



Pittsburgh Area Community Schools



Impact Report 2024



OUR VISION

Pittsburgh Area Community Schools' vision is to transform public education, creating an equitable education experience for students that enables them to reach their highest potential free from barriers.

OUR MISSION

Pittsburgh Area Community Schools' mission is to bridge the gaps between students, families, schools, and resources, fostering a community where all students can succeed.

Letter from Our Executive Director



Ten years ago, I started my journey with PACS, and the Community School Strategy. When I was introduced to the organization and the model I was energized by the proactive approach and its foundation of building strong relationships between schools, families and the community where everyone lives. When I started, PACS only had a small presence in three schools in Allegheny County. A decade later, we're serving 14 school sites in Allegheny, Beaver and Westmoreland Counties and we serve nearly 8,000 students every year.

The Community School strategy is a movement to create positive change within our schools and communities. Its intention is to infuse our schools with connections, fun, whimsy, empathy and collaboration.

It's through collaborations that we all succeed. Our work isn't possible without many people coming together, agreeing to keep students as their primary focus when making decisions. It is not possible without our incredibly dedicated team working through any obstacle to make sure students have what they need when they need it. It isn't possible without the support of 230 community providers, who help us build a safety net around our schools. And it's not possible without the cooperation and support of the students, families and communities we serve.

Through the Community School Strategy PACS helps to:

- **Increase parent engagement.** This year PACS helped plan 110 family and community engagement events welcoming 7,705 guests – a 34% increase in parent participation over last year.
- **Help identify critical funding for needed initiatives.** Alliquippa needed to add seats to their after-school program, so PACS secured a BOOST grant to expand.

• Help build out-of-school time

More than 2,100 students participated in after-school activities across our network, bringing programs like Drone Photography, Student Government, and Hip-Hop Dance to our students.

- **Build relationships.** PACS' team supported 319 families and conducted 4,112 individual meetings with these students and their families. Taking the time to listen and understand so that we can find the right resources.

• Help make the community safer –

PACS' Cure Team has interrupted 124 violent incidents and engaged with 8,769 individuals through community events in McKees Rocks.

It's amazing what's possible when we work together. We all want the same things. Safe communities, good schools, stable families and jobs that pay a family sustaining wage. Together, we're not just supporting students—we're transforming systems, shifting mindsets, and building schools that reflect the strength and spirit of their communities.

We've reached a plateau, while we will take a brief moment to enjoy the view from our new location, we recognize that there are more mountains to climb. I hope that we can continue to depend on your support. There is so much work to be done and we can't do it without a strong community behind us.

Bridget Clement
Executive Director

Integrated Student Supports

Academic success depends on much more than what happens inside the classroom. PACS works every day with students who are experiencing food and housing insecurity, inadequate health care access, exposure to violence in their neighborhoods, and trauma at home, among other concerns. Our role in schools is to **help identify students who are struggling, discover what barriers they are facing, and connect them with the services and support they need** to overcome them.

Thanks to our expanded Full-Service Community School Program, **PACS is helping more students break down more barriers than ever before**, both with school-wide services and helping the students most in need through case-management.

Here are some examples of the incredible work our support teams have been doing in schools this year:

Clairton Food Pantry

With over 70% of students on the free/reduced lunch program, it was immediately apparent that **hunger and food insecurity were significant barriers for the student body** when PACS began work in Clairton School District. We immediately kick-started programs for weekend food bags and holiday food distribution events, but it was clear the need was much greater.

Working with partners like the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and Whirlpool, **PACS was able to create a new in-school food pantry**, stocked with non-perishables and fresh food, available to all K-12 students.

Burrell Attendance Support

Rayvyn had been absent for more than half of the previous school year when referred to PACS. She had gone through a lot of challenges leading to periods of homelessness, stress and trauma. PACS' specialists started meeting regularly with Rayvyn and working on small, incremental goals to improve her situation and get her back into the business of learning. **By the end of the year, PACS had helped Rayvyn find more stable housing and improve her attendance enough to graduate.** We since connected her with JobCorps to work towards finding a full-time job.

PACS was able to create a new in-school food pantry, stocked with non-perishables and fresh food, available to all K-12 students.

*Below Left: Burrell staff serve students coffee during an attendance incentive event.
Below Right: Clairton staff members prepare food items for student distribution.*



Expanded and Enriched Learning Time

Students spend only part of their day in school, but learning doesn't stop when the school day ends. **In wealthier communities, students often have access to extra academic support and enrichment activities** like tutoring, science or coding camps, sports, music, and art. These opportunities give them more time to learn and more chances to succeed in school and in life.

Unfortunately, not all students have the same access to these opportunities. Families in lower-income communities often lack the resources to afford or access these programs. Expanding learning time and offering more opportunities outside the regular school day can help close this gap. **These programs not only support better grades but also lead to improved attendance, behavior, graduation rates, leadership skills, and reduced involvement in crime.**

PACS works every day to enrich learning throughout our schools, and help reduce the achievement gap throughout our districts.

