Day in and day out, teachers see the needs of students. They understand what works and what doesn't work, they celebrate success when students achieve, and they work hard to find better ways when students struggle.

Studies have repeatedly shown that teachers are tremendously important to student achievement. They have also found that when a student has an ineffective teacher, achievement suffers dramatically.

States across the nation, including Ohio, are starting to recognize the high price that is paid when we ignore the research, compromise our standards, and don't insist that every student be taught by an effective teacher. It is for this reason that Ohio enacted legislation in 2011 to improve and strengthen the state's teacher evaluation process and requirements. Ohio's current teacher evaluations are not differentiating sufficiently between effective and ineffective teachers. High percentages of teachers receive excellent ratings, despite wide variance in student learning. Ohio wants to stay competitive with other states, like Florida, that are implementing rigorous teacher evaluation systems based on demonstrated improvements in student learning, and getting positive results.

For too long, evaluation systems have treated all teachers the same when, in fact, they are not. Ensuring that every child has an effective teacher is a bipartisan issue. On many occasions, President Obama has made the case that our nation must focus on ensuring that there is an effective teacher in every classroom. He has called for radical change saying, "We've got to be able to identify teachers who are doing well. And, ultimately, if some teachers aren't doing a good job, they've got to go."

Similarly, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has made a strong case for an improved system that identifies and rewards effective teachers. He said, "It is time to recognize and reward our best teachers, support those in the middle, and also acknowledge that teaching may not be the best career choice for a small minority of teachers who continue to struggle despite support and mentorship. Teaching is not a job for everyone."

Governor John Kasich is committed to the success of every student, and to the importance of hearing the perspective of teachers as Ohio works to build an outstanding P-16 education system. He was emphatic in the spring of 2011, when he said, "I want to hear from those teachers who want a better way and who have ideas for how to get us there. I look forward to working with them to create a better way."

In response to this call, Robert Sommers, Director of the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education, and Sarah Dove, Ohio's Teacher Liaison, assembled a steering committee consisting of a cross-section of teachers representing schools and educators across the state. This steering committee provided valuable guidance and leadership to the process of soliciting and analyzing teacher input. Dr. Sommers and Mrs. Dove conducted 19 meetings across the state. They reviewed the many letters and emails responding to the governor's call. More than 1,400 teachers offered their input.

"Let me be clear: if a teacher is given a chance, or two chances, or three chances, and still does not improve, there is no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from its consequences. The stakes are too high. We can afford nothing but the best when it comes to our children's teachers and to the schools where they teach.”

—President Barack Obama
The responses were overwhelmingly productive, frank and helpful. Teachers did not hold back with tough criticism, but they also expressed a shared understanding and belief in the fundamental principles behind reforming teacher evaluation and compensation. To those who responded – we are deeply grateful. This report represents a compilation of the input received, and recommendations derived from that input.

Even as research and public opinion continue to support reforms to boost teacher effectiveness, we know that there will be individuals skeptical of reform. A recently released report by the National Council on Teacher Quality stated that, "nothing about building a truly effective teaching force is going to come easy. The reality is that teacher reform is being met with unparalleled, vocal opposition." While we respect the opinions and perspectives of those who are opposed to this work, we believe the interest of the state’s children and the quality of our education system is well-served by moving forward.

If we are truly honest with ourselves, there has always been a quiet grapevine that has run throughout our schools identifying the best and worst teachers. Parents, administrators, and teachers themselves request that their own children be placed with teachers known to be the best and try to avoid teachers who are understood to be less effective.

Is it fair that knowledgeable parents and school employees are able to grab seats for their own children in the best classrooms, leaving behind parents and children who don’t know how to work the system? Is it fair that those teachers who could benefit from peer help and assistance don’t get it because those same peers can simply use the system to work around them?

This process of engaging teachers has further deepened the Administration’s belief that Ohio’s teachers are the most critical element in improving education in our state.

Based on what we’ve learned, we recommend that our new system clearly identify growth measures, offer freedom for high achievers and most importantly, allow for the flexibility that teachers demand. We need to build in proper support, communication and training for everyone involved in any new system. Along with increased accountability should come increased input into decision-making. By properly and effectively implementing this framework, our schools can improve and teachers can have the fair and productive evaluation system they deserve.

Performance of Ohioans in all walks of life is subject to review, and their organizations are better and more competitive as a result. With a competent and carefully drawn program of teacher evaluation, Ohio schools will achieve the same result.

"I want to hear from those teachers who want a better way and who have ideas for how to get us there. I look forward to working with them to create a better way.”
—Governor John Kasich

Analyzing and synthesizing the comments and input received from hundreds of teachers is no easy task. This summary is not meant to be a scientific compilation of the information. It is intended, rather, to present the general sentiment of the productive comments received. It is acknowledged that in any particular category, comments were received that would range across the entire spectrum of pros and cons.

States (in green) are developing new evaluation systems using student growth.
Teacher Perspectives: Evaluation

Teachers believe a meaningful evaluation of their performance is important and valuable, but they also believe that new evaluations, if poorly designed and implemented, could be disastrous.

Teachers are proud of the work they do and are strongly committed to being the best they can be. They want meaningful feedback on their performance. Meaningful, however, does not mean simply checking boxes or doing something for compliance purposes. If evaluations are to be implemented, they want them to provide relevant and timely input into their practices in the interest of improvement.

Many teachers believe that current evaluation processes are not working. However, some expressed confidence in specific and structured evaluation systems that they have seen as effective, including the Peer Assisted Review (PAR) system. Teachers crave more information about what the new evaluations could look like, how they would be implemented, and the potential impact on teacher employment and compensation.

