Comprehensive Review
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Organization, Instruction, Research, and Operations

Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS)
Michael Casserly, Executive Director
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Agenda

• Introduction and Overview
• Report Highlights
• Major Recommendations
• Future
Transition Team Goals

• Review and evaluate organization and management structure
• Examine overall staffing levels in comparison with other major school systems
• Assess impact of instructional program and disciplinary practices on student outcomes
• Review financial operations and business services for opportunities for improvement
• Develop recommendations to help PPS improve student achievement and optimize administrative structures
Comprehensive Review in Five Areas

- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Curriculum/Instructional Programming
- Budget and Business Service
- Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment
- Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols
Strategic Support Team Process

- Review completed by four Strategic Support Teams made up of 24 senior urban school executives from eight city school districts.
- Interviews with close to 170 key staff, teachers, and community members.
- Review of documents and data.
- Have conducted over 300 such reviews in over 50 major city school systems.
Organizational Structure and Staffing

Promising Practices:

• Many talented and committed staff members at both the central office and school levels who can build a high-functioning organization

• Slightly fewer students per teacher than the median Great City School district 14.0 vs. 16.1

• Somewhat fewer students per school–based administrator than the median Great City School district, 111.3 vs. 114.6

• Lean central office with considerably more students per district-level administrator than the median Great City School district, 465.0 vs. 216, respectively
Organizational Structure and Staffing

Key Finding: *Organizational structure does not support schools, enhance staff work, or assist effective collaboration across staffing units in a way that would boost performance.*

Key Recommendations:

• Consider a reorganization of functions reporting to the superintendent

• Consolidate all research, evaluation and data analysis functions under a new research office

• Bifurcate operational and financial responsibilities

• Clearly define roles and responsibilities of central office staff and networks to better align with organizational goals
Organizational Structure and Staffing

Key Recommendations (cont.):

• Revamp the principal supervisory system under Chief of Schools and reorient to enhance instructional responsibilities and capacities of assistant superintendents

• Appoint or hire a dedicated additional assistant superintendent at the secondary level

• Have Executive Director of PSE and Director of ESL report to Chief Academic Officer (CAO)

• Consolidate federal instructionally-related programs and place under CAO
Instructional Programming and Alignment

Promising Practices

• The Pittsburgh Promise®
• Board’s short-term priorities for the superintendent and goal setting
• District curriculum built roughly around PA Department of Education’s Standards Aligned System
• All pre-K classrooms use the same curriculum and materials
• Parent Hotline
• Monthly Excellence for All Parent Meetings
• Equity Advisory Panel
**Instructional Programming and Alignment**

**Key Finding:** *Instructional systems are weak and disjointed with little in place to enhance student achievement or build the district’s capacity to improve. Ineffective staff accountability.*

**Key Recommendations:**

- Articulate long-term and short-term goals for student learning
- Charge a cross-functional team with developing a strategic plan for managing systemwide change
- Clarify and articulate which instructional decisions the district holds “tight” and what flexibility schools have to tailor instruction
- Fully align curriculum, assessment system, professional development, and interventions with PA Core Standards
Key Recommendations (cont.):

• Decide which literacy and mathematics materials to adopt

• Develop a comprehensive professional development plan to build central office, principal and teacher capacity

• Remove evaluative functions of ITL2s to focus on instructional quality rather than RISE implementation and train as real coaches

• Design and implement a districtwide instructional strategy and program for English Language Learners

• Develop an accountability system for central office staff that ensures responsibility for progress on district’s academic goals
Budget and Business Services

Promising Practices

• Highly skilled and dedicated staff

• Awarded GFOA and ASBO Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting

• 100 percent participation in direct payroll deposit system

• Universal belief that district schools are clean in their appearance

• Communication and responsiveness of the school safety unit
Budget and Business Services

Key Finding: Financial and operations functions could be more effectively organized and strategically managed.

Key Recommendations:

- Consider reorganizing the financial, operations and business services
- Reinstitute the use of analytical business tools to test assumptions, explore alternatives, validate choices, and guide decision making
- Improve budget development and interim financial reporting to the superintendent and school board
Budget and Business Services

Key Recommendations (cont.):

• Improve the accuracy of annual budgets by considering revenue and spending trends
• Conduct comprehensive review of and tighten internal controls
• Create annual business plans for individual departments and units with clearly defined goals and objectives that roll up to district plan
Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment

Promising Practices

• High regard for research staff

• Data warehouse that houses teacher evaluation data to make staffing decision more efficient

• Construction of data warehouse is an accomplishment to build on
Key Finding: Overall lack of data systems, organizational capacity, and program evaluations prevent teachers and principals from having the information they need to improve practice.

Key Recommendations:
• Cultivate a data-driven culture across all levels
• Enact a data governance committee to draft policy and procedures around data collection and use
• Develop a districtwide balanced scorecard system to assess overall school system progress with results transparent to the public
• Set up a regular annual schedule of program evaluations
Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols

Promising Practices

• Student Code of Conduct revised to include progressive discipline techniques before imposing suspensions

• Restorative Practices pilot at 22 schools
Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols

**Key Finding:** No system-wide strategy in place to address school climate and student discipline. High suspension rates fall disproportionately on students of color.

**Key Recommendations:**

- Implement a districtwide PBIS program that provides protocols for minimizing and lost instructional time
- Consider expanding restorative justice practices
- Consider eliminating suspensions in preK-2 that do not involve immediate physical threats to student safety
- More accurately count long-term suspensions
Accomplishments to Date

- Chief of Data, Research, Assessment and Accountability position opened
- Process underway to update preK-5 ELA curriculum to align better with PA Core Standards
- 2017 General Fund Budget includes increases in classroom technology and job embedded professional development
- More inclusive administrative leadership teams/cabinet meeting foster collaboration
Questions?