Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling.¹ Not only do effective teachers raise student achievement, but they close achievement gaps and put their students on track to succeed in college, career and life. How? They motivate, inspire and lead. They relentlessly build relationships with students, families and other colleagues. They collaborate to develop and deploy multi-disciplinary lessons. They individualize learning and differentiate instruction. They diagnose their students’ learning needs. They sharpen their own pedagogical and content knowledge. They help students find joy in learning. Put simply, great teachers do it all.

Strong principals have the second greatest effect on student achievement among all school-related factors.² The relationship between effective principals and effective teachers is interdependent. That is, effective principals support effective teaching by articulating a coherent vision and purpose, providing strong instructional leadership, collaborating with teachers and holding staff and students accountable for success. They care for children, govern buildings and staff, lead teams, drive results, manage change, offer strategic perspectives, demonstrate cultural leadership and uphold the highest of ethics. They also attract and retain the best teachers. When surveyed, 24 out of 25 teachers say that the principal is the single greatest factor in determining whether or not they stay at a school.³ Successful leadership matters even more in high-poverty, low-performing schools—where the stakes are highest for students.⁴ For both teachers and principals, autonomy and accountability are key. They are on the front lines—closest to students and their needs—and best positioned to determine resource allocations, staffing needs, schedules, student interventions and professional development needs. School environments must empower and value teachers and principals as professionals to promote innovation and allow for flexible, nimble decision-making in the best interests of children.

Philanthropy Ohio believes there are at least five interlocked elements that comprise a cycle of effective teaching, described below. Each element includes Ohio-specific context, national best practices and specific action steps Ohio’s education leaders can take to tighten and improve the element, all with an eye toward ensuring that every Ohio student benefits from an effective educator.
Ohio’s Current Context: When it comes to delivering well-prepared teachers, Ohio receives a C- from the National Council on Teacher Quality. Specifically, the state is criticized for lax admission requirements into teacher preparation programs, a lack of rigorous content knowledge for elementary and middle school teachers, an overly broad approach to licensing special education teachers and an inconsistent approach to student teaching and placement. The same report gives Ohio a B for expanding the pool of teachers through the use of alternative programs including Teach for America (TFA), Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and other high-quality initiatives.

National Best Practices: Ohio’s teacher preparation programs should look to the following national exemplars:

• Arizona State University (ASU) is recognized for graduating teachers who in their first year match the effectiveness of second-year teachers. Candidates begin student teaching during their junior year and as seniors spend four days per week teaching in the pre-K-8 classrooms and one day attending courses on-site in districts. The hallmark of ASU’s program is its pre-service teacher data dashboard. The dashboard allows all teacher educators, site coordinators, mentors and teacher candidates to regularly view evaluation data on teacher candidate progress from performance assessments, walk-throughs, progress reports and notebook checks.

• Boston Public Schools (BPS) has three “grow your own” teacher pipelines aimed at preparing racially, culturally and linguistically diverse teaching candidates who reflect the diversity of the students the district serves. One such pipeline includes the High School to Teacher Program, which supports the development of BPS high school students through high school and college graduation, and then has them return to BPS as teachers.

Recommendations: Ohio must ensure its teacher candidates have the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for students’ 21st century success. To that end, Ohio education leaders should:

• Compel the creation of tight partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local school districts, which ensures that teacher preparation programs help school districts meet their most pressing talent pipeline needs.

• Encourage teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates who are not only equipped with educational theory, but possess practical content knowledge and appropriate pedagogical tools.

• Require that teacher preparation programs expose pre-service candidates to the real classroom setting early and often as part of their training with effective mentor teachers. Pre-service candidates should be exposed to the real classroom as freshmen and sophomores. Waiting until candidates are juniors or seniors is just too late. It is crucial that pre-service candidates are paired with model classroom teachers.

• Strengthen entry-level and content knowledge expectations for teacher preparation programs, ensuring that candidates are high-caliber and not defaulting into the teaching profession as a second or third career choice because they were rejected admission into more rigorous college programs.

