

**Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers  
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15203  
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*Data Collection:* Bill Harju, Interviewer

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Paul Francis, Staff Representative/Co-Chair of PEP

## **A. Demographics**

*Number of Schools:* 91

*Elementary* 56 (There is a move to K-8 within the District and as a result, 3 elementary schools have converted)

*Middle/Junior High* 18

*High School* 11

*Other:* 6 Special Schools (3 special education centers, 2 alternative centers, 1 vocational school)

For 1999-2000, the district will be adding 4 new schools - 3 elementary and 1 middle school and one additional school will become k-8. In addition, the district has three charter schools within the boundaries that enroll a total of 355 students. Each charter school student costs the district approximately \$4,000. Charters must apply to the local school board. In Pittsburgh, 11 applied, three were approved. Charters do have an appeal process to the state. So far, none of the denied charters have appealed.

*Total number of employees by classification:*

*Certified:*

3,300 Certified non-supervisory personnel - Membership is approximately 3900. The larger number of members is due to the fact that PFT represents another bargaining unit that is not employed by the Pittsburgh School District.

*Classified:*

560 Paraprofessional, 50 Technical Clerical, 200 Substitute Teachers are all represented by PFT.

*Secretary/Clerical Unit:* 376

*Custodial/food service:* 664

*Management/supervisory:* 209

*Management team:* 43

*Bus Drivers:* Contracted out.

*Current enrollment by level:* (Total enrollment is 39,603)

*Elementary* 19,952

*Middle/Junior High:* 7,967

*High School:* 11,167

*Current enrollment by race/ethnicity*

*Caucasian:* Elementary: 38.5%; Middle: 42.1%; High School: 49.9%

*Hispanic:* Elementary: 0.5%; Middle: 0.4%; High School: 0.3%

*Black/African American:* Elementary: 59.6%; Middle: 56.2%; High School: 48.6%

*Asian:* Elementary: 1.4%; Middle: 1.2%; High School: 1.3%

*Native American:* Elementary: 0.1%; Middle: 0%; High School: 0%

*Current enrollment - Language:* Very small ESL program.

*Average Class Size by level:*

*Primary:* Academic classes: 22.4; All classes: 21.7

*Upper:* Academic classes: 22.4; All classes: 21.7

*Middle/Junior High:* Academic classes: 22.9; All classes: 21.5

*High School:* Academic classes: 22.1; All classes: 19.7

*Private School enrollments in area/trends:*

Approximately 9,500 students or 19% of the students within the Pittsburgh attendance area attend non public schools, mostly Catholic - Parochial.

*School District Budget*

*Total expenditures:* \$409,400,000

*Expenditures per student:* \$10,337

## **B. Significant Background Information:**

*Union Structure/Roles*

*Officers (Names, longevity)*

Albert Fondy, President, 32 years

Joseph Zunic, Executive Secretary, 32 years

Rufus Jordan, Vice President, 31 years

Paul Francis, Vice President, 20 years

Mary VanHorn, Vice President, 10 years

Sylvia Wilson, Secretary, 1 year  
Walter Weaver, Treasurer,  
Edward Pace, Financial Secretary

#### *Executive Body*

The PFT Executive Board is composed of thirty-three individuals. Positions include the 7 officers, three Trustees who assist with PFT financial books, a Parliamentarian, two representatives each from elementary, middle and high schools one professional support group representative (representing counselors, social workers, etc), three paraprofessional group representatives, one technical-clerical group representative, one IU#2 group representative (Allegheny Intermediate Unit which PFT represents) and nine members at large.

#### *Representative/Policymaking Body*

PFT conducts four Building Representative meetings per year, start of school, October, January and May. The meetings are informational only, and the BR's are not part of a policy making body. PFT does conduct two membership meetings per year in odd numbered years, and three in even numbered years (Union Election years). Membership can adopt policy, however most policy is made by the Executive Board.

