

2014 Authorizer Survey

Feedback on PCSB's Oversight and Support

November 3, 2014

DC Public Charter School Board

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Background

In Fall 2012 the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) first surveyed DC charter schools to assess the satisfaction levels and collect oversight feedback. PCSB conducted this survey again in 2013 and now in 2014.

The purpose of the survey is to measure and evaluate the way PCSB serves its local educational agency (LEA) partners by giving charter LEAs the opportunity to provide feedback to PCSB. PCSB incorporates this feedback as it revises its operations and portfolio management procedures, improving school service in the future.

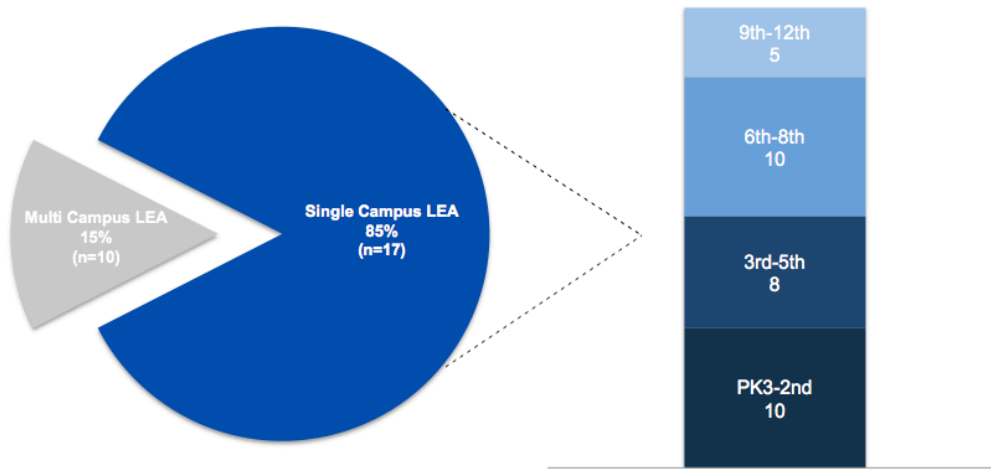
During the September 30, 2014 Charter School Leaders meeting, the 2014 Authorizer Survey was administered. A total of 34 school leaders chose to fill out the survey and in the pages to follow the results will be summarized.

I. Demographic Results

About 79% of survey respondents (or 27 respondents of 34 total) chose to answer the optional Demographic Information section. The results were heavily skewed in favor of Single Campus LEA's: 85%.

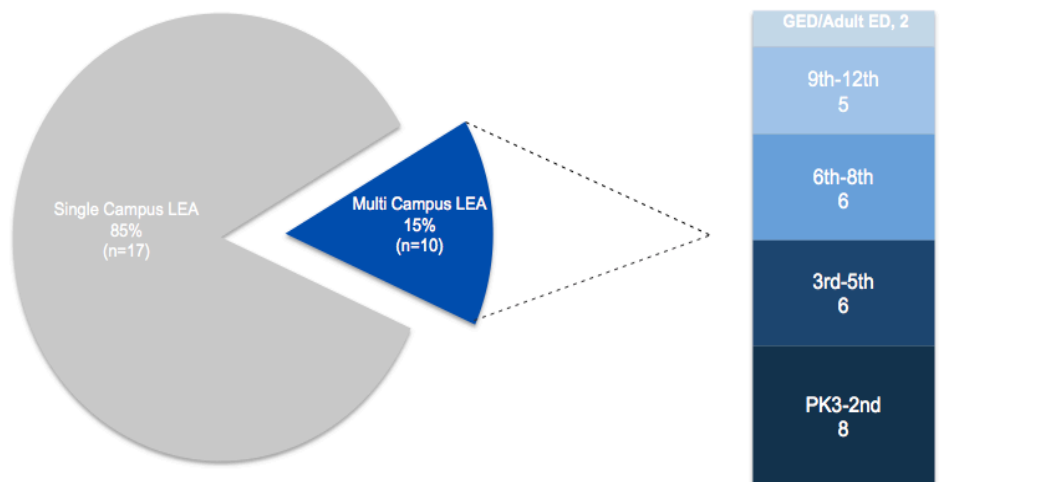
However, once the data is broken down by grade level, there is a similar distribution among grade levels between Single Campus LEA's and Multi-Campus LEAs.

Single Campus LEA Respondents: Grade Level Breakdown*



*Two Single Campus LEA leaders did not answer the grade level question, so they are not included in the Grade Level Breakdown graph.

Multi Campus LEA Respondents: Grade Level Breakdown*



*One Multi Campus LEA leader did not answer the grade level question, so they are not included in the Grade Level Breakdown graph.

