



Feedback and Findings Meeting

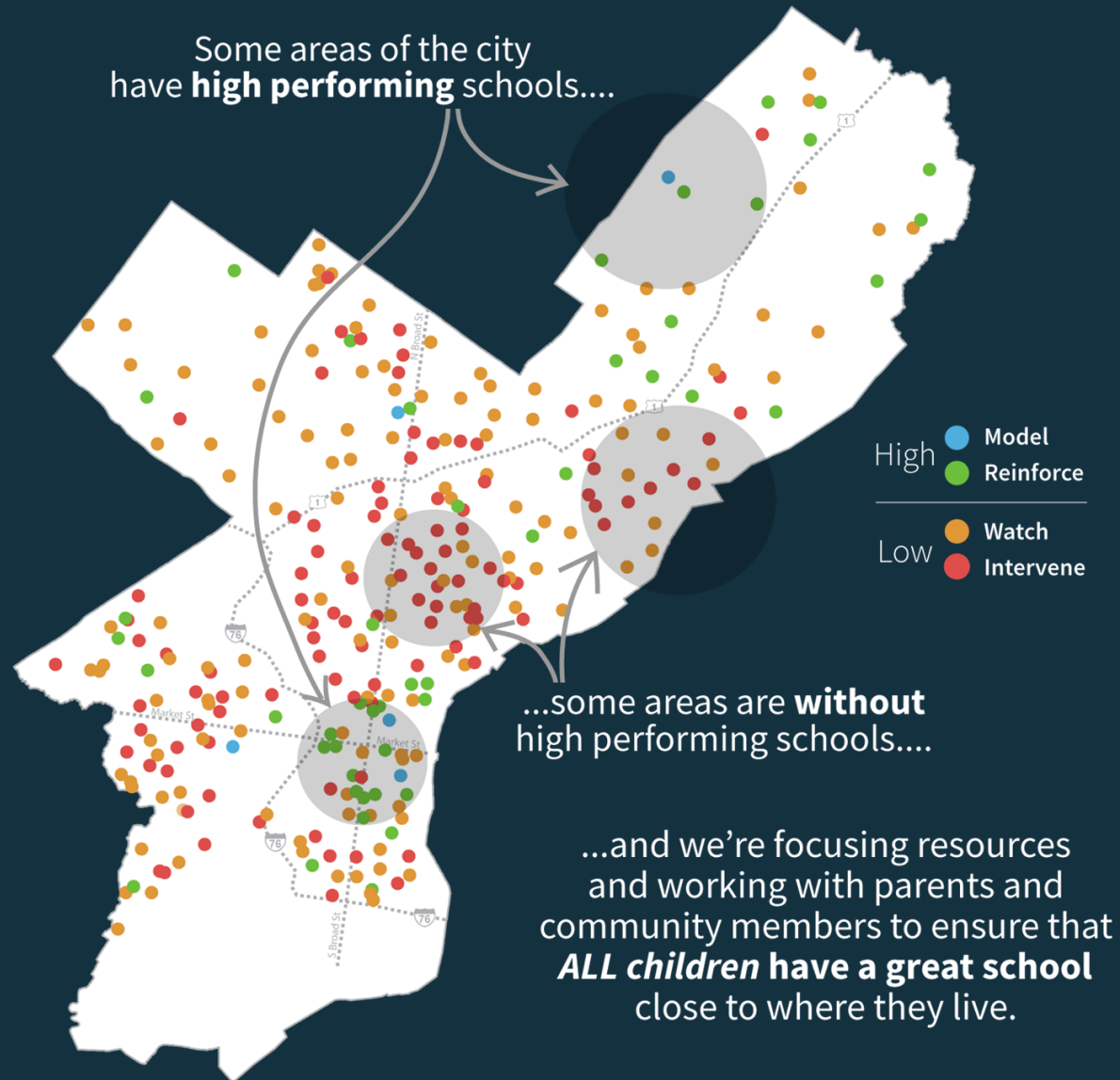
Steel Elementary School

November 20, 2017



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

All children deserve **a great school** close to where they live.





Agenda

- Why We're Here
- Feedback and Findings
- Questions
- Additional Ideas
- Next Steps



Why is my school being considered?

Steel Elementary School

SPR

3-year SPR trend

2013-14 2014-15 2015-16



3-year SPR average

15.0

Key Data

2015-16 Performance

Reading Achievement*

10%

Math Achievement*

1%

Attendance^

34%

* School Year 2015-16 performance for achievement equals the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the English language arts and math PSSA exams. ^Attendance equals the percentage of students attending school 95% or more of school days.



Important Notes

- Becoming a charter school is not an option for Steel.
- Closure is not an option for Steel.
- The Steel school community created a plan for school improvement in 2014. This plan and findings gathered in this process will inform what resources and supports Steel needs to improve student learning.



