

**TEEN-LEAD
ADVOCATES
+ CREATORS**



COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

SPRING '22 ZINE

T A B L E

O F

C O N T E N T S

SECTION 1
PORTRAITS
OF EQUITY

LAYOUT DESIGN
BY TRINITY

SECTION 3
STUDENT HIERARCHY
OF NEEDS
FEATURING:
PERRY TRADITIONAL
ACADEMY

LAYOUT DESIGN
BY CHRISTA

SECTION 2
BARRIERS

LAYOUT DESIGN
BY MOLLY

SECTION 4
FACES OF
POWER

LAYOUT DESIGN
BY TYLER



MEET THE TEAM

MEET



CAYAH

This is Cayah
Cayah is 13 years old
Cayah goes to
Shady Side Academy

Cayah is a member of the
Teen Bloc community
Cayah is a member of an
acting company, ATC
(Alumni Theater
Company).

Cayah's passions are
engaging with the people
and communities around
her, reporting and writing,
and educating herself and
others everyday on
current everyday
worldwide issues.

MEET



ELI

Eli has been with TeenBloc since summer of 2020.

He is 15 years old and a Freshman at City High Charter School.

Eli also plays football and other activities.

Eli likes to play video games and have fun and he is from the Carrick neighborhood

M E E T

A H M E E N A

I'm Ahmeena and what drives me towards advocacy is being part of a minority and always being the minority places I went growing up.

Since I was in Pre-K I went to a Private PWI and I was the only African American kid in my class until middle school.

That experience impacted me in many ways. I had to experience all the rude things that came along with people who didn't accept minorities.

So growing up I felt like I never had any representation. Things like having nobody else to represent you made me want to help represent people like me so they wouldn't have to feel the way I felt going to those places. I also wanted to voice for those who felt like those places making them feel like they didn't fit in with their people.

MEET



MOLLY

Molly has been working with TeenBloc since summer of 2020.

She attends Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School as a junior Media major, specializing in tech media and filmmaking. She has been writing and editing for the Creative Writing Team of The Incandescent Review since 2020.

Additionally, Molly is a host for Bridges & Books, a lit podcast created by teens, for teens, where she interviews acclaimed and diverse YA authors and discusses her favorite YA novels. When she's not writing or recording, she enjoys running, gardening, and spending time with her pet cat, Cornflake.

MEET



TRINITY

Trinity is a new member of Teen Bloc.

She is 15 years old and a Sophomore at Shadyside Academy.

Trinity enjoys partaking in multiple different sports and interacting in the theater.

She also enjoys learning more about her community and helping others.

