

Good Evening!

My name is Brittany Shoup, and I am an extremely proud special education teacher at Pittsburgh Colfax. A few years ago, I started coming to public hearings to sprinkle some sunshine on the incredible work going on in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Unfortunately, I took on a commitment for the last three years that had meetings the same time as the public hearings.

I'm proud PPS K-12 graduate who wanted to be a teacher since the third grade in Mrs. Kelly's room at Pittsburgh Mifflin. Every day I get the privilege to live out my childhood dream as a teacher in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. It's always disappointing when someone asks where I work, and my eyes light up to tell them Pittsburgh Public Schools, and their reply is always, "I'm so sorry." I'm making it my mission to change that narrative, because I know for a fact that we have some of the best teachers in the nation and we get to teach some amazing kids! I was so excited when I could come back and share some good news with you – and maybe add in an ask or two!

This month, I want to highlight some work of my colleagues. I wear many hats through my work as a teacher, and also with my work with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers. One of my commitments that I'm very passionate about is my work as a co-facilitator for the Teacher Leader Program at the PFT. Every year, we select 12 participants to participate in the program. We meet for 8 Saturdays at the PFT and learn about policy and how we can use our "educator voice" to influence policies that greatly effect our students and our classrooms. We have guest speakers ranging from the PFT president, to politicians, to journalists, and to school board members. I would like to

personally thank Sylvia Wilson, Pam Harbin, and Bill Gallagher for your past participation in our program as a guest speaker! We learned so much from you! You were each so approachable and actively told participants to reach out to school board members to have our voice heard. We really feel that we got a glimpse into the incredible work you do each day – we could truly feel the passion you have for the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Another part of the Teacher Leader Program is activism. Each educator creates an action research question, followed by an action research project. We have an amazing group this year! We've just started creating our research questions and they range from student behaviors to class size to assessments and fluency. We will be presenting our findings at the PFT on the morning of Saturday, May 20th.

My ask this month is simple. Can you please save the date to come and see our participants present their research? Maybe you can help them cut through some red tape or influence the creation of policies to help make our Pittsburgh Public Schools even better!