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Laura Johnson, NCTQ  
Phone: 202-393-0020 x117  
Email: [ljohnson@nctq.org](mailto:ljohnson@nctq.org)

Tom Lasley, Learn to Earn Dayton  
Phone: 937-825-2200  
[tlasley@udayton.edu](mailto:tlasley@udayton.edu)

Terry Ryan, Thomas B. Fordham Institute  
Phone: 937-227-3368  
[tryan@edexcellence.net](mailto:tryan@edexcellence.net)

**REPORT ON THE DAYTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECOMMENDS  
IMPROVEMENTS FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING QUALITY  
TEACHERS**

*Study examines teacher staffing, compensation, tenure, work schedules and evaluation policies*

**DAYTON, June 26, 2013** – Today the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a report that examines teacher quality policies and practices in the Dayton Public Schools. The in-depth study, *Teacher Quality Roadmap: Improving Policies and Practices in Dayton*, identifies a number of changes which could better support the recruitment, development and retention of effective teachers and provides Dayton with a tailored analysis identifying the teacher policy areas most in need of critical attention, as well as areas of strength for the district. Comparisons between Dayton, neighboring districts and similar districts around the state and nation provide context and examples of promising practices.

“We hope the NCTQ study serves as a call to action for the community to work in support of effective teaching in Dayton, and to actively play a role in helping our students succeed,” said Thomas Lasley, Executive Director of Learn to Earn Dayton. “Improving schools by supporting teachers will improve our communities, increase opportunities for residents and help our economy thrive.”

“This new report from NCTQ makes clear that the Dayton Public Schools badly need to modernize their teacher policies if the district is to ever see real and sustained academic gains for its students. This report should serve as a roadmap for distinct reform,” said Terry Ryan, Vice-President for Ohio Programs and Policy at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Dayton's primary teacher policy challenges are focused in how it staffs its schools. The district has been working to improve practice in this area, but significant improvements still can and should be made.

"With a new evaluation system coming on line and a new contract currently being negotiated, Dayton has a great opportunity to take stock of the policies that impact how the teaching profession looks in the community," said Kate Walsh, President, NCTQ. "Teachers should be hired, evaluated and compensated as professionals. Their responsibility to their students is too great for outdated policies."

Among the report's findings:

- Dayton's procedures for hiring and assigning teachers to schools delays the hiring of new teachers until late into the summer months, when many potential candidates have already found other jobs. Most problematic, however, is that principals do not have final say over who works in their buildings; assignment of many transferring teachers is done by seniority.
- Dayton, like most districts in Ohio, is about to implement a new, state-mandated evaluation system. There is significant room for improvement from the current system which has not served as a tool for driving accountability.
- The district dismisses no teachers for poor performance, and generally transfers such teachers to other schools.
- Starting salaries and lifetime earnings for Dayton teachers are some of the lowest in the area, and remain so in comparison to other urban districts in Ohio.
- Almost 40 percent of teachers were chronically absent in 2011-2012. (Absent 16 or more days when school was in session, including days out for professional development, but not including long term leave).
- District recordkeeping, a struggle for many urban districts, appears to be a significant problem in Dayton. For example, there are a lot of routine data that it does not collect, such as electronic evaluation data on teachers and information on their student-teachers.

The NCTQ analysis is meant to serve a practical purpose, offering clear steps for the district to make alone and jointly with the teachers union, and for Ohio lawmakers. In total, NCTQ makes 25 recommendations to the district and five recommendations to the state that would improve the policies shaping the quality of the Dayton workforce.

The most urgent recommendations are focused on improving teacher staffing policies:

- 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. Moving up the displacement and voluntary transfer process to late spring would allow the district to focus on new hires well before the start of the school year.
- 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 throughout the school year.

- Improve data systems. Having high-quality data available for making decisions is of the utmost importance for Dayton. Maintaining information on student-teachers in the district, numbers and characteristics of new teacher applicants, and numbers of teachers displaced or voluntarily transferring annually, would allow the district to make better decisions on hiring and staffing processes overall.

Reforms in other areas of Dayton's policies are needed too, including:

- Incorporate peer reviewers/content specialists. State law gives Dayton the flexibility to incorporate multiple observers in the new evaluation process. The district should formalize the process of peer reviewers or content specialists who can validate principal observations, assess content-relevant instruction and ease the time demands of evaluation for building administrators.
- Jointly seek additional revenue to raise teacher salaries. 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.
- 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 those 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.

This examination of the state of teacher policies in Dayton Public Schools explores the district's contract with its teachers, as well as district practices and state laws that shape the work rules for teachers. Additionally, NCTQ analyzed human resource data and held focus groups with teachers, principals, community members and students. This report follows other NCTQ district reports in Baltimore, Boston, Hartford, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Springfield (MA), Miami, Oakland, and Philadelphia.

NCTQ would like to commend Superintendent Lori Ward and the teachers union, who have shown courage in putting the district policies under the microscope in this way.

The full report is available [here](#).

### **About the National Council on Teacher Quality**

The National Council on Teacher Quality advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers. In particular we recognize the absence of much of the evidence

necessary to make a compelling case for change and seek to fill that void with a research agenda that has direct and practical implications for policy. We are committed to lending transparency and increasing public awareness about the four sets of institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: states, teacher preparation programs, school districts and teachers unions. For more information, visit: [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org).