MEET

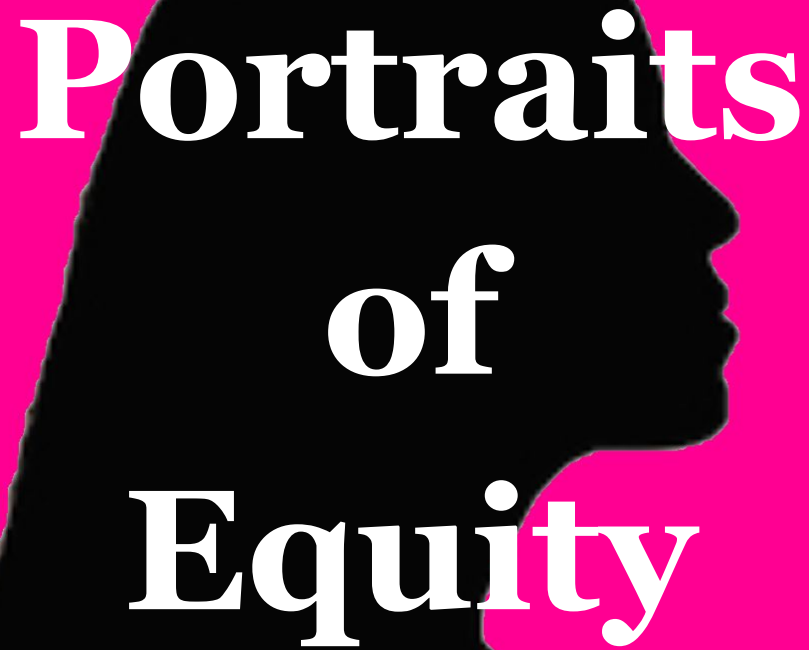


TYLER

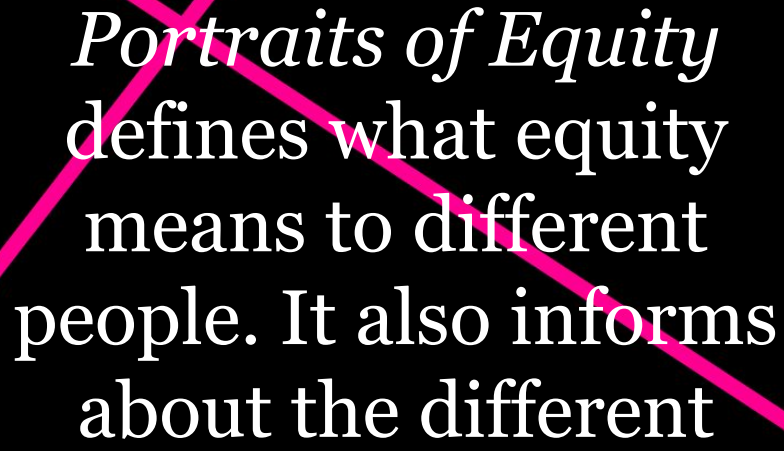
Tyler has been working with TeenBloc since Fall 2019.

He goes to Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12; He does an instrumental major, playing clarinet and writing music.

He is also involved in his school's Student Council, Latinx Student Union, Stand Together, and NHS, Future Kings Mentoring, etc.

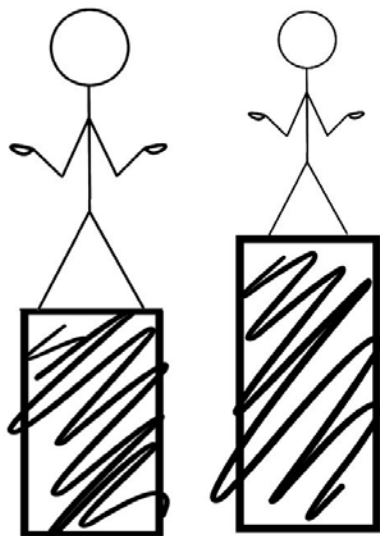
A black silhouette of a woman's head in profile, facing right. The silhouette is positioned against a bright pink rectangular background, which is itself set against a black background. The text "Portraits of Equity" is overlaid on the silhouette and the pink background.

Portraits of Equity

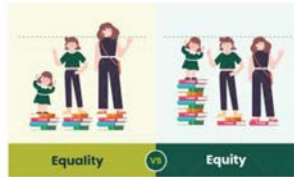


Portraits of Equity
defines what equity
means to different
people. It also informs
about the different
inequalities plaguing
the Allegheny County
school system,
specifically Pittsburgh
Public School District.

EQUITY IS THE
ONLY ACCEPTABLE
GOAL



Paul Farmer

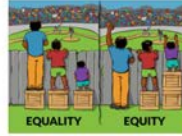


Cayah

“Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial
Equity shows examples of integrity and equal
treatment. Equity in schools are crucial factors
to equity as a whole”

“The Pittsburgh Promise is a college scholarship
program that offers support and help to
students who attend PPS and PCS”

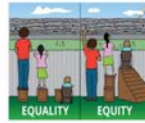
“This need impacts equity by having both
Pittsburgh Public schools and Charter Schools
have the same graduations and completion of
school rates. To have better education statuses
especially for PPS teachers and educators to
inspire students to graduate and become
successful would be the ideal goal”



equity is everyone
being at the same
level

equity is nobody has
to cry for others to
laugh the joke isn't at
the expense of other
everyone can laugh

equity is empathy and
equality



equity is beyond the
idea of equality it's
about more than just
being fair and having
enough to go around
it's about making sure
it's accessible to all

what is... Equity



giving a taller
ladder to the
friend on the
higher side of the
tree or more
giving more for
people to be able
to have the same
access as you so
then it can be
equal

equity is a step to
equality a step
essential to getting
there to be able to
form an understanding

Ahmeena

“To me equity is the understanding that all people, races, sexualities, and religions should be held at the same level and receive the same treatment”

“But what I've come to realize is equity is more than just another meaning for equality but its a helping hand and a step towards equality”

“While population per race in schools is usually trumped by white the suspension rates are usually higher in people of color especially in the pittsburgh public schools. For example the number of suspensions at perry and the percent of african american students and students who are people of color”