#### *Committees Union:*

1. Political Action Committee The PAC raises money through a mandatory dues checkoff of \$10 per year which can be refunded upon request. In addition, there is a voluntary checkoff by which members can contribute more than the \$10.
2. Social Committee - The committee sponsors an annual picnic and several nights at Pirates ballgames.
3. Paraprofessional steering committee
4. Elementary Grassroots Committee
5. Middle School Grassroots Committee

#### *Committees: Joint:*

1. Professionalism in Educational Partnership Steering Committee (PEP) The PFT and the School District have entered into a partnership designed to strengthen the schools, improve learning by students, and enhance the teaching profession. This partnership was developed beginning in 1985 and has spanned the transition through several rounds of collective bargaining. The Steering Committee which coordinates the PEP process is composed of approximately equal numbers of representatives of the District and the Union. The 1998-99 Committee has 28 members.

Much of the work of the PEP is accomplished through subcommittees, thus, this year; for example, there is a Special Education Inclusion Subcommittee, Social Promotion Subcommittee and a Site Based Selection of Staff Subcommittee. In the past, subcommittees of the PEP developed many of the joint PFT-District programs including the District's ITL program, the Instructional Cabinets, and the Quest Scholarship program.

2. Strategic Planning Committee: The Committee is composed of a broad-based representative group from Administration, Community, and Other Unions. The purpose of the committee is to set direction for long range planning for the district. The committee reports to the school board.

3. Instructional Teacher Leader Steering Committee - A small committee composed of equal numbers of administrators appointed by the district and union members appointed by the union. The committee function is to develop and monitor the process of certifying Teacher Leaders, and to handle other issues that arise relating to the ITL programs. The committee reports to the PEP Steering Committee.
4. New Teacher Induction Committee: A small committee composed of equal numbers of administrators appointed by the district and teachers appointed by PFT. The role of the committee is to design, implement and monitor the state mandated new teacher induction program.
5. Burdensome Paperwork Committee A joint committee that reviews the use of paperwork in the district with an eye toward decreasing its volume.

*Permanent Union Staff (Names, positions, tenure)*

The PFT employs no "permanent union staff" as normally defined. Rather, all staff members must be elected members of the PFT Executive Board, thus all persons listed below are also elected members of the 33 member executive board, and, if not re-elected, they would lose their positions. Staff members from the Board are appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Albert Fondy, President, 32 years  
 Joseph Zunic, Executive Secretary, 31 years  
 Rufus Jordan, Staff Representative, 32 years  
 Paul Francis, Staff Representative, 20 years  
 Mary VanHorn, Staff Representative, 10 years  
 Sylvia Wilson, Assistant to the President, 1 year  
 Sherman Shrager, Staff Representative, 1 year

*Term limits*

PFT has no term limits.

*Union Partnerships*

PFT-Slippery Rock State University: A partnership that provides University credit for PFT members who participate in PFT "Educational Research and Development" courses offered in the PFT office.

School District-University Collaborative: A partnership between the District, PFT and several universities to coordinate student teaching and internships.

*Principal means of communication with members:*

The PFT Point - a printed newspaper published four times per year (samples attached)

PFT "Negotiations Update/Alert" - newsletter format, produced as necessary (samples attached)

Various flyers on an as needed basis (samples attached).

### *Membership Engagement*

The PFT has no specific programs around membership engagement.

### *Significant recent budget developments (cutbacks, infusions) if any:*

Over the past three years, the Pittsburgh School District has faced a series of budget deficits, \$15-20 million per year during two of the past three years. The district has cut central office staff, custodians, security guards, secretarial and clerical employees and has made other cuts. The fiscal problems have been created from several sources. First, the state has shifted some of the responsibility for special education funding to the district resulting in general fund encroachment. Second, the political scene in Pittsburgh, while allowing school boards to unilaterally raise taxes, is such that raising taxes is seen by the Board as political suicide, thus taxes remain the same, while school expenses go up. Further, the population of the city has remained stagnant, thus no growth.

### *In order to understand this district, what is it necessary to know/understand?*

During the 1980's and early 1990's, the district had a superintendent who was willing to work in partnership with the union. As a result, the district's Professionalism In Educational Partnership (PEP) program was begun. PEP has become a part of the "culture" of the district, thus resulting in a very lengthy period of relative labor peace and collaborative management. While the partnership has been productive, budget curtailments have resulted in some retrenchment in programs over time. For example, three schools were designated as "teacher centers," where the schools were initially closed and reopened with new staffs with specific skills. The three schools then, were provided with an allocation of replacement teachers who could be sent to other schools to substitute for teachers who would then be able to share teaching with the theoretically more skilled teachers in the centers. This program was closed in 1991 due to fiscal constraints. Since 1992, the district has had two superintendents, and is now in the process of searching for the third. Again, since 1992, new progressive reforms have been at a standstill and the district has been tied up in budget difficulties, implementing and then breaking down a court ordered integration plan resulting in serious school redistricting controversy. Most recently, the district is moving ahead on becoming a standards based district.

