
POLICY MATTERS OHIO

CLEVELAND: 3631 PERKINS AVENUE SUITE 4C - EAST • CLEVELAND, OHIO, 44114 • TEL: 216/361-9801 • FAX: 216/361-9810
COLUMBUS: 1372 GRANDVIEW AVE. SUITE 242 • COLUMBUS, OHIO, 43212 • TEL: 614/486-4601 • FAX: 614/486-4603
[HTTP://WWW.POLICYMATTERSOHIO.ORG](http://www.policymattersohio.org)

For immediate release Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Contact: Piet van Lier, 216-361-9801

Full report available at <http://www.policymattersohio.org/LearningFromOhiosBest.htm>

Homegrown model for teacher development can improve teaching and learning Ohio can learn from its best educators

In 1981, a groundbreaking Toledo program commonly known as Peer Assistance and Review created a model for teacher support and development that has fostered new relationships among teachers and administrators. Columbus and Cincinnati followed with their own programs. Since then, about 70 districts nationally have put similar efforts in place, often laying the foundation for other ways to improve teaching and learning.

These programs release experienced, qualified teachers from classroom duties to help new teachers and struggling veteran teachers develop and improve their skills. These mentors also evaluate their peers and recommend dismissal if they don't make the grade.

This study by Policy Matters Ohio seeks to bring Peer Assistance and Review, or PAR, to the attention of state policymakers and other stakeholders. This model is particularly relevant as the administration of Gov. Ted Strickland focuses its attention on improving Ohio's public education system; in his state of the state speech this year, the Governor highlighted the need to learn from Ohio's best teachers, those who know "what works best in the classroom." PAR, with its reliance on teacher leaders, provides just this opportunity.

Policy Matters recommends that the Strickland administration and the Ohio Department of Education develop a pilot program to begin to expand PAR statewide.

"The timing is right for such an effort," says Piet van Lier, Policy Matters senior researcher and author of the report. "There is a broad consensus that effective support for teachers is an essential component of improved teaching and learning. Peer Assistance and Review can be part of the solution."

Research suggests that strong teacher support programs like PAR, especially in a teacher's first two years in the classroom, can reduce turnover, boost student achievement, and save districts money. Absent such intervention nearly a third of new public school teachers change schools or leave teaching after their first year according to a 2004 study. When teachers do leave, costs for recruitment and retraining can reach as high as \$18,000 per teacher.

Policy Matters recommends that teacher training efforts use high-performing veteran teachers to conduct the training; include evaluation and procedures for dismissal; provide targeted training; be governed cooperatively by administrators and union leaders; and set the stage for further collaborations to improve teaching and learning.

Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan Ohio-based research institute dedicated to promoting policies and programs that work for all.

