

Ohio's Teacher Equity Plan

To ensure high-quality teachers in every Ohio classroom

If there is one clear message that has emerged from educational research, it is this: teachers make a difference in student learning. Teachers matter most, and high quality teachers matter even more.

Research on the critical importance of teachers is not new. Over the last 10 years, major studies show that the single most important factor in determining how much students learn is how much their teachers know – their preparation and qualifications, content knowledge and teaching skill (The George Lucas Foundation, 2005). High quality teachers have extensive teacher preparation, classroom experience and in-depth knowledge of the subjects they teach. A 1999 review of policies in 50 states strongly suggests that the quality of teachers is directly related to improved student performance. In fact, students' backgrounds – poverty level, language background and minority status – are less influential in predicting achievement levels than the quality of the teaching force (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Researchers say that while schools can have powerful effects on achievement, variation in teacher quality has the most effect on how much a student achieves (Hanushek et al., 1998).

The public agrees. In a 1998 poll, nine out of 10 Americans said the best way to improve student achievement is to provide a qualified teacher in every classroom (Haselkorn & Harris, 1998). A 2004 poll again confirmed that 91 percent of the American public and 90 percent of public school teachers believe teacher quality is most important – more than parental involvement, facilities, resources or the quality of school principals (Teaching Commission, 2004).

There is no question that Ohio has unacceptable gaps in student achievement, especially between black and white students and between low-income and higher-income students. Unfortunately, Ohio's own research shows that often the children in high-need schools, who need the most experienced, most educated, most skilled teachers, get the least effective educators (Levin, Driscoll, & Fleeter, 2005).

To more equitably distribute the best and brightest teachers, Ohio has developed the Teacher Quality Distribution plan under the umbrella that all teachers should have access to a lifelong resource and support system from the time they enter teaching until they retire. The plan presents a comprehensive set of 68 strategies, organized around nine supportive elements, which clearly demonstrate Ohio's *good faith effort* to improve the distribution of its most effective teachers.

Developing policies and strategies, however, is not enough. Ohio is ready and poised to move from recommending strategies to taking action. The time is right for Ohio's educational system to provide every child with a competent, caring and highly qualified teacher.

The plan is in place and the work is underway.

Strategies to Ensure an Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers

Ohio's Teacher Quality Distribution Plan is built upon two *key strategies*, which are based upon Ohio's quantitative and qualitative research findings and are targeted to identify, correct and monitor any inequitable distribution of the state's highly qualified, experienced teachers:

Key Strategy 1: Increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers in Ohio to 100 percent.

Key Strategy 2: Continuously monitor and improve the distribution patterns of Ohio's teachers to ensure that poor and minority students are not being taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified and out-of-field teachers.

Supporting Ohio's two key strategies is a comprehensive set of 68 sub-strategies, organized around nine supportive elements that clearly demonstrate Ohio's *good faith effort* to ensure that poor and minority students are not being taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified and out-of-field teachers. The 68 sub-strategies are the results of findings from Ohio's district- and school-level quantitative data analyses, Schools of Promise case study research, the expertise of the Ohio/Education Trust partnership project's working group and national research on teacher quality.

Element 1: Ohio's Data and Reporting Systems Sub-strategies

1. 1 Collect and publicly report data on the distribution of teacher talent, including the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each core subject area and the percentage of highly qualified teachers in schools not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP).
1. 2 Collect data on teachers' certificates and licenses held; enable educators, parents and other stakeholders to review up-to-date information on the credentials of their schools' teachers and leaders and on the achievement levels of various groups of students through a Web-based data system.
1. 3 Collect and publicly report data that describe patterns of teacher turnover and mobility, specifically in high-need schools.
1. 4 Advocate for the development of a data system that reports the number of teachers changing *schools* within their district, changing *positions* within their district, *moving* to other districts or into administration, or *leaving* the profession.
1. 5 Collect data related to teachers' perceptions about working conditions associated with high teacher turnover, including time, facilities and resources, leadership and professional development.
1. 6 Monitor, on an ongoing basis, the specific staffing needs of Ohio's schools by generating data reports that identify subject and location area shortages.
1. 7 Utilize and continuously improve a Web-based recruitment system that matches districts' teaching vacancies with prospective teachers.
1. 8 Develop and implement a data and reporting system that is able to link teacher qualifications to student achievement (value-added data); use the value-added data to reliably measure students' individual progress and to determine the impact of educational, instructional and program

practices on student achievement. [Note: By the 2007-2008 school year, Ohio will have a statewide information bank on value-added data.]

