

Building Block #6: Redesign schools as places in which teachers will be treated as professionals, with incentives and support to continuously improve their practice and the performance of their students

SUMMARY OF GAP ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Career Ladder Systems

The top performing jurisdictions are increasingly using highly structured career ladders, similar to those found in most high-status professions, to structure the careers of teachers. In Shanghai and Singapore, the world’s leaders in this development, as teachers progress up a well-defined sequence of steps, they acquire more responsibility, authority, status and compensation, much as one would in a large law firm in the United States, progression from associate, to junior partner, to senior partner, to managing partner. Or one could compare the careers of school teachers, who typically have the same job on their last day of work as they did on their first day, to those of university faculty, who might progress from lecturer to assistant professor to associate professor to full professor to full professors who hold endowed chairs. The career ladders for teachers in the top performing countries can be visualized as a “Y” in which the teacher proceeds from novice up the ladder to an exemplar teacher and then choose either to proceed on one branch up to master teacher and up the other to principal and beyond. In these systems, master teachers typically make as much as school principals. The criteria for moving up the ladder start with a focus on excellent teaching, but then, as they move up, focus on the teachers’ ability to mentor other teachers, lead other teachers in the work of teacher teams and, finally, lead other teachers in doing research leading to steady improvement in student performance in the school. In Ontario and Finland, the professional status of teachers and opportunities for differentiated roles creates comparable incentives for retention and professional development. All well-developed career ladders in the leading jurisdictions provide strong incentives to all teachers to get better and better at the work.

Like other states, Maryland has no statewide career ladder system for teachers, although, to its credit, Baltimore City’s pilot system is further along than pilots in the other benchmark states that are all experimenting with career ladders. Massachusetts, the state with by far the best student performance in the United States, is the only top performing state that has a design for a state-level career ladder system, but that system has been implemented in only a few school districts. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Center for Education and the Economy are exploring developing a national framework for a career ladder that would be piloted in select states.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission makes a series of recommendations relating to establishing a career ladder for teachers and addressing the gap in salary between teachers and other high–status professions in Maryland. It is the intent of the Commission that these two efforts be implemented concomitantly.

1. In order to recognize effective teachers and incentivize them to stay in the classroom, Maryland must build a statewide career ladder system modeled on the most effective such systems in the US and the world.
 - a. The development of a viable career ladder will require considerable effort extending over several years and involving all of the stakeholders (LEAs, MSDE, collective bargaining units, school boards, etc.).
 - b. Once established, all new pK-12 teachers would be placed on the career ladder. Currently serving teachers would eventually be placed on the career ladder after a reasonable transition period.
 - c. Maryland will need to convene a group of experts and stakeholders to develop a statewide framework for a career ladder, which would include the minimum number of ladder steps, the titles for these steps, and the broad criteria for placement on each of the ladder steps and for advancing between steps. In its final report, the Commission will provide additional detail on how it recommends this process should proceed.
 - d. Maryland’s career ladder should present two paths to school leadership for exemplar teachers and mentors: a “Master Teacher” track that allows highly effective teachers to stay in the classroom with appropriate compensation and an administrative track that gives teachers the chance to become assistant principals and principals after they have primarily worked in the classroom and have demonstrated the capacity to be successful teachers and mentors.
 - e. The process for evaluation and promotion of teachers on the career ladder should include a combination of master teachers and administrators.
 - f. While the career ladder will have a statewide framework as described above, the districts and local bargaining units would negotiate the compensation and specific responsibilities at each step, as well as any additional ladder steps or requirements added to the statewide framework through local negotiations.
 - g. The career ladder should be designed to complement and facilitate the implementation of the high performance work organization in the schools (see #4 below).

Teacher Compensation

Because the top performing jurisdictions are trying to attract teachers from the same cohort of high school students who go into the high-status professions, their typical stated policy is to compensate them at levels comparable to compensation for the high-status professions. Starting pay for teachers in these countries is often higher than in the high-status professions. When lower, the difference is almost always less than 25 percent. Neither Maryland nor the top performing states in the United States do that. The average statewide *starting* salary for teachers in Maryland was \$34,234 in 2015, which lagged behind other professions, by up to 56 percent in 2015. This compares to up to 52% in Massachusetts, 46% in New Hampshire, and 42% in New Jersey. The average of all teachers' salaries in Maryland is \$66,482. This also lagged behind other professions by up to 40% in 2015. This compares to up to 16% in Massachusetts, 31% in New Hampshire, and 26% in New Jersey.