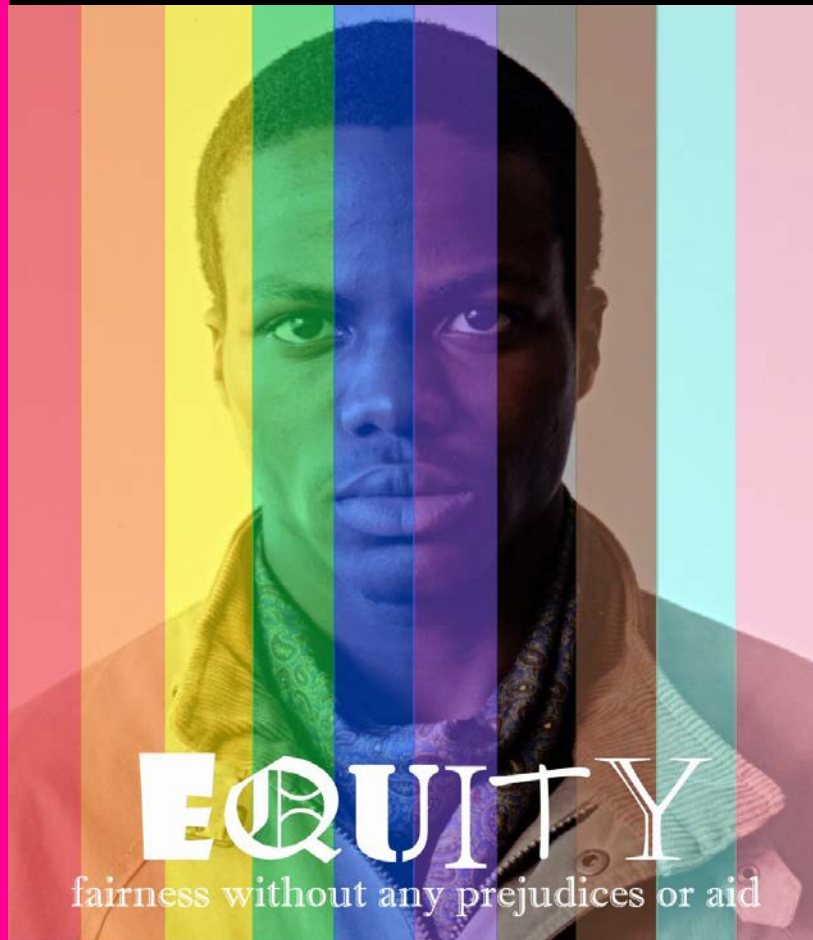
By: Molly

Molly

“69% of students were chronically absent, the majority of them missing 20% or more of the school year. For Pittsburgh CAPA, a creative and performing arts magnet school, only 4% of students were chronically absent”

“A number of factors could be affecting absentee rates, including access to transportation, online resources, trustworthy and certified teachers, and health (and mental health) resources”

“Equity to me is providing an empathetic, individualized approach to education and opportunity. There is a clear difference between equity and equality, as equality takes on a “colorblind” mindset, ignoring the institutional, structural racism that is deeply embedded in society”



EQUITY

fairness without any prejudices or aid

By: Trinity

Trinity

“Equity can be defined as fairness without any prejudices or aid that allows one to have more readiness than the other. This means there should be an ability for people to be able to get as far as their peers; despite one's financial standings, race, sexuality, or others”

“The percent of students who missed twenty percent or more of the school year in Westinghouse was 69%. Urban Pathways has less than one-fourth of that percentage”

“If more assistance could be provided to schools, such as Westinghouse, to help more students be able to consistently come to school; would not only decrease the percent of students missing twenty percent or more of the school year but would increase the schools' graduation rate(simultaneously decreasing the percentage of high school dropouts)”



By: Tyler

Tyler

“Equity in our schools is the process of reforming our school procedures to support academic fairness and inclusion to all students and staff”

“For example, black students are more likely than white students to attend PPS schools with high concentrations of children in poverty”

“This is something that we need to be aware of, especially for wanting equity”

“This gives reasons to why assumptions are made against minority students and students who have an IEP”

“it shouldn't be the case that you have to be economically 'advantaged' in order to gain a 'good' education.