Teachers believe that evaluation systems should be easy to understand and implement effectively. They also believe that complicated and confusing evaluation systems have the unintended consequence of treating teachers unfairly and arbitrarily. Teachers believe the underlying expectations embedded in the evaluation system should be communicated clearly, giving each teacher a full understanding of what is required to receive high ratings.

A Teacher’s Voice: “The greatest value that can come from evaluations is improvement in their practice and the resulting student learning. Evaluations must be one part of a larger quality assurance process that includes meaningful professional development opportunities, as well as regular support and coaching from qualified leaders and other educators. Teachers believe it is necessary to examine their own practice and scrutinize their own strengths and weaknesses as part of a self-assessment in their own quest for improvement. Self-assessments, in conjunction with external evaluations, should drive their improvement plans and professional development opportunities.

Teachers believe that using multiple measures in an evaluation is important, but they also believe that an evaluation system needs to be clear, easy to understand, and timely in providing feedback.

Teachers understand that the best evaluation systems do not rely on just one measure of their practice. They generally support the use of multiple measures, including student growth and learning (see below), observation, artifacts of practice, etc. Teachers believe that a wide range of options should be explored in the process of deciding on those measures that ultimately will be incorporated into the system.

Teachers recognize, however, that the more factors that are included, the more difficult it is to understand exactly how a teacher’s final rating is determined. Ultimately, there is a need to ensure that the evaluation system is designed in such a way that teachers can understand clearly how each factor contributes to the overall evaluation result.

Teachers appreciate receiving timely feedback. The sooner teachers can be made aware of how well they are performing, or areas that need improvement, the better it will be for them to act on such information. This concept extends to a desire for more timely information about assessment results.

A Teacher’s Voice: “It is true that high performing teachers are not recognized in a consistent fashion and to do so might help retain the best and the brightest.”

A Teacher’s Voice: “The evaluation process that is currently in place is ineffective, subjective and biased. There is no evidence based documentation attached to the evaluation process and no future planning/training options.”
Teachers believe that student growth and achievement is the true measure of an educator’s effectiveness. Nevertheless, they are tremendously skeptical about whether it can be measured fairly and accurately, with some suggesting it may not be measurable at all.

Teachers are divided in their beliefs about being held accountable for student learning. Many are comfortable with including student growth and learning as a component of a teacher evaluation system. Others believe a child’s external circumstances can overpower any efforts made in the classroom to improve student academic achievement. Some of the teachers in this latter category suggest that, given these factors outside their control, they cannot be held solely accountable for student learning. While we respect this point of view, there is convincing evidence showing that schools and teachers can, in fact, go a long way toward mitigating the negative academic implications of these circumstances. Given the proper support, professional development and knowledge of appropriate pedagogical strategies and interventions, teachers and schools can succeed with students that face these external realities in their lives.

Teachers have been interested in hearing about organizations across the country that have worked to identify schools that are “beating the odds” – that is, successfully educating students who face difficult external circumstances. In Ohio, we have a long standing program to recognize schools that are beating the odds. Recognition for these “Schools of Promise” began in 2002 and more than 590 schools have received this designation. The Ohio Department of Education also has sponsored case study research on the effective instructional practices and cultural qualities of Schools of Promise and published a number of documents relating to that research.

Emphasizing the point that student achievement must be a significant factor in teacher evaluations, Arne Duncan said, “I understand that tests are far from perfect and that it is unfair to reduce the complex, nuanced work of teaching to a simple multiple choice exam. Test scores alone should never drive evaluation, compensation or tenure decisions. But to remove student achievement entirely from evaluation is illogical and indefensible.”

Ohio law requires that the state framework for teacher evaluation to be approved by the State Board of Education include student academic growth measures for 50 percent of each evaluation. Given this reality, teachers want to have a complete understanding of the assessments that will be used and the manner in which computations will be made.
Teachers understand that a state system of assessments will form the basis for measuring student growth, but they have persistent concerns about the quality of the current assessments. They have little understanding of the assessments that are being developed to assess the Common Core State Standards.

This document is not the proper forum to air the litany of complaints that teachers have about Ohio’s current assessment system. Comments about problems with the current assessment system were numerous. Even more significant, however, is the realization by teachers that the state will soon have a new system of assessments that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. While they are hopeful that the new assessments will overcome the shortcomings of the old assessments, they have no concrete information. They are concerned that assessments, which have yet to be designed, will form the basis of new evaluation and compensation systems to be adopted in the near future.

Another issue raised, primarily by teachers whose students are either significantly above or below grade level, is whether the state’s assessments are broad enough in scope to measure true student growth at the extremes of the spectrum. As the state migrates to a new assessment system, ensuring that the assessments have the capacity to address this issue is important.

Finally, teachers recognize that for the system to be meaningful, the state’s data system must accurately track students in relationship to the teacher who is responsible for their learning. Teachers want clarity about how “teacher of record” will be determined moving forward.

Teachers believe that observations of their classroom practice should form a part of the evaluation. They also believe that observations must be made against well-defined criteria based upon definitions of good practice and be conducted by qualified evaluators who have strong content and pedagogical knowledge.

A Teacher’s Voice:
“I do, however, wonder how teachers in the non-core classes will be measured for merit pay with no state standardized tests available.”

In general, teachers are well-informed about the research regarding teacher performance (i.e., Charlotte Danielson, Marzano, etc.). They are interested in making sure that the expectations specified for their practice are evidence-based and rely on a clear rubric, which defines good performance. Teachers want a clear understanding of what is expected of them before new evaluations are implemented.

