

Teacher attendance and low pay among DPS issues when it comes to having quality teachers, study says.

Posted: 12:05 a.m. Thursday, June 27, 2013

To get quality teachers, Dayton Public Schools needs a better way to hire teachers earlier and figure out a way to reduce teacher absenteeism, according to study released Wednesday by a Washington, D.C. think tank.

BY [KELLI WYNN](#) - STAFF WRITER, DAYTON DAILY NEWS

DAYTON —The National Council on Teacher Quality focused on the 2011-2012 school year for the study, which included recommendations for improvements made through changes to district processes, collective bargaining or state policy.

Representatives of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute suggested the study to the district. Lori Ward, Dayton Public School superintendent said she agreed to it because she felt it would help the district improve.

One of the issues highlighted in the study is that almost 40 percent of teachers were chronically absent in the 2011-2012 school year — which means these teachers were absent 16 or more days.

“A great teacher is the number one influence on the quality of education that a child receives,” Ward said. “A staff that has a shared high expectation for students, the instructional leader and staff, a culture that has a high level of student engagement and a safe environment is what I think increases the environment where both students and teachers love to come to work.”

Dayton Education Association president David Romick said he wasn't surprised to learn about the teacher absenteeism finding.

“We have advocated for years for some type of teacher incentive bonus,” Romick said.

Another issue is that teacher salaries are low compared to other area school districts.

“One of the keys is compensation in terms of initially attracting these young people for our students,” said Tom Lasley of Learn to Earn Dayton, an organization that helped with the study.

“I think that Dayton Public Schools are in need of modernizing their human capital policies,” said Terry Ryan of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. “Basically they're burdened by contract language, rules and traditions. These things may have made sense years ago, but they don't now. Especially, in light of the fact that 94 percent of the district's students are economically disadvantaged.”