II. Accountability Results

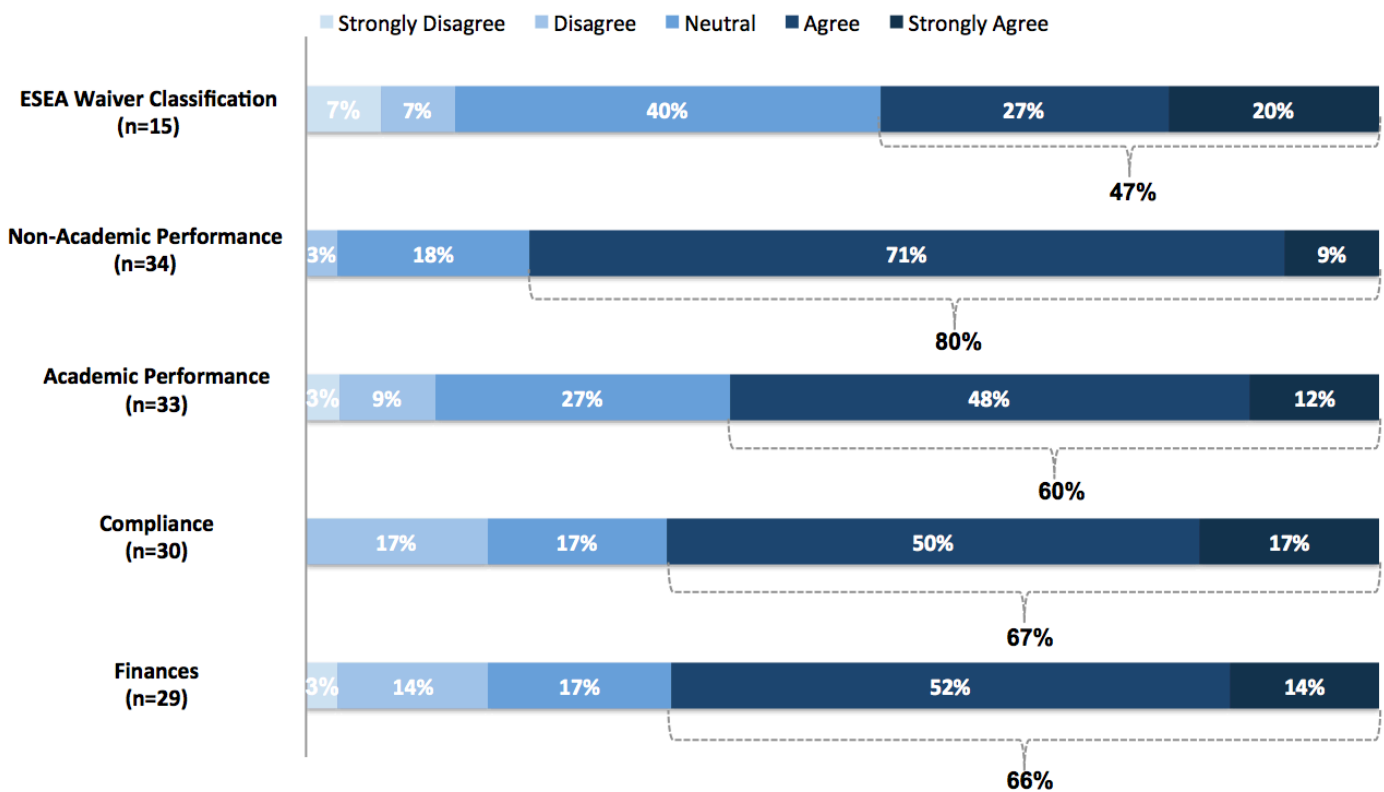
A. Accountability Expectations

From the graph, an overwhelming majority of respondents (80%) note that they ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ with PCSB’s clarity when communicating its accountability expectations for Non-Academic Performance (attendance/discipline).

More than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that PCSB is clear with its accountability expectations in regards to Academic Performance (60%) and Finances (66%).

However, PCSB is performing below 50% in its clarity of communicating its accountability expectations for the ESEA Waiver Classifications (47%) for those schools that are Focus or Priority schools. However, those responding “Neutral” may have marked this in error rather than skipping this question.

PCSB is clear when communicating its accountability expectations for:

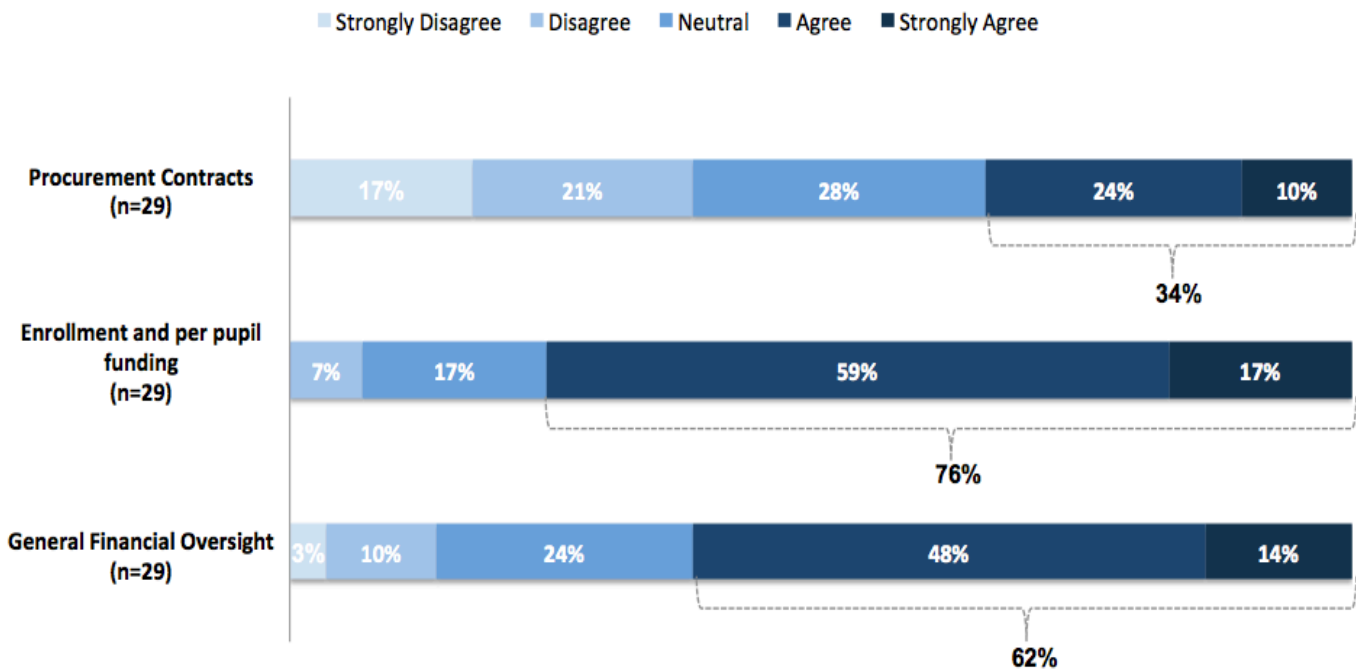


B. Financial Oversight

Out of 29 school leaders who chose to answer the financial oversight question, Procurement Contracts is an area in which PCSB must improve since, only 34% of the 29 school leaders noted that they 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with PCSB's clarity in communicating information about the topic.

However, in regards to other financial oversight topics, PCSB is doing well in communicating enrollment and per pupil funding and general financial oversight information. More than half of the respondents chose to identify with either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' in those two financial oversight topics.