### *Labor-management relationship*

The labor management relationship has been collaborative. Currently, negotiations are continuing over a contract that expired on December 31, 1998. The protracted bargaining results not from a poor relationship but rather from the budget difficulties alluded to above.

### *Key crises:*

Unexpectedly, the current superintendent, who has been in the district for two years, is voluntarily leaving for another position, resulting in a national search for a new superintendent.

The current nine-member school board is divided - for example simply electing a president of the school board took 10 ballots in December, 1998. The board members each represent a district of the city; thus the controversy over redistricting has been increasingly difficult.

### *Measured outcomes - test scores, college acceptance rates (1997-98 & 1998-99)*

1997-98 Test data is attached.

*Current Superintendency:*

*Name:* Dr. Dale E. Frederick

*Background:*

Dr. Frederick came to Pittsburgh from Superintendencies in Dayton and Warren, Ohio. His earlier career was spent in Arizona, the state to which he is returning in July.

*Tenure:*

2 years. Dr. Frederick is leaving the district at the conclusion of the current, 1998-99 School Year and the district will be seeking a replacement.

*Management team:*

The management team includes a Deputy Superintendent (retiring this year), a Director of Budget Development and Management, a Director of Business Affairs, three Assistant Superintendents who have line responsibilities for a region of the district, a Director of Human Resources, School District Solicitor (attorney), a Director of Strategic Planning and Development and the Director of Student Information Management. One of the assistant superintendents came with the current superintendent. The remainder of the management team preceded Dr. Frederick in office.

*Other employee unions (Name, approximate unit membership, relationship to teachers)*

*Secretarial/clerical:* AFSCME.

*Maintenance/Bus drivers:* The district contracts out all busing.

*Food services Custodians:* AFSCME

*Principals/Supervisors*

Represented by the Pittsburgh Administrators Association who have a meet and discuss relationship with the district. The administrator's organization sits on PEP, and the relationship with PFT is generally positive.

*Paraprofessional/Security Personnel*

Represented by PFT under a separate agreement. Worthy of note, this unit includes School Police Officers.

*Skilled Trades:*

The Pittsburgh Building Trades Council, under a separate contract represents skilled Trades.

*Status of contract:*

*Expiration of current agreement:*

The existing agreement expired on December 31, 1998. PFT is currently in negotiations over a successor agreement and is anticipating a brief one year extension of the existing agreement, with new negotiations over a successor to start in fall, 1999. The purpose of the short term agreement would be to move past the current situation involving a major school board election, the superintendent search, and the existing budgetary crisis.

*(Note: In late June, the parties reached an interim extension agreement which expires in December 2000. The agreement includes across the board salary increases of \$500 on November 1, 1999; \$500 on March 1, 2000, and \$200 on November 1, 2000.)*

*Agency fee:* Yes

*Binding arbitration:* Yes

*Strikes:* There have been no strikes in Pittsburgh in recent history.

*Unfair labor practices:* There have been no ULP's filed in recent history.

*Significant litigation:* None

*Approximate number of grievances per year:*

*Union role in community:*

*Political endorsements:*

The PFT has an interview and endorsement process through the PAC Committee. The PAC Committee recommends to the executive board. PFT endorses in School Board Races, city council and mayor, state legislative races, judgeships both statewide and countywide, and statewide races. An endorsement by PFT means 1) participation in the PFT slate mailed to members; 2) financial contributions; 3) phone banks and 4) depending on circumstances, workers.

*Community engagement*

The PFT has recently sponsored a parent-teacher dialog in partnership with the Pittsburgh Council on Public Education. The program was developed, based upon a perceived gulf between parents and teachers. The "dialog" involved bringing in a consultant to discuss standards, which represents one of the key issues facing the district. Following the presentation, the attendees were divided into small groups of parents and teachers to discuss the presentation. Feedback was positive; thus future sessions are planned for the next school year, perhaps around the district's three regions. Attendance at the session was approximately 60.