Current salary levels combined with working conditions are having a negative impact on recruitment and retention of teachers in Maryland public schools. In particular, perilously few Maryland students are opting to pursue teaching careers. Enrollment in Maryland teacher preparation programs has declined by approximately 20 percent since 2010, and the number of graduates decreased by nearly the same amount in 2014 and 2015. Of particular concern, it appears from the available data that a sizable portion of Maryland teacher graduates do not pursue a teaching career in Maryland. Roughly 60% of *all* teachers hired in Maryland are from out of state, and less than one-quarter of newly-prepared teachers hired each year are prepared at a Maryland university, ~~a (that figure~~ that has been declining in recent years). Add MLDS data in January

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. ~~Once the Commission's recommendations are fully implemented, t~~The gap in compensation between teachers and high-status professions that requireing comparable levels of education ~~(assuming a 10 month contract), such as nurses, certified public accountants and architects,~~ should be significantly reduced, if not completely eliminated. A timeline for accomplishing this goal and the appropriate benchmark comparisons will be included in the Commission's final report.
 - a. ~~Once a career ladder is fully developed and implemented, i~~Increases in compensation for Maryland teachers must be tied in significant measure to their position and advancement ~~-on the career ladder.~~
 - b. Advancement up the ladder should be based on the acquisition of specified knowledge and skills, rigorous evidence of success as a classroom teacher and/or additional responsibilities commensurate with the additional compensation. Teachers should ~~be able to~~ demonstrate success with students from different demographic and economic backgrounds before moving to the top of the ladder.
 - c. Teachers' compensation should continue to be negotiated at the local level between bargaining units and school boards, but the State should begin conducting regular periodic surveys of compensation in Maryland, both on a

county and regional basis, to determine prevailing rates of beginning and average compensation in the high status professions. This information will provide a benchmark for teachers' salaries as a proportion of high status professions' salaries and enable the State to begin planning for achieving the goal of this recommendation.

3. Closing the gap in compensation between teachers and comparable high-status professions should be phased in as part of the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, including changes in teacher preparation programs, raising the standards for teacher certification and re-certification, the development of a career ladder system, and the new approach to school organization and management

~~3.~~

4. WhileAs the career ladder is being developed and implemented, Maryland needs to systematically phase-in salary increases for teachers (above and beyond cost of living adjustments) over the next 4 or 5 years in order to stem the decline in teacher recruitment and retention and to begin reducing the gap between compensation levels for teachers and other professions requiring comparable levels of education. Of note, Teacher compensation in Maryland is below the average salaries in two of the three states used by the Commission in its benchmarking work.

a. During the phase-in period for the career ladder and while Maryland is developing and implementing an increase in certification standards, average salaries of Maryland teachers should be brought to the average of the two comparison states, New Jersey and Massachusetts, whose demographics and economy most resemble Maryland.

5. Maryland should identify and implement best practices to attract a diverse pool of teachers. The following could be evaluated for effectiveness:

a. Providing child care incentives to teachers, which in combination with a higher salary (BB6), could prevent teachers from stopping out of the profession when they have children of their own

b. Providing incentives such as statewide property tax abatement or home mortgage assistance

c. Expand current tuition remission or discounts available to children of higher education employees.

d. Recruiting future teachers who attended primary and secondary school in that school system should be encouraged as a way to lower teacher attrition rates

The Organization of Teachers' Work

The career ladders in the top performing jurisdictions are organized to support a very different form of work organization in the school, much more like that found in professional service practices such as law firms, engineering firms or universities than the form of work organization typically found in the typical American school. American teachers are expected to spend more time facing students in the classroom than teachers in any other industrialized country. By

contrast, in many top performing countries, teachers are in front of a class teaching for about 40 percent of their time at work. Most of the rest of their time is spent in teams working to systematically improve their lessons and the way they do formative assessment, work together to come up with effective strategies for individual students who are falling behind, tutoring students who need intensive help, observing and critiquing new teachers, observing other teachers to improve their own practice, doing research related to solving problems in the school and writing articles based on their research. The career ladders in these countries have structured the roles available to teachers as they move up the career ladder to support the form of work organization just described. There is no state in the United States that has thus far implemented policies designed to support the form of work organization just described.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4-6. Maryland needs to change the way its schools are organized and managed to make them more effective and to create a more professional environment for teaching, which the career ladder is designed to facilitate and support
- a. The state should phase-in a reduction of the maximum time, currently 70 to 80%, that teachers are expected to teach in a typical week. This would give teachers more time to work as professionals in collaboration, as is the case for teachers in countries with high performing systems, to improve the curriculum, instructional delivery, and tutor students with special needs. The magnitude of the reduction in teachers' class time and the cost of implementation requires further study by the Commission in the coming months.
 - b. In order to effectively use this additional collaborative time and the new organization of schools, teachers should receive training on the Commission's recommendations and the best uses of collaborative time to build professional learning communities. As these communities develop and more decision making is moved from the central administration to the schools, more school leadership roles will be created, which will provide more opportunities for greater roles and responsibilities for teachers moving up the career ladder. This training should be a high priority for implementation.

