



Feedback and Findings Meeting

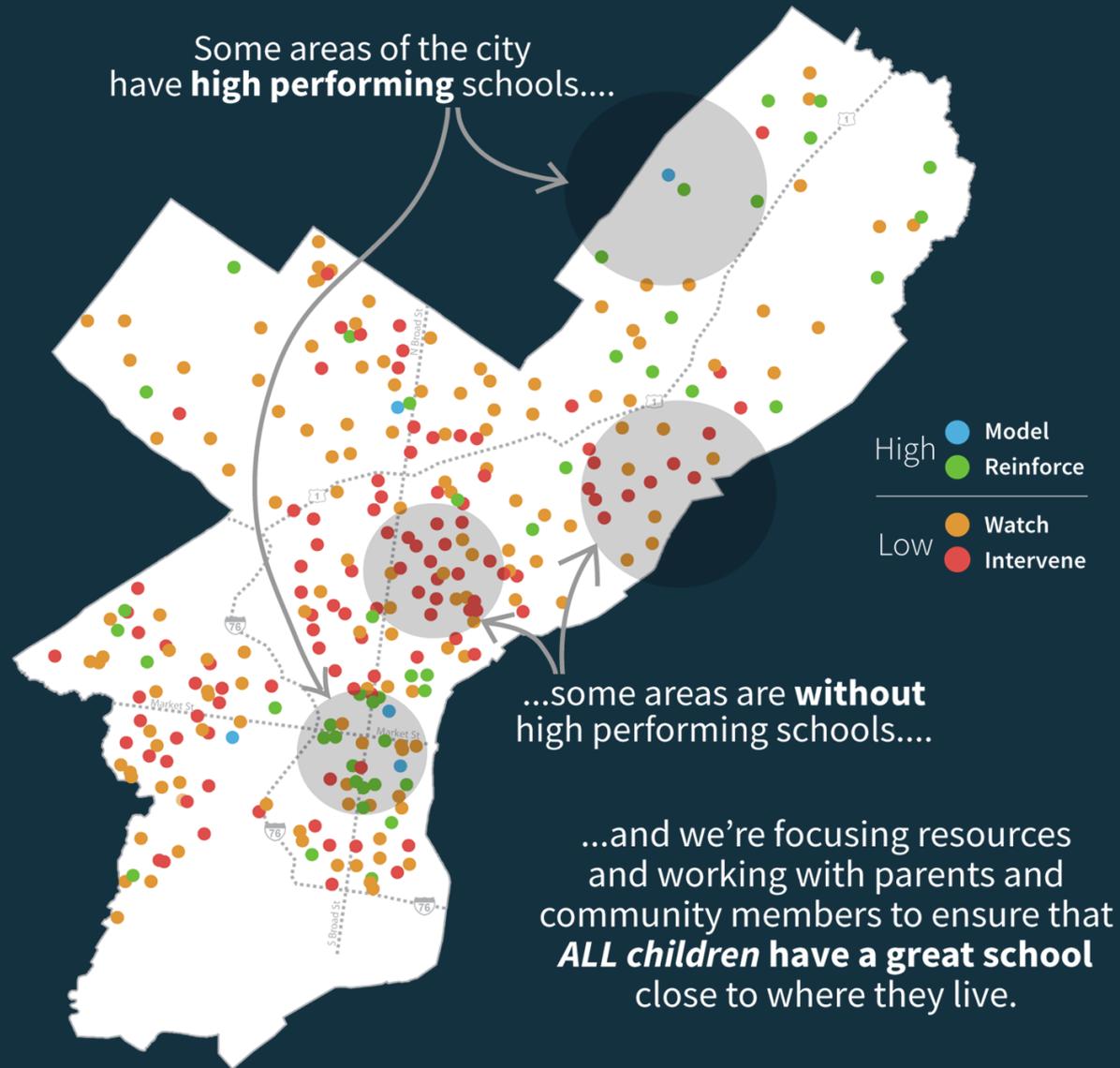
Wagner Middle School

November 15, 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?

Wagner Middle School

SPR

3-year SPR trend

2013-14 2014-15 2015-16



3-year SPR average

11.3

Key Data

2015-16 Performance

Reading Achievement*

13%

Math Achievement*

2%

Attendance^

26%

* 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 in this process
- Closure is not an option in this process.