## C. Education Reform

### *Union posture:*

#### *Pro/anti reform:*

The PFT has a history of support for common sense educational reform programs, though the union carefully evaluates "new ideas," to ascertain that they are in fact, workable, support student achievement, and do not overly burden the rank and file membership.

#### *Membership attitudes*

Membership will generally support a reform that is advocated by or supported by the PFT. Older teachers have greater difficulty accepting change - thus reform - than do newer teachers though in the late '80's, by a vote of approximately 2-1, the membership at the high school level, accepted an increased work week of one hour and fifteen minutes.

#### *Financial commitment*

The PFT provides scholarships to the best students who go into education. The Union provides grants of \$500 for educational improvement programs on a competitive basis. A significant percentage - perhaps up to forty percent - of the time of the PFT staff is spent in advocating for and/or defending reforms within the district.

#### *Reform elements in contract:*

1. Article 4 - Home Learning and Parent Assistance Center - a PFT supported effort to provide a parent center.
2. Article 14 - Reading Programs and Reading Teachers - provides for a reading diagnostic position, and reading teacher positions and provides that improved reading instruction become a priority for staff development in the district.
3. Article 13 - Special Education - details and makes grievable significant aspects of the special education program, including provisions regarding IEP's, facilities and class sizes, student participation in athletics, etc.
4. Article 51 - Internal School Restructuring and Total School Restructuring - Provides that local school sites, under certain conditions, have flexibility in scheduling when the school is undergoing restructuring.
5. Articles 74, 75, 76 - Instructional Team Leaders These three articles establish the position of instructional team leader (ITL), provide job descriptions, scheduling and selection procedures for these personnel who are charged with responsibilities in the areas of teacher evaluation, improvement of student achievement, internal school restructuring, and overall improvement of instruction.
6. MOU regarding Educational Professionalism Partnership (PEP)

#### *Organization/structure for reform:*

##### *Central coordinating structure:*

The Professionalism in Education Partnership (PEP) Steering Committee is the central coordinating structure in the district for reform.

*District office structure:*

The District employs a Director of Strategic Planning and Development who serves to coordinate reform issues within the district, however, the primary planning effort takes place through the PEP Steering Committee.

*Union structure:*

There exists no formalized union structure for reform. The union works through the PEP Steering Committee, and one of the Union members of PEP serves as the Co-chairperson.

*Responsibility (within union - leaders? Staff?)*

The responsibility flows through the Executive Board to those members of the Board who are assigned staff responsibilities.

*Organization around standards*

*Implementation:*

The math standards are being implemented in the classrooms.

*Role of union:*

PFT supports the concept of standards based instruction and, while not selected by the union, the teachers involved in developing the standards are union members.

*Development of standards:*

The School District has a department of "Teaching, Learning and Assessment." This department has a staff of "school support specialists" in each area of the curriculum. These staff are assembling groups of volunteers who are developing standards. So far, math and communications standards have been developed.

*Professional Development*

*Program description & Operation:*

The Union has a training program that is offered to the membership in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers. The program is entitled "Education Research and Dissemination" and involves a series of classes and workshops around teaching and learning. Participants meet in collegial sessions to explore key research findings and teaching concepts, to design exercises for the application of these principles in the classroom, to reflect on their own teaching, and to share their experiences with colleagues. Upon receiving this training, participants are then encouraged to convey their knowledge and skills to their teaching colleagues at their respective schools. The ER&D program is funded by PFT dues, and since the program's inception in 1989-90, more than 1100 Pittsburgh teachers have been impacted by the program.

*Relationship to union:* The ER&D program is a union program.

*Relationship to colleges/universities:*

The PFT has a relationship with Slippery Rock State College, and the college provides graduate credit to teachers who participate in the ER&D program.

### *Low performing Schools*

#### *Program description:*

The PFT and the District have a jointly developed process for "Interventions and Assistance" in schools that fail to achieve their annual goals. Schools may volunteer for the appointment of a "School Assistance Team (SAT)," and an SAT will be assigned for schools that fail to achieve their goals for two consecutive years.