Sto-Rox Afterschool Program

PACS continued and expanded our successful afterschool program in Sto-Rox. Working with our network of partners, PACS provides **four days of afterschool programming every week for students in Sto-Rox Primary Center and Upper Elementary.** New partners like Gemini Theater and Drone Photography of Pittsburgh have helped us keep the program fresh and exciting and continue to give students a safe and enriching place to be after school. **Over 340 students took part in PACS' after school activities this year.**

East Allegheny Pride Pals

Pride Pals is a peer mentoring program where responsible students from East Allegheny High School work with first graders from Logan Elementary. An enriching experience for both sides, the **older students provide advice and get younger students excited about school** while also learning responsibility and communication skills.

Below, Top Right: Sto-Rox afterschool participants. Bottom Right: Sto-Rox afterschool program participants got to meet Jerome Bettis with partner organization First Tee.



PACS provides four days of afterschool programming every week for students in Sto-Rox Primary Center and Upper Elementary



Active Family and Community Engagement

No one parent, educator, or organization can provide everything a student needs for success — it takes a village. The resources students need are often in our community, but finding those resources can be a struggle all on its own. **PACS works as a connector, working with students, their families, and our network of over 230 partner organizations to help bridge that gap.**

PACS' services don't stop at the school walls. We spend time at students' homes and out in their neighborhoods getting to know their parents, siblings and environment to learn how to help the whole family. By supporting the communities around our schools as whole, **PACS helps build a place where our students can feel safe and supported.**

PACS helps our students find success in school and in life.

Cure Violence Community Events

PACS Cure Violence team works every day to try to reduce the threat of violence around Sto-Rox School District. In addition to on-street violence interrupters, Cure hosts basketball tournaments, pizza dinners, and other community events to build community spirit and bring all facets of the community together.

East Allegheny Job Fairs

Working together with local businesses and East Allegheny Alumni, **PACS helped to host multiple career fair events** for East Allegheny High School. These events connected students and their parents with local employers offering high quality jobs, training programs and internships.

PACS works as a connector, working with students, their families, and our network of over 230 partners

Below: Cure Violence basketball tournament



How You Can Get Involved



Sponsor Our Students

Corporate partnerships can support more students and families. Ask about our EITC program for extra tax benefits.



Workforce Development

Help students prepare for the workforce through training, internships, workshops, job fairs, and career speaking engagements at schools.



Donate Your Time

Make an impact by volunteering at one of our food pantries, afterschool programs, or community events.



Sit on Our Board

Contribute your expertise and leadership to our board or other committees, helping shape the future of education.



In-Kind Support

Organize donation drives for clothing, personal care items, or school supplies for students, or help PACS with the services your business offers.



Field Trips for Students

Sponsor educational/recreational trips or activities for students, enhancing their learning experience.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership and practices act as the connecting force that brings the other three pillars together. **When schools create a shared vision and set common goals, while also sharing responsibilities in a fair and inclusive way, they're able to draw on the strengths and knowledge of everyone involved.** Working closely with

families, community members, and local organizations during the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages leads to strong results. It helps school districts better coordinate services and programs, align goals across the community, and build lasting, supportive relationships with their partners.

Everyone in a community school — from students to superintendents — should have a voice in their school. Here's how PACS is bringing them together:

School Site Teams

As part of our community school program, PACS is organizing a Site Team for each school building in our network comprised of educators, parents, community members and students who can **work together collaboratively to address the unique challenges their schools face.** We began recruitment in 2023–24 to launch in the next school year (and we can't wait to tell you how it's been going!)

New Kensington-Arnold Cyber Student Support

Since the pandemic, many districts have kept an expanded cyber school option for students. However, not all schools have had the capacity to properly oversee these programs, leading to attendance not being tracked effectively and other issues. Seeing this need in New Kensington, **PACS has been working with school administration and students to create standards for attendance and regular check ins with students** so their program can better meet the promise of an equal educational experience.

PACS has been working with school administration and students to create standards for attendance and regular check-ins with students.