Support for New Teachers

Ontario, Shanghai and Singapore have well-developed systems to induct new teachers into the teaching profession. They are tightly structured and monitored: mentors are recruited, selected through an interview process, trained and evaluated. Maryland has an induction coordinator for each school district and the state provides orientation training for all new mentors, but, as in Massachusetts and New Jersey, mentors are self-selected and receive minimal ongoing training at the discretion of local districts. New Hampshire leaves the decision of whether to implement a program to the districts.

The 2016 Maryland Teacher Induction, Retention and Advancement Act (TIRA) established a stakeholder group to develop recommendations for strengthening teacher induction in the State. The TIRA stakeholder group built on the work of the P–20 Council’s Task Force on Teacher Education, which made numerous recommendations to improve teacher preparation and induction programs in 2015. The TIRA recommendations include: integrating mentoring during the teacher training practicum with mentorship during induction and establishing formal qualifications for mentor teachers such as tenure, five years of teaching experience, and highly effective ratings on teacher evaluation and principal recommendations. These recommendations represent a good starting point for developing a high performance system for making mentoring new teachers an integral part of the new career ladder system.

Another promising model also exists in Maryland. Known as the Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR), Montgomery County Public Schools has successfully implemented this collaborative partnership between the school system and the teachers’ union for over 20 years to use successful teachers, known as consulting teachers, to mentor and develop new teachers in the profession. Under PAR, consulting teachers also observe and provide feedback to existing teachers about their performance and best practices in the field, a practice used in the top professions. Consulting teachers are given release time from their classroom duties to give their full attention to reviewing and assisting both new teachers and teachers-at-risk.

Helping Teachers to Continually Improve Their Practice

In Shanghai, teachers are required to take 120 hours of professional development during their first year and 240 hours every five years after that. Senior-level teachers are required to take 540 hours every five years. In Singapore, all teachers are required to have 100 hours of professional development each year. In Ontario, it is the equivalent of Shanghai at 6 days per year, while Finland allows local municipalities and schools flexibility to allocate time for professional development as they see fit.

Maryland sets professional development requirements for teachers who must earn an “advanced teaching credential” to continue teaching after five years of teaching by taking 36 hours of professional development, including 21 hours of graduate credit, earning a master’s degree in education or earning a certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards along with 12 hours of graduate work. After earning this advanced credential, Maryland teachers must be recertified every five years, which requires taking at least six credit hours. Massachusetts and New Hampshire require 100 hours and 75 hours of professional development every three years for recertification. New Jersey only requires 20 hours of professional development for a one-time recertification of a provisional license, with no additional requirements. Like the benchmark states, Maryland generally leaves provision of professional development to districts. The research shows that requirements for specified amounts of professional development of the usual sort, including requiring Masters degrees, acquiring certificates, taking courses or earning credits by taking workshops, have little or no effect on the performance of the students who are involved in this kind of professional

development. Only when these forms of professional development are used to supplement professional development that is embedded in the work that teachers do as they participate in teams that work to systematically improve student performance does professional development make a real difference in student performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Maryland must strengthen its teacher induction systems. As part of its policies establishing the career ladder system, Maryland should require that the career ladders include as part of the responsibility of senior teachers the responsibility to mentor new teachers and experienced teachers who need help; as part of the policies established to implement new forms of work organization, these mentor teachers should be given enough time with their mentees to provide the guidance and support they will need to succeed in their initial years in teaching.

~~5.~~ The IHE–LEA collaboratives recommended in BB #5 should include teacher inductions systems for new teachers integrated with their teacher preparation program. An excellent starting point for a new induction system is the Teacher Induction and Retention Program (TIRA), modeled on Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR), which should be scaled up across the State as quickly as possible, recognizing the challenges of economies of scale in smaller school systems, evaluated on an ongoing basis, and integrated into the new career ladder system. The initial focus of enhanced induction programs should be new teachers in schools serving high concentrations of students living in poverty and expanding to all new teachers over time.

8.
~~6-9.~~ Maryland also needs to strengthen substantially its professional development policies and practices. At present, professional development in Maryland places too much emphasis on general and generic topical presentations and too little emphasis on advancing teachers' content knowledge and instructional effectiveness. The \$seed funds mentioned in Building Block #5 should include ~~be committed for~~ collaborative partnerships between universities and LEAs to create rigorous professional development programs focused on teacher's pedagogical capacity and content knowledge. Once developed these model programs should be scaled up across the State.