What about the children,
To ignore is so easy,
So many innocent children,
Would choose the wrong way,
So what about the children,
Remember when we were children,
And if not for those who loved us,
And who cared enough to show us,
Where would we be today?
A Moment for Reflection

Our goal is to enter this work with our children at the center. We want you to just take a moment to think about what resonated with you when you listened to and saw the lyrics from the song “What About the Children.”
Agenda

• Context
• Scope of Work
• Committee Members
• Process
• Recommendations
• Timeline of Next Steps
Context

- PPS Strategic plan emphasis on positive and supportive school culture (Strategic Theme #1).
- PPS discipline data warrants innovative approaches to reducing suspension data trends (comparative statewide data, racial disaggregation data, students with exceptionalities data, etc.).
- Need for greater consistency as a system with comprehensive understanding, documenting, reporting and responding to disciplinary-based situations and potential solutions.
Strategic Theme #1: Create a positive and supportive school culture.

1. Meet the holistic needs of all students.
2. Establish a shared commitment and responsibility for positive relationships with every student, family, and staff member.
3. Create effective family and community partnerships in every school.

Strategic Initiatives:

PHASE 1
1a. Establish a system-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process, that includes Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and restorative practices, implemented through high functioning Student Assistance Program (SAP) teams in every school that are equipped to follow the process with fidelity.
2b. Develop and communicate explicit and consistent expectations for staff interactions with students and families.
3b. Implement a tiered and phased community schools approach.

PHASE 2
1b. Embed elements of social-emotional learning into academic instruction.

PHASE 3
1c. Develop individual student success plans for all students.
3a. Develop effective partnerships among schools, students, families, and community organizations, utilizing a research-based framework that fosters collaboration for student success.

District Vision
All students will graduate high school college, career and life-ready prepared to complete a two- or four-year college degree or workforce certification.

District Mission
The Pittsburgh Public Schools will be one of America’s premier school districts, student focused, well-managed, and innovative. We will hold ourselves accountable for preparing all students to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life.

Strategic Theme #2: Stop and implement a rigorous, aligned instructional system.

Objectives:
1. Establish a rigorous District-wide curriculum and assessment framework that is culturally inclusive.
2. Develop a comprehensive assessment system aligned to grade-level expectations.
3. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

Strategic Initiatives:

PHASE 1
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1b. Develop a comprehensive assessment system aligned to grade-level expectations.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

PHASE 2
1a. Ensure that all professional development for teachers and staff follows research-based and culturally relevant practices.
1b. Provide differentiated instructional support that is based on data and deployed through school-based, district wide, and online learning opportunities.
1c. Ensure that supervisory and support staff who engage in instructional conversations with teachers receive differentiated learning opportunities to be effective in their roles.

PHASE 3
1b. Provide differentiated instructional support that is based on data and deployed through school-based, district wide, and online learning opportunities.
1c. Ensure that supervisory and support staff who engage in instructional conversations with teachers receive differentiated learning opportunities to be effective in their roles.

Strategic Theme #3: Provide appropriate instructional support for teachers and staff.

Objectives:
1. Impact student outcomes by increasing teacher knowledge through a cohesive system of instructional support.

Strategic Initiatives:

PHASE 1
1b. Align instructional and professional development efforts to ensure collaboration between school administrators and staff around the school’s professional development focus.
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

PHASE 2
1a. Ensure that all professional development for teachers and staff follows research-based and culturally relevant practices.
1b. Provide differentiated instructional support that is based on data and deployed through school-based, district wide, and online learning opportunities.
1c. Ensure that supervisory and support staff who engage in instructional conversations with teachers receive differentiated learning opportunities to be effective in their roles.

PHASE 3
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1b. Develop a comprehensive assessment system aligned to grade-level expectations.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

Strategic Theme #4: Foster a culture of high performance for all employees.

Objectives:
1. Attract and retain high-performing staff who hold high expectations for all students.
2. Enhance District-wide systems that promote shared accountability, high expectations, and continuous growth for all employees.

Strategic Initiatives:

PHASE 1
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1b. Develop a comprehensive assessment system aligned to grade-level expectations.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

PHASE 2
1b. Align instructional and professional development efforts to ensure collaboration between school administrators and staff around the school’s professional development focus.
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.

PHASE 3
1c. Ensure that supervisory and support staff who engage in instructional conversations with teachers receive differentiated learning opportunities to be effective in their roles.
1b. Develop a rigorous selection and hiring process that ensures the most effective workforce.
1a. Develop and disseminate a common curriculum framework.
1b. Develop a comprehensive assessment system aligned to grade-level expectations.
1c. Implement an instructional system with aligned and equitably distributed resources.
The Administration shall identify and convene a working group made up of no less than 10, but no more than 20 members.

