



Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers

LEADERSHIP REPORT

May 9, 2024

This Leadership Report provides information regarding:

- Mandatory PCCD Safety Training
- Teaching and Learning Conditions (TLE) Survey
- **URGENT: School Tuition Vouchers**
- PFT Meetings Calendar

Mandatory PCCD Safety Training

Last Friday, May 3rd, you should have received an email from the Superintendent's office informing you of the requirement to complete a 2-hour on-line safety training produced by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). While the training is a requirement for public school employees (Act 55 of 2022), that mandate does not require you to use your own time to take the training.

Later on Friday, I wrote to Dr. Walters letting him know, *"The PFT's position is the District cannot mandate work activities during times outside of the contractual workday / work year, even if the training is required by an entity beyond PPS."*

I stated that the training cannot be started and stopped, based on information I received from some who have tried. Dr. Walters responded that his understanding is the training can be started and stopped and he would verify this while working with Assistant Superintendents to find time in the day. He did not respond to my suggestion that May 24, 2024 be converted to the ½ student day / ½ PD day to accommodate completion of the required training.

Since then, it has been reported to me both that on-line safety training participants can stop the session and return to it later and they cannot.

Please let your PFT Representative (Robert Mitchell or Diane Swearingen) know if you are getting **adequate release time from meetings** to complete the training during the workday and

whether you can start, stop, and return to the online training without losing any time.

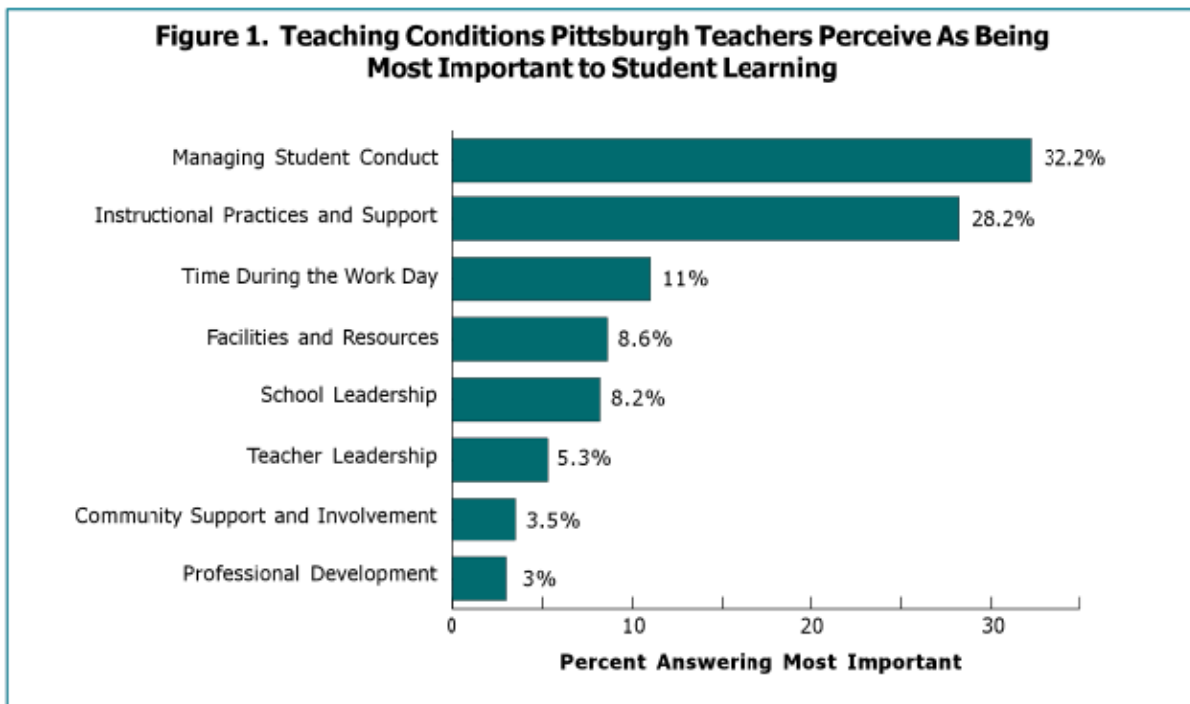
robert_mitchell@pft400.org or dianes@pft400.org.

TLC Survey

The window for the Teaching and Learning Conditions (TLC) survey has been open since May 1st. Schools (and CAPA Adjunct Teachers) will not receive their school-wide data unless at least 50% of the educators in the building take the survey. Click here for the [current response](#) rates.

The PFT leadership fully supports and encourages participation in the TLC survey. In addition to individual school improvement planning, the TLE data allows the union and the district to have comprehensive data about which schools have teaching and learning environments that need immediate attention.