The broad-based team is appointed by a regional superintendent, but is reviewed by various officials, including officials from PFT. The SAT receives data regarding the school and conducts site visits, and works with the school to revise and improve the annual plan. Schools that fail to improve after the first year of assistance are subject to additional interventions which can include: 1) further monitoring by the SAT; 2) alternative proposals developed by the principal and staff; 3) personnel recommendations made by the SAT; 4) other measures agreed to by the Superintendent and the PFT President.

Relationship to union:

*Written Documents:* See attachment 16

#### *Incentives for school improvement - measures to raise student achievement or teacher quality:*

None.

#### *Peer review:*

##### *Program description:*

PFT does not have a specific peer review programs. However, ITL's have a responsibility to observe and provide feedback to teachers at their school site. In the event a teacher is in trouble, a principal may request the ITL to provide intensive observation and assistance. The observation reports conducted by the ITL are kept between the teacher and the ITL however, if a teacher's performance does not improve, the observations are turned over to the principal upon request.

#### *School based management/decisionmaking related to school improvement*

##### *Program structure:*

In Article 61, the contract provides that "Instructional Cabinets" at school sites will continue to operate based upon non-contractual guidelines adopted by Professionalism and Educational Partnership Committee (PEP).

Article 51 provides some parameters which Instructional Cabinets and schools must follow in the restructuring of their sites. First, restructuring must be the result of shared decisionmaking including full discussion by the faculty. While consensus is the recommended form of decisionmaking, the contract provides that a 60% vote of approval by the staff in a secret ballot election will be enough to obtain support for a restructuring proposal. Principals do not have a veto, however the contract provides that the role of the principal is crucial, and that it is the responsibility of the principal to coordinate restructuring activities, and to work in conjunction with the Instructional Cabinet. Faculty members are also admonished to support restructuring proposals that they oppose, provided that the proposal received a 60% vote.

*Role of site teams:*

The role of site teams is not specifically detailed, thus there has been conflict at sites regarding the role of the instructional cabinets.

*Contract/rule waivers:*

Waivers of contract provisions, board policy, established practice and from some provisions of law are possible through submission of a proposal to the PEP.

*Other major reform efforts (Description, scope, relationship to union)*

*The Instructional Teacher Leader Program*

The ITL program began in 1987, and was developed through the PEP process. The ITL program results in classroom teachers assuming roles of instructional leadership, while remaining in the classroom with some time released from teaching in order to carry out their professional functions. ITL's receive \$2000 per year for assuming these extra responsibilities. There are about 300 ITL's, and their assignment is based upon the size of the school/team. ITL's must have a master's degree or equivalent, at least four years of teaching in Pittsburgh, and ITL's must go through a specialized ITL training. Responsibilities of the ITL's include:

- .Internal school restructuring activities.
- Working with new teachers and with teachers experiencing difficulties.
- Planning and conducting "teacher interaction and planning time."
- Instructional cabinet meetings and functions
- Participation in systemwide ITL meetings.

PFT sees the ITL program as particularly beneficial as it involves actual classroom teachers - as opposed to the typical district coordinators or curriculum specialists assuming instructional and curriculum leadership roles.

The collective bargaining agreement, at articles 74, 75 and 76 (attached) contains extensive language regarding the roles, selection and assignment of ITL's.

Attachments:

1. Collective Bargaining Agreement, 1995-1998
2. PFT Constitution & Bylaws
3. PFT Financial Report and Related Information (1998-99 Budget)
4. PFT Point, November, 1998
5. PFT Point, June, 1999
6. School District of Pittsburgh, 1999 General Fund Budget - Background Material
7. PFT Negotiations Update/Alert, May, 1999
8. PFT Negotiations Letter/Report, January, 1999
9. PFT/School District - January 15, 1999 - Retirement Incentive
10. Professionalism & Education Partnership 28 Member PEP Steering Committee, 1998-99
11. PFT "Pittsburgh's Professionalism and Education Partnership (PEP)"
12. Pittsburgh Council on Public Education: Public Voices for Public Schools
13. Educational Research & Dissemination Program of the PFT
14. Key Elements Guiding the Pittsburgh Public Schools Accountability System
15. Instructional Teacher Leaders (ITLs) in Pittsburgh - Classroom Teacher with Added Roles and Responsibilities
16. Intervention and Assistance - A description of the Pittsburgh program of assistance to low performing schools.