• Continue to expand high-quality alternative pathways and grow your own programs, like Teach for America, the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and BRIGHT New Leaders for Ohio Schools, which accelerate the entry of high-flying mid-career professionals, content experts and diverse candidates. Expansion should be balanced with high entry-standards and successful results.
ELEMENT #2
Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Ohio’s Current Context: The teaching profession in Ohio and across the nation has lost some of the allure of earlier decades, due to a combination of factors including: increased access to other professions for women and minorities; non-competitive, low-growth salaries; increased accountability pressure; and a more mobile workforce. On top of that, student needs are increasing and districts struggle to place high-quality teachers in high-need schools and subject areas. Once teachers are placed, they are often not receiving adequate support. On-boarding and supporting new teachers is essential to their short- and long-term success. The National Council on Teacher Quality indicates that Ohio “nearly meets” all of its criteria for offering effective induction and support programs through ODE’s Resident Educator Program, but more work remains.

National Best Practices: Two initiatives—one state-level and one local-level—have moved the needle in teacher recruitment and retention:

• The State of Delaware created the Delaware Talent Cooperative to reward retention incentives of up to $10,000 over two years to highly-effective educators who remain in their high-poverty, high-needs schools. The program also awards recruitment incentives of up to $20,000 over two years to highly-effective educators who transferred from their current school to work in a high-needs school. Those who received the incentives became part of a cohort that received professional development and met to share feedback and strategies about their work.

• After experiencing persistent challenges filling teacher vacancies, Fresno Unified School District initiated a partnership with California State University Fresno. Together, they looked at data patterns within the city, particularly focused on poverty, student demographics and teacher retention. After assessing the data, the two organizations decided to focus on recruiting strong math, science and special education teachers to teach grades 4-8, forming the Fresno Teacher Residency Program.

Recommendations: Ohio education leaders should consider the following steps to enhance teacher recruitment and retention:

• **Consider the establishment of a state-level initiative** that recruits educators into hard-to-staff schools and subjects and rewards them for longevity and high-performance in the position.

• **Support “grow-your-own” recruitment strategies** that identify promising paraprofessionals, interns and student and novice teachers as one strategy to help with better recruitment and retention.
**ELEMENT #3: Teacher Compensation**

**Ohio’s Current Context:** Today’s standard lock-step salary schedule widely used to determine teacher compensation does not encourage teachers to train in hard-to-staff subject areas or to teach or lead in hard-to-staff schools. Nor does it adequately reward excellence in the classroom. Salaries are generally not competitive, particularly in STEM fields, and do not allow for significant growth based on performance.

**National Best Practices:** The following locally-driven compensation initiatives are worth noting:

- The Aldine Independent School District adopted a variable compensation structure based on observation ratings. Teachers rated highly effective in the Danielson Framework in 2015-16 will receive a one-time bonus in 2017 on top of any annual base salary increase approved by the school board. Teachers rated ineffective will have their salaries frozen. The district will use the savings from the frozen salaries to offset at least part of the costs of the bonus payments. For Aldine, compensation reform is the first phase in a long-term plan to create a three-tier career pathway based on evaluation outcomes and linked to specific financial incentives and supports.

- LIFT, Washington D.C. Public School’s (DCPS) career ladder, provides teachers with additional compensation and advancement opportunities without them having to leave the classroom. Teachers advance through stages of the career ladder by earning Effective or Highly Effective IMPACT ratings. As they advance, teachers can earn a higher base salary and participate in leadership opportunities involving policy design and implementation, curriculum development, coaching and mentoring and recruitment and selection. LIFT also helps recruit effective teachers into the classroom.

- Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s new pay-for-performance compensation system gives accomplished teachers the recognition they deserve. Through the plan, accomplished teachers receive automatic salary increases while ineffective teachers do not earn credit toward the next pay level. All teachers may still receive supplemental stipends by teaching in a hard-to-staff building, earning postsecondary credit or meeting building goals outlined in the school’s improvement plan.10

**Recommendations:** Ohio should recognize that if teacher preparation becomes more selective and rigorous, and teacher recruitment and retention is a high priority, then teacher compensation must follow suit. To that end, the state should:

- **Move to calculate teacher compensation using a more robust formula** that includes value-added student performance data; relevant academic credentials; length of service; principal and peer evaluations; and the extent of their school responsibilities.
ELEMENT #4
Teacher Leadership and Professional Learning

Ohio’s Current Context: Teachers have value that extends well beyond the classroom. They need time and space to develop lesson plans, collaborate with peers, reflect on and assess their own methods, work one-on-one with students and mentor and coach other teachers. Their work has to evolve as they sharpen their craft and get better at what they do. Professional learning is essential in the development of an educator. Currently, Ohio spends millions of dollars on professional development with little evidence of a return on investment as measured by increased student performance and educator satisfaction. The state does not evaluate its professional development offerings to gauge effectiveness and inform future investments.

National Best Practices:
• Leaders at Monticello Central School District in New York questioned how they were spending valuable professional development dollars. Leaders took a step back to thoroughly examine how professional development funds were being spent. After conducting an inventory of programs and spending patterns, district leaders made a decision to stop spending on programs that were not returning an investment.11
• In 2016-17, DCPS teachers will receive weekly training in their subject areas as part of a new professional-development program called LEAP. Conducted in small teams across grade-levels and led by instructional coaches or other experts with the school system, LEAP will help teachers prepare for upcoming lessons, review best practices and better align their instruction with Common Core standards. The program is recognized because it shifts focus of professional learning from broad, general teaching practices to a specific content focus.12

Recommendations: The most effective professional learning is job embedded and collaborative, delivered through sustained and regular activities and continuous feedback loops, uses technology and honors school culture. It also effectively uses coaches who are teacher leaders.13 Ohio leaders should consider the following as they seek to enhance teacher leadership and professional learning:

• Clarify where its professional learning dollars are going and if they are having an impact. This can be done by identifying and harnessing local innovations in professional learning and investing wisely to scale those innovations that work.
• Provide guidance to districts and schools on how to review and make smart investments in resources and services from third-party professional development providers.
• Take advantage of high-quality open-source tools and resources, including those developed by other states and districts.
• Ensure that every teacher and leader has access to relevant, high-quality professional development.
• Support districts and schools in offering career ladders, flexible teaching assignments and the blurring of administrative and teacher roles.
• Improve feedback and support policies that help districts better align professional development and support offerings with gaps in educator practices.
• Enhance partnerships between schools, institutions of higher education and non-formal sector organizations (such as museums, zoos, art galleries, etc.) to enhance content-specific professional development.
**ELEMENT #5: Evaluation**

**Ohio’s Current Context:** Evaluation stands as one of the most powerful levers to achieving effective teaching and should be used to encourage and nurture high performing teachers, support average teachers to improve and hold accountable and ultimately dismiss chronically weak teachers. Strong evaluation systems include measures of student growth and are used to provide educators with high-quality feedback and targeted supports and professional development for continued growth and improvement.

**National Best Practices:** The evaluation and support policies and practices of four school districts deserve attention:

- Denver Public Schools, which, in an effort to increase the amount of feedback teachers receive, instituted a peer observation protocol for novice teachers. Denver’s peer observation approach provides teachers with reflective conversations and honest, content-specific feedback.
- Cincinnati and Toledo instituted something similar with the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) protocol. In PAR, the local teacher union and district administrators jointly manage a program that uses expert teachers to mentor and evaluate their peers. The “Toledo Plan” is the model for PAR, which is now used by six other schools across the country.14
- DCPS implements IMPACT, its district evaluation system that helps retain its best teachers and develop those who need targeted support. The effect of IMPACT is significant: researchers credit it with accelerating student learning by an average of four months.15 While these districts have thrived with new evaluation and support systems, many have struggled to implement the technical aspects of new evaluation policies.