Left: Site Team gathers to brainstorm
This page: Cyber schooling

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DNA Business Consulting

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Aliquippa

Robin Felder
Site Manager

Malik Shegog
Site Manager

Clairton/Duquesne

LaQuandra Bennett
Team Manager

Lamara Patrick
Resource Specialist

Alexis Thomas
Site Manager

Tonya Washington
Resource Specialist

Shannon Wiggins
Site Manager

East Allegheny

Cherakee Hicks
Resource Specialist

Christine Snyder
Site Manager

Brenda Parks
Site Manager

Sto-Rox

Angelique Brown
Resource Specialist

Dawn Gennuso
Site Manager

Shawntea Mahdi
Resource Specialist

Larette McCoy
Site Manager

**Sakinah Shaahid-
Lowman**
Team Manager

Leila Reines
Site Manager

**Sto-Rox Cure
Violence**

Roger Howell, Jr.
Violence Interruptor

Rhonda Johnson
Community Outreach

Mike McCarthy
Program Supervisor

Malcolm Mott
Violence Interruptor

Mike Mott
Program Manager

Brenden Pearson
Violence Interruptor

Corey Sidberry
Community Outreach

Westmoreland County

Tiffany Brocious
Attendance Specialist

Tessa Falatovich
Team Manager

Jacob Hoyle
Attendance Specialist

Heather Lake
Team Manager

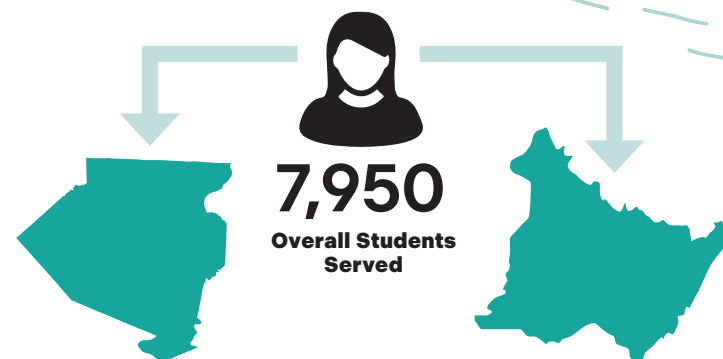
Jessica Sanchez
Family Engagement
Specialist

Arthur Venus
Attendance Specialist

Danielle Williams
Attendance Specialist

Our Reach & Impact

In the 2023–2024 school year, PACS provided support to thousands of students and families across Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties.



Allegheny County



3,975

Students Receiving
Direct Services



953

Students Receiving
Basic Needs Services



74

Students Receiving
Health Services



344

Students in Out of
School Time Programs



1,703

Attendance
at Events

Westmoreland County



194

Students Receiving
Direct Services



213

Students Receiving
Basic Needs Services



25

Students Receiving
Health Services



100+

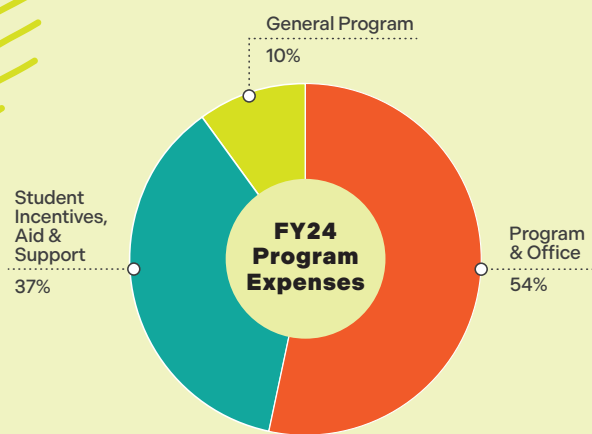
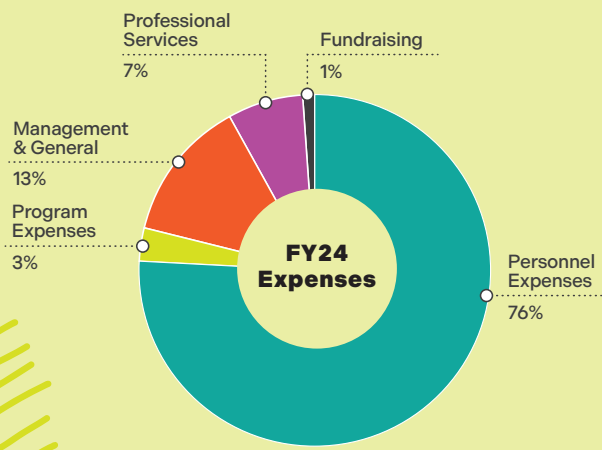
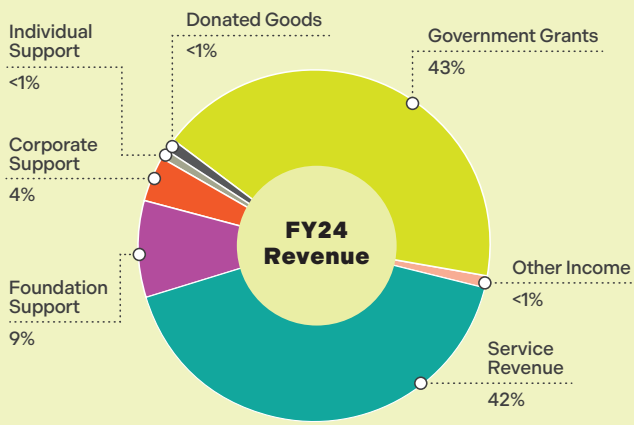
Students in Out of
School Time Programs



1,250

Attendance
at Events

Financial Data





Pittsburgh Area Community Schools

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