Maisie

“The definition of equity is being fair and impartial. Equity in schools is a big part of equity”

“60% of students in Perry High School are chronically absent. This reflects onto their school work, and therefore produces less graduates. Another part of this could stem from the fact that 80% of students who attend Perry are economically disadvantaged”

“It shouldn’t be the case that you have to be economically ‘advantaged’ in order to gain a ‘good’ education”

“This isn’t fair to those who don’t have access to this education and therefore isn’t equitable”

Elijah

When I think about equity I think mainly about resources. Equity is a big issue in PPS schools. Some schools are being treated differently than other schools. An example of an equity issue is a school like Allderdice, located in Squirrel Hill, has way more access to resources and funding than a North Side school, like Perry Traditional Academy.

I believe this to be true considering Allderdice has an absentee rate of 21% where Perry Traditional Academy has 58%.

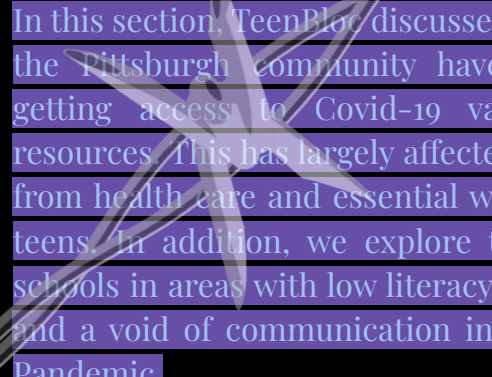
It creates a question alone of why so many students at Perry are chronically absent. I don't think it's just because the kids are 'bad'. Students in predominantly Black schools are being failed, frequently in this district, and something needs to be done.

I feel like schools in other neighborhoods like Squirrel Hill, Shadyside, etc are treated way better than a school on the North Side because Perry is always shown as a bad school, the media never shows us the good things that happen there. We need school equality in more schools because it's not far that some schools are being treated bad because there on a certain side of town or because there numbers are bad. If we had school equality it would make the school, and the district, much better.

BARRIERS

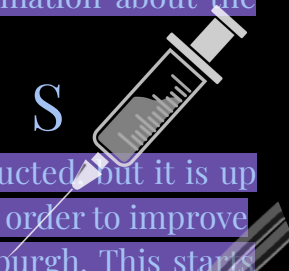


: circumstances or obstacles that keep people or things apart or prevent communication or progress



In this section, TeenBloc discusses barriers that people in the Pittsburgh community have faced in regards to getting access to Covid-19 vaccinations and other resources. This has largely affected BIPOC individuals -- from health care and essential workers, to children and teens. In addition, we explore the inequities amongst schools in areas with low literacy rates, poor leadership, and a void of communication in information about the Pandemic.

B A R R I E R S



Barriers are bound to be constructed but it is up to us to tear them down little by little in order to improve the quality of life and fairness in Pittsburgh. This starts with focusing on marginalized groups who have had it the worst. The data is real, and if we pull from it and learn to read it, we become unstoppable and lives can be saved. It is necessary to approach barriers head on so that real change can happen. TeenBloc illustrates some ways this need can be fulfilled through tangible ideas, actions, and dedication.

**EQUITY IN
EDUCATION**



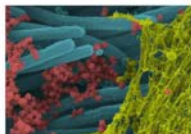
**EQUITY IN
HEALTH**

Cayah

“Equity plays a huge role in the Covid vaccines and who has access to them. African Americans, Hispanic people, and Pacific Islanders are less likely to get the vaccine than white people because they might not have access, they might be hesitant to get it because of failure with the medical treatment in the past or because medical places are racist and refuse to assist people of color. So because of race you are put in danger and cannot get the help you deserve to keep others and yourself safe.”

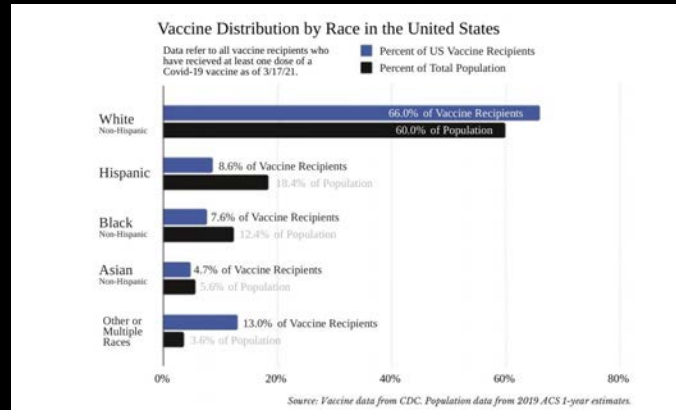


“Some groups of youth do not have the education or money to get the vaccine and they sadly are at risk and higher danger of exposure of Covid-19. There could be a physical business that just works on finding people who cannot get the vaccine and giving it to them and educating them on why having the vaccine is important and safer.”