Element 2: Ohio's Teacher Preparation Sub-strategies

2. 1 Create new teacher standards, and ensure that the new standards serve as the foundation for preparing all of Ohio's teachers.
2. 2 Develop an annual report on the quality of teacher education in Ohio that provides data on passing rates and the number and specialization of teachers produced by each institution of higher education; expand the performance measures contained in the annual report.
2. 3 Strengthen the collaboration between the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents to address the oversupply and undersupply of teachers in certain subject areas and types of districts; explore imposing ceiling caps to manage the oversupply of teachers in some areas and the possible use of financial incentives to colleges and universities that recruit, graduate and place teachers in shortage areas.
2. 4 Advocate for the establishment of goals for each institution of higher education related to the number of graduates in high-need subjects and based on the staffing needs of Ohio's high-need schools.
2. 5 Expand the number of Ohio's Charter Colleges of Education that are based on an apprenticeship approach to teacher preparation and designed to meet the specific staffing shortages of partnering high-need school districts.
2. 6 Advocate for the establishment of state college loan forgiveness programs to channel prospective teachers toward schools that have difficulty attracting sufficient numbers of qualified teachers; provide up-to-date information on available federal loan forgiveness programs to prospective teachers.
2. 7 Require teacher preparation programs to include *cultural competence* in their curriculum to help new teachers understand and appreciate the students, families and communities that they serve.
2. 8 Conduct research on the link between teacher preparation and student performance. Use student achievement data to systematically identify what works in teacher preparation and how to improve the state's teacher preparation programs.

Element 3: Ohio's Out-of-field Teaching Sub-strategies

3. 1 End the temporary licensing of teachers in Ohio.
3. 2 Publicly report up-to-date information on teachers' certificates and licenses held; notify districts when teachers are not properly credentialed in the subjects they are assigned to teach.
3. 3 Develop and implement a Revised HQT Plan that outlines Ohio's initiatives to ensure that 100 percent of its teachers will be highly qualified by the 2006-2007 school year; provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers to become highly qualified.
3. 4 Expand high-quality alternative routes into the profession, to allow individuals with relevant expertise in hard-to-fill subjects to enter the profession; ensure that *all* routes into teaching and the principalship are high quality and standards-based.
3. 5 Streamline licensing and certification procedures.
3. 6 Provide stipends to teachers for teaching mathematics, science or special education in schools that have been identified as hard to staff.
3. 7 Provide funds to school districts for contracting with institutions of higher education to provide instruction in mathematics, science and foreign languages.
3. 8 Develop and fund partnerships with institutions of higher education for training already licensed teachers to become certified in high-need subject areas.

- 3. 9 Support the development of partnerships between institutions of higher education and high-need school districts to provide professional development for teachers in the hard-to-staff subject areas of mathematics and science.
- 3. 10 Provide technical assistance for hard-to-staff school personnel to help them fully utilize all the features of the state’s Web-based recruitment system.
- 3. 11 Promote partnerships that help districts recruit and hire qualified international teachers of hard-to-fill subjects and specializations.
- 3. 12 Utilize a credential review board to review the licensure applications of alternative-route and out-of-state candidates.

Element 4: Ohio’s Recruitment and Retention of Experienced Teachers Sub-strategies

- 4. 1 Require and fund high-quality induction experiences for all new teachers and principals, including those who enter the profession through alternative routes; advocate for funds to prioritize induction in high-need schools by providing three years of structured mentoring designed to support teachers and principals.
- 4. 2 Provide mentor training to experienced teachers to assist them in mentoring entry-year teachers.
- 4. 3 Improve state-level data systems to reduce the time it takes for issuing educator licenses.
- 4. 4 Provide incentives to highly qualified, experienced teachers for teaching in high-need schools.
- 4. 5 Advocate for collecting data on the number of teachers changing *schools* within their district, changing *positions* within their district, *moving* to other districts or into administration, or *leaving* the profession; conduct exit interviews to identify the factors influencing teacher mobility.
- 4. 6 Target support to National Board Certification candidates who teach in regions with high numbers of high-need schools, and provide incentives for them to stay.
- 4. 7 Explore providing opportunities for “high value-added” teachers in high-need schools to apply for incentives and rewards that encourage them to stay.

