



Strategic Plan: Highlights

This past spring, A+ Schools engaged in a strategic planning process that involved interviews, focus groups, surveys, and other forms of data gathering. We revised our vision and purpose statements and refocused the organization on educational equity. Moving forward, we will advocate for positions related to educational equity, strengthen the engagement of African-American students and families, and sharpen our communication efforts. Our work will be organized around themes, beginning with “Great Teaching.”

What do we mean by educational equity? An equitable education system provides each student with the individual support necessary to graduate from high school and complete an advanced certification or degree. Equity does not mean an even split of resources. Instead, it requires strategic allocations to ensure:

- Every classroom has an effective teacher.
- Resources are distributed to schools based on student and school needs.
- All students have access to opportunities such as prekindergarten, quality after-school programming, advanced courses, arts, foreign languages, and career and technical education.
- Students are offered differentiated supports according to need, such as tutoring, enrichment, special education services, and behavior intervention.

What this will look like is expressed in our revised vision statement. We envision a public education system in Pittsburgh where:

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

Why have we chosen great teaching as our first theme? Effective teaching is the most significant school-based contribution to student learning, and our students of color have the most to gain from a great teacher every year in every class.

Over the next three years, we will work with parents and the community to demand change, and to support the district and the teachers union’s efforts to:

- Develop measures of effective teaching that include student achievement, classroom observation, and student feedback
- Enable those measures to be used in making staffing decisions to ensure that our most vulnerable students have effective teachers
- Apply deliberate, sustained effort to create positive teaching and learning environments that enable teachers and students to do their best work in our most vulnerable schools

To see the full report, visit www.aplusschools.org.