Ahmeen@

“Here in this graph you can see that white people had more recipients than any other race because they had easier access to [the vaccine]. Adding all the other races up would equal 33.9%. So the percentage of POC vaccine recipients were nearly half of the white vaccine recipients. This graph also shows how the vaccine was unfairly distributed. There was more than enough for white people (and other or multiple races) but not nearly enough for any other race.”



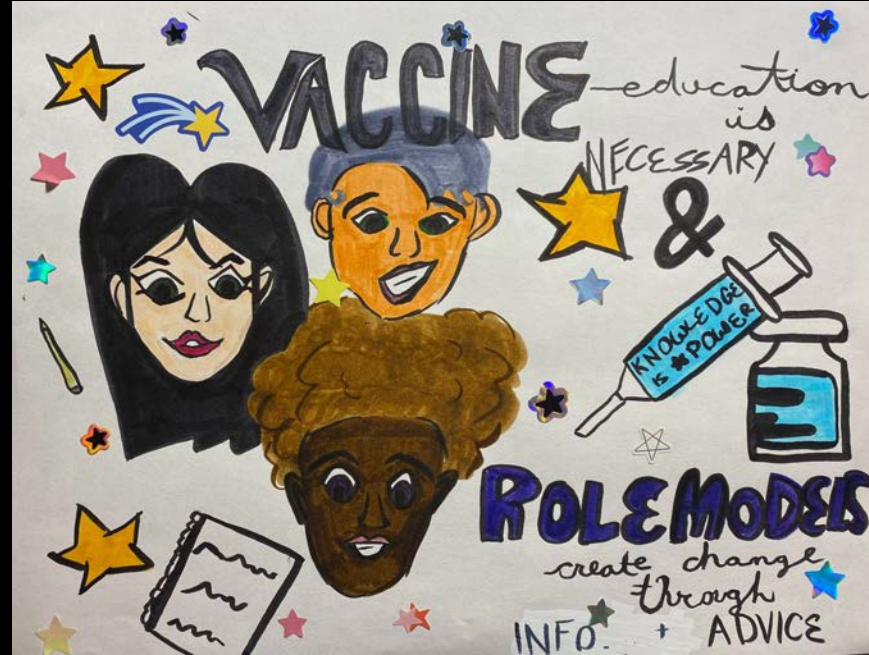


Molly

“Youth is affected because their growth and opportunities may be stunted due to things that they essentially have no control over. Young people are too often put into a position of no power, and BIPOC youth are even more so hindered.”



“To solve this issue, teachers need to be hired based on the training and intention they are putting into their curriculum. Consideration of students’ needs should also be put into this; you should never onboard a teacher without properly seeing how students are reacting. Although many of these teachers seem committed, something has to be going wrong as more than half of the students are chronically absent, being pushed away from school. I easily think this must be due to students who don’t feel worthy, appreciated, ready, or understood.”

