Advocates for African American Students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (AAASPPS)

Overview of Issues and Concerns

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AAASPPS Membership

Wanda Henderson
Celeta Hickman
Tamanika Howze
Tony Mitchell
James Stewart
PHRC-PPS CONCILIATION AGREEMENT

GOALS

AA

ACHIEVEMENT GAP

RAISE AA

ACHIEVEMENT

PHRC–PPS

AGREEMENT

Students

Teachers

Principals/Administration

Parents/Community

School District

State (PDE)

SIX AGREEMENT AREAS

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

CULTURALLY

COMPETENT

ASSESSMENT

CULTURALLY

RESPONSIVE

Note: AA = African American
Areas of Concern Identified by AAASPPS

1. Culturally Relevant/ Responsive Education
2. Parent Engagement/ Empowerment
3. Principal Leadership and Modeling
4. Discipline/Special Education
5. School Violence
6. Professional Teacher Development
7. Evaluation of Change
AAASPPS Concerns

1. Culturally Relevant/Responsive Education

• Limited research regarding “Best-Practices”

• Limited familiarity with “Culturally Responsive” pedagogies

• Inadequate resources devoted to curriculum development and teacher training

• Teacher/Student cultural mismatches


AAASPPS Concerns (cont)

2. Parent Engagement/Empowerment

- Lack of African American parent and community involvement

- Unnecessarily complex school-home communication practices that are not parent-friendly
AAASPPS Concerns (cont)

3. Principal Leadership and Modeling

- Leadership and communication styles that adversely affect students’ and parents’ perceptions of teachers, administrators, and the district

- Leadership and management problems created by school closings, principal shifts, and subsequent student transitions across various neighborhoods
AAAASPPS Concerns (cont)

4. Discipline/Special Education

• Continued overrepresentation of Black students, particularly males, in discipline, special education, and other “marginalizing” programs

• In 1997-98, 31.6% of Black Males were suspended at least once, compared to 18.6% for all other males.
AAASPPS Concerns (cont)

6. School Violence

- Disturbances and fights catalyzed by student, teacher, and principal reassignments
- Underreporting of disturbances and fights
- Lack of a systematic plan to reduce violence
6. Professional Teacher Development

- Limited pre-service or in-service training in culturally responsive education and cross-cultural communication

- Cross-cultural communication barriers that limit effective interactions with parents’
AAASPPS Concerns (cont)

7. Evaluation of Change

- Organizational and operational changes that create instability across the district and adversely affect students’ learning, motivation, and safety

- Limited use of proven research, best practices, and cultural knowledge to guide decision-making
7. Evaluation of Change (cont.)

- Incremental changes in the absence of a comprehensive strategy will make implementing and managing the PHRC-PPS Conciliation Agreement problematic.