



## PEP Rally

*Keeping the "neighbor" in our neighborhood schools*

Good evening,

My name is Dave Breingan and I'm a community organizer with Lawrenceville United's PEP Rally program, which works intensively with three of Lawrenceville's neighborhood schools and families in those feeder areas.

Having worked very closely with many parents, students, teachers, administrators, and neighborhood organizations over the past two years, I wanted to share some of the qualities that I think the board should look for during the search for a new superintendent.

First, the new superintendent should share the priorities of Pittsburgh Public Schools around equity, positive school climates, high achievement, and innovation. We need a superintendent who can build on the positive work that the district is doing in these areas, while also having a clear vision for how to significantly improve outcomes for our students. When only half of our third graders are reading at grade level, and there were 172 out of school suspensions for kindergartners last year, the status quo is simply unacceptable.

For any vision to be successful, it needs to be shared, and so I would encourage the board to seek a candidate that has a proven track record of building strong partnerships and valuing input from many different stakeholders. We need a superintendent that prioritizes family, student and community engagement and wants to involve families, students, and neighborhoods in shaping policy and making decisions.

I also hope that the board chooses a superintendent that has the commitment and experience to address some of the issues in the district that our families and school staff care about.

We would like to see still greater outcomes when it comes to **equity**:

- Dramatically reducing the disproportionate use of suspensions against students of color and students with IEPs and further promoting positive behaviors and the use of **restorative practices**.
- **More resources for ESL students**. With Pittsburgh becoming a more welcoming city, we need to invest in Pittsburgh Public's commendable ESL department to serve the growing population of immigrant and international families.
- **Improve diversity in the recruitment of staff**.

We would also like to see a more responsive and transparent central office, including:

- **Greater direct access for parents** and more follow-up for parents who take the time to speak at public hearings or bring up issues.
- **A more transparent and pro-active system for solving classroom size issues** before the beginning of the school year, so that families know exactly what to expect and can plan accordingly.
- A **more transparent budget** that reflects the different needs of different schools.
- **More autonomy given to school principals**, and more support for helping them to achieve their goals.
- **A much better system for transitioning students with special needs into kindergarten to set them up for success**.



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Lastly, I would encourage the board to make this public input process as transparent as possible by detailing with the public how the input received in January will be collected and processed, and sharing as much of it as possible with the community.

Thank you for your time and your service!

Dave Breingan  
Community Organizer

**LAWRENCEVILLE**



**UNITED**

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