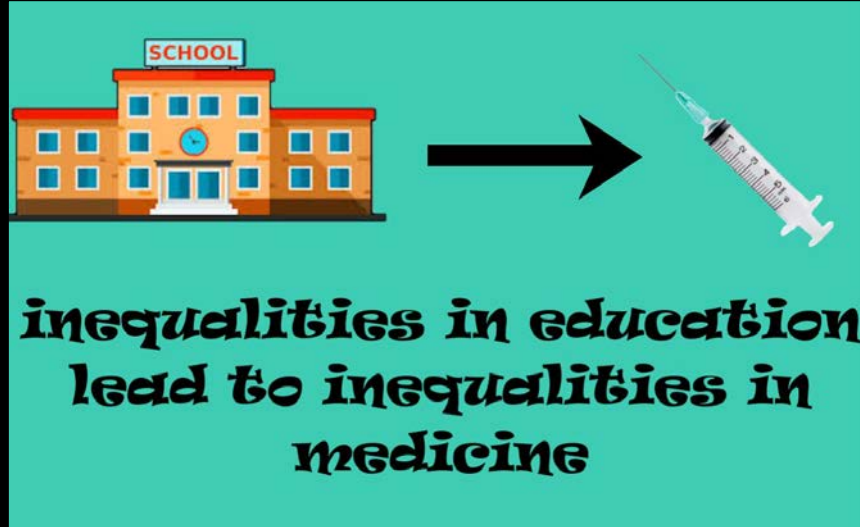


Trinity

“The black community was one of the main groups that needed vaccinations and other COVID-19 assistance and yet they were not one of the main ones to receive it, due to the inequalities in the healthcare system. This demonstrates how those who need help the most, don't receive it in the current medical management. This is a relevant violation of inequality in the world which correlates to other aspects of life, not just in the medical world.”



“This also affects their future by putting them and the future generations at the same disadvantage because of the lack of data literacy. This is a continuous issue that will not stop until it is fixed. For it to be fixed or even to begin on the pathway to it being fixed there needs to be more data literacy in all schools, no matter the wealth of the district, easier access to data, and data that is easier to read.”



Tyler

“During the pandemic, there were many absences and suspensions on students for not logging in online at Perry. The teachers and staff didn’t realize that the student probably couldn’t log in due to poor connection or they’ve never achieved a device! At Perry, there weren’t enough teachers or students last year! Inequity is breaking apart our system as a whole in the PPS community!”



“As an individual attending one of the PPS schools, I have the perseverance and wisdom to create conversations based on topics that concern all of us, no matter what type of view we have on that specific topic. I really like to communicate with others and understand their different beliefs on these situations and want to inspire those views that will attract others to do the same. Just by teaming up and discuss options, things can be better and solved.”



VACCINES ARE FRESH!

EQUITY IS FAIR!

WE ALL NEED IT!!!

Maisie

“People who don’t have those specific thing should not have to suffer and get sick from it. They should be given equitable treatment. That saying treatment suited to their specific needs. This correlates to data literacy within schools. If you weren’t data literate you wouldn’t be able to read the information and more specifically stats and graphs given to you in this report. Then you would be missing out on necessary and impactful information that could affect you and your community. Also you would have less access to vaccines as you wouldn’t have the resources to get them. them. Allegheny county as a whole has significantly more white people vaccinated than black people.”



“To help this it would be smart to integrate values such as equity into these infrastructures and make it so people who have different needs, can gain access to things that can improve that need, rather than have to suffer for it”



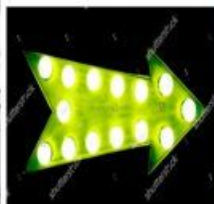
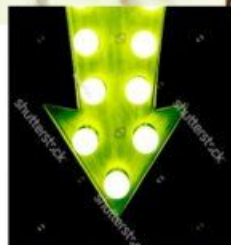
“There seemed to have been issues with rollout and according to the report, tended to favor people with data literacy and access to people within the system and transportation”



Elijah



“I think the health barriers for covid vaccines are people being afraid to get it because they think the government put something in it and because false facts about the vaccine. Big Influencers are saying that the vaccine will make you have long term health conditions or others say just don't get it. People not getting the vaccine is affecting the kids to because they cant go to school because there is to many covid cases and that can be prevented if everyone gets the vaccine.I think this is impacting the equity of the schools and businesses to because they don't have any workers because they don't want to get the vaccine or they refuse to get it. I think there should be more people and companies influence people to get the vaccine.”



STUDENT
HIERARCHY
OF

NEEDS

FEATURING

PERRY
TRADITIONAL
ACADEMY



***TO SUCCEED
WE NEED...***

COMMUNITY

SAFETY

**EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT**

HEALTHY FOOD

S U C C E S S

In order for any High School student to succeed, there is a system of needs and resources that must be acknowledged, addressed, and provided to ensure a fair and equitable environment for all.

February-May of this year, we visited Perry Traditional Academy to get Peer Student perspective on what resources and supports are wanted and needed.

This section includes a series of responses from frequent discussions regarding emotional and physical needs for a healthy and productive learning environment.

COMMUNITY /S

I feel like I belong more when I understand the work given to me and am able to discuss other perspectives.

-Kayla

Good vibes in the classroom.

-Michael

Feeling and being wanted.