Overview of main findings from School Quality Review

Strengths

- Committed school leadership
- Improving school climate
- Distributed leadership
- School leaders visible throughout the school

Growth Areas

- Lack of challenging instruction
- Lack of clear vision
- Staffing issues, especially in special education
- Learning objectives not clearly communicated

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

- Overall staff efforts
- Improvement at dismissal
- Efforts to communicate with parents

Growth Areas

- Student supports for behavioral/mental health
- Student safety, both in the school and at the park across the street
- Staff stability
- Rigor in academics
- Special education

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- 1) Which findings and feedback matched your experience, and which ones surprised you?
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School Quality Review

Purpose:

Identify main factors that support learning or limit learning

Process:

- 2 day site visit
- 12 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

23 Parents, students, family members

2 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:

- The principal is committed to improving the school and is constantly seeking ways to improve teacher and student performance.
 - a. Teachers have received training on the new district curriculum resources for math and literacy, as well as on analyzing data, looking at student work , and questioning and discussion techniques.
 - b. This work is still in its infancy and its impact is only now seen in small pockets of improved practice across the school, especially in the 6th grade literacy class.
- The climate of the school is improving and is beginning to create an environment that is conducive to learning.
 - a. Students and parents alike feel generally respected by school leaders and staff, who maintain positive relationships with them. Students in focus groups indicate that there are multiple people in the building to whom they can go in confidence if they have a problem. Students regard the school as safe.
 - b. The work environment is very collegial. Teachers support each other and value their professional relationships. One teacher stated “ The staff is very supportive of each other and the students” when asked to describe the culture of the school.



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- The parents feel positively about the leadership.

"I like what I see. Mr Berry is always on the street, there is an older officer I see his is always there. I look at them coming home. I like what I see." -- parent

"I had a situation, they told me I needed to see the principal. She called me, and the situation was addressed." -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Strengths:

- The Principal and school leaders are very visible in the school.
 - a. The principal and the deans frequently visit classrooms, move about the hallways during transition times, and are present outside the building both before and after school.
 - b. School leaders regularly monitors teaching and learning through frequent observations of lessons.



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Strengths:

- The parents recognize staff efforts to resolve conflicts.

“I remember she got in trouble...they immediately got the child involved and put them together and asked the child questions and my child questions. And they really got a quick resolution there. So I see that they are on it and I like that. And I think that my child knew that they're not going to play here.” -- parent

“They were kinda fighting....But her Dean was there, and he kinda diffused the situation.” -- parent



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Strengths:

- Parents see improvement in orderliness at dismissal

“...it seems calmer than normal. Because last year I saw a lot of kids fighting like a mob almost. But I haven't seen that this year so far.” -- parent

“The principal does a great job when 3 o'clock comes, she is like “alright let's keep it moving, ...She breaks up some kids from other schools come and hang out with their friends, she just tells them to keep moving” -- parent



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Strengths:

- **The Principal has created a hierarchy of leadership.**
 - a. The school has an established leadership team consisting of the principal, the three deans, the climate specialist, and the counselor.
 - b. The principal works to build the capacity of her deans who serve as critical operational supports. The Principal says that as she gets better, they get better.
 - c. Various staff have been assigned roles and tasks within the leadership structure of the school. There are three deans who are responsible for climate and culture, and for supporting the behavioral and academic expectations of an assigned grade.



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Strengths:

- Parents experience good communication with teachers and staff

“We are in contact with teachers every day. I know what he’s doing...We text, they call, the app, the remind app. I come up here...” -- parent

“I have to give them credit. The teacher, when I first met her, I said, call me. And she has. And then I met the dean and he’s called me.....I like that.” -- parent



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Challenges:

- The school does not currently have a school-wide behavior management system such as Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS.)
 - a. There is evidence of inconsistent application of consequences, as well as the absence of systematic process of positive behavior interventions.
 - b. In 3 out of 12 classrooms, students were engaged in off-task behaviors, which created a disruptive environment that negatively impacted the quality of learning. The off-task behaviors were not addressed and there was no evidence of routines or procedures for managing the class.



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Challenges:

- By far, the most mentioned challenge was student safety

“It’s not fair. Why am I afraid to send my kid to the neighborhood school because of all the stuff that’s going on and everybody saying.” ‘The kids are bad. The teachers the same’ You know? I shouldn’t feel uncomfortable sending my kids to the neighborhood school.” --parent

“She [my wife] was very fearful for my daughter...Even to this day she’s looking at different options...I would hope this could become a school where you feel good about sending your kids...You feel as though they’re going to learn as well as just...being safe.” -- parent

“They push her [daughter] They push her. She was talking with her friend, they push her. They grab her head, they push her on the wall...” -- parent



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Challenges:

- Safety continued

“Cause every day when I pick my daughter up its just insane. I’m being honest, it’s just insane here. I see cops and everything.” (disconfirming evidence)

-- parent

“They [students] slammed my son on the floor in the gym last year.” -- parent



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Challenges:

- Safety outside of the school building - specifically at the nearby park - was also cited as a concern.

