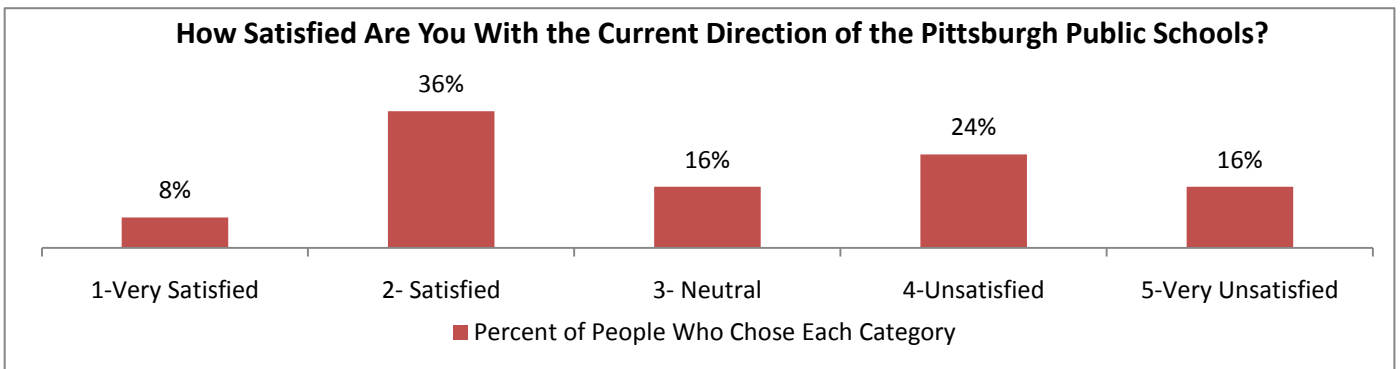
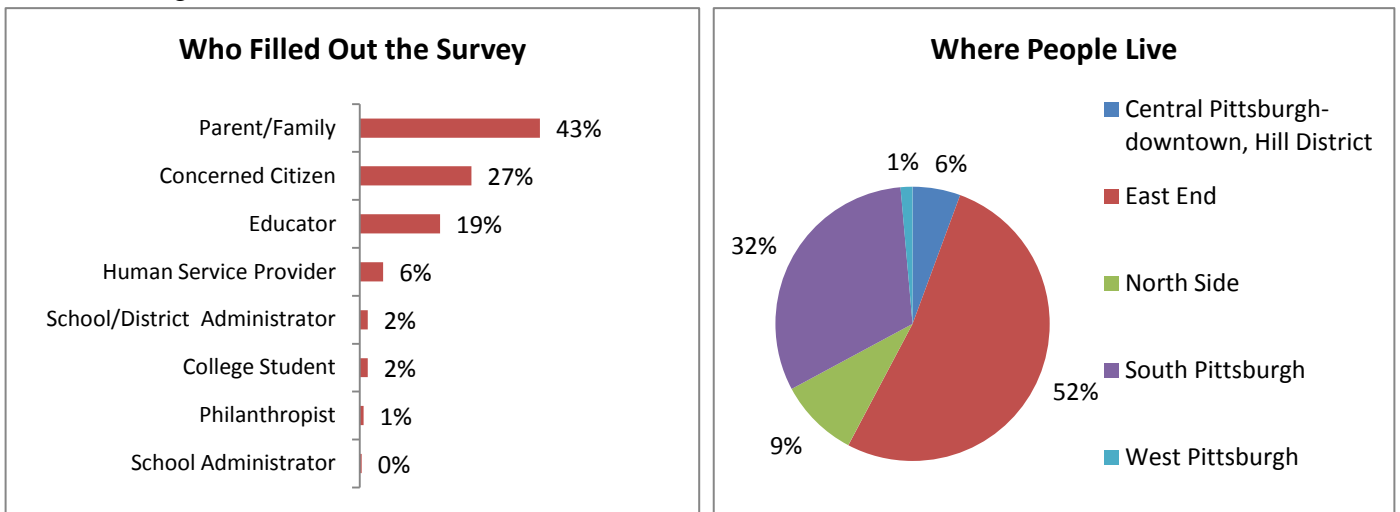


Choosing Our Next Superintendent: Feedback from Members of the Pittsburgh Community

As a school district, we are at a critical juncture as we are in search of the next superintendent. To engage the public and inform the School Board of the community's priorities, A+ Schools with the support of our co-sponsors the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Black Political Empowerment Project - collected public opinions in 2 ways: online and in person. These results are presented to the Pittsburgh Public School Board to inform their process.