Teachers recognize that principals may not always have the content and pedagogical knowledge to evaluate every teacher effectively. At the same time, they recognize that this is not an insurmountable obstacle, and that there are ways that evaluators can be identified or trained so that their observations provide meaningful and relevant feedback. Teachers want to have confidence in the system and be comfortable that they will not be evaluated arbitrarily. They want to know who will observe them, the evaluator’s qualifications and what training evaluators will receive.

In many cases, teachers were open to the idea of a third-party evaluator. The recent report issued by the National Council on Teacher Quality observed, “A third-party evaluator can provide important feedback on the evaluation process and important checks for principals and other administrators typically charged with implementing teacher performance reviews. A neutral party who is a demonstrated effective teacher may be able to provide feedback to other teachers on instructional practice in a way that is non-threatening.”

Teachers understand that observations of classroom practice, and feedback based on those observations, can drive a teacher’s growth and improvement. The observations must be meaningful, however; and structured so the observer and the teacher have a shared understanding of the practices which result in student growth. Teachers believe that evidence-based expectations for their practice and performance can be defined to form the basis for observations. Expectations must be articulated clearly and understandable before they are used for evaluation purposes.
Teachers have mixed views on the use of student and parent feedback as part of the evaluation system, but they seem open to further exploration of how such input into an evaluation system might work. Teachers have great respect for parents and students, but they realize that families are not always happy with every encounter they have with a teacher. Teachers are unsure about how student and parent evaluations could be factored fairly into an overall evaluation system. At the same time, they acknowledge that experimentation with different approaches can lead to a comfort level with using such input. Student and parent input must be structured in a productive way, and not in a way that simply provides a vehicle for amplifying complaints.

Teachers believe that collaboration is an important element of good practice and that the evaluation should include this component. They believe that evaluation systems must avoid features that could foster competition and stifle collaboration among teachers.

Teachers value collaboration. In the best schools, there is a constant exchange of ideas and a focus on working together to improve student learning. Teachers are afraid the new evaluation and compensation systems could drive a wedge between teachers and force greater competition instead of collaboration. In response to this, some teachers hoped to see a portion of their evaluation be focused on the achievement of team, grade-level, or building goals.

Teachers also are concerned that the new evaluation and compensation structures might include limits on the numbers of teachers designated as high-performing. Teachers worry that such limits would diminish collaboration. These types of design elements should be avoided.

Teachers believe that the state can develop good models for teacher evaluations, but they also believe that flexibility should be a feature of these models.

Teachers understand statewide frameworks generally must be, by their nature, applicable to all teachers in all circumstances. Nevertheless, they do not feel comfortable with a one-size-fits-all approach. They believe part of the design of the state frameworks must include

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**A Teacher’s Voice:**

“One size won’t fit all and shouldn’t!”
features that allow differentiation at the district or building level. Such differentiation might consist of the inclusion of additional factors, a variety of evaluators, varying weights and use of various approaches to measuring student growth. Teachers believe these conversations and decisions at the local level should be made with input from teachers.

Teachers also believe that flexibility should be allowed for the evaluations of teachers who demonstrate effectiveness in improving student outcomes. This flexibility could include choices around who conducts the evaluation, the frequency of the evaluation and the types of measures included.

Teachers believe there are circumstances affecting students that create challenges for any evaluation system, and these circumstances can be factored into the evaluations in a fair way.

Teachers recognize they do not live in a perfect world, where every student comes prepared and ready to learn. In fact, in any given classroom, one is likely to find students facing particular challenges, which, in turn, create difficulties for the fair evaluation of a teacher’s performance. This is not to say that teachers are dismissing the importance of educating all students. In fact, teachers strongly believe that those students who present special challenges need nurturing and strong educational environments to succeed, as much and perhaps more than others.

Teachers do not want to be relieved of responsibility for any of their students. But they do want an evaluation system that is designed in a way that treats teachers fairly when it comes to the performance of the students in their charge. Teachers believe the evaluation system can be designed fairly to meet both student and teacher needs.

Teachers feel strongly that current approaches to professional development are not meeting their needs. They believe setting goals for improvement can be a valuable part of the evaluation process. They want more rigorous and meaningful professional development that addresses each teacher’s own needs.

Teachers have chosen their profession because they want to help students discover the joy of learning and acquire valuable knowledge and skills. They realize it is important to be on the lookout constantly for opportunities to improve their practice. A well-developed evaluation system can be an important component of that improvement process.

A Teacher’s Voice:
“If you want teachers who are experienced, seasoned professionals, set up a plan to keep them moving through professional development and reward their progress.”
To have a truly powerful impact, however, the evaluation system must lead to professional development opportunities that are timely, relevant and aligned with each teacher’s needs. Many teachers do not feel that the current approaches to professional development accomplish this. They believe that effective teachers should be trusted to make choices and be given flexibility in the pursuit of the most appropriate professional development to meet their needs and the needs of their students.

One notable comment made by teachers was the acknowledgement of the need for more professional development on understanding and using data. Teachers can be inundated with data that sometimes defies understanding. Helping teachers develop their skills around data analysis and use – as well as emphasizing that data reports should be prepared with a strong eye toward user-friendliness – can serve teachers well in identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers believe implementing a new evaluation system should be a priority, but they also believe that the use of the system at its outset – when it is still being defined and refined – must be done in a way that is fair to teachers and sensitive to potential consequences.