Here is an example of district-wide data comparison item from an early administration of the survey a decade ago. Having these data and being able to compare to current data will help with our conversations with administration and school board members. I predict that managing student conduct is as important now (or more) as it was a decade ago.



Reminders:

- All eligible K-12 school-based educators should have received a survey link email from Panorama Education (support+pittsburgh@panoramaed.org) on May 1st with the subject "Request for Feedback: TLC Survey". This email contains a unique survey link that connects each educator to their school and role group while maintaining confidentiality.
- If you have any questions regarding the TLC Survey or did not receive the survey link, please send an email to teachingandlearningenvironment@pghschools.org.
- EC/EI educators will take a separate TLC Survey that also is open from May 1st ... May 31st.

URGENT: School Tuition Vouchers

The school tuition voucher bill, [SB 795](#), passed out of the Senate Education Committee, 8 to 3, on May 7th with all 7 Republican senators and 1 Democratic senator voting in favor. Last year's language that described "Lifeline Scholarships" was replaced with the "PASS Scholarships" that the Senate Republicans and Governor Shapiro negotiated a year ago.

The bill is not scheduled for a vote this week. When the full Senate considers the bill it is expected to pass as it did last year. Then it will move to the House.

We need to stop this latest effort to use taxpayer dollars to fund private and religious schools. The PFT, Local 400 has signed on to a labor coalition letter ([link below](#)) that has been sent to Governor Josh Shapiro, Members of the PA Senate and House, Education Secretary Dr. Khalid Mumin, and PA Treasurer Stacy Garrity.

Every one of us needs to write to their PA House Representative and their PA Senator—but the House is crucial because that is where we have a chance to stop this newest form of vouchers.

[You can find your legislators here.](#) On each of their pages there is an email button to click to send your message.

Feel free to cut and paste the following message — modify it and personalize it if you wish. An email to your representatives with your home address on it is far more valuable than an automated message created on your behalf. A typed or hand-written letter to your representatives is even more powerful. If we all send a personalized message by email or U.S. mail, we can stop this diversion of money from public schools that accept everyone regardless of faith or ability, to non-public schools that have great leeway to discriminate — and often use it.

Dear Representative (or Senator) _____

Senate Bill 795 is moving in the Senate and would create a new state funded school tuition voucher program in Pennsylvania. Please oppose this and all efforts to create a new tuition voucher program in our state.

Tuition voucher programs are diversion of money away from public schools that accept everyone regardless of faith or ability, to non-public schools that often discriminate.

Some of the reasons I oppose SB 795 and urge you to do the same include:

- Tuition vouchers divert taxpayer dollars directly to private and religious schools.*
- Non-public schools are not held accountable for academic success.*
- SB 795 has very limited protections against discrimination and leaves students with disabilities and LGBT youth vulnerable to discrimination.*
- SB 795 diverts taxpayer dollars away from public schools while the state continues to be out of compliance with its Constitutional obligations regarding school funding.*
- EITC and OSTC already divert \$475 million of taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools.*

Please oppose SB 795 and do not allow tuition vouchers to be a bargaining chip in current budget negotiations with the Governor.

*Sincerely,
[your name and address]*

Here are the labor, associations, and stakeholder letters:

[Labor letter \(PFT400 signed on\)](#)

[Association letter \(e.g., school boards, administrators\)](#)

[Stakeholders](#)

[PA Schools Work](#)

In 2001, a back-door form of school vouchers was established in PA with the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), which was followed by Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC). These voucher programs fund private and religious schools by giving corporations tax credits for donations to non-profits that then provide school tuition vouchers to families. This is a 2-step diversion of \$475M of taxpayer dollars to private and religious schools — now at \$475M/year.

Please send your letters today.

Upcoming Meetings

May 11, 10:00 AM Teacher Leader Program, Fondy Room, PFT
May 14, 4:30 PM Substitute Teachers Grassroots Meeting, Zoom
May 15, 4:30 PM Early Intervention Grassroots Meeting, Zoom
May 20, 4:30 PM Early Childhood Grassroots Meeting, Zoom
May 24, 4:30 PM Final Friday PFT Social Event (location TBD)
May 28, 4:30 PM School Safety Grassroots Meeting, Zoom
June 3, 4:30 PM PFT PAC Meeting, Zoom
June 5, 4:30 PM PFT Executive Board Meeting, Fondy Room
June 6, 5:00 PM Paraprofessional Appreciation Event, Fondy Room
June 10, 4:00 PM PMOIU#2 Grassroots Meeting, Zoom
June 10, 4:30 PM Family Services Specialists Meeting, Zoom

All these meetings are for PFT Members only.

In solidarity,

**Billy Hileman
President
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers**