

For Immediate Release
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As The World Celebrates Teachers, Pittsburgh Public Schools Receives Overall Thumbs Up From Its Educators

*District releases results of its 1st Teaching and Learning
Conditions Survey on World Teachers Day*

PITTSBURGH, PA—Seventy-eight percent of Pittsburgh Public Schools educators agree that their school is a good place to work and learn. The finding was among the results of the Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey, conducted by the New Teacher Center, of more than 2,150 District educators. In conjunction with World Teachers Day, the District released the results of its first independent survey of educators about their working conditions and school environments.

“As a part of our efforts to ensure that all teachers have what they need to be highly effective, we must work to continually improve the teaching and learning environment,” said Superintendent Mark Roosevelt. “For the first time we have data that will guide our work to ensure that our school environments support effective teaching and foster student learning.”

One of the key initiatives of the District’s **Empowering Effective Teachers** plan is the improvement of the teaching and learning environment. 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. The final response rate (85%) of Pittsburgh teachers was the highest among schools nationwide that participated in an initial survey.

“The participation rate of our members in this survey is outstanding and reinforces the importance of positive teaching and learning environments,” said PFT President John Tarka. “We believe this data will be used to inform positive change for teachers and students at the school level and throughout the District.”

In addition to having more than three-quarters of educators reporting overall satisfaction with their school:

- **77% strongly agree that parent and guardians are supportive of them and their schools;**
- **74% indicate they intend to stay teaching at their current school;**
- **78% report that they teach in a school that is safe.**

Educators are additionally positive of the facilities they work in:

- **More than two-thirds believe teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials and resources;**

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- **7 out of 10 are positive about their school buildings with 75% reporting adequate work space , 70% saying their building is clean and well maintained, and 75% believing the physical environment of classrooms support teaching and learning.**

Educators agree that school leadership matters:

- **92% report that teachers are held to a high professional standard for delivering instruction;**
- **74% report that teacher performance is assessed objectively;**
- **76% say they receive feedback that can help them improve their teaching.**

Educators report that instructional practices support and promote student learning:

- **9 out of 10 educators report using assessment data to inform instruction;**
- **85% report that local assessment data is available in time to impact instructional practices;**
- **65% agree that that state assessment data is available in time to impact instructional practices.**

While the District had positive results overall, there were areas of concern raised by educators that the District is committed to addressing. Although approximately 70% of educators agree that students understand expectations for their conduct, only 54% agree that school administrators consistently enforce the rules for student conduct. Fewer (45%) agree that students in their schools follow the rules of conduct. Additionally, 66% of educators report that teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction, but only about half agree that teachers play at least a moderate role in issues that impact their practice. Additional concerns include the following:

- **59% agreed that they had sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.**
- **51% agreed that there is sufficient non-instructional time in their day.**
- **42% agreed that efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork.**
- **42% of new teachers who received mentoring services never saw their mentor teacher teach and 33% were never observed by their mentor.**

To support the work of creating excellence in the teaching and learning environments district-wide, each school now has a Teaching and Learning Environment Liaison. This liaison is a teacher, who has taken 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.

“The addition of the Teaching and Learning Environment Liaisons and the use of data in Pittsburgh is unprecedented nationally,” said Eric Hirsch, Director of Special Projects, New Teacher Center. “At the New Teacher Center we have implemented similar surveys across 15 states and hundreds of districts and no one has committed the resources or developed a more comprehensive plan to improve teaching conditions.”

More Information

Of the more than 2,000 educators who participated in the survey, during the months of April and May, 2010, responses were received from 1,983 teachers, 45 principals, 15 assistant principals and 118 other education professionals. To view a copy of the Positive Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey, please visit <http://teachingconditions.org/pittsburgh> for the full report of the District-level survey results or contact the Parent Hotline at 412-622-7920.

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