PCSB is clear when communicating the following financial oversight:

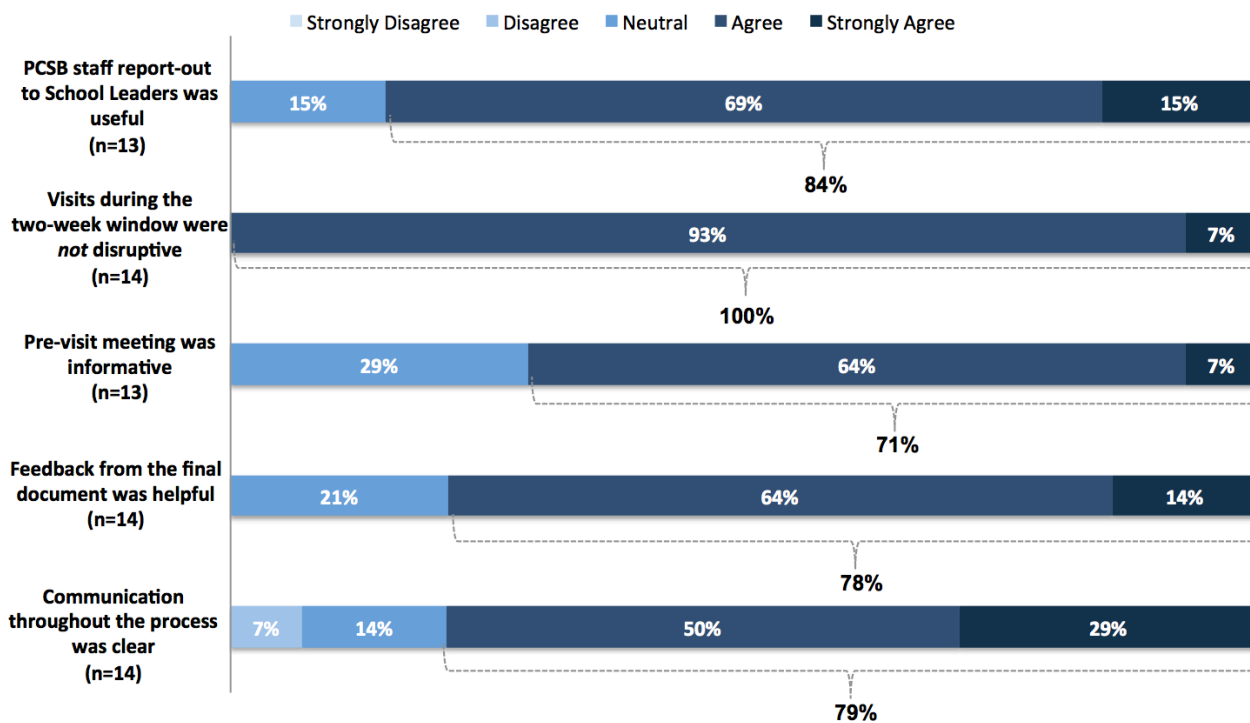


C. Qualitative Site Reviews

PCSB received high marks on the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) process. Even though only 14 school leaders had gone through a QSR, the respondents rated PCSB highly in all areas, with each topic receiving 71% or greater.

However, it is important to note that the “Pre-visit meeting” and “Feedback from the final document” both received higher neutral ratings than the other three areas, which is not a great cause for concern, since it does not necessarily represent a negative rating; however, PCSB should think about ways to improve the pre-visit meeting and the feedback from the final document, so that school leaders continue to gain value on those two parts.

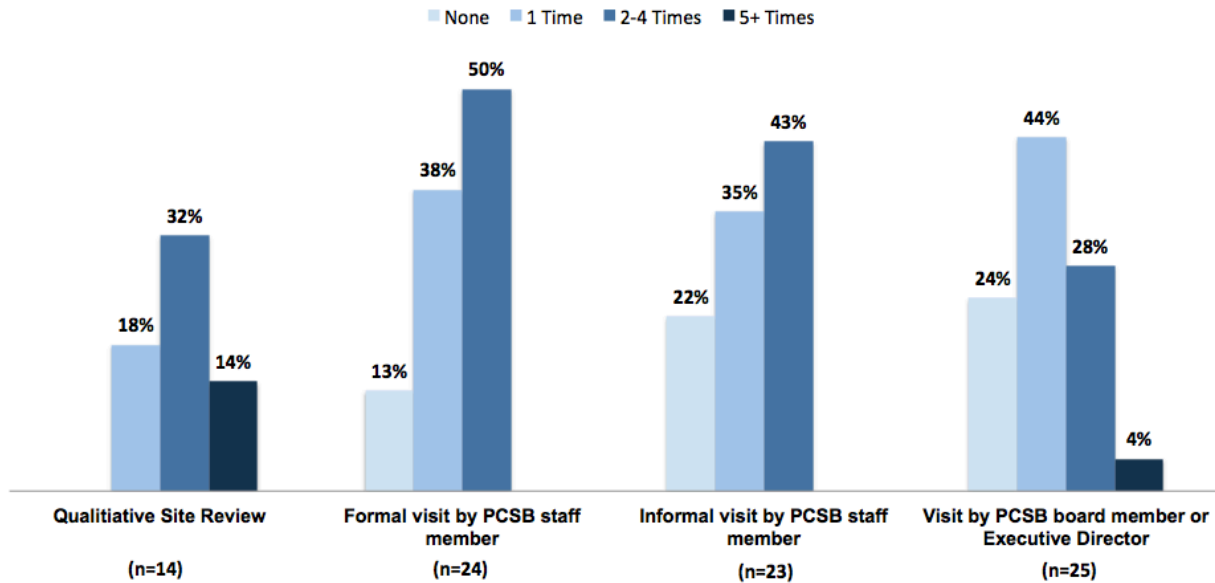
If your school underwent a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) during the 2013-2014 year, please rate the following:



D. PCSB School Visits

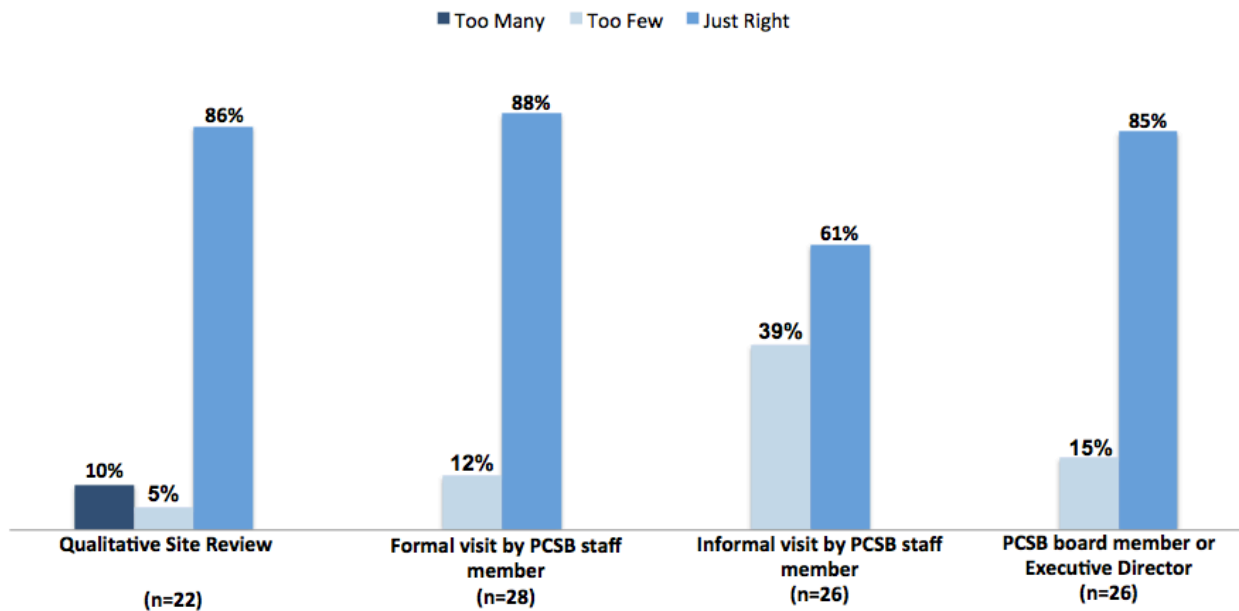
On average, 42% of school leaders reported that PCSB staff (including during the QSR) visited schools about 2-4 times throughout the 2013-14 year, while 44% of school leaders reported that Board Members and Executive Director Scott Pearson visited only once.

How many times did a PCSB representative visit your school(s) during the 2013-2014 year?:



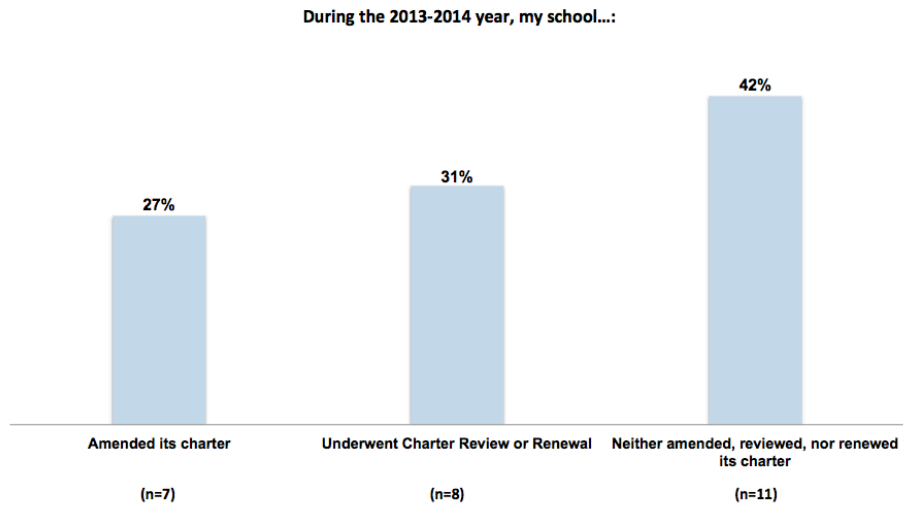
80% of School leaders, on average, believe that PCSB staff and board visited the school the *right* number of times. Comparatively, based on the data it seems as though school leaders would appreciate if more *informal* visits were done by PCSB staff members: only 61% of school leaders thought that the number of visits was 'Just Right.'

I believe the number of visits PCSB representatives made to my school(s) during the 2013-2014 year was...:



III. Charter Amendment, Review, and Renewal

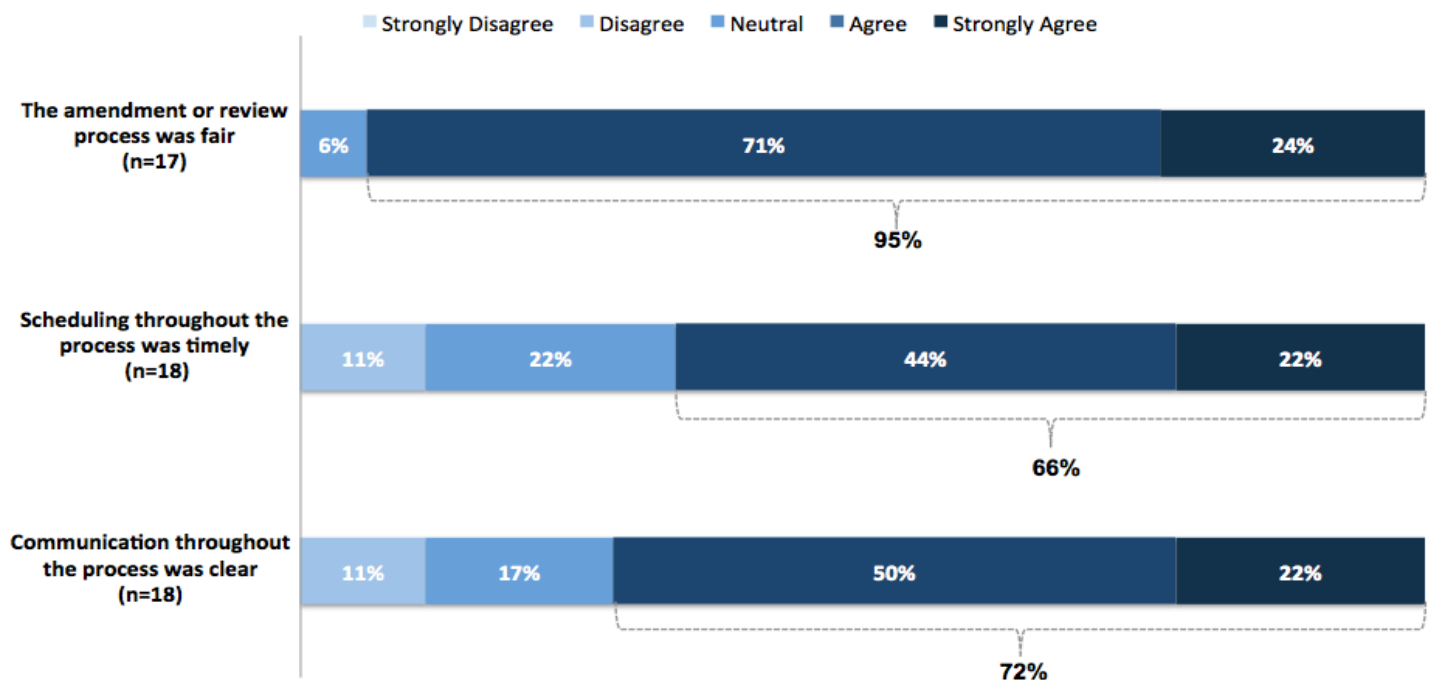
Out of the 15 school leaders that reported that their school either amended its charter or underwent a charter review or renewal, PCSB scored well on this section. School leaders overwhelmingly rated PCSB positively for having a fair amendment or review process, timely scheduling throughout the process, and clear communication.



While PCSB did score exceptionally on this section, there are two comments to consider from school leaders:

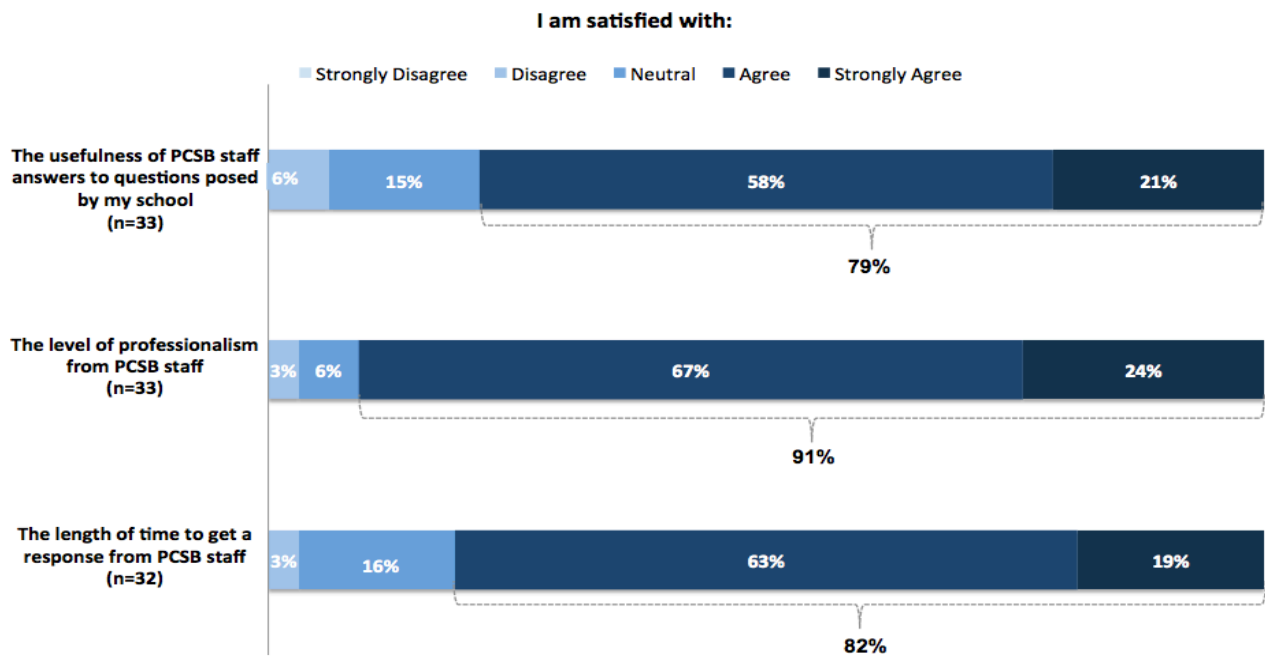
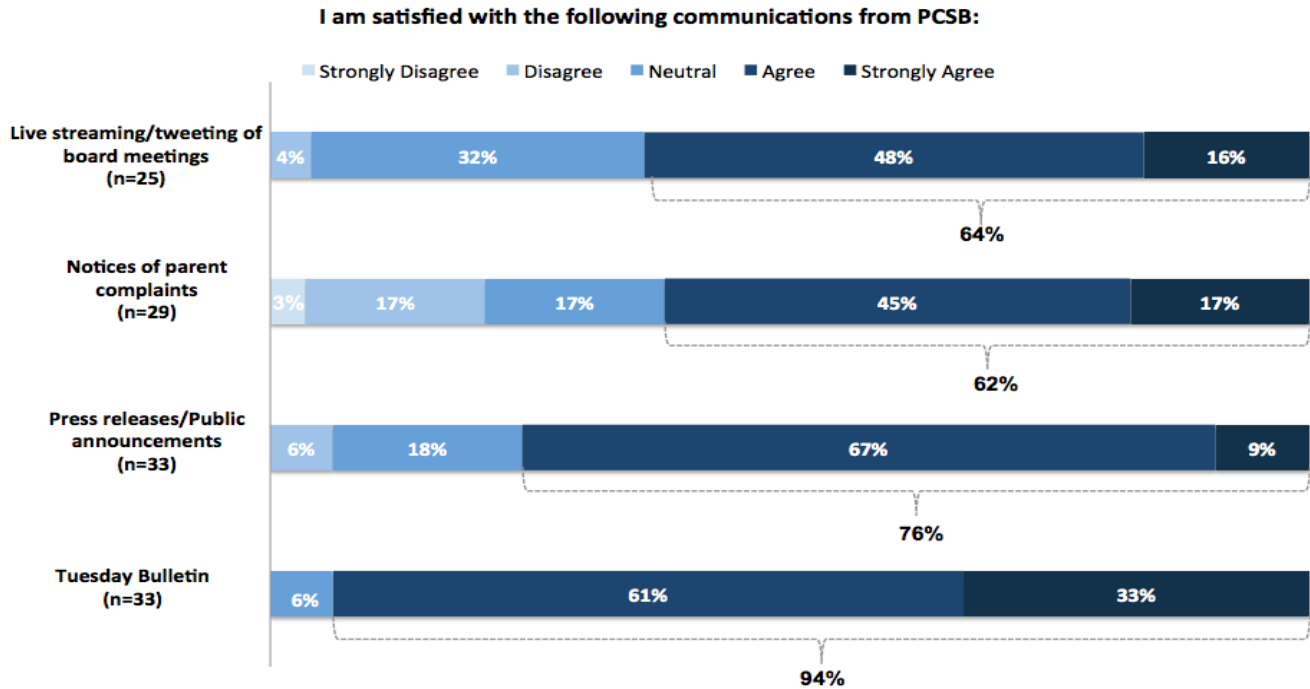
- *From time to time, the things that require an amendment are unclear.*
- *Difficult to find historically submitted documents*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:



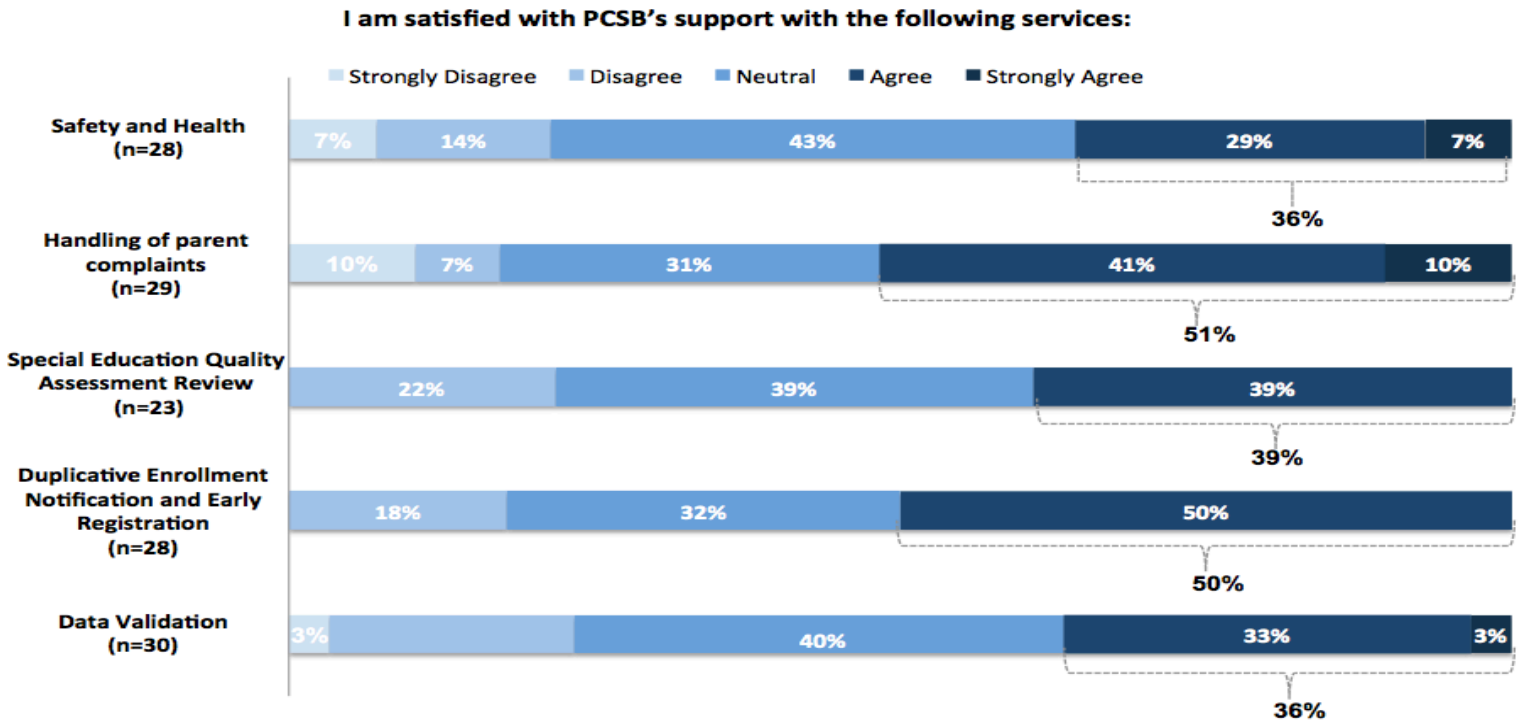
IV. Communications

Overall, more than half of school leaders rate PCSB well in terms of communications. However, parent complaints are rated lower than the rest of topics at 61%. One school leader noted that *parent complaints are often communicated to LEA's after the complaint has been resolved.*



V. Customer Service and Support

Based on the data, PCSB can do a better job serving schools in the services listed below. On average, only 42% of school leaders 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with the statements listed below. Most of the issues stem from the fact that school leaders noted that they are still unsure about whom to contact for what, although they are glad that they are now assigned one staff member per school. **Please see the table below, which captures all of the comments for this section.**