Overview of Main Findings from School Quality Review

Strengths

- Tracking and recognizing student behavior
- Leaders and some staff model and reinforce appropriate behaviors
- Parent volunteers
- Use of technology

Growth Areas

- School culture and climate
- Communication
- Follow through on school-wide systems
- Homework and afterschool activities

Please record feedback on the cards you were given:

- 1) Which findings and feedback matched your experience, and which ones surprised you?
- 2) What else do you think would help improve students' academic performance?
- 3) What are other ways in which the school could involve parents and the community?



Overview of Main Findings from parents and community members

Strengths

- Longstanding middle school staff
- Teaching staff that represents the student body
- Vista to support parents and community partnerships

Growth Areas

- School cleanliness
- Safety
- Student supports

Please record feedback on the cards you were given:

- 1) Which findings and feedback matched your experience, and which ones surprised you?
- 2) What else do you think would help improve students' academic performance?
- 3) What are other ways in which the school could involve parents and the community?



School Quality Review

Purpose:

Identify main factors that support learning or limit learning

Process:

- 2 day site visit
- 15-20 classroom observations
- Meetings with the school leader
- Student, staff, parent focus groups
- Staff survey



Stakeholder Feedback

Forums and participants

In addition to the School Quality Review focus groups led by Cambridge, Temple facilitated:

Kickoff meeting

Community input and ideas meeting

Three parent/family focus groups

37 Parents, students, family members

10 Staff members

28 Community members



Feedback and Findings

Please record feedback on the cards you were given:

- 1) What did or didn't surprise you?
- 2) What else would help students?
- 3) How else can we involve families?

Strengths:

- Steel has established systems for tracking and recognizing student behaviors.
 - a. The use of Class Dojo is prominent and shared throughout grades and classrooms. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators spoke of the Class Dojo system as a positive reinforcement for expected behaviors.
 - b. While in classrooms and hallways, some interactions included positive reinforcement and demonstration of care.
 - i. For example, a teacher took time to speak one-on-one with a student placed in the hallway for misbehaving. When the teacher returned to the classroom, they stated, "Thank you for working independently while I was outside of the door."
 - ii. Another example includes a teacher reviewing a student's workbook and saying, "See I told you, you could do it."



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- Every teacher has access to technology and some teachers are using technology effectively to engage students.
 - a. Whiteboards, computers, and laptops were evident throughout the school.
 - b. Curriculum and other school-wide documents are stored in Google drive.
 - c. Teachers in many classes were observed using interactive whiteboards connected to the internet to acknowledge and record positive behaviors by awarding Class Dojo points.
 - d. In a first-grade class, students had earned a “dance party” where the teacher played an educational jam video for students to sing and dance along. Once the video concluded, the teacher and students transitioned smoothly into the math lesson. All students were engaged and showed evidence of a clear routine, ensuring effective use of instructional time and wasting no instructional time on behavioral challenges.



Feedback and Findings

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- 1) What did or didn't surprise you?
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Strengths:

- Steel has a long-standing middle school staff.

“Like most of the middle schools in the city have a teacher shortage. Like five teachers missing in the middle school building. And we don't have those issues, that's a plus. We have dedicated teachers. And half of our middle school staff have been here for years. And those are the ones who stuck through the fight. Now that I'm thinking, all those teachers who are stable teachers are fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade.”

-- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- Parents regularly volunteer at the school and have created an informal system for making sure they are present during different times throughout the school week.
 - a. During the parent focus group meeting, parents reported keeping a weekly schedule, informally amongst themselves, to ensure they are volunteering in the school at different times throughout each day. This comes from a desire to “keep our kids safe, especially when going to other classes or lunch.”
 - b. Parents reported speaking with certain teachers regularly at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. They also reported participating in family movie night and awards assemblies when such events are scheduled.
 - c. A core of the parent population desire to be partners in their child(ren)’s education and development.



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Strengths:

- Parents appreciate and understand the importance of having a staff that represents the primarily African American student body.

“Our teachers are invested into this community. Black teachers can educate Black children, this is an anomaly and if they give us the right resources to make this work, it will work. Our teachers are invested into being sure our kids are educated because our children are our future. And it's not generic, I'm gonna be very clear. Black children are going to fill in the place for us black folks as professionals wherever we go, we need to be sure that we're able to compete at the next level.”

-- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- Steel has a community partnerships coordinator working with parents.

“So last year when the grant proposal and the request for Vista came up, I wrote to Vista, got Mr. Dennis's name on it, and then he wrote one as well, so we ended up with a Vista. Because we need a Vista because I can't be in the school all day. So she does community partnerships, she's been doing our flyers. She reminds us when we have stuff on the counter that it needs to happen.” -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- School leaders and some staff model and reinforce expectations of appropriate behaviors.
 - a. Every observed interaction between the principal and teachers, staff, students, and parents demonstrated care and a desire to support individuals/families.
 - b. The principal, co-principal, and counselor were present in classrooms, teacher meetings, and in hallways, interacting with children to correct and remind them of appropriate behaviors.