Element 5: Ohio’s Professional Development Sub-strategies

- 5. 1 Develop and implement new professional development standards; target funds to support only those professional development activities that are aligned with Ohio’s new professional development standards and with the NCLB definition of high-quality professional development.
- 5. 2 Require low-performing school districts, as well as districts with unacceptably wide achievement gaps, to demonstrate compliance with the state’s professional development standards through their Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plans.
- 5. 3 Implement a statewide technical assistance support system that provides targeted assistance to low-performing districts and schools.
- 5. 4 Target additional high-quality professional development on the analysis and use of data to help districts identify achievement gaps and raise the academic performance of all students.
- 5. 5 Create local professional development regional support sites to ensure that all educators will use Ohio’s new professional development standards to guide the development of their own plans for professional growth.
- 5. 6 Develop professional development academies focused on the specific needs of teachers in the state’s Appalachian region.
- 5. 7 Expand the use of technology to support teachers’ professional growth, including more opportunities for online mentoring support and the use of digital tools.
- 5. 8 Provide training to school district personnel in value-added growth models.

Element 6: Ohio's Specialized Knowledge and Skills Sub-strategies

- 6.1 Require new teachers to demonstrate, through the Praxis III assessment, their ability to teach diverse learners.
- 6.2 Place subject specialists and coaches in high-need schools; provide targeted coaching to teachers who teach reading and mathematics.
- 6.3 Develop and promote research-based coaching models.
- 6.4 Make a major investment in preparing principals for the unique challenges of high-need schools (e.g., how to promote student learning, how to hire effective teachers).
- 6.5 Study the school organization, culture, instructional practices and characteristics of teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools that significantly raise student achievement (Schools of Promise).

Element 7: Ohio's Working Conditions Sub-strategies

- 7.1 Strengthen school leadership through developing and implementing new principal standards.
- 7.2 Increase the pool of high-quality principals through alternative administrator preparation programs.
- 7.3 Require and fund high-quality induction experiences for all new principals, including those who enter the profession through alternative routes.
- 7.4 Develop a framework of essential criteria for school districts to follow when creating locally determined evaluation systems for assessing the performance of principals.
- 7.5 Collect data related to teachers' perceptions about working conditions associated with high teacher turnover, including time, facilities and resources, leadership and professional development.
- 7.6 Keep good teachers where they are most needed by providing tools and resources for improving the working conditions in high-need schools.
- 7.7 Adopt school climate guidelines to provide physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students and staff; adopt a substance abuse and violence prevention policy.
- 7.8 Create smaller schools and/or smaller units within schools.
- 7.9 Prioritize funds for renovating high-need school facilities, and construct new facilities based on need.

Element 8: Ohio's New Compensation Systems Sub-strategies

- 8.1 Implement new compensation systems that recognize challenging schools, are linked to value-added data and allow for tiered career paths.
- 8.2 Provide monetary incentives to encourage highly qualified, experienced teachers who teach in high-need schools to stay.
- 8.3 Apply for teacher incentive funding to develop innovative compensation plans that reward teachers who demonstrate success in improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps.
- 8.4 Develop career advancement structures to raise compensation for master or mentor teachers.
- 8.5 Assist school districts in developing locally determined evaluation systems for assessing teachers' performance.
- 8.6 Pay teachers who earn National Board Certification an annual stipend in addition to their regular salary.

Element 9: Ohio's Policy Coherence Sub-strategies

- 9.1 Combine the action plan required of the state's partnership project with The Education Trust with the NCLB-required state teacher equity plan to produce *one aligned state plan* (Ohio's Teacher Quality Distribution Plan); ensure that the state plan evidences coherent policies and aligned strategies that are targeted to improving the distribution of Ohio's highly qualified, experienced teachers.
- 9.2 Ensure that Ohio's policies related to equitable teacher distribution are grounded in data analyses findings and are aligned with the state's long-term strategic goals and policy environment.
- 9.3 Ensure that the state's testing policies and systems of rewards and sanctions do not inadvertently drive teachers and principals away from high-need schools.
- 9.4 Build and nurture national- and state-level strategic partnerships that promote policy coherence and strategy alignment.
- 9.5 Develop strong working relationships between the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio's General Assembly.