“There is a drug corner...in front of the playground. It’s very intimidating. ...I don’t feel safe with that across the street. I don’t feel safe with that across the street. Other than that, I feel safe with her inside of the school.” -- parent

“Why are grown people standing there {by the playground} doing drugs? I’ve seen it with my own eyes. While these kids are out there...They have Lacrosse and Field hockey across there.....They have gym over there too.” -- parent



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Challenges:

- There is instability in school staffing and lack of resources to appropriately support the school's large population of students with special needs.
 - a. At the time of the visit, 4-5 vacancies were reported.
 - b. Teachers stated, "I really believe Wagner can be a great school, but additional support is needed to address the social, emotional, and/or mental needs of many students," and, "There are many [students] who have behavioral issues that seem to require help beyond the teachers and administration."

- The principal has not yet been able to articulate a vision that is well understood and embraced by all constituents of the school.
 - a. Different stakeholders have different conceptions of the vision, and different understanding about how to achieve it.



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Challenges:

- Parents worry about instability in staffing.

“You need to address the vacancies that have been in the school.” --parent

“[My child said] ‘I dont have homework because my teacher wasn’t there.’ And that ‘s a concern for me.” -- parent

“Wagner gets nothing. We have 8 teacher vacancies.” --parent



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Challenges:

- Parents see unaddressed behavioral and mental health issues.

*“I’m inside the building and there’s a lot of mental health issues.” AND
“This parent [in the focus group] talked about his son having bruised ribs like none of us heard....There’s a lot going on.” -- parent*

“...we need to really look at some sort of psychiatrist or something - not a guidance counselor but a therapist to just listen to kids and talk. ..Because the teacher’s in the middle of trying to teach...You’ve got people acting out because they’re issues are not being addressed.”

“They [teachers] are dealing with emotional and mental health and just a plethora of challenges when they’re trying to teach algebra....” --parent



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Challenges:

- Despite the fact that teachers use district-recommended materials, students are not given tasks or questions that lead to deep understanding of concepts.
 - a. In none of the classrooms observed, were students observed to be discussing what they were learning with their peers, or engaging in discussion and debate about each other's ideas.
 - b. In 11 out of 12 classrooms, students were not assigned tasks or asked questions that required critical thinking or problem solving.
- Learning objectives are not consistently communicated in ways that allow all students to understand what they are learning, why it is important, and how it is connected to past and future learning.
 - a. Well written and effective communication of the learning objective was observed in only 1 of 12 classrooms visited.
 - b. Objectives were not revisited during and at the end of lessons.



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Challenges:

- Parents want a higher level of academic expectations.

“I don't see her being as pushed as she needs to be.” -- parent

“She came from [another school] and one thing my daughter said was ‘Mom, I did this already.’ That is the biggest issue is to keep her engaged and challenged.” -- parent

“My son has special needs. He came from [another school] coming from a place of structure and pride and great education to here. I feel so bad for him.” -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Suggestions:

- Parents want to see more 1 on 1 interactions with students around academics.

“[What would] make a difference...teachers actually have an assistant and a coach and a classroom that they can actually get to each and every student.” -- parent

“I like the idea that there's an interaction between an assistant and teachers for our kids cause a lot of them are not necessarily on reading level or math level.” -- parent

“My child, he has a question and he raises his hand he doesn't get much of an answer because she's busy.” -- parent

“What I'm trying to say is the teachers. They need help too. They can't concentrate on each student in the classroom.” --parent



Feedback and Findings

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Suggestions:

- Parents want better services for students with special needs.

“..I think they should do a better job collaborating with the school where the [special needs] child is coming from.” -- parent

“[My special need child] needs a wraparound. She needs somebody to be with her.” -- parent



Feedback and Findings

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Suggestions:

- Parents want to see more engaging teaching methods.

“I would like to see the teachers supported in a different way that allows them the freedom to exercise out of the box thinking , creativity.” --parent

“Find something they are more engaged in. Get inside their mind a little bit and see what they like more.” -- parent

“Not just sitting in the classroom like all day. There's experience outside things of what they are learning. Whatever they are learning take a trip. Something to keep them going...it seems like they're bored...” AND

“We would like to see our kids be more joyful and be able to express themselves...whether that's music, poetry, cooking, sewing....” -- parent



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Suggestions:

- Parents want more parent and community engagement.

“I was a student here...every Wednesday they had like family Fun Math night or reading. Where families come and you do activities inside the school with the teachers and stuff. I would like to see that come back.” -- parent

“Maybe being able to have a person that has a hand in some resources in the community. ..How can they focus on school readiness if they don't have food in the refrigerator?” -- parent

“Let's collaborate together, figure out some ways to get everybody involved...Parent Cafes...a place for them to come let their hair down...Having a panel, like one night just to have a question or answer...to get what the parents thoughts are.” - 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