-Jamel

...when the teachers are cool and chill and don't try to boss me around.

Demir

VISION IN *ACTION*

Students in Mrs. Brentley's Social Justice class have been collaborating with TeenBloc to understand the data behind advocacy and leadership.

This is a team collaboration stemming from months of discussion and planning to create a visualization of Peer Perry Student perspectives and a call to action to better the learning and emotional environment at Perry Traditional Academy.



Damir (top left) helps remind Michael (left), Mason (center), and “ ” of the concept that the rest of the group developed as a team. - Photograph by Tiffini Gorman

ESTEEM

I FEEL GOOD WHEN...

**I get good
grades.
Kayla**

**I complete my
goals.
Demir**

**There's someone to go to.
Jamel**

SAFETY/ HEALTH

**IN ORDER TO FEEL
SAFE I NEED...**

**I NEED MASKS IN
ORDER TO FEEL SAFE
-KAYLA (REGARDING
COVID REGULATIONS IN
SCHOOL)**

**MANY SCHOOLS HAVE LIFTED
THEIR MASK REGULATIONS,
DESPITE SOME STUDENTS NOT
BEING VACCINATED. THIS MAKES
A LOT OF STUDENTS FEEL
UNDERSTANDABLY
UNCOMFORTABLE.**

**BETTER FOOD.
-JAMEL**

**MANY STUDENTS EXPRESSED
FEELING SLUGGISH OR NOT
OVERALL HEALTHY DUE TO THE
LACK OF NUTRITIONAL VALUE
IN MOST LUNCHES PROVIDED.**

**NOT HAVING HEALTHY LUNCH
OPTIONS INHIBITS THE BODY
ON A MENTAL AS WELL AS
PHYSIOLOGICAL LEVEL .MANY
STUDENTS WILL NOT EAT THE
FOOD WHICH THEN SETS A
TONE FOR THE REST OF THEIR
DAY.**

**OUR BRAINS NEED NUTRIENTS
IN ORDER TO FOCUS AND
REGULATE OTHER STIMULI
THROUGHOUT THE DAY.**

SAFETY/ HEALTH



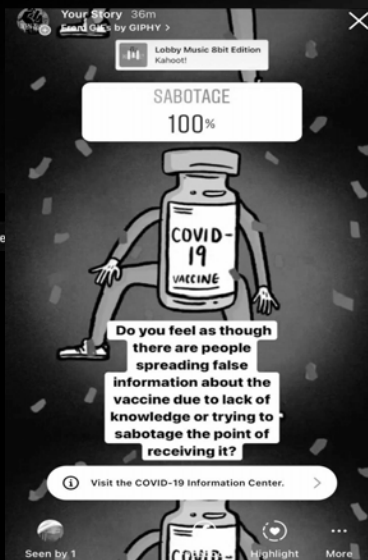
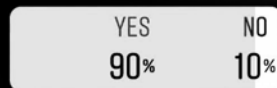
**LAST FALL, TEENBLOC
PARTNERED WITH THE
COMMUNITY VACCINE
COLLABORATIVE BY
SURVEYING PEERS TO
UNDERSTAND HESITATION AND
OPINION ON COVID
VACCINATION.**

**THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN
HELPFUL FOR MEDICAL
PROFESSIONALS AND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TO
BETTER UNDERSTAND TEENS
AND PROVIDE
APPROACHABLE,
TRANSPARENT DATA AND
INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS,
AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILIES.**

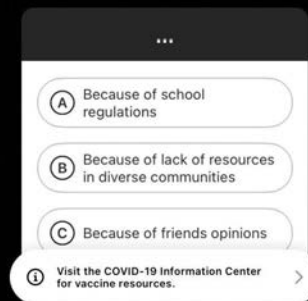
**PITTSBURGH COMMUNITY
VACCINE COLLABORATIVE**



**Do you think it should
be mandatory to get
the vaccine if your
playing a sport**



**Why do less diverse
schools have more
children vaccinated,
than more diverse
schools?**



Seen by 28

Facebook

Highlight

More

**A FEW EXAMPLES
FROM A SERIES
INTERACTIVE COVID
VACCINATION
SURVEYS
ADMINISTERED VIA
INSTAGRAM.**

**WE'RE
JUST
GETTING
STARTED!**



PHOTOGRAPH BY TIFFINI GORMAN

**SOMETHING IS BREWING AMONG THE STUDENTS
AT *PERRY*. EACH DAY STUDENTS ARE CONTINUING
TO OPEN THEIR EYES AND FURTHER REALIZING
THEIR VOICES *DO* MATTER AND SOMETHING CAN
BE *DONE*. STAY TUNED.**

A photograph of a large crowd of people, mostly seen from the chest up, with their hands raised in the air. The background is a solid blue color. The image is used as a background for the title text.