The working group shall include at least one of each of the following: Board member, administrator, principal, teacher, student, parent or guardian, Equity Advisory Panel member, Local Task Force member and another community representative.

The working group shall be identified and convened no later than July 15, 2017.
✓ The working group will define non-violent minor disciplinary infractions.

✓ The working group will develop and present the definition of non-violent minor disciplinary infractions.

✓ The working group will recommend supports and services needed to implement a ban on the use of out of school suspension for students enrolled in grades below the third grade.

✓ The definition and recommendations will be presented to the Board no later than the November 2017 Education Committee meeting.
Scope of Work

• Establish a Working Group Committee to:
  • Define non-violent minor disciplinary infractions for grades K-2
  • Develop and present the definition of non-violent minor disciplinary infractions and its recommendations for supports and services needed to implement a ban on the use of out of school suspension for students enrolled in grades below the third grade.
Committee Members

- 7 Community Members
- 2 Board Members
- 2 Central Office Members
- 2 Central Office Facilitators
- 2 Teachers
- 6 Principals
- 2 Students

- Meetings to occur every other week starting in August through the end of September (extended through October)
- Complete any necessary pre-work and assignments to facilitate the effectiveness of meeting discussions
- Make final recommendations to the Board
Process

- Independent Facilitator: Ron Porter of RDP Consulting
- 8 meetings were held between August through October 2017
- Additional principal and teacher input was solicited in response to preliminary recommendations
Reference Materials

Articles
• Eight Behaviors for Smarter Teams
• Instead of Suspension
• Ten Alternatives to Suspension
• Rethinking School Discipline
• Racial Disproportionality and Implicit Bias in School Discipline
• Kicked out of Kindergarten

Data
• PPS Suspension Data
• Education Rights Network Infraction Code Data

School District Benchmarking
• Houston Independent School District
• Oakland Unified School District
• Denver Public Schools
The term “crime of violence” means—

• (a) an offense that has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or

• (b) any other offense that is a felony and that, by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.
Focus of Working Group
Violent/Nonviolent Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Level</th>
<th>Current Code of Conduct Status</th>
<th>Working Group Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level One Offenses</td>
<td>Offenses that do not lead to an out-of-school suspension</td>
<td>Not addressed by working group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Two Offenses</td>
<td>Offenses that may lead to an out-of-school suspension</td>
<td>Focus of working group for defining violent/nonviolent offenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Three Offenses</td>
<td>Offenses that lead to an out-of-school suspension</td>
<td>Not addressed by working group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level One
(Offenses that do not lead to an out-of-school suspension)

• Tardiness
• Truancy and Class Cuts
• Inappropriate Personal Property
• Pester ing, Teasing, or Bothering Other Students
• Inappropriate Language or Gestures
• Minor Disruption of School/Bus
• Refusal to Comply with Posted/Published School Norms & Regulations
• Possession of Pagers, Lasers, Radios and Certain Electronic or Telecommunication Devices
• Disruption of Class
Level Three
(Offenses that lead to an out-of-school suspension)

• Assault on a School Employee
• Assault on a Student or Other Person not Employed by the School
• Weapons and Dangerous Instruments
• Drugs
• Arson
Recommendations for Distinguishing Non-Violent and Violent Level 2 Offenses

Level 2 offenses deemed by the Working Group as **Non-Violent**:  
- Unauthorized presence of students during school hours (school or private property)  
- Possession or use of tobacco or electronic smoking devices  
- Academic dishonesty  
- Misuse of computers/electronic device  
- Undesirable group activity  
- Profanity & vulgarity/verbal altercation (to student)  
- Profanity & vulgarity/verbal altercation (to staff)  
- Inappropriate sexual behavior  
- Repeated level I or II infractions  
- Terroristic threats or conspiracy to commit violent acts
Recommendations for Distinguishing Non-Violent and Violent Level 2 Offenses

Level 2 offenses deemed by the Working Group as *Violent*:

- Damage, destruction or vandalism of property
- Harassment
- Fighting
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Hazing
- Physical Aggression/Altercation
- Theft/Robbery

*These offenses align with 18 U.S. Code § 16 Definition of Violence and/or PA Criminal Code.*
### Violent/Nonviolent Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Aligns with 18 U.S. Code § 16 Definition of Violence</th>
<th>Aligns with PA Criminal Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damage, destruction or vandalism of property</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fighting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(Disorderly Conduct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying/Cyberbullying</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Physical Aggression/Altercation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(Disorderly Conduct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft/Robbery</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fighting and Physical Aggression fall under "Disorderly Conduct" in PA Criminal Code.
Top 5 Recommendations: Supports

The most frequent recommendations included:

1. One counselor and one social worker for every school according to national standard of 1:250 student to staff ratio outlined by the American School Counseling Association and the National Association of School Social Workers.

