



# Strengthening School Staffing in Minneapolis Public Schools

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The New Teacher Project | May 2009



# Agenda

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**Background**

Findings

Recommendations

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## About The New Teacher Project






**The New Teacher Project (TNTP)** is a national non-profit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by ensuring that poor and minority students get outstanding teachers.

Our work centers on recruiting and retaining the best talent for the classroom and ensuring that teachers have the environments that allow them to do their best work.

These goals are dependent on a continuum of policies, processes, systems, and services that have a real daily impact on teachers and principals.

The purpose of this analysis is to increase the alignment of these systems to the ultimate goal of excellent instruction in every classroom.

Our inquiry centers around **fundamental questions**, such as:

-  Is the district recruiting teachers effectively?
-  Do placement processes facilitate strong, lasting matches between teachers and schools?
-  Are schools creating effective instructional teams through the staffing process?
-  Does the district have reliable mechanisms for evaluating and improving teacher performance?
-  Is the district retaining its best teachers?



## Methodology

In the fall of 2008, TNTP partnered with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation For Children to analyze a variety of the district's policies and practices and make recommendations to increase the concentration of high-quality teachers in MPS schools.

A range of human capital topics were explored, including:

- Teacher recruitment, hiring, and staffing processes
- Teacher and principal evaluation processes
- Teacher and principal pipelines
- Teacher retention

TNTP conducted its analysis through four primary methods:

- 1 Analysis of relevant policy documents**, including the MPS-MFT collective bargaining agreement, appropriate memoranda of agreement, and the principals contract.
- 2 Stakeholder interviews** with district administrators, HR staff, principals, teachers, and union leadership.
- 3 District transaction data** for teachers and school administrators, including records on hiring, transfers, excesses, layoffs, releases, recalls, leaves and separations.
- 4 Survey data** collected from district principals, asst. principals, teachers, and recent applicants for teaching and school leadership positions. Surveys yielded a 75% teacher response rate and 93% administrator response rate.\*

\*Response rate was 100% for principals, 81% for asst. principals.



## Summary of Findings

- 1 MPS operates in an increasingly challenging and competitive environment; the district is experiencing dramatically declining student enrollment and **significant instability for teachers and schools.**
- 2 MPS' current staffing rules for managing a system-wide contraction **exacerbate the district's workforce instability and do not allow for the consideration of quality** in staffing decisions.
- 3 MPS is currently unable to use instructional performance to inform critical decisions because the **current system fails to help schools manage instructional quality effectively.**
- 4 While MPS has employed a variety of staffing models that provide a range of discretion to teachers and schools in making placement decisions, teachers and principals prefer **mutual consent options.**



**MPS must change dramatically to remain sustainable as a district and viable for Minneapolis families. Staffing decisions are critical levers to creating stability for schools and retaining the best teachers.**



## Finding #1

Background

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# #1

**MPS operates in a challenging and competitive environment; the district is experiencing dramatically declining student enrollment and significant instability for teachers and schools.**

