

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Ebony Pugh 412- 622-3616

Educators Report Overall Progress on Second Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

PITTSBURGH, PA—Superintendent Linda S. Lane released survey results today showing an increase in the number of teachers and other educators that report overall satisfaction with the teaching and learning conditions in the District. The Teaching and Learning survey, conducted by the New Teacher Center, reveals that for the most part Pittsburgh educators are more positive about their teaching and learning conditions in 2011 than they were in 2010. Results further show that eight out of 10 educators (79%) report that their school is a good place to work and learn. Nearly 3,000 educators (93%) participated in the survey, up from the 85% that participated on the District's first survey conducted last year.

“We know that great teaching and learning conditions support effective teaching, which is the most important school-based factor in advancing student achievement. That's why, through our collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers we made enhancing the teaching and learning environment a priority in our Empowering Effective Teachers plan.” said Superintendent Lane. “I am pleased to report that, as a result of last year's survey, educators worked together to improve the teaching and learning environments in their schools. We know that we need to get better in order for students to get better. We are seeing promising growth in almost all areas, and will use this year's data to continue that growth.”

As a result of data generated from last year's Teaching and Learning Conditions survey, principals, teachers, and school staff developed specific plans for improving the conditions in their school. To facilitate this work, a teacher was selected in each school to serve as a Teaching and Learning Environment Liaison. The liaison took on the additional responsibility of leading the development and implementation of a District strategy to drive improvements in the teaching and learning environment in every school.

Of the eight constructs surveyed, the District saw significant positive growth in the areas of Time, Teacher Leadership, and School Leadership.

While educators still report the need for more time to collaborate and teach, conditions related to the area of Time have improved since 2010. The most growth (13%) was observed in the area of Time related to efforts made to minimize the amount of paperwork. Progress in the area Time improved in all areas.

- **67%, up from 59%, report that they have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students;**
- **67%, up from 54%, report they have enough time available to collaborate with their colleagues;**

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- **Nearly six out of 10 agree that the amount of non-instructional time is sufficient (59% up from 51%)**

In the conditions related to Teacher Leadership, important growth was observed in areas of teacher empowerment and decision making.

- **74% of educators, up from 66% in 2010, agree that teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.**
- **75% of educators, up from 68% in 2010, agree that teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.**
- **86% of educators, up from 79% in 2010, agree teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.**

While smaller increases are present on questions related to building professional work relationships, most agree (93%) that teachers are held to high standards. Seventy-two percent of educators agree that school leadership made sustained efforts to address teachers concerns around leadership issues, an increase of 8%. Of the conditions related to School Leadership key gains have been made in teacher evaluation, leadership consistency, and the effectiveness of school improvement teams.

- **78% agree the procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent, an increase from 70% in 2010.**
- **77% agree the school improvement team at their school provides effective leadership, an increase from 70% 2010.**
- **83% agree that they receive feedback that can help them improve teaching, an increase from 76% in 2010.**

As District educators are more positive about their teaching and learning conditions in 2011, conditions related to teachers access to state and local data in time to impact instructional practices declined 2%. Also declining two percent in 2011 was educators' agreement in the reliability and speed of Internet connections.

Additional survey results include:

- 82% of educators agree that their school environment is safe, up from 78% last year;
- 48% of educators agree that they have autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery, up from 38% last year;
- 83% of educators agree that teachers were effective leaders in their school, up from 79% last year;
- 74% of agree that faculty are recognized for accomplishments, up from 70% last year;
- 65% agree the feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them, up from 61% last year.

The improvement of the teaching and learning environment is one of the key initiatives of the District's **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan. Pittsburgh was the only district to receive a grant from the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** that included the teaching and learning environment as a strategic priority. As a part of this plan and its participation in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, the District and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) worked with the New Teacher Center to conduct an anonymous survey of all Pittsburgh teachers. The goal of the MET project is to help educators

and policy makers identify and support good teaching by improving the quality of information available about teacher practice.

As a result of last year's data, for 2011 seven District teachers started new roles as Learning Environment Specialist at seven high needs schools. Learning Environment Specialists are teachers who demonstrate strength in positive classroom management, leadership and peer coaching skills. These teachers will help to ensure that school-based goals for a positive teaching and learning environment are being met. Now with two years of results, the District is able to identify schools that have made progress and learn from them, and identify schools where progress has not been made in order to supply targeted support.

More Information

Of the nearly 3,000 educators who participated in the survey, responses were received from 2,048 teachers, 56 principals, 22 assistant principals, 357 paraprofessionals, and 186 other education professionals. To view a copy of the Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey, please visit www.pittsburghteachingconditions.org for the full report of the District-level survey results or contact the Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920.

About Pittsburgh Public Schools

Pittsburgh Public Schools is in the midst of a transformational plan called *Excellence for All*, initiated in 2006, designed to dramatically improve the performance of our students, staff and schools. For students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the future is now brighter, thanks to The Pittsburgh Promise[®], a community commitment to help students and families plan, prepare and pay for continuing education after high school. Graduates of the Pittsburgh Public Schools can earn up to \$40,000 in Promise scholarships over 4 years. To date, approximately 2,500 students have received scholarships from The Pittsburgh Promise.

Pittsburgh Public Schools is the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and second largest in Pennsylvania. The District serves approximately 27,000 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12.

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