The Online Survey

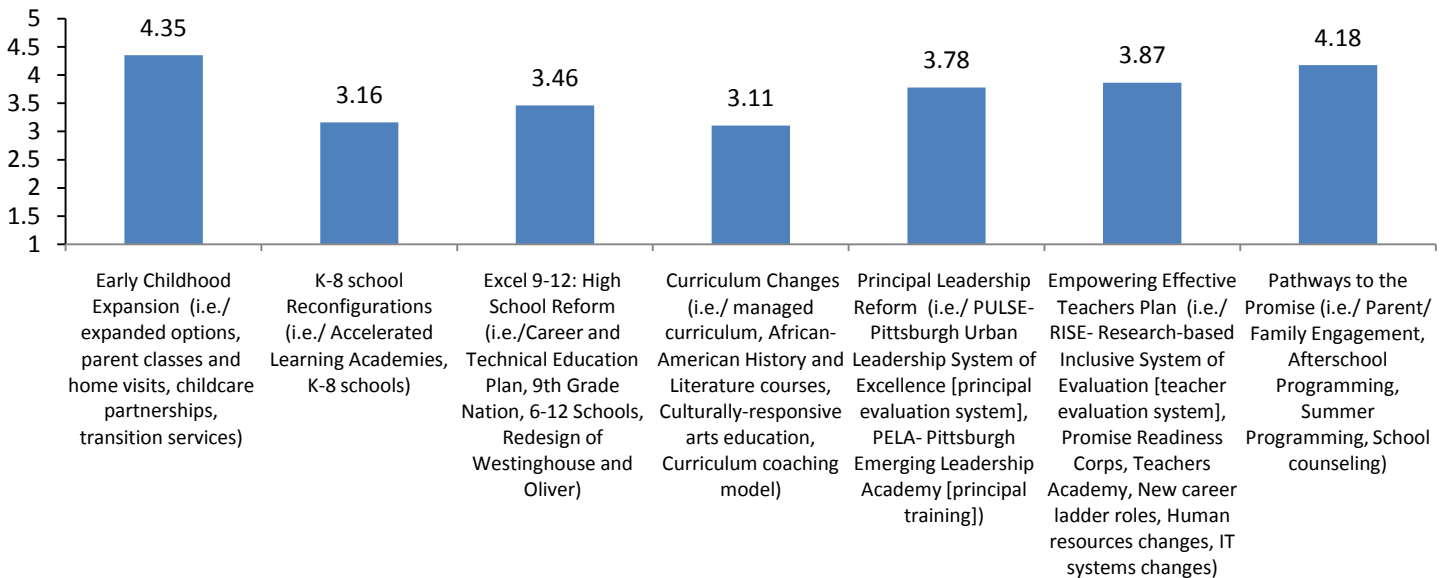
We developed an online survey to ask the public to share their level of support for specific school reform initiatives and what they felt should be priorities of the next superintendent. Of the 213 people that responded, 77% described themselves as White, 14% described themselves as Black, and 8% described themselves as Multi-racial, Asian, Hispanic/Latino or some other race. The graphs below illustrate how they described their role in the school system and where they live. The bottom graph represents their level of satisfaction of the current direction of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.



In addition to overall satisfaction, we asked people to share their level of support for specific initiatives, as well as what they thought should be kept/ grown or re-evaluated/ discontinued. The graph below shows the average rating for each initiative.

Average Support Rating For District Reforms

1= Very Unsupportive, 2= Unsupportive, 3= Neutral, 4= Supportive, 5= Very Supportive



The reform initiatives that survey respondents thought the new superintendent should keep or grow (in order of preference from highest to lowest) were:

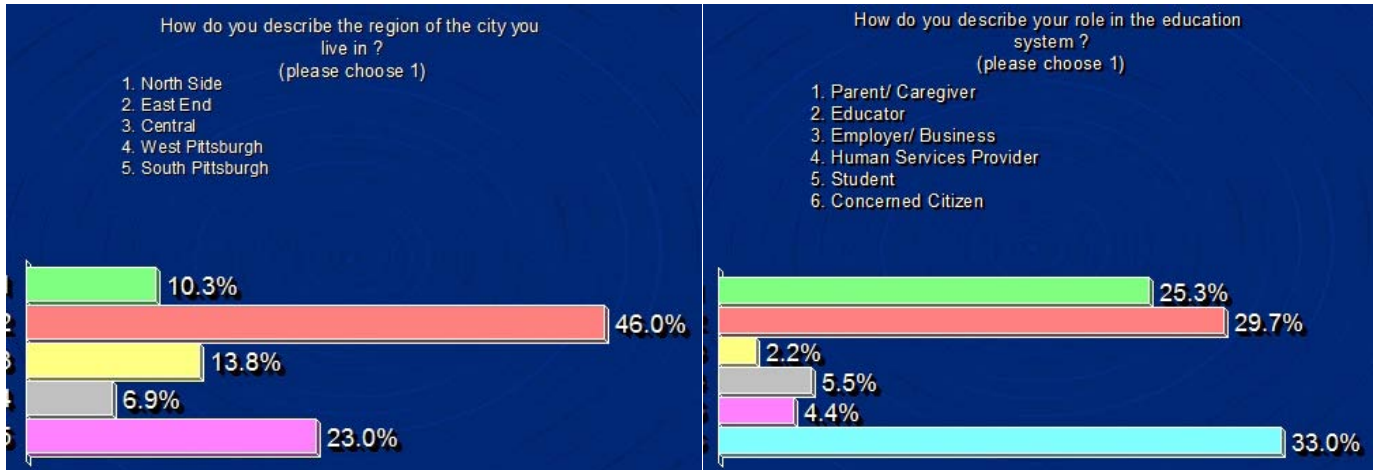
- *Empowering Effective Teachers*- many of the comments were centered on making sure teachers were supported and heard in the process, ensuring the plan was fairly implemented, and raising the standards for teacher performance
- *Pathways to the Promise*- many of the comments voiced support for the Pittsburgh Promise and emphasized the need to grow the parent and family engagement work within this initiative.
- *Early Childhood Expansion*- many comments on this area described the importance of early interventions and services for parents of young children.

The reform initiatives that survey respondents thought the new superintendent should re-evaluate or potentially discontinue (in order of preference from highest to lowest) were:

- *Curriculum Changes*- many of the comments focused on the challenges of managed curriculum, while others questioned the rigor and effectiveness of specific courses
- *K-8 School Reconfigurations*- many of the comments questioned the success of Accelerated Learning Academies and the effect of K-8 school changes
- *High School Reform*- many of the comments questioned new high school configurations, feeder patterns and magnet schools and questioned the potential of the district's career and technical education plan

The Community Meeting

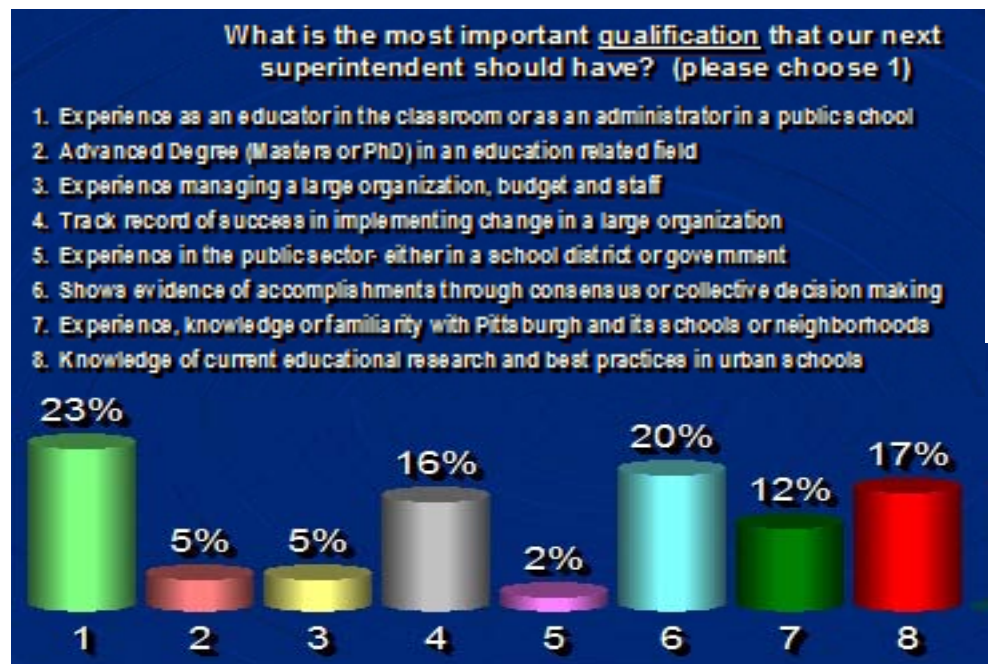
On November 11th, 2010 we hosted- along with cosponsors Urban League and B-PEP - a community meeting at Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Hill District. Of the 103 people that attended, 54.6% described themselves as Black, 38.6% described themselves as White and 6.8% described themselves as either Multi-racial, Asian, Hispanic/Latino or some other race. The images below show where the attendees lived and their role in the education system.



