

GETTING THE BEST TEACHERS IN DAYTON'S CLASSROOMS

5 big findings every Daytonian needs to know

The National Council on Teacher Quality (www.nctq.org) recently completed a study called *Teacher Quality Roadmap*, looking at policies and practices in Dayton Public Schools and their impact on teacher quality and student achievement. NCTQ identified a number of tangible solutions, five of which are listed here.

This study is the first step in making change happen. The much more difficult work lies ahead and falls to the Dayton community to push for and support reform.

Finding 1: The district needs to do a much better job hiring and assigning teachers.

THE CHALLENGE

Dayton's procedures for hiring and assigning teachers to schools delay the hiring of new teachers until late into the summer months, when many potential candidates have found other jobs. Most problematic, however, is that principals do not always have final say over who works in their buildings; assignment of certain transferring teachers is done by seniority.

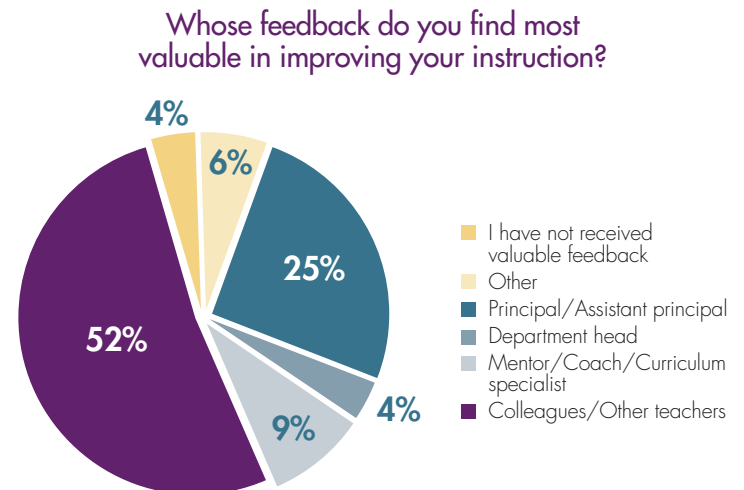
THE SOLUTION

- **Give principals the authority to decide who works in their buildings.** The district should negotiate with the teachers union to commit to allowing principals to interview and select candidates for all vacancies in every school. At a minimum, principals should be able to reject the assignment of a teacher to their school, including teachers who have lost their assignment in another school no matter what the reason, and extend this authority to all points in the school year.
- **Hire teachers earlier.** Implementing a formal hiring timeline whereby all positions are filled by June would benefit the district immensely. Key deadlines should be communicated to school leaders well in advance.

Finding 2: Ohio's new evaluation system has the flexibility to allow peer reviewers. Teachers feel that peers provide valuable feedback in improving their practice.

THE CHALLENGE

Moving to an evaluation system where every teacher requires annual observations will be a significant shift for principals in Dayton. Ohio's new evaluation process would allow peer reviewers to be part of the evaluation process if a district so chooses. These reviewers can offer support to time-strapped school leaders and content-specific feedback to teachers. In surveys, teachers also voiced the importance of peers in providing valuable feedback.



Over 50 percent of Dayton teachers said that their colleagues are the most valuable source for feedback that improves their instruction.

THE SOLUTION

Incorporate peer reviewers to the evaluation process. The district should formalize the process of peer reviewers or content specialists that can validate principal observations, assess content-relevant instruction and ease the time demands of evaluation for building administrators.

Finding 3: In the past five years, Dayton has never dismissed a teacher for poor performance, generally allowing poorly performing teachers to move from one school to the next.

THE CHALLENGE

While the rate of teacher dismissals is low in all the districts we've studied, Dayton is the first district we have encountered where dismissal on the basis of performance is nonexistent. If a teacher is performing poorly, the general solution in Dayton is to transfer the teacher to another school.