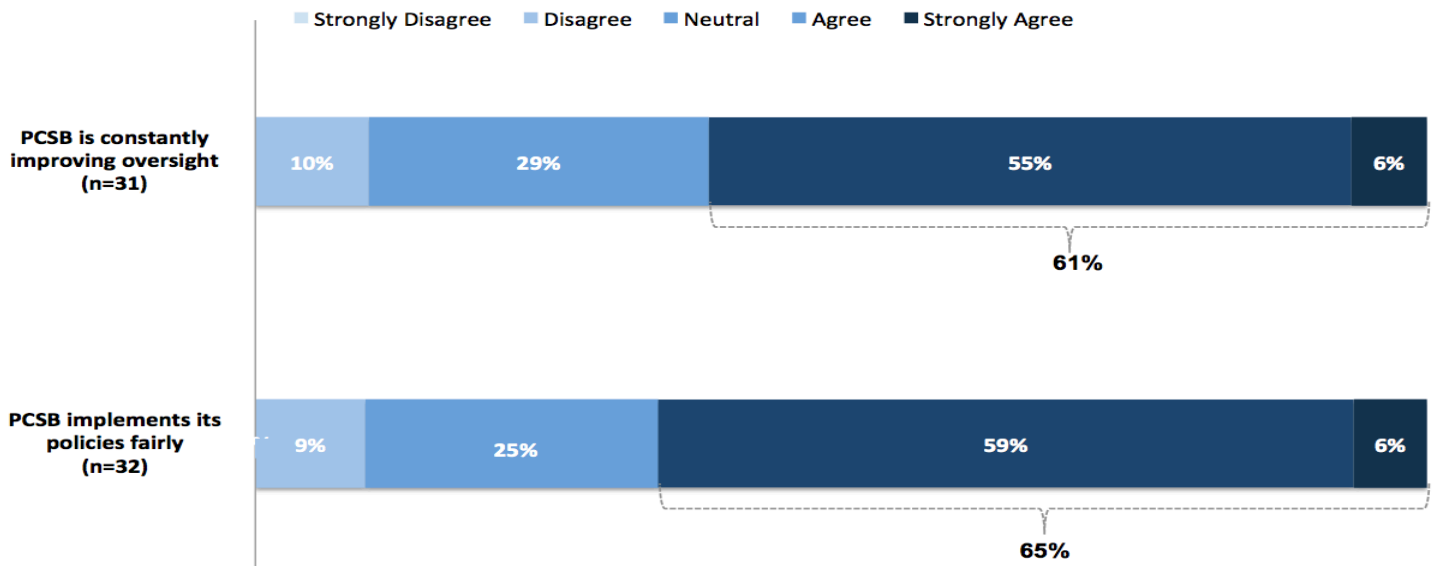
Comments Received for Customer Service and Support

How can PCSB improve these services?	Are there any additional areas in which PCSB should provide support?	Are there any content areas for which you are unsure whom to contact at PCSB?
Focus on accuracy in documentation and also consistency across policy and other documents. Greater diligence on the documentation/data provided by OSSE but for which schools are held accountable by the PCSB	Our school would like to improve the grievance process for parents. We'd prefer if there were a 3 rd party involved to mediate the grievance process to submitting one to PCSB. If the grievance cannot be remediated then it should be sent to the PCSB.	My only concern is that telephones are often not answered and it goes into voicemail
We still have issues with how our attendance data is crunched at the PCSB's end; our adult students struggle to get the immunizations they need	More info, clarity on procurement	Yes, lots
Some staff members are very responsive while others never respond	PCSB should assist in providing LEA's with legal support so that schools don't have to scramble to get legal representation.	Truancy and attendance data and data issues with city systems
The data in Proactive and Sharepoint do not match. When data is pulled for reports, it is unclear why ProActive's data is incorrect if it is being pulled from Sharepoint.	Continue to provide ways to coordinate with city services	I am not always sure, but usually respond to whomever initially communicates on the topic; also would be helpful to get all dates for leader meetings for the year so we can plan around them.
I do think having a person that represents PCSB assigned to a specific school was much more supportive	Taskforce members did not always feel that all voices were heard or even recorded in the minutes. Sometimes the impression is that PCSB has a preset way they wanted things to go	
Money and time might be best spent in creating an instructional program, lessons, curriculum that matches the questions in the standardized test as opposed to creating secretivity [sic] of the test.	Charm report wasn't particularly clear, useful or accurate	
Keep clear communication	Timelines for things sometimes change/shift	
More working committees or task forces: accountability, finance, policy, government relations	Still too many requests for "compliance" documents, especially considering all of OSSE's requests as well	
PCSB should consider both small and large LEA's with data validation. Sharepoint is inefficient when validating >3 campuses		
Very hard to get staff signed up for medication training although I'm glad it's offered; I appreciate the non-judgmental way PCSB deals with complaints		
Let school leaders know there's a problem before it's too late; let school leaders know about a problem before you alarm school board members		

VI. Overall Oversight

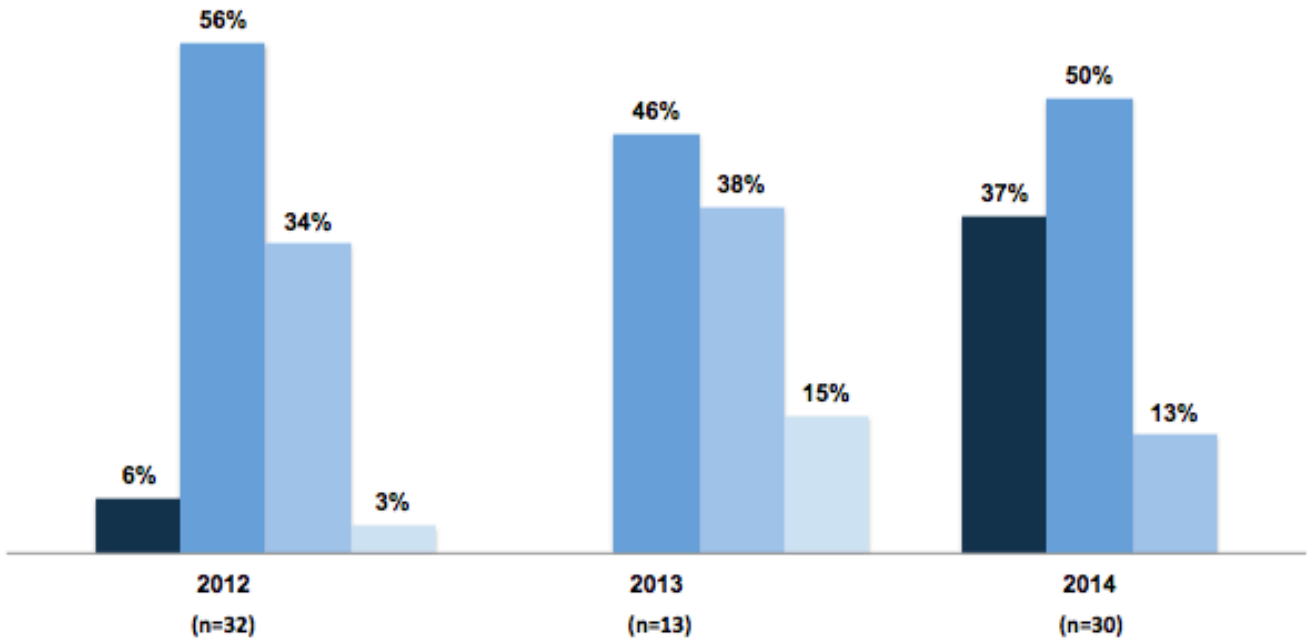
More than 60% of school leaders 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that PCSB is both constantly improving oversight and implementing its policies fairly. PCSB has also improved its overall grade since the survey was first released in 2012. **37% of school leaders noted that PCSB received an "A" during the 2013-14 year, which is a significant improvement from the past two years, giving PCSB a GPA of 3.2 for the 2013-14 year.** View the table below, which captures all of the comments for this section.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