FACES OF POWER

FACES OF POWER
IS THE VOICES AND
VISUALS FROM
OTHERS WHO WANT
TO BE IMMEDIATE
CHANGE IN THEIR
SOCIETY.

What is
happenin
 $1+1=3$



Vs

What needs to
be happening



CAYAH

“It is quite remarkable a there is a 10:1 student-teacher ratio exists at PPS. There needs to be more educators present to teach these kids. If the school system and administrators are not there for them, no one will be.”

“There is a 0% rate of students who passed the AP Exam, a 21% Mathematics proficiency rate, a 33% Reading proficiency rate, and only a 78% graduation rate of students at PPS. Obviously, there has to be more knowledgeable educators hired, and the people responsible for not providing quality need to be fired!”

**INCREASE OF
CHANGE
=
DECREASE OF
INEQUALITIES**

By: TRINITY

TRINITY

“At Westinghouse, sixty-nine percent of students missed twenty percent or more of the school year, while at Urban Pathways, fourteen percent of students missed twenty percent or more of the school year. This is due to the inequities when it comes to students' access to help and support.”

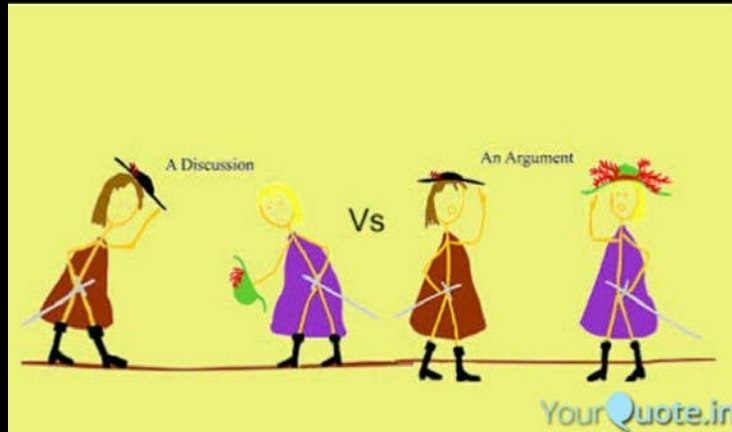
“Without the ability to understand the root causes, they will not be able to understand how it would hurt their students in the future.”

Argument = who is right ??

Discussion = what is right ??

Have an understanding day.

- Mihir Mehta



BY: TYLER

TYLER

“By looking into data of different schools in PPS like CAPA 6-12 versus Perry High School, there are many differences and inequities. Perry High School has more suspension rates than CAPA does, especially with minority students...the way they’re being represented is not accurately reasonable or fair.”

“I want to empower other students at CAPA, Perry, and other schools to read about this data with schools and convince the PPS system to do something to better promote our schools before any damage is caused while in recovery of the pandemic. Not everything is perfect, but we can at least have as much equity as possible for all students and teachers coming into the PPS community.”

CONTRIBUTORS

MAISIE JOHNSTON
GRADE 11

Maisie has been an active Member of TeenBloc since 2018. While Maisie has taken time to expand her horizons wiith various other activities, such as softball. Maisie has been a powerful voice and exemplary leader during the creation of this zine.

SPECIAL THANKS

A+ Schools
Report to The Community
Data and Research Resource
CHECK IT OUT!

The Black Equity Coalition
Covid 19 Vaccination Report
Data and Research Resource
CHECK IT OUT!

PERRY TRADITIONAL
ACADEMY

TEENBLOC IS PART OF **A+ SCHOOLS +US INITIATIVE**, DEDICATED TO EMPOWERING PITTSBURGH YOUTH GRADES 8-12 TO UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL **EQUITY** THROUGH DATA-BASED RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS BY WAY OF ADVOCACY-BASED **ART** AND **STORYTELLING**.

FOLLOW OUR COLLECTIVE JOURNEY



@aplusschools

LEARN MORE ABOUT TEENBLOC!