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Challenges:

- The current culture of the school community is reactive and driven by unsafe and inappropriate behaviors.
 - a. Behaviors were the topic of conversation in every interaction observed between school leaders, staff, teachers, leadership team, teacher teams, parents, families and students. We did not observe any exchange focused on the quality of learning and teaching.
 - b. Staff were observed constantly reacting to disruptions to learning.
 - c. Low staff attendance rates contributes to inconsistent reinforcement of policies and inconsistent implementation of systems.
 - d. School leaders, teachers, and staff find themselves responding to a range of emotionally fueled questions in the school, daily. Parents, families, and staff do not feel well-equipped to serve the needs of students who have experienced great trauma in their young lives.



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Challenges:

- Parents identified specific safety concerns such as the entrance of the school, fighting among students, and hallways.

“As far as safety they do have a camera on the outside which is against when they lock the box you bang on the door and let them in. I feel as though that box with the camera in there should never be locked up until everyone is out of the building...They don't ask who you here for, they buzz you right in. Not look at your face, anything. ” -- parent

“My daughter just got punched in the nose this week Tuesday, the girl just walked up to her, punched her in the nose. Blood all over the place, she goes to the nurse office. The nurse couldn't take care of her because she had so many other kids in there from fighting and carrying on. ” -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Challenges:

- Parents identified issues of bedbugs, fleas, mice, mold, and air quality at Steel.

“There's bedbugs in here. They exterminated one side, the other side didn't get exterminated, and my son came home bit up, many of times. I have seven kids that go here and out of my seven, three of them have got bitten. One in gym, one in class, the other one, I think was in art class. We brung it up to the people that we're supposed to; staff, teachers.”

-- parent

“My sons come home and say I can't use the bathroom because it's so dirty. I remember when they used to play in the auditorium, and I went to use the bathroom. It was filthy, like it wasn't cleaned in days. I've come to the school for meetings and we'd be in the auditorium, and they'll be eaten apples on the floor, eaten sandwiches on the floor.”

parent



Feedback and Findings

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Challenges:

- School leaders do not follow the planned school-wide systems to monitor the effectiveness of learning and teaching through regular observations of lessons, analysis of student work, and review of plans.
 - a. None of Steel teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement, “We receive the instructional resources and materials needed to support all of our students in the classroom.”
 - b. Of the 19 classes observed, none had evidence of student groupings. In classes where learning was observed, students were all working on the same worksheet or workbook pages, reading the same books, or copying the same writing from books or the board.
 - c. Teacher centered, whole class instruction is currently the norm throughout the school and as a result students learning is limited.



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Challenges:

- Parents shared concern about the types of behaviors students were demonstrating but they identified how the school organized its student supports as contributing to the behavior.

“And we keep talking about all the kids are bad, I can think there's about maybe about 10 kids. And I'm not gonna say they have like, severe challenges that disrupt the school community. It's about maybe ten.” -- parent

“...And I don't want to just single them out, but it's enough of a percentage that it disrupts the rest of the school. So, there's two things at work here. Whatever that program is, it's not sufficient to handle the needs of those children. And two, the school district needs to lend more support to this school in terms of staff and training, so that those people in the building can handle those situations.” -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Challenges:

- There was no evidence of quality homework or after school activities used to reinforce and extend classroom learning experiences.
 - a. Teachers reported, "These students don't do homework, so why assign it?"
 - b. Piles of unscored homework were observed. Students reported, "They [teachers] don't even look at the homework, so most kids don't do it."
- Communication is inconsistent and places strain on the relationships between the school and parents within the community.
 - a. Parents reported receiving notices from the school the day after an event or even the week after. School leaders reported a policy of sending written communications the day of the event.
 - b. Class Dojo and data systems are used inconsistently and leave parents wondering how their child is doing in school and creates gaps in understanding between the school and parents/families. Teachers, school leaders, students, parents, and families reported that some teachers use Class Dojo while others do not.



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Suggestions:

- Parents developed a plan in 2014 based on an assessment and concluded Steel should become a community school.

“Going back to the plan that was devised three or four years ago when that charter take-over was attempted, we need to go back to that model, we need to take that model, and we need the school district's full support in implementing that model” -- parent

- Parents asked for increased mental health services including counseling and group counseling, STS staff, and outpatient therapists.

“I think the district needs to make a sound investment in the things that they know are issues with this school. It's not top secret that mental health is needed.” -- parent



Questions

10-15 mins

Norms for questions:

- 1) Ask questions that benefit the whole group (we are happy to address individual questions after the session).
- 2) Please be mindful of your talk time so that all voices can be heard.
- 3) Please be respectful of differences of opinion.



Additional Ideas

Other Feedback:

1. Which findings and feedback matched your experience, and which ones surprised you?
1. What else do you think would help improve students' academic performance?
1. What are other ways in which the school could involve parents and the community?

When prompted, please move to the charts to provide your feedback using the cards that were handed out.



Next Steps

December

**Dr. Hite, Assistant Superintendents,
and other District leaders review**

- 1) Stakeholder feedback
- 2) Site visit results
- 3) School input
- 4) New data (SPR)

**January -
February**

**Recommendations for improvement
shared with community**

philasd.org/greatschools/investmentsandinterventions