2. All staff should be provided professional learning in the areas of mediation, anger management and de-escalation strategies (before they are on the job and ongoing).

3. A minimum of two general education paraprofessionals/classroom assistants in every building. Ideally, one of the paraprofessionals should have specific expertise in addressing the needs of learners with IEP’s.

4. A cool-down room in every building with a full-time practitioner that uses restorative practices strategies. There should be a designated intervention classroom led by a certified regular education and special education teacher.

5. One Restorative Practices Coordinator/staff member in every building according to Oakland (CA) Unified and Houston School Districts.
Recommendations: Supports (con’t)

1. One counselor and one social worker for every school according to national standard of 1:250 student to staff ratio outlined by the American School Counseling Association and the National Association of School Social Workers.
Recommendations: Supports (con’t)

Rationale:

• Current PPS process for providing needed counseling support at the elementary levels is not equitable. Some of the high need schools are under-resourced with one counselor and/or social worker for 500 students.
• Professional counseling assistance can support positive behavioral change for youth, particularly for those demonstrating challenging behaviors.
• The competencies of both counselors and social workers must include ability to address trauma induced behaviors of youth.
• Students with IEP often require specific and sometimes complex interventions. Counselors and Social Workers should be trained to address the needs of students who likely do not respond to “traditional/mainstream” interventions.
2. All staff should be provided professional learning in the areas of mediation, anger management and de-escalation strategies (before they are on the job and ongoing).
Rationale:

• Educators can benefit from targeted training on verbal de-escalation.
• Several members emphasized the importance of having School Officer and Security staff fully trained in de-escalation and anger management techniques.
• Extreme disruptive and/or inappropriate behaviors can be redirected by educators who have received a comprehensive array of proactive and responsive trainings geared to build positive school culture and address challenging behaviors.
  • Positive examples of effective training within benchmarked districts: *Within Oakland Unified, there are specific and prescriptive description of roles and responsibilities for adults focused on prevention of misbehavior.*
Recommendations: Supports (con’t)

3. A minimum of two general education paraprofessionals/classroom assistants in every building. Ideally, one of the paraprofessionals should have specific expertise in addressing the needs of learners with IEP’s.
Rationale:

- The classroom presence of a professional(s) with expertise in addressing the needs of youth with emotional/psychological imbalances can be invaluable to stabilizing the learning environment.
- Many Working Group members stressed the importance of having learning support expertise in the classroom. Significant numbers of elementary students do not enter school ready to learn. Learning support for these students at an early age can interrupt the long-term trajectory of a student.
4. A cool-down room in every building with a full-time practitioner that uses restorative practices strategies. There should be a designated intervention classroom led by a certified regular education and special education teacher.
Recommendations: Supports (con’t)

Rationale:
• The members of the Working Group were nearly unanimous in endorsing cool down rooms that made use of Restorative Practices. One classroom would be geared for students and there would also be a designated location for educators to also cool off.
5. One Restorative Practices Coordinator/staff member in every building according to Oakland (CA) Unified and Houston School Districts.
Rationale:

• The Oakland (CA) Unified and Houston School Districts experienced success in reducing suspensions in part due to having this position in each of its schools.
• Assures that new staff members receive timely professional development and are oriented to Restorative Practices tenets; serves as a liaison with Central Office to assure consistency in implementation as well as mutual sharing of promising practices.
## Cross-Reference of Recommendations by Theme/Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes from Oct 2017 Feedback</th>
<th>Additional Staff (para, LES, counselor, social worker, etc.)</th>
<th>In-School &amp; Saturday Detention/Restorative Programming</th>
<th>Social/Emotional Skills Curriculum</th>
<th>Enhanced Mental Health Partnerships</th>
<th>IEP Support</th>
<th>Behavior/Trauma/Crisis/Restorative Practices Training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
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### Cross-Reference of Recommendations by Theme/Group

<table>
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<th>Themes from Oct 2017 Feedback</th>
<th>Additional Support to Schools/Teachers w/High Suspension Rates</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Parent Involvement</th>
<th>Implicit Bias/ Cultural Relevance Training</th>
<th>Expanding Existing Services (PBIS, Restorative, Community Schools,)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thank You to the Committee

We want to offer heartfelt appreciation for the members of the committee who dedicated their time and expertise. Many contributed 20+ hours to participate on the committee.