While teachers are not interested in slowing down the process, they do believe that it is very important to find valid and reliable approaches to ultimately determine their destiny and compensation. Teachers will become more comfortable with the system as they see it fairly identifying high performers as well as poor performers. Rushing into full implementation before fully understanding the reliability of the new system could be harmful to many teachers and erode trust in any future systems. Teachers also believe that, as with any performance, there can be fluctuations over time. For this reason, teachers believe it would be fair to use multiple years of data as the foundation for their evaluation.

A Teacher’s Voice:
“Including annual professional goals to work towards every year will encourage teachers to try new ideas and techniques in the classroom, keeping current with the new thoughts and trends in education.”
Many teachers indicated a level of openness in moving to a merit pay system, but they are unsure whether valid and fair alternatives can be developed and implemented.

Of all the subjects discussed by teachers, those relevant to changes in compensation were the most emotional. Understandably, teachers are apprehensive – some, even fearful – about the implications of a new compensation system. Many teachers have no experience with performance-based compensation systems and find themselves in uncharted territory. Teachers consistently indicate that they are not in the teaching profession for the money; but like the rest of us, teachers have bills to pay and financial obligations to meet. Consequently, as the prospect of changes to the compensation system are discussed, teachers understandably become nervous.

At the same time, almost every teacher can identify inequities in the current system such as the “teacher down the hall” that may not be performing at an effective level. They know different teachers have different impacts on student learning, and they are attracted to the idea of rewards based on effectiveness.

However, they are skeptical of the notion that a fair and impartial compensation system that is tied to effectiveness can be designed. In the absence of specific information, teachers are highly suspicious and anxious about what compensation reform looks like and what the possible benefits and risks might be. Will it be possible for teachers to earn substantially higher salaries if they are highly effective and show other valued characteristics? How will districts deal with large numbers of highly effective teachers? Is it possible for teachers to receive large reductions in salary for poor performance?

Figure 1 entitled “What does performance-based compensation look like in other places?” provides a broad overview of the key elements that generally appear in such models. Additionally, in Appendix A, three specific examples are provided. These examples are provided for illustrative purposes only and their inclusion is not intended to indicate any preference or endorsement.

Compensation is important, but other conditions of employment can be even more important. Teachers want respect and the opportunity to lead and to help others grow. They also see that sometimes the “reward” for high performance can be assignments that are even more difficult and challenging and may put their effectiveness at risk. Compensation systems that are not well-designed may discourage effective teachers from taking on more difficult assignments if they risk negative financial consequences.

A Teacher’s Voice: "Bring on merit pay! I plan to earn it, because I work hard to be good at what I do! You are right – test scores alone are not enough. Schools are required to put in place a rigorous, multi-faceted evaluation and intervention plan for special needs and at-risk students. Let’s put that same kind of theory to work in teacher evaluations. Should test scores play a part? Absolutely, insofar as to show annual yearly growth for students.”

Performance-based compensation systems can take many forms. These ideas are provided for illustrative purposes only and their inclusion is not intended to indicate any preference or endorsement. Generally, the approaches address the following elements:

Grid or no grid: Some performance-based plans (e.g., District of Columbia Public Schools) are built on top of a typical “steps-and-lanes” salary grid. Others (e.g., Denver Public Schools) eliminate the grid entirely and simply tie percentage increases or dollar bonuses to various performance criteria. If a typical grid stays in place, the automatic increases in the grid may be curtailed in favor of stronger performance-based elements that are in addition to the grid salaries.

Base Salary Increases: Performance-based compensation models generally have mechanisms that allow for a teacher’s base salary to grow. These are tied to specified criteria and are generally permanent. In some cases, states or districts establish new teacher categories (i.e., novice, experienced, master, etc.). As a teacher meets the criteria for a higher category, he/she moves into a higher salary level. Similarly, if a teacher is not performing up to the criteria established for the current salary level he/she could be shifted to a lower level (usually after persistent underperformance over multiple years).

Bonuses: Performance-based compensation models usually include bonuses that reflect the value that a district places on certain types of activity or teacher commitment. Bonuses are not factored into the base salary and must be earned each year. These may include specific enhancements for teaching in hard-to-staff schools, teaching in certain subject areas (e.g. STEM fields), teaching larger numbers of students, etc.

Grouping: Some performance-based models include features that reward groups of teachers – usually at the building level—for their impact on student achievement. These rewards are usually in the form of bonuses, which must be earned each year.

Appendix A discusses, in greater detail, three performance-based compensation systems: Denver Public Schools – ProComp; District of Columbia Public Schools – IMPACTplus; and Harrison School District (Colorado Springs, Colorado) – Effectiveness and Results Plan.
Teacher Perspectives: Other Related Issues

Teachers believe administrators and others working in schools and districts also need meaningful evaluation systems tied to student performance.

Teachers understand they are not alone in establishing the conditions for successful student learning. While they might be the most important in-school factor impacting student success, the excellence of building and district administrators also is a key in creating the conditions for teachers and students to succeed. Teachers believe a strong and credible evaluation system for principals and leaders in our schools and districts must be part of a comprehensive system designed to drive improvements to student learning across the board.

In some cases, teachers identified instances where principals “stacked” a class in a way that made it difficult for the teacher to succeed. They are afraid such practices might continue in cases where administrators have a bias against a teacher or target a teacher for removal.

In our conversations, teachers were pleased to learn that the development of evaluation models for principals and superintendents is already underway pursuant to state law. These evaluations will be aligned with the teacher evaluations. Furthermore, the principal evaluations will also be tied to student performance. Therefore, there will be a tremendous incentive for principals to ensure class assignments are handled in such a way as to maximize the likelihood of student, teacher and school success.

