

Definitions and sources of information

All information is from the **2008-09** school year unless noted.

Abbreviations:

PPS: Pittsburgh Public Schools

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 9/09 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 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: PPS (1/09) 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: PPS and individual charter schools.

Student stability rate

Definition: A measure of student stability during one academic year. For district schools, the student stability rate represents the total number of students enrolled for the entire year divided by the official enrollment for the year, which is calculated in October. Charter schools provided similar information. (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 2005-06 school year to the 2008-09 school year. Schools with “n/a” either opened after 2005-06 or were declared “new” in 2006 by PDE due to significant changes in population.

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 the sum total of the number of days each student attended school by the sum total of possible days each student could attend.

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

Teacher daily attendance

Definition: Percentages were determined by dividing the sum total of the number of days each teacher attended school by the sum total of possible days each teacher could attend. 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 by school staff in the 2009-10 school year, excluding programs for students identified as “gifted.” Other services not listed here may be provided by itinerant staff depending on students’ needs. For definitions of services, see “Special Education” on the PPS Web site (www.pps.k12.pa.us). *Note:* By law, district and charter schools must serve students according to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Like school districts, charter schools must not discriminate against students based on disability.

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

Family income status

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

Sources: PPS and individual charter schools.

PSSA tests

Definition: Percentage of students at Proficient/Advanced achievement levels on PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) Reading, Math, Science, and Writing tests, for identified grades; percentage of students at each achievement level on PSSA Reading and Math tests by subgroups* for identified grades or grade spans. 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

above). 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.”
- Subgroup scores are reported as “n/a” when that subgroup had 0-9 students (test scores for fewer than 10 students in a group or subgroup are not reported by PPS or PDE). For K-8 schools, subgroup percentages were calculated separately for each grade span (3-5 and 6-8), rather than by building total. Students’ scores were not included for subgroups that had fewer than 10 students in a grade or grade span.
- 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, PPS Division of Communications & Marketing, and other sources.

Graduation rate

Definition: PDE determines the graduation rate by adding the number of drop-outs in 9th grade in 2005-06, in 10th grade in 2006-07, in 11th grade in 2007-08, and in 12th grade in 2008-09 to the number of 2009 graduates, then dividing the number of 2009 graduates by that total.

Source: PDE.

Percent eligible for the Pittsburgh Promise

Definition: Percentage of 2009 graduating seniors, by race, who met or exceeded the Class of 2009 Pittsburgh Promise grade point average (GPA) criteria of 2.25. This is one of several criteria for eligibility to receive funds from the Pittsburgh Promise (see the district Web site for more information). The Pittsburgh Promise scholarship eligibility indicator reported for district high schools is not reported for charter schools this year, because some charter school students were ineligible due to residency requirements, rather than their GPAs.

Source: PPS.

Seniors planning to attend college

Definition: Percentage of graduates in 2008 who reported that they were planning to attend a two- or four-year college/university or an institution granting a specialized associates’ degree. *Note:* This information is reported by students. Not every student responded.

Source: PDE.

SAT scores

Definition: The SAT is an admissions test required by many colleges.

Sources: 2006-09 SAT average Critical Reading and Mathematics standard scores for each school, PDE (www.pde.state.pa.us/pas/lib/pas/SAT_Scores_Public_Schools_2009.pdf); national and state average scores, College Board.

Percent taking SAT

Definition: Number of 12th graders in 2008-09 who took the SAT divided by the official 12th grade enrollment.

Source: PDE.

Percent taking AP courses

Definition: Number of students, by race, 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 high school program, offered only at Schenley.

Source: PPS.

Note about schools declared “new” in 2006: PDE changed the status of 21 Pittsburgh schools to “new” in 2006, due to shifts in Pittsburgh’s school population caused by school closings, openings, and reconstitutions. For those schools, PDE doesn’t consider scores from previous years for the purposes of its accountability system.

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 2007-08 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.

Additional definitions and sources for charter schools

Tests given by the school

City Charter High School:

Definition: ACT assessments in English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science: standard scores for a cohort of students who took the ACT series—the EXPLORE assessment in 9th grade, the PLAN assessment in 10th grade, and the ACT assessment in 11th grade (a test some students take instead of the SAT). Scores for all subject areas were combined into one composite standard score. The cohort represents students who took the assessment in 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09. The combined scores would remain the same year to year if school growth occurred at the same rate as the national norm group.

Source: City Charter High School.

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park:

Definition: Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (MNCE) for the TerraNova Reading and Mathematics assessments for kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. MNCE is calculated by adding the normal curve equivalent scores of all students in the group and dividing by the total number of students in that group. Test scores were reported on a scale from 1-99, with 50 being an average score.

Source: The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park.

Manchester Academic Charter School:

Definition: Median national percentiles for the TerraNova standardized assessment in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics, for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades.

Source: Manchester Academic Charter School.

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh:

Definition: Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (MNCE) for the TerraNova Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics assessments, in 1st, 2nd, and 4th grades. MNCE is calculated by adding the normal curve equivalent scores of all students in the group and dividing by the total number of students in that group. Test scores were reported on a scale from 1-99, with 50 being an average score.

Source: Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School.

ACT standard scores for 11th grade students

[City Charter High School only]

Definition: The ACT is a college readiness assessment some students take instead of the SAT.

Source: City Charter High School.

Percent of students taking the ACT

[City Charter High School only]

Definition: The number of 11th graders in 2008-09 who took the ACT divided by the total number of 11th graders.

Source: City Charter High School.

Seniors who earned college credit

[City Charter High School only]

Definition: Percentage of students who earned credit for courses they took at the Community College of Allegheny County during their senior year of high school (2008-09).

Source: City Charter High School.

For more information

A+ Schools: www.apluschools.org

Pittsburgh Public Schools: www.pps.k12.pa.us

Career Connections Charter High School: www.careerconnections.org

City Charter High School: www.cityhigh.org

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park: www.environmentalcharterschool.org

Manchester Academic Charter School: www.macsk8.org

Northside Urban Pathways Charter School: www.pathways.k12.pa.us

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School: www.ulpgh.org/programs/charter.asp

Pittsburgh Promise: www.pittsburghpromise.org

Pennsylvania Department of Education: www.pde.state.pa.us, <http://paayp.emetric.net>