THE SOLUTION

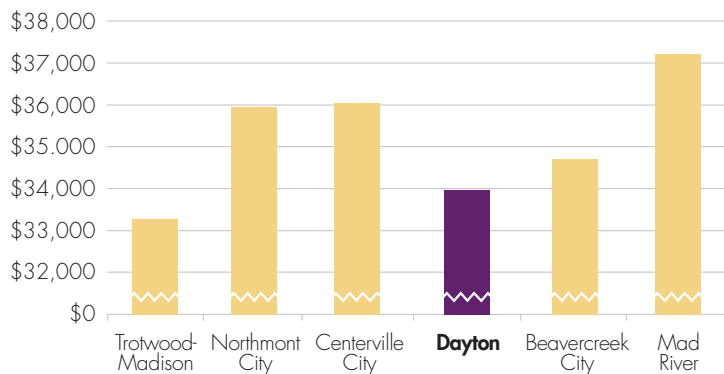
With the implementation of Ohio's new evaluation system, Dayton has the opportunity to develop a rewards and consequences system that is tied to a teacher's evaluation rating. Teachers that receive proficient ratings should have opportunities for professional development related to their needs, and those who are rated at the top should have opportunities to serve in teacher leadership roles. Likewise, teachers who are rated "developing" and "ineffective" should be given support to improve and for those rated "ineffective", steps should be taken to ensure that their improvement is immediate or they are removed from the classroom.

Finding 4: To recruit and retain the best, Dayton needs to pay its teachers more.

THE CHALLENGE

Districts are at a strong disadvantage if starting salaries are not comparable with surrounding districts, as teachers are likely to "shop around" for the best compensation package. Dayton's teacher salaries start below most other districts and remain some of the lowest salaries in the market throughout a teacher's career.

Starting Salaries for Teachers in Dayton (with a BA)



Starting salaries in Dayton are less than all other surrounding districts except one, Trotwood-Madison.

THE SOLUTION

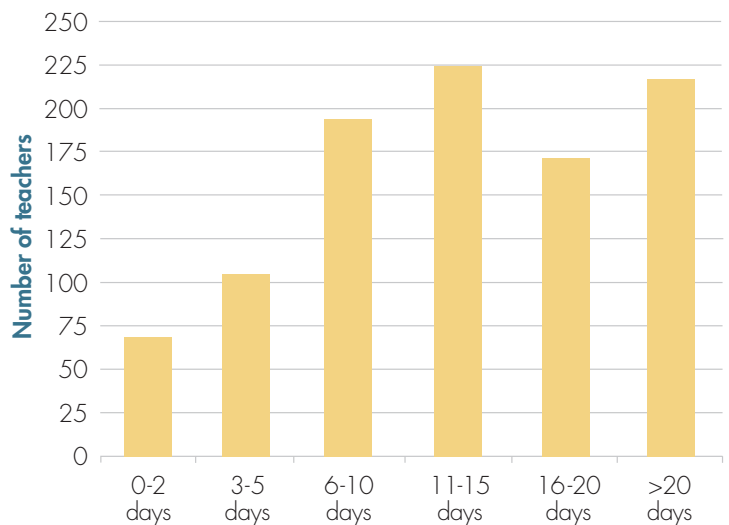
Whether additional revenue comes from the state, local voters, or private funding, the district and union should seek funds by presenting an agreement that clearly spells out what citizens would receive for the additional dollars: a stronger applicant pool, more professional development, and increased accountability.

Finding 5: With urgency, the district must address chronic absenteeism.

THE CHALLENGE

Almost 400 teachers in Dayton were out of their classrooms 16 or more days in 2011-2012, almost once every two weeks.¹ (That does not include teachers out on long-term leave.) This represents almost 40 percent of teachers in Dayton. When teachers are chronically absent, the school principal is obligated to make it clear that high absenteeism, no matter what the reason, is detrimental to student learning.

Number of leave days taken in 2011-2012



In 2011-2012, almost 40 percent of teachers were absent 16 or more days, effectively a day every two weeks.

THE SOLUTION

- Provide administrators monthly reports on absences. Regularly provide summative absence information by school to principals. This will give administrators the information they need to identify potentially problematic absence patterns (as well as teachers with stellar attendance records) so that they can respond appropriately.
- Develop an absence intervention process. Provide guidance to principals about monitoring absences, identifying causes of excessive absences, creating attendance improvement plans, and, in extreme cases, taking disciplinary action.
- Minimize professional development sessions that take teachers out of the classroom.

For more information or to view the entire report visit us at www.nctq.org



¹ NCTQ defines teachers out on long-term leave as those who were out for 15 or more days continuously.