Teachers desperately want more, clearer, and better communication about the teacher evaluation work, as well as any work related to teacher compensation.

There is a great deal of misinformation and factual inaccuracy about evaluation and compensation reform circulating among teachers. In the absence of reliable and trusted communications, teachers have no choice but to consider anything they hear – and, in many cases, the worst things they hear – in forming their perceptions and opinions. Teachers want more, better, regular and reliable information about the process and details of teacher evaluation and compensation system design.

A Teacher’s Voice: “Administrators should also be able to receive feedback; and feedback from teachers and the staff working under an administrator should affect his/her salary. If performance is going to affect teacher salaries, it should also affect raises for administrators.”
Steering Committee Recommendations

It is not sufficient to simply listen to what teachers say. Their voices must contribute to the design and implementation of the teacher evaluation system and new compensation system models. Based on the input received and presented, the Steering Committee submits the following recommendations to policymakers and other interested parties for consideration. These recommendations are made in the interest of informing and strengthening the design of Ohio’s teacher evaluation and compensation systems. The Committee recognizes that not all of them will be embraced by policymakers or the governor.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) should promptly identify and define what assessments or measures may be used for producing student growth data.

By July 1, 2013, Ohio school districts are required to adopt teacher evaluation policies that are aligned with the model developed by ODE. Ohio’s enabling legislation requires ODE to develop an evaluation system that provides for multiple evaluation factors and identifies measures of student academic growth for grade levels and subjects for which the Value-Added progress dimension is currently not available. This work must be completed by Dec. 31, 2011. The available choices must be communicated to local school districts in a way that allows instructional leaders and teachers to understand how the tools can be used within the evaluation process. This timeline will allow school communities to engage in the difficult task of preparing their evaluation policies.

Teachers understand the importance of student growth as a measure of their effectiveness in the classroom, but are limited in their understanding of how student growth can and will be measured. This is particularly true for teachers who provide instruction in areas not currently subject to statewide assessments. They have expressed strong concern with the ability to rely solely on a single, annual assessment as the measure of student growth.

Evaluation systems currently in use in other states have clearly defined processes for selecting the growth measures that will be used and provide for flexibility based on the individual teachers’ environments. Washington D.C., Rhode Island, and New Haven, Connecticut, all rely on a combination of standardized tests and alternative measures that have been selected in coordination with an instructional leader. By relying on a method that engages teachers in the review and definition of their measurement tools, they gain a clear understanding of what will be measured and confidence that the measures will accurately reflect their impact on student growth.

The evaluation system should include opportunities for a differentiated evaluation process based on a teacher’s success, as measured by the student growth factors. At a minimum, the evaluation system should allow credentialed evaluators to include administrators, peers, and third-party evaluators.

The state’s biennial budget bill (House Bill 153) included provisions requiring the annual evaluation of teachers. These provisions require the evaluations be conducted by a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, vocational director, supervisor in any educational area or a person designated to conduct evaluations under an agreement providing for peer review. The statute gives local school boards the option of evaluating “accomplished” teachers every two years rather than annually.

A Teacher’s Voice: “Let’s use peer review! Many qualified educators would be willing to branch out and travel to evaluate peers in other districts and regions. That, by the way, would be a great new business opportunity for a start-up company! Let’s use parents and communities as well. While many teachers are almost combative in their attitude toward parents, the better teachers build that relationship enthusiastically and use it to help students succeed.”

Teachers believe current evaluation systems, which are perceived to be less complex than the frameworks being developed, are already too burdensome. They are concerned about the long-term feasibility and practicality of any new or expanded evaluation system. They are also concerned that the workload for administrators who have to evaluate every teacher, every year will become unsustainable. Additionally, some teachers feel that if their students are consistently showing growth they should be given some flexibility in how they are evaluated.

There are a variety of examples across the country that illustrate ways to address these issues. For instance, In Montgomery County, Maryland, two different evaluations are used. The first one is used when evaluating a novice teacher or an experienced teacher who performs below standard on an evaluation from their principal. These evaluations use the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) approach conducted by “consulting teachers.” The second one is used for experienced teachers who are meeting the district’s standards of effectiveness. These evaluations are conducted by principals and take less time to complete.
It is recommended that student growth measures be used as an initial screen to determine which evaluation process is most appropriate for each educator. Teachers whose students achieve appropriate levels of student growth should have more freedom and options for the evaluator and the evaluation method. Teachers whose students do not demonstrate appropriate levels of student growth should require a more prescriptive evaluation. All evaluators should be provided with substantial training and should be monitored over time to ensure fairness and validity. Figure 2 on page 14 illustrates these ideas.

The process of developing the evaluation system should include piloting multiple measures, tools, and methods to judge educator’s work.

Ohio’s statute prescribing the general features of a teacher evaluation model stipulates that the evaluation framework must provide for multiple evaluation factors. Teachers agree that they want the freedom to be able to demonstrate their abilities and effectiveness using a variety of measures.

Systems in other states, like Rhode Island, look to a variety of artifacts and measures to assess educators. Ohio should allow for a wide range of factors in an evaluation system. These could include, but should not be limited to:

- Portfolios that might include:
  - Lesson/Unit plans
  - Student work
  - Copies of curricular materials
  - Assessments
  - Records of communications with parent/colleagues
  - Copies of student records
  - Copies of grade book
  - Student progress reports
  - Other materials deemed useful
- Parent surveys
- Student surveys
- Evaluation of classroom instruction and/or artifacts (i.e., Educational Testing Service)
- Licensure type
- Teacher’s responsibilities, leadership and involvement
- Coursework and professional development.

