



# The Daily News

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## Eisenhower Event at EA brings Pittsburghers, Seattle people together

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East Allegheny School District has done the impossible—bringing together people from Pittsburgh and Seattle.

Educators from the Seattle suburb of Tukwila, Wash., probably weren't surprised that some of their hosts wore Steelers garb at a Thursday meeting at East Allegheny Middle School held as part of Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation's sixth annual National Cluster Workshop.

Tukwila is one of six Full Service Community School sites funded by the foundation named for the one-time president of Penn State University.

Such schools are characterized by a strong core instructional program, enrichment activities designed to expand learning opportunities, and a full range of social services that safeguard children's well-being and remove barriers to learning.

FSCS sites also are in Lancaster, two Iowa cities, Maryland and East Allegheny. The national workshop took place Wednesday, Thursday and continues today at the Holiday Inn in Monroeville.

"You're just going to observe our ongoing work," Mon Valley Educational Consortium Executive Director Dr. Linda Croushore said to workshop visitors at the monthly EA District Leadership Design Team.

Croushore said FSCS status helped East Allegheny make a transition from a junior high school to a middle school.

The middle school, now located in the high school complex, will move into a new building nearby.

Ground was broken for Logan Middle School Jan. 21. Acting Superintendent Roger D'Emidio said bids to build Logan may be approved Monday at a 7 p.m. meeting of East Allegheny's school board.

Adding to Super Bowl coincidences was the presence of East Allegheny parent Patricia Batch. Her nephew is Charlie batch, Steeler backup quarterback and Steel Valley alumnus.

"Pretend they're not there," Croushore had to remind the East Allegheny panel about the audience of educators from across the U.S.

While at the meeting, Eisenhower Foundation workshop participants got to see how the FSCS program was tailored to meet the need of students, families and the community. Parents and school officials have attended two sessions of the Governor's Institute for Parental Involvement in Harrisburg. A parent center also was established in the middle school-high school complex.

As site coordinator, MVEC's Christopher R. Edmonds oversees a schedule of community outreach, after-school activities, tutoring, summer programs, and parent/family involvement opportunities.

The meeting was led by Croushore, D'Emidio and former Superintendent Dr. Thomas Knight.

Knight, now Bethel Park superintendent, worked with such teams at East Allegheny and Bethlehem Center district in Washington County,

A subject broached was how to reach out to parents in a district where 65 percent of kindergarten students will move out before their high school graduations.

"We are a very transient district," noted East Allegheny Education Association President Barbara Bacco-Viola.

"We really need to listen to the parents," said the Rev. Deshawn Coles, an associate pastor at Braddock's Potter's House Ministries and a panelist who sent four sons to East Allegheny schools.

Her suggestion of a welcoming basket for parents of new students was picked up, with Bacco-Viola suggesting it include letters from their prospective teachers.

One observer, Michael Munoz of Des Moines, Iowa, suggested that teachers call parents of new students.

"It's a little thing," Munoz said, "but it goes a long way."

Croushore said EA's team get 95-100 percent attendance for meetings that are rarely cancelled.

"I'm impressed with their ability to reach out to the community," said Martha de Acosta, foundation education and training program director.

De Acosta presented a "collaborative leadership" award to the team and MVEC after the 90-minute meeting.