**Recommendations:** Ohio leaders should:

- Refine the state’s evaluation system using the latest research and promising practices from the field, including the development of multiple measures such as social-emotional learning and allowing outside evaluations and unannounced evaluations.16 17
- Strategically use the state’s newly-implemented assessment to provide useful and formative information to teachers and students while meeting the needs of evaluation models.
- Provide principals with training and support so they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to accurately evaluate their teachers, provide better feedback and identify appropriate supports.
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) also presents Ohio with new opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness across all these domains. Key ESSA flexibilities, which Ohio must capitalize on, include:

- **Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund Grants**—Competitive grants to develop, improve or expand performance-based compensation. Funds can also be used to develop or improve an evaluation support system that uses measures (based in part on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement) and differentiated supports based on feedback.

- **State Use of Title II Funds**—States may use Title II Funds to develop or improve evaluation systems for teachers, principals or other school leaders. States can also use Title II funds to support induction and mentoring programs that increase the retention of effective teachers and principals. ESSA requires states to report on evaluation results if funds are used to enhance the evaluation process. ESSA provides additional flexibility for how states use Title II dollars to fund teacher preparation academies, leadership training programs and ensure the equitable distribution of teachers.

- **School District Use of Title II Funds**—Schools may use Title II Funds to develop or improve evaluation systems for teachers, principals or other school leaders. The evaluation systems must be based in part on evidence of student academic achievement, which may include student growth, and shall include multiple measures of educator performance (such as student surveys, parent/family surveys, outside observers, multiple observers, peer observations, etc.).

As Ohio moves forward on each of these fronts, it should prioritize meaningful stakeholder engagement and communications to inform work in all the areas mentioned above. Thoughtful pursuit of these steps will put Ohio on a path to ensuring that every Ohio student benefits from an effective educator.

**ABOUT PHILANTHROPY OHIO**

Philanthropy Ohio is an association of foundations, corporate giving programs, individuals and organizations actively involved in philanthropy in Ohio. Its mission is to provide leadership for philanthropy in Ohio and to enhance the ability of members to fulfill their charitable goals. It provides the network, tools and knowledge to help people engaged in philanthropy become more effective, powerful change agents in their communities. Together, its more than 220 members hold over $50 billion in assets and provide over $4 billion in grants to nonprofit organizations that work to improve the lives of community residents.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH ELEMENT OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Element #1 — Teacher preparation and alternative pathways

• Compel the creation of tight partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local school districts.
• Encourage teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates who are not only equipped with educational theory, but possess practical content knowledge and appropriate pedagogical tools.
• Require that teacher preparation programs expose pre-service candidates to the real classroom setting early and often as part of their training with effective mentor teachers.
• Strengthen entry-level and content knowledge expectations for teacher preparation programs.
• Continue to expand high-quality alternative pathways and “Grow-your-own” programs.

Element #2 — Recruitment and Retention

• Consider the establishment of a state-level initiative that recruits educators into hard-to-staff schools and subjects and rewards them for longevity and high-performance in the position.
• Support “Grow-your-own” recruitment strategies that identify promising paraprofessionals, interns and student and novice teachers as one strategy to help with better recruitment and retention.

Element #3 — Compensation

• Move to calculate teacher compensation using a more robust formula that includes value-added student performance data; relevant academic credentials; length of service; principal and peer evaluations; and the extent of their school responsibilities.

Element #4 — Teacher Leadership and Professional Learning

• Clarify where its professional learning dollars are going and if they are having an impact.
• Provide guidance to districts and schools on how to review and make smart investments in resources and services from third-party professional development providers.
• Take advantage of high-quality open-source tools and resources, including those developed by other states and districts.
• Ensure that every teacher and leader has access to relevant, high-quality professional development.
• Support districts and schools in offering career ladders, flexible teaching assignments and the blurring of administrative and teacher roles.
• Improve feedback and support policies that help districts better align professional development and support offerings with gaps in educator practices.
• Enhance partnerships between schools, institutions of higher education and non-formal sector organizations to enhance content-specific professional development.

Element #5 — Evaluation

• Refine the state’s evaluation system using the latest research and promising practices from the field.
• Strategically use the state’s newly-implemented assessment to provide useful and formative information to teachers and students while meeting the needs of evaluation models.
• Provide principals with training and support so they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to accurately evaluate their teachers, provide better feedback and identify appropriate supports.

ENDNOTES