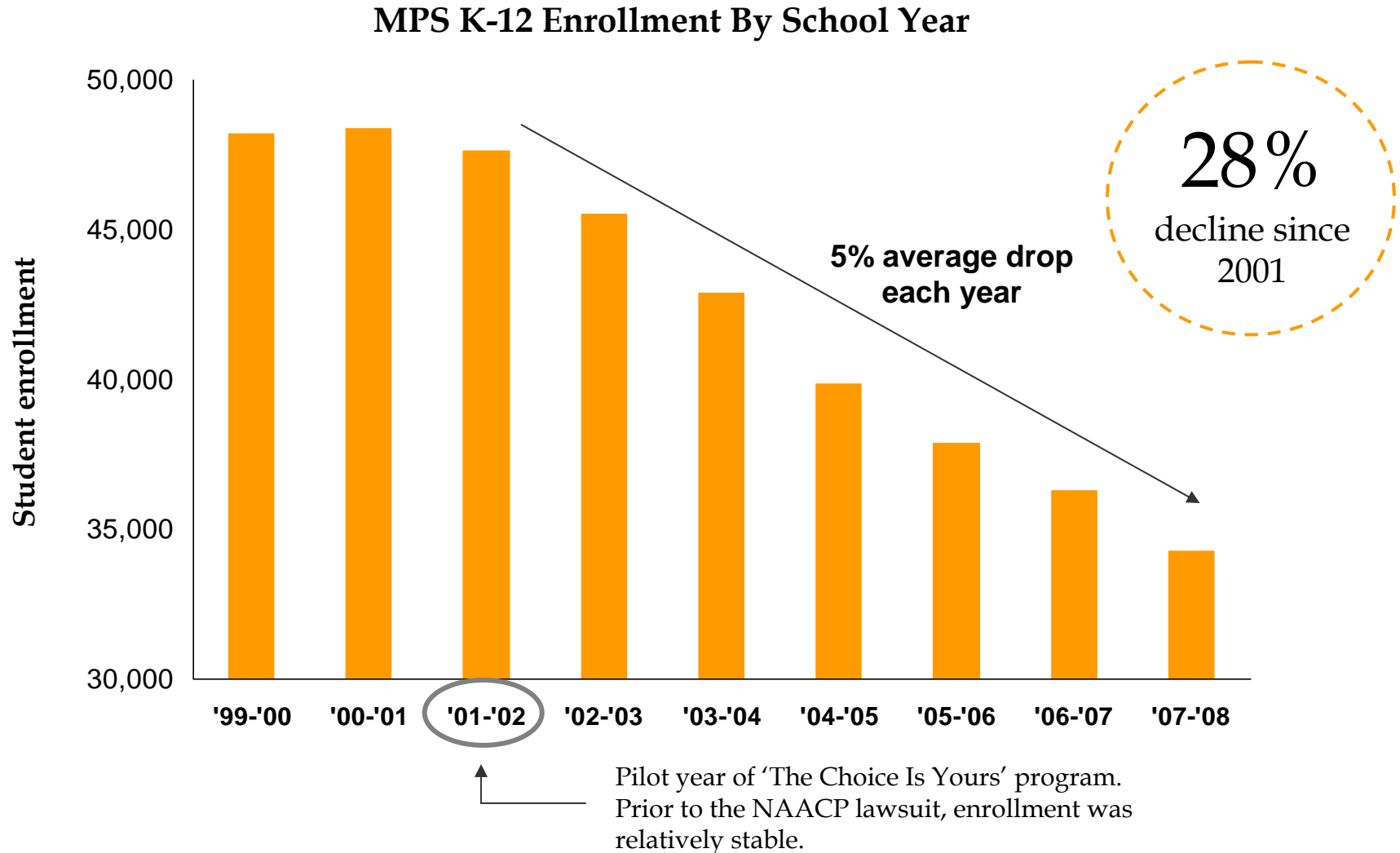


## MPS must compete for students in the face of statewide open enrollment policies and expansive charter laws.

- Minnesota state law grants all students the opportunity to apply to public schools outside their district of residence.
  - In 2001, a successful NAACP lawsuit led to the creation of The Choice Is Yours program, requiring transportation be given to low-income Minneapolis students to facilitate use of the open enrollment policy in all city and neighboring suburban schools.
- Minnesota has been at the forefront of the **charter school movement**, passing the nation's first charter school legislation and opening the first charter school in the early 1990s.
  - Minnesota law enables multiple authorizing agencies to grant charters, including school districts and independent bodies, allowing for **rapid charter development**.
  - Of the 143 charter schools operating in Minnesota, 66 (46 percent) are in Minneapolis/St Paul.

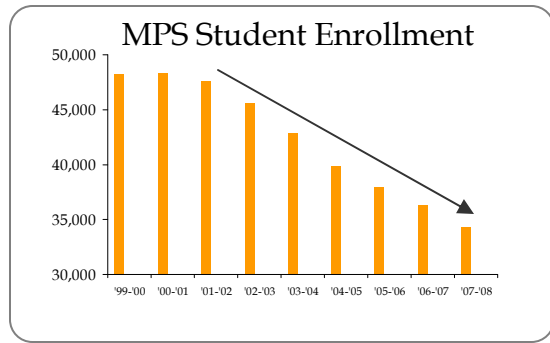


Confronted with competition for students, MPS has not yet been able to reverse a decade-long trend of declining student enrollment.