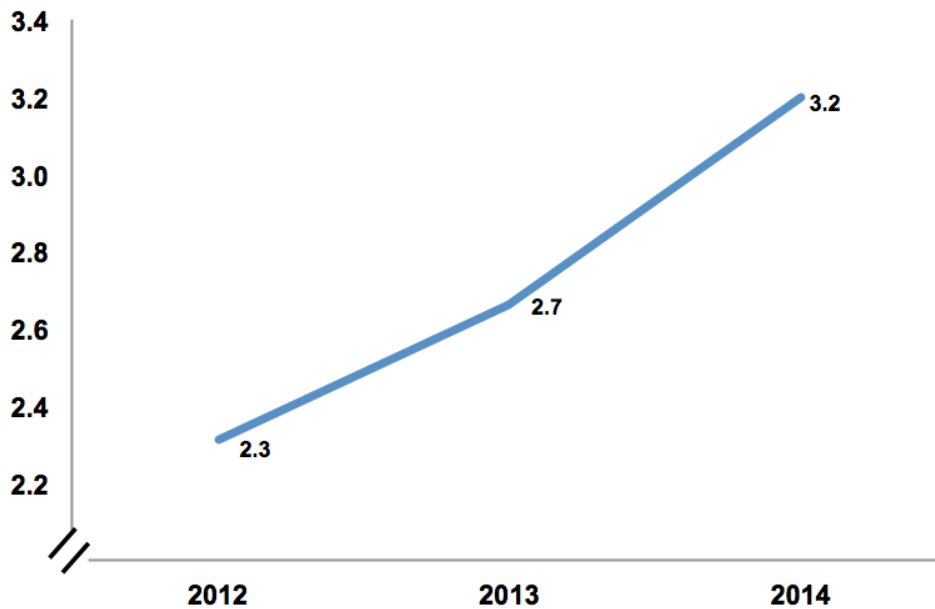


How would you grade PCSB's overall performance as an authorizer?:

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D



PCSB's GPA Through the Years:



Comments Received for Overall Oversight

What should PCSB <u>start</u> doing to be an effective authorizer?	What should PCSB <u>keep</u> doing to be an effective authorizer?	What should PCSB <u>stop</u> doing to be an effective authorizer?
Hire staff with charter school leader experience; stop raising charter fees to grow staff	Tuesday bulletin; PMF taskforce	Stop assuming everyone has time for public comment
Less compliance	More engagement with stakeholders	Adding compliance/lack of coordination with OSSE on services (often duplicative)
More involvement by actual board members	Keep talking to schools (adding concerns in writing, not just verbal/meetings to resolve)	Changing the PMF, adding metrics to the PMF
Retain your best people: lots of turnover, makes it hard on schools	Make great staff hires and re-allocations/reorganizations; hold task forces around PMF improvements	Stop disrespecting the accreditation organizations. They were explicitly chosen in the charter law to oversee academics of charter schools. PCSB is only to oversee that schools keep their accreditation, are financially stable, take the standardized tests (not be judged or penalized by its results)
More clarity and consistency on compliance; higher quality data systems – Proactive not very good; put together business leaders working group	Minimizing requests for documents	PCSB leaders making threats, insinuations, ect when sensitive issues come up; staff is very professional and come across as supportive. Executive director is blunt and clear in communication which is helpful
Hold floors/targets steady for 3-5 year period	Close relationships with LEAs; remain accessible	Consider the financial and other costs of requirements for schools, such as the new procurement policy requirements
Be more transparent when making decisions that fly in the race of stakeholder input	Continue to hold schools accountable for student performance	Stop the rollout of new initiatives that have not been thoroughly thought through and thus are in-process to working out the details
In good shape	Keep the fantastic relationship with the school leaders	Stop promoting some schools over others as if parents cannot make their own decisions based on available data; stop unnecessary reviews and reporting
Visit more low performing schools to dialogue about how they can improve	Very clear and proactive communication in writing	
Start thinking about learning the academic ratings to the accreditation organizations not redeveloping a PMF wheel. Let this hundred year old organization do its job like the AMA and FDA	Communication	
Explain how PMF does not disadvantage charters serving in high needs parts of the city. Show data which illustrates how schools with similar population in wards are reflected with tiers and how it is a fair yardstick	Keep Scott and Naomi in their positions	
Provide consistent and accurate information to decrease confusion; consider how policies affect various schools	Keep bringing LEA's together [at school leaders meetings]	
Like OSSE, PCSB has a lot of data upload requests that can at times challenge us to complete on time	Continue to publish a standardized report card (PMF) that allows comparisons between schools and information on progress and growth	
Be clear and transparent when applying policies, conditions, and sanctions		