All of these measures should be examined to determine how they might best be used in Ohio’s districts. It is recommended that, for each of these categories, clear definitions of quality be established by the state or districts so that teachers and evaluators can have a shared understanding of excellence and expectations.
For teacher who cannot demonstrate student growth at proficient level or better or for whom data does not:

- **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**
  - should be demonstrated through observation and other means determined by an administrator.

- **PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION**
  - should be determined by combining professional practice and student growth scores. Educators should be designated **PROFICIENT, ACCOMPLISHED, DEVELOPING or INEFFECTIVE**.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - should be at the discretion of the **PROFICIENT or ACCOMPLISHED** educator. Professional Development should be prescribed for those educators designated **DEVELOPING or INEFFECTIVE**.

For teacher who can demonstrate growth at proficient level or better:

- **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**
  - should be demonstrated through observation and other means determined by the educator.

- **PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION**
  - should be determined by combining professional practice and student growth scores. Educators with strong student growth numbers should be designated either **PROFICIENT or ACCOMPLISHED**.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - should be at the discretion of the **PROFICIENT or ACCOMPLISHED** educator.
The Ohio Department of Education must commit to providing increased communications with teachers about new evaluation and compensation models.

Little effort has been expended by the Department of Education in educating teachers on where the state is and where it is headed in the areas of evaluation and compensation. By providing teachers with a “big picture” version of the state’s evaluation framework, the state can lay the groundwork for educated and committed teachers. The Department of Education must reach out and collaborate with key stakeholders to assist with getting the needed communications to teachers and leaders across the state. ODE should develop and implement a strategic communications plan to identify key messages, important milestones and identify who is responsible for sharing information.

According to law, the state must develop a standards-based framework for the evaluation of teachers that meets nine established criteria. This framework should be shared with teachers in early 2012, along with regular updates from districts piloting the framework. Pilot information will guide changes to the model itself, but communicating a well-formed framework to teachers, administrators, school board members and other interested stakeholders would go a long way toward helping teachers accept the evaluation system and the potential it provides for improvement.

Educators do not have a good understanding of performance compensation. While salary schedules and traditional compensation systems are more comfortable, they are not necessarily well-liked. These systems are “safe” and predictable, which puts educators at ease. However, simple performance compensation examples that help illustrate how performance measures, combined with current compensation lead to decisions about increases in salary, would help build comfort with a new system of compensation. Examples would also help educators to see the importance of maintaining high levels of achievement for themselves and their students when making compensation decisions.

Understanding that the Ohio Principal Evaluation System is in the process of being developed, it is recommended that it should be designed in such a way as to mirror the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System for consistency across the process. Additionally, evaluations for superintendents and other administrators should be aligned similarly.

A system of evaluations that spans all employees should promote the alignment of the human resources of an organization toward a common goal. In this case, the goal is student achievement and ensuring that by the time students graduate, they have mastered the knowledge and skills required for them to succeed in college and careers. This can be accomplished by making sure that evaluations for all school district personnel are constructed around this common goal.

HB 153 stipulates, “Each board shall adopt procedures for the evaluation of all assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals and other administrators and shall evaluate such employees in accordance with those procedures. The procedures for the evaluation of principals shall be based on principles comparable to the teacher evaluation policy adopted by the board under section 3319.111 of the Revised Code, but shall be tailored to the duties and responsibilities of principals and the environment in which principals work. An evaluation based upon procedures adopted under this division shall be considered by the board in deciding whether to renew the contract of employment of an assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal or other administrator.”

A Teacher’s Voice: “I feel teachers should be evaluated on performance but the problem is that there is personal bias and teachers are not given equitable classrooms – some are given more behavior problems and lower performing students if the administrators feel a particular teacher is more competent than another; hence, turning effectiveness into a negative impact for the highest performing teachers.”
The Ohio Department of Education must invest time and effort into training school boards and administrators before implementing any new systems.

There is nothing quite so disturbing as getting mixed messages and confusing signals about a topic as important as evaluation and compensation reform. What source does one trust? Teachers have indicated that they are receiving different answers about the new evaluation and compensation systems, depending on whom they ask. There must be a concerted effort to ensure that school boards, administrators and others communicating on these issues have an accurate and clear grasp of the specific requirements and directions.

It also is commonly understood that these new evaluations will have an impact on the way administrators use their time, which may lead to funding and management implications for school districts. Doing this work correctly is very important to the successful outcomes that are desired. Consequently, school boards and administrators need help understanding how to prioritize time and funding to ensure that implementation is successful.

Holding teachers and principals accountable for student achievement can be difficult if they do not control decisions about resource utilization and allocation. The Ohio Department of Education should identify and promote operating models that grant principals and teachers greater control over curricular and operational decisions, as well as expenditures with the potential for impacting student achievement.

Good organizational management practices seek to align the use of resources toward the mission and goal of the organization. New evaluation systems and compensation structures have the potential to promote greater alignment of the people working in a school district around common objectives. But there are other resources that can be brought to bear on meeting the organization’s goals. It is important that the deployment of those resources also be aligned.