The meeting attendees discussed their views on several questions and A+ Schools used polling software to enable the audience to see the responses from others and choose what they thought was most important. The polling options were developed from both the online survey themes and the discussions that took place at the meeting. The images below depict the results of live polling that was conducted during the meeting. Community members discussed the qualities, qualifications they felt the next superintendent should possess as well as what they thought should be his/her first priority.

The top 3 qualifications wanted in the next superintendent (in order of preference) were:

- *Experience as an educator* - many commented that they felt the experience should be in an urban school system, specifically
- *Evidence of accomplishments reached through consensus*- many commented on the

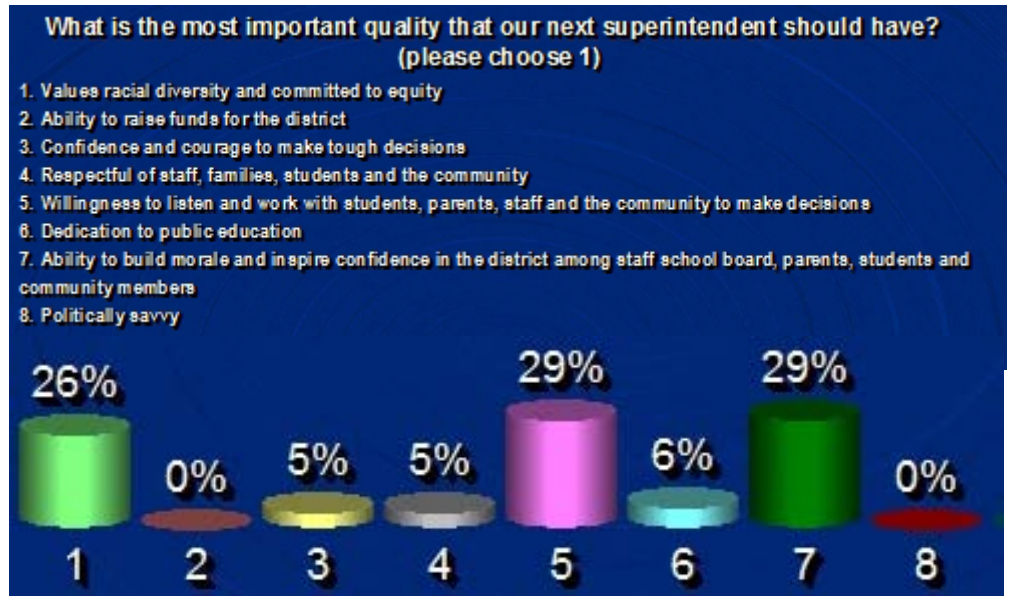


importance of the new superintendent working with from parents, families and the greater community.

- *Knowledge of current educational research and best practices in urban schools-* many also commented that the knowledge should be about what works in districts in reform

The top 3 qualities wanted in the next superintendent (in order of preference) were:

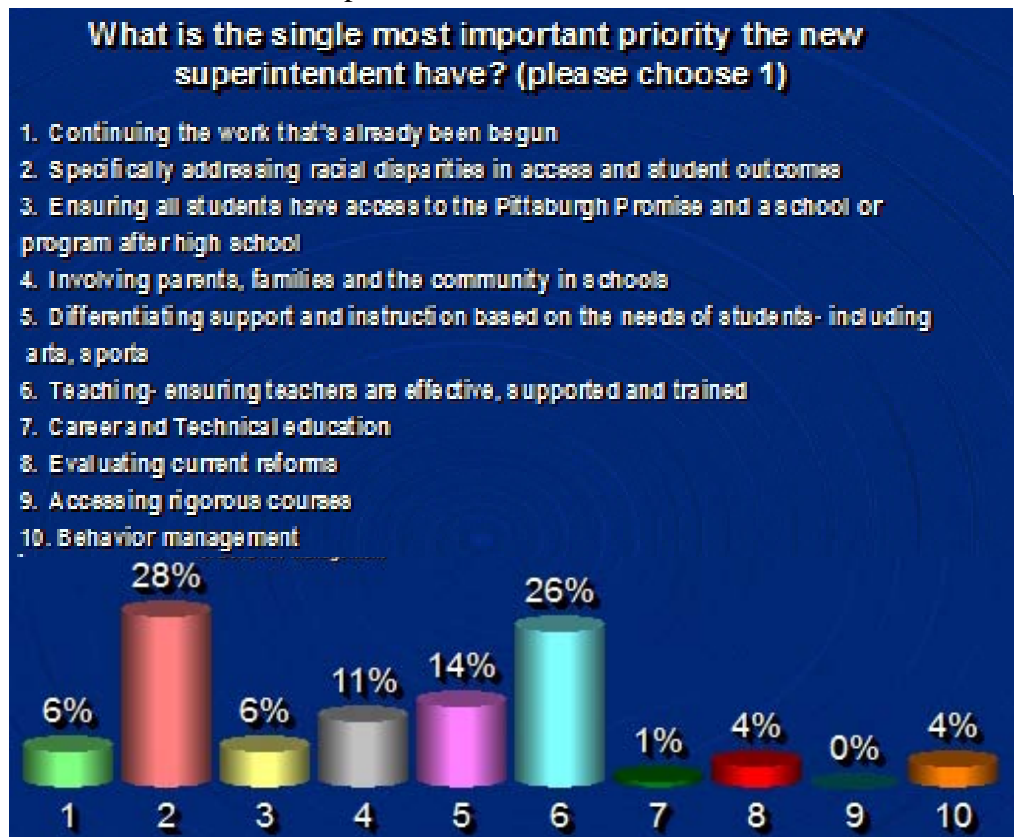
- *Willingness to listen and work with students, parents, staff and the community to make decisions*
- *Ability to build morale and inspire confidence-* many commented on working with families as a strategy to inspire confidence.
- *Values racial diversity and committed to equity-* many commented further by wanting to see evidence of accomplishments related to race and equity



The attendees also discussed what they felt should be the next superintendent’s first priority. Their responses were collected and the result of the poll is below:

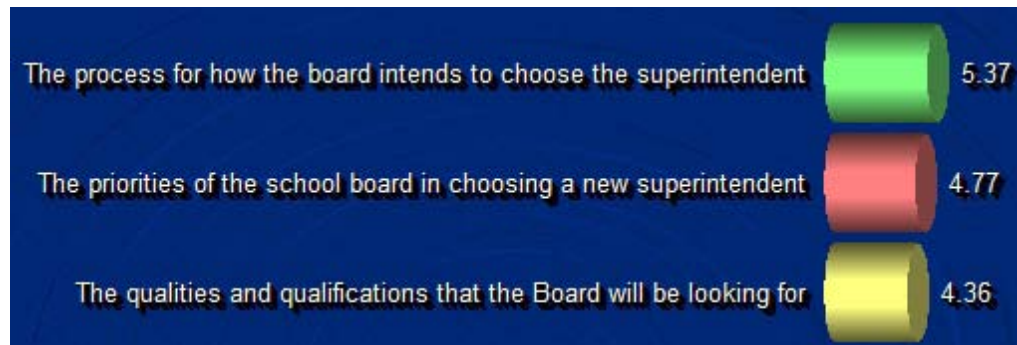
The top 3 priorities (in order of preference) were:

- *Specifically addressing racial disparities-* many discussed the other 2 priorities as ways to address the disparity
- *Teaching*
- *Differentiating support and instruction based on students’ needs*



What information do you need, moving forward?

The meeting attendees prioritized what they would like for the Board's next steps to be. Their priorities are depicted to the right.



In Summary:

Between the online survey and the community meeting, A+ Schools, Urban League, and BPEP were able to engage about 300 people from the community to share their opinion to help inform the superintendent search. There were very few people in the online survey or in the community meeting that felt as though a new superintendent should just start over or undo everything that has been done. The general sense is that there were things that people wanted to be strengthened and others re-evaluated. The public's priorities for school reform can be summarized by:

1. Strengthen the district's commitment to equity- this was a very strong theme in both the survey responses and community discussions
2. Continue focusing on effective teaching – this was specifically demonstrated in both the survey and the discussions
3. Continue and grow the ways that the district provides non-academic supports to students and families; specifically those that are not reaching the same outcomes as white students in the district- this was emphasized by demonstrated support for the Pathways to the Promise work and the specific priorities of the discussion groups to focus student's unique needs and the racial disparity in access and outcomes.
4. Include and involve parents, families and the community in the work ahead- this was echoed in both the survey and especially in the discussions at the community meeting.