

School Works Findings 2014

School climate, positive discipline practices, and staff instability concerns common at high poverty schools.

The findings from A+ Schools' 2014 School Works community action research are set in the context of Teen Bloc's Student Bill of Rights. When putting together their Bill of Rights, our students discussed what they need and want in order to succeed in school.

The findings represent the views of over 400 high school juniors and 26 principals, counselors, and teaching and learning environment specialists in our schools.

The trends are troubling and point to large inequities in our high schools. Students in our most vulnerable schools more often report violations of the basic rights embodied in the Student Bill of Rights. And often, the adults in the building agree with student assessments of school climate.

We believe the following must happen in order for our high schools to better foster our students' success:

- ✂ PPS should adopt the student Bill of Rights and make policy changes to help enforce them.
- ✂ Schools, especially our most vulnerable schools, should organize staff to create positive and supportive school climates that treat students with dignity and respect.
- ✂ All PPS schools should eliminate zero tolerance policies that suspend students on a first offense for minor and subjective infractions.

Key Finding:

👍 Adults and students in vulnerable schools experience greater challenges, especially with school climate and teaching.

Additional Findings:

Positive School Discipline

👍 Students believe discipline to be fairer at schools that use restorative justice practices more frequently.

👍 Chronic absenteeism increases at schools with greater numbers of zero tolerance policies.

👍 Few students report most teachers caring about their lives outside of school.

Academic Resources & Counseling

👍 Few schools report effective systems to transition students to college or career training, and most students only somewhat understand how to apply to college.

Student Participation in Decisions

👍 Students report feeling less able to discuss concerns with adults and participate in decisions than adults reported.