Sometimes at the school building level, teachers and principals have a vision for what they must do to meet the needs of their students, but they are unable to realize that vision fully because many resource inputs are outside their control. Across the country, we see examples where more and more authority to influence spending and other resource allocation practices is being infused into building leaders and managers. These ideas are not always simple to implement and are not to be taken lightly. Nevertheless, exploring them in the spirit of supporting a complete and targeted approach to meeting the needs of students in a particular school building could have positive outcomes.

As part of the discussion on this issue, teachers were interested to learn about Innovation Schools, where teachers and principals have the opportunity to take control of their schools for the benefit of children. By a vote of the staff in a building, the school can become exempt from central administration, school board and state rules and regulations. This freedom would be provided in exchange for a student performance commitment by the staff. Innovation schools could provide teachers with the freedom to “do what’s right” for the children they serve.

Teachers were really interested in this new idea. As such, the Department of Education should begin the development of rules that allow for the implementation of Innovation Schools. They should gather and disseminate information about these models that allow for greater resource alignment at the building level and greater decision-making responsibility on the part of principals and teachers. These models should be actively publicized and volunteers should be identified to pilot their effectiveness.

The Ohio Department of Education should help schools identify alternative supports for students when parents aren’t involved to compensate for that absence.

The challenges faced by students who do not have supportive parents and communities compounds the teaching challenge. There are examples in various school districts of systems of supports, which provide students with alternative external support mechanisms designed to improve student attentiveness to academic pursuits outside of class. These approaches often take the form of deep mentorships. Teachers and school districts need a better understanding of these options.

The Department of Education developed the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports Guidelines to assist local district and school building leadership teams in the creation of plans and policies that would provide every student access to academic and nonacademic programs and support services that are critical for success. ODE should strengthen these guidelines with examples of programs and strategies that work and ensure that all schools and districts are aware of the guidelines and successful models. They also should work to identify opportunities to expand the use of these strategies and analyze their impact.
Teachers have great impact on the education of our children. Their ideas and perspectives also should have great impact on strategies adopted to improve the educational system.

When given the opportunity, teachers will be constructive and productive in helping policymakers design new approaches to improve educational outcomes. Specifically, with regard to teacher evaluation and compensation systems, teachers understand how these tools can become a powerful force in creating the climate, conditions and incentives that promote alignment toward a common goal – improving student achievement. If structured properly and implemented fairly, these systems will be one of multiple strategies necessary to further advance Ohio’s education system.

The work ahead will be difficult and will not be flawless. On this point, the report by the National Council on Teacher Quality observes that, “Stakeholder input is important – but bold leadership is also important.” Bold leadership can include teachers who are willing to stand up for doing what is right in the interest of students. The recommendations in this brief are one reflection of that leadership.

The existence of other perspectives and viewpoints may mean that not all the recommendations are adopted, but they nevertheless reflect productive input into the complex consensus-building that will result in the state’s final approach. Teachers must be involved in the ongoing development, implementation and review of the evaluation and compensation systems. In the end, teachers are the greatest and best resource we have to move Ohio toward the vision we hold for the future of education.

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iii http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/


v Excerpted from September 27, 2010 interview with Matt Lauer. Available at http://msnbc.msn.com/id/39378576/site/todayshow/ns/today-parenting


viii Information on the schools of promise and the research publications can be found on the Ohio Department of Education’s website (www.education.ohio.gov) by searching for “schools of promise”.


xi http://www.dc.gov/DCPS/In+the+Classroom/Ensuring+Teacher+Success/IMPACT+%28Performance+Assessment%29/IMPACT+Guidebooks

xii http://www.rde.ri.gov/educatorquality/educatorevaluation/Docs/RiModelGuide.pdf

xiii http://www.nhps.net/sites/default/files/1__NHPS_TEVALDEV_Introduction_-_Aug_2010.pdf


This appendix provides examples of three performance-based compensation systems.

- Denver Public Schools – ProComp
- District of Columbus Public Schools – IMPACTplus
- Harrison School District, Colorado Springs, Colorado – Effectiveness and Results (E & R) Plan

The Denver ProComp system was approved for implementation in the Denver Public Schools in 2004. In 2005, Denver voters approved a $25 million levy to fund the compensation plan, and the plan went into effect in 2006. ProComp does not use any type of salary grid. Rather, the entire compensation system is driven by a single “index” amount – a dollar amount negotiated by the district administration and the union. The index amount for 2010-2011 is $37,551. The ProComp system uses a combination of sustained salary increases and one-time bonuses. The system generally provides sustained increases (base building) for professional development, satisfactory evaluations, and demonstrated student progress. Bonuses (non-base building) are provided for circumstances that can change from year to year – working in hard-to-serve schools, accepting hard-to-staff assignments, teaching in high-growth schools, etc. Figure 3 presents the key features of the Denver ProComp Plan.

### FIGURE 3 RECOMMENDED EVALUATION PATHS FOR EDUCATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of Index $37,551</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description of Element</th>
<th>Effect on Base Salary</th>
<th>Percent of Index</th>
<th>Builds pension and highest average salary</th>
<th>Payment Type and Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing ongoing professional development – tied to the needs of our students – is a central strategy to help you expand your skills, improve student performance, and advance your career with the district</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Monthly installments upon submission of proper documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree and License</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation for graduate degree or advanced licenses or certificates</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>9% per degree or license. Eligible once every 5 yrs.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Monthly installments upon submission of proper documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Student Loan Reimbursement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reimbursement for tuition or for outstanding student loans</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>Actual expense up to $1,000/yr.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Up to $1,000 per year upon submission of proper documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases for new teachers based on a satisfactory evaluation.</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>1% every year</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pro-rated over 12 months. If unsatisfactory, delayed at least 1 yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Probationary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases based on a satisfactory evaluation.</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>3% every three years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pro-rated over 12 months. If unsatisfactory, delayed at least 1 yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Non-Probationary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases based on a satisfactory evaluation.</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>1% every year if no 3% in past 2 yrs.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pro-rated over 12 months. If unsatisfactory, delayed at least 1 yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Designed to attract teachers to schools with a high percentage of free- and reduced-lunch</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Monthly installment upon completion of service each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-to-Serve School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Designed to attract teachers to roles with high vacancy rate and high turnover</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Monthly installment upon completion of service each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Growth Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Incentive paid for meeting student growth objectives</td>
<td>Base Building</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 objective – Paid lump sum. 2 objectives – Paid in monthly installments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds CSAP Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers whose assigned students’ growth in CSAP scores exceed district expectations</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Paid lump-sum in the year following assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Growth Top-Performing Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers in schools designated as a “Top-Performing School” based on the DPS School Performance Framework</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Paid lump-sum in the year following assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Growth School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers in schools designated as a “High-Growth School” on the DPS School Performance Framework</td>
<td>Non-Base Building</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Paid lump-sum in the year following assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. District of Columbia Public Schools – IMPACTplus

IMPACTplus is the performance-based compensation system used in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) for Washington Teachers’ Union (WTU) members. The system is promoted as offering the opportunity for highly effective teachers to more than double their compensation in a few short years. Annual bonuses for highly effective teachers range from $3,000 to $25,000, depending on the IMPACTplus category under which they are evaluated and other factors such as the free- and reduced-price lunch rate of the school in which they teach.

IMPACTplus is driven by DCPS’ new performance-based teacher evaluation system – IMPACT. The system includes differentiated evaluations for teachers of general, ELL and special education students; counselors; mentor teachers; and other support staff. Teacher evaluations are multi-dimensional and include five observations conducted by master evaluators and principals. The system identifies two types of teachers – Group 1 includes teachers in grades and subjects for which value-added scores are available (math and reading in grades 4-8); Group 2 includes teachers in non-tested subjects. Teachers who are rated “highly effective” under the evaluation system are then eligible to participate in the IMPACTplus compensation system.

IMPACTplus is layered on top of the district’s basic “steps-and-lanes” salary schedule. The compensation system has two elements. The first includes annual bonuses that are based on the school’s free- and reduced-price lunch rate, as well as whether a teacher is a Group 1 teacher or teaching in a high-need subject area. Figure 4 below summarizes the bonus structure.

**FIGURE 4 IMPACTplus ANNUAL BONUS STRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR IMPACT RATING</th>
<th>YOUR SCHOOL’S FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH RATE</th>
<th>YOUR BONUS</th>
<th>YOUR ADD-ON IF YOU ARE IN IMPACT GROUP 1</th>
<th>YOUR ADD-ON IF YOU TEACH A “HIGH-NEED” SUBJECT</th>
<th>YOUR TOTAL POSSIBLE ANNUAL BONUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</td>
<td>60% OR HIGHER</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL $10,000</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL $5,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59% OR LOWER</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL $5,000</td>
<td>ADDITIONAL $2,500</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPACTplus also includes a component that can affect a teacher’s base salary. The structure allows teachers to accelerate through the basic salary grid in use by the district, based on the school’s free- and reduced-price lunch percentage. Figure 5 summarizes the base salary impact approach.

**FIGURE 5 IMPACTplus BASE SALARY ACCELERATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR IMPACT RATING FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS</th>
<th>YOUR SCHOOL’S FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH RATE</th>
<th>YOUR SERVICE CREDIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</td>
<td>60% OR HIGHER</td>
<td>5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59% OR LOWER</td>
<td>3 YEARS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Harrison School District, Colorado Springs, Colorado – Effectiveness and Results Plan

Harrison School District was one of the first districts in the nation to replace a traditional salary schedule with a pay system based entirely on observations of teacher practice and student achievement results. The Effectiveness and Results (E&R) Plan was implemented in the 2010-2011 school year, when 85 percent of teachers in the district were paid based on this new compensation system, rather than a traditional salary schedule. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, 100 percent of teachers will be on the plan. All principals also will be compensated under a similar system. An essential factor in determining which pay level educators earn is significant, demonstrated success in helping to improve student achievement.
As shown in Figure 6, the Harrison E&R system for teachers has nine pay levels—Novice, Progressing I, Progressing II, Proficient I, Proficient II, Proficient III, Exemplary I, Exemplary II and Master. Specific criteria for performance and student achievement results are established for each pay level. Higher levels require demonstrations of higher-level mastery and results. The compensation schedule is split into two tiers:

- The “Principal Review,” which uses student achievement data plus principal observations to place and move teachers into four initial pay levels with gradual salary differences between them, and
- The “District Review,” which combines student achievement data plus performance on district-wide priorities/goals to move a teacher along the highest five levels with dramatically greater salaries.

All teachers undergo the Principal Review; teachers who have reached the Proficient I level may request to undergo the District Review to reach one of the higher pay levels. Principals also are held accountable for their school-wide improvement objectives and overall action plans. They must be able to prove their results with data.

Years of service play no role in the E&R model. Professional development and credential attainment only play a small role. A teacher’s performance can fall to lower levels if their performance does not meet the criteria of their current level for three years.

**FIGURE 6  HARRISON SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS MODEL**
Special Thanks

The following educators served as members of the Educator Effectiveness Steering Committee providing guidance and input that proved essential in the development of this report:

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