

# Advocates for African American Students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (AAASPPS)

## Overview of Issues and Concerns

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# AAASPPS Membership

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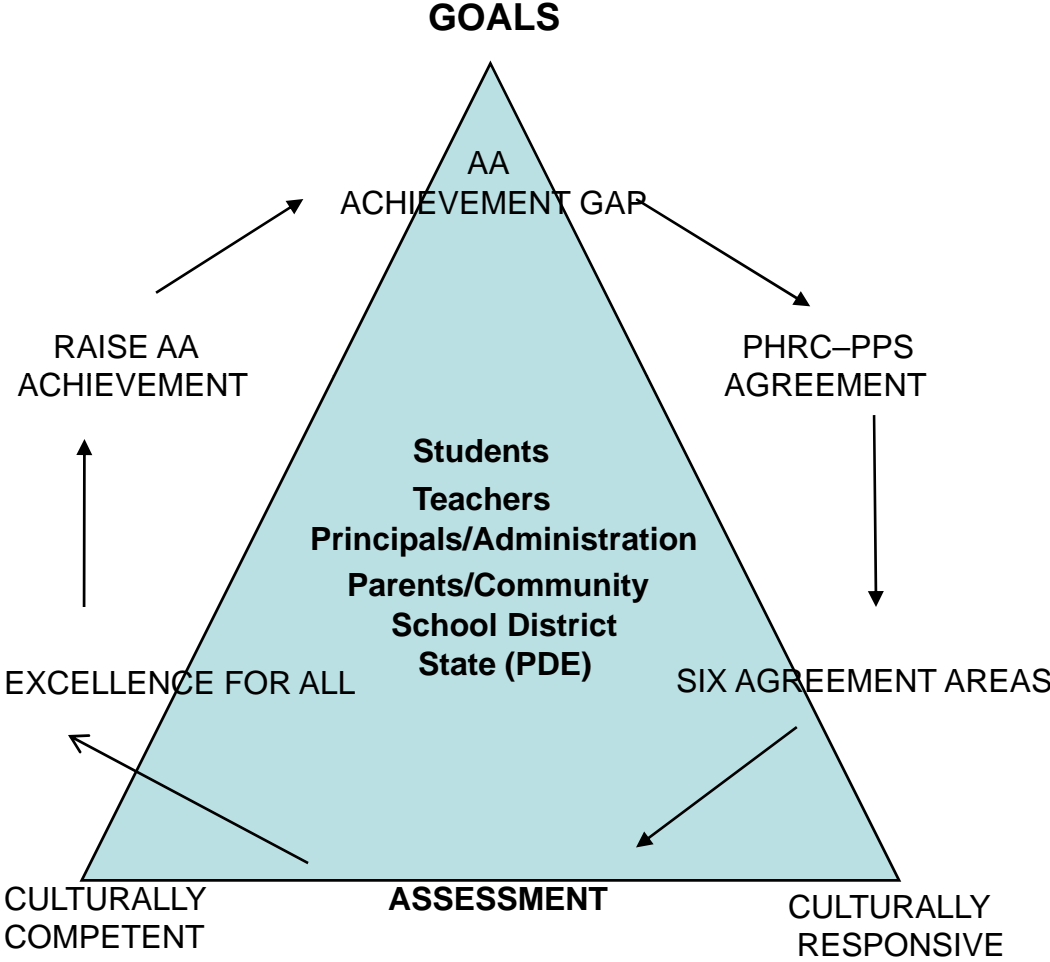
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# PHRC-PPS CONCILIATION AGREEMENT



Note: AA = African American

# Areas of Concern Identified by AAASPPS

1. Culturally Relevant/ Responsive Education
2. Parent Engagement/ Empowerment
3. Principal Leadership and Modeling
4. Discipline/Special Education
5. School Violence
6. Professional Teacher Development
7. Evaluation of Change



# AAASPPS Concerns

## 1. Culturally Relevant/Responsive Education

- Limited research regarding “Best-Practices”
- Limited familiarity with “Culturally Responsive” pedagogies
- Inadequate resources devoted to curriculum development and teacher training
- Teacher/Student cultural mismatches



# AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

## 2. Parent Engagement/Empowerment

- Lack of African American parent and community involvement
- Unnecessarily complex school-home communication practices that are not parent-friendly



## AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

### 3. Principal Leadership and Modeling

- Leadership and communication styles that adversely affect students' and parents' perceptions of teachers, administrators, and the district
- Leadership and management problems created by school closings, principal shifts, and subsequent student transitions across various neighborhoods



# AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

## 4. Discipline/Special Education

- Continued overrepresentation of Black students, particularly males, in discipline, special education, and other “marginalizing” programs
- In 1997-98, 31.6% of Black Males were suspended at least once, compared to 18.6 % for all other males.



# AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

## 6. School Violence

- Disturbances and fights catalyzed by student, teacher and principal reassignments
- Underreporting of disturbances and fights
- Lack of a systematic plan to reduce violence



## AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

6. Professional Teacher Development
  - Limited pre-service or in-service training in culturally responsive education and cross-cultural communication
  - cross-cultural communication barriers that limit effective interactions with parents'



# AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

## 7. Evaluation of Change

- Organizational and operational changes that create instability across the district and adversely affect students' learning, motivation, and safety
- Limited use of proven research, best practices, and cultural knowledge to guide decision-making



# AAASPPS Concerns (cont.)

## 7. Evaluation of Change (cont.)

- Incremental changes in the absence of a comprehensive strategy will make implementing and managing the PHRC-PPS Conciliation Agreement problematic

