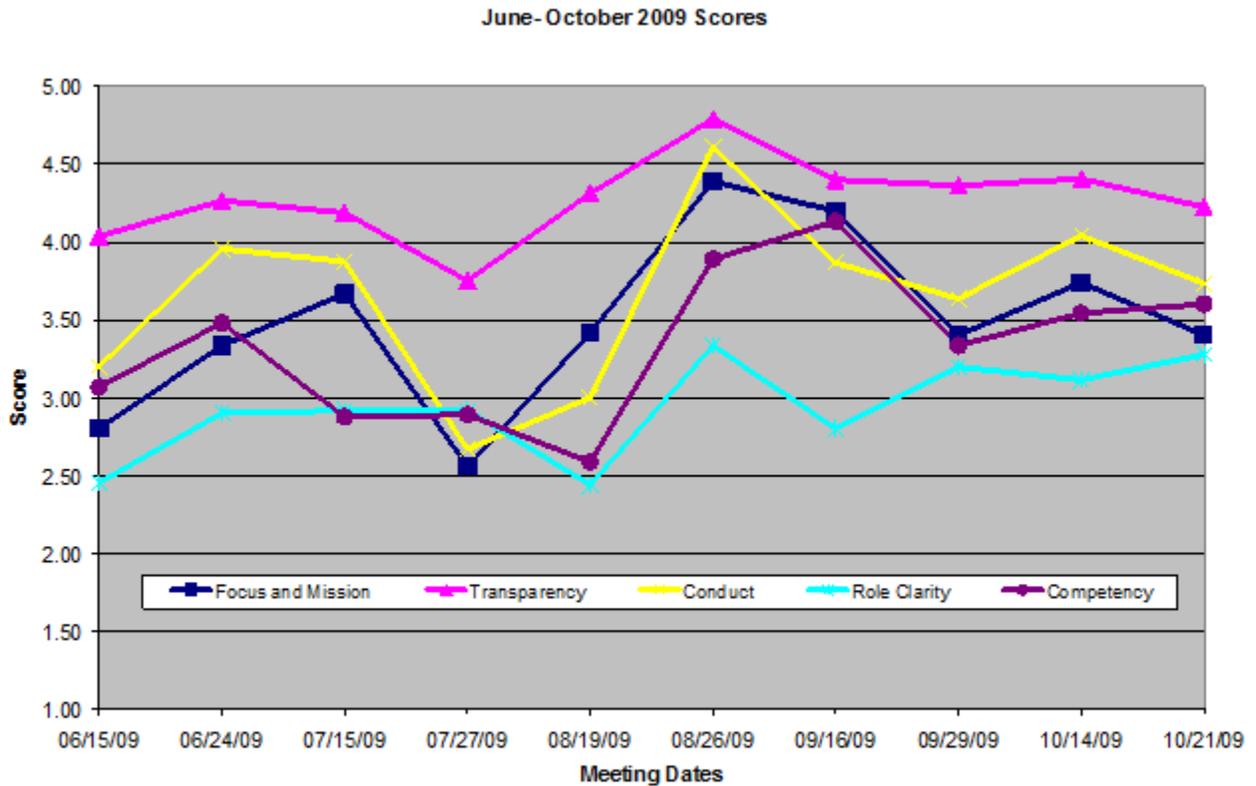
The Board Watch volunteers have spoken again! The good news is that for each indicator and overall, Board Watch grades have gone up.

- **Overall:** The score increased from a 3.35 to a 3.62, both of which are a B-. The grades were calculated from 63 surveys from 30 different volunteers.
- **Focus and Mission:** The score increased from a 3.24 to a 3.59 and represents volunteer responses to whether or not the board managed its time well, focused on its own goals, and focused on improving student achievement.
- **Transparency:** The score increased from a 4.02 to a 4.29 and represents volunteer responses to whether they felt welcome at the meeting, could gain access to the meeting and were able to obtain and agenda and meeting related materials.
- **Conduct:** The score increased from a 3.25 to a 3.74 reflecting volunteer feedback on how the board handled differences of opinion and whether or not comments were solution oriented vs. sarcastic or accusatory.
- **Role clarity:** The score increased from a 2.98 to a 3.10 reflecting volunteer feedback on the extent to which the Board exercises its role in planning for implementing policies and strategies to achieve the district’s goals vs. focusing on individual programs, line items, and routine administrative tasks.
- **Competency:** The score increased from a 3.27 to a 3.39 reflecting volunteer feedback on how prepared the board was for meetings and whether or not they based decisions on facts, research, and effective practices.



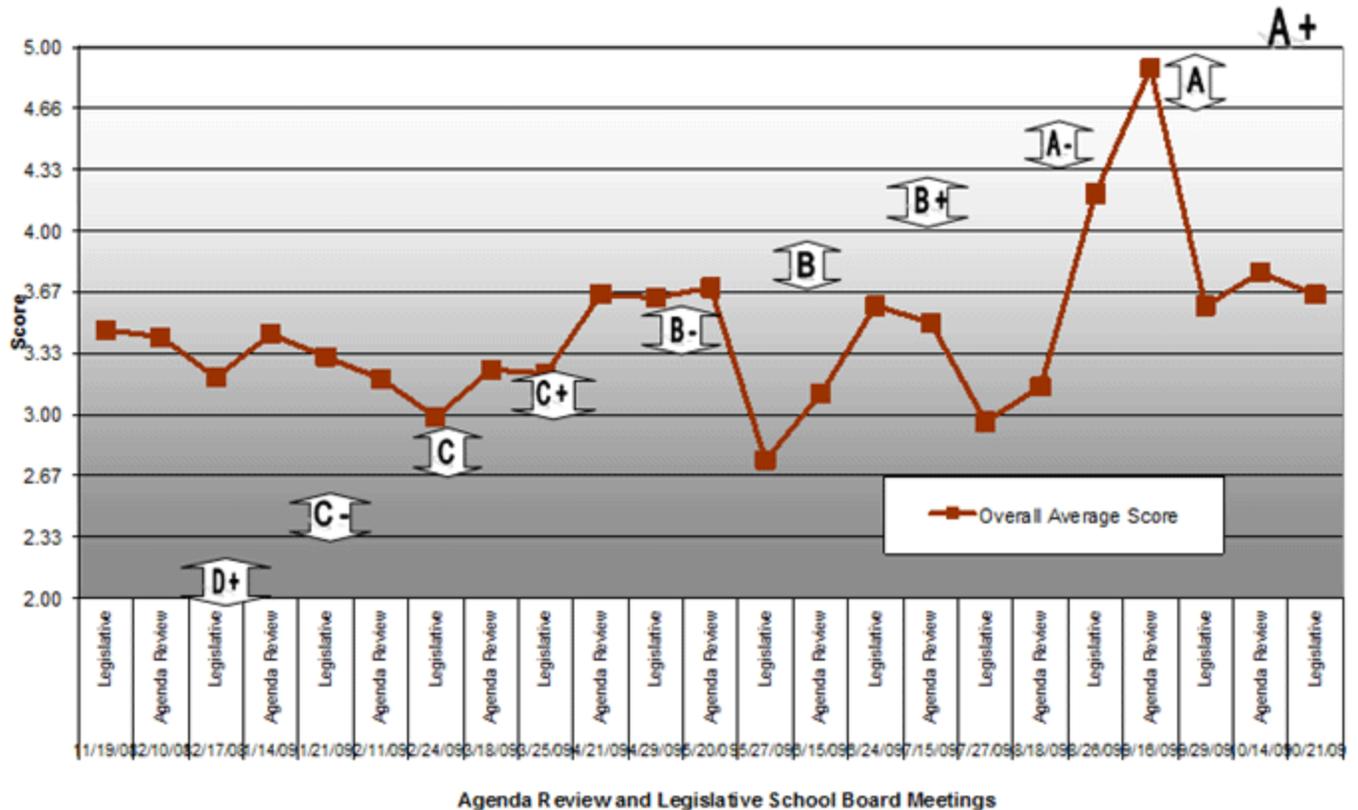
Progress Per Meeting:

After the first set of grades, many of our recommendations were based on transparency and the Board’s score has improved in that area and stayed the highest grade for the last 2 report cards. After the last report card, we asked the Board to have more conversations related to district-wide planning that are based on facts, research and data as a way to improve the competency, role clarity and conduct scores. The Board responded and scores improved. Role clarity, however, has remained the lowest scoring area. Therefore, the majority of our recommendations are for ways to improve within this area.



Since this report card marks the end of 1 year of Board Watch scores, we can see how the overall average score has fluctuated per meeting overtime. The Board’s overall scores have generally been higher in the past few months than they’ve been over the entire past year.

**November 2008- October 2009
Pittsburgh Public School Board Governance**



A+ Schools' Recommendations:

- Currently the public hearing is held before the agenda review meeting. This means the community's opportunity to provide public comment comes before it knows what actions are on the board's agenda. We recommend reversing the order of the public hearing and the agenda review meeting to allow the public more opportunity to speak to relevant and timely issues being considered by the board before the board votes. This alternate meeting order would help the board fulfill its role by hearing from the community in order to make informed choices for the entire district.
- Volunteers report very few instances of policy discussions at the board meetings. They also note that when policy issues are raised it is not always clear if, how, or when the topic comes back to the board for deliberation and consideration. Therefore, we recommend that the board create a deliberate process and time for tracking and addressing new and existing policy issues. The board's current work to revise and update its policy manual provides a great opportunity to make this process deliberate and transparent to the public.
- Our volunteers continue to report difficulty getting in the building and finding the meeting room. Volunteers also continue to report not being in the same room as the board meeting. Moving forward we recommend better, perhaps permanent, signage at

the front door. Additionally, we ask that the Board considers moving all agenda review and legislative meetings to the larger board room enabling more of the public to observe deliberations first hand.

The role of the board is to set and monitor policies that move the district forward in improving student achievement. Part of their very important role as elected officials is to also be the liaison with the community. Therefore we ask that through increased access to deliberations, meaningful engagement with the public and a process for reviewing and monitoring policies, the Board would be more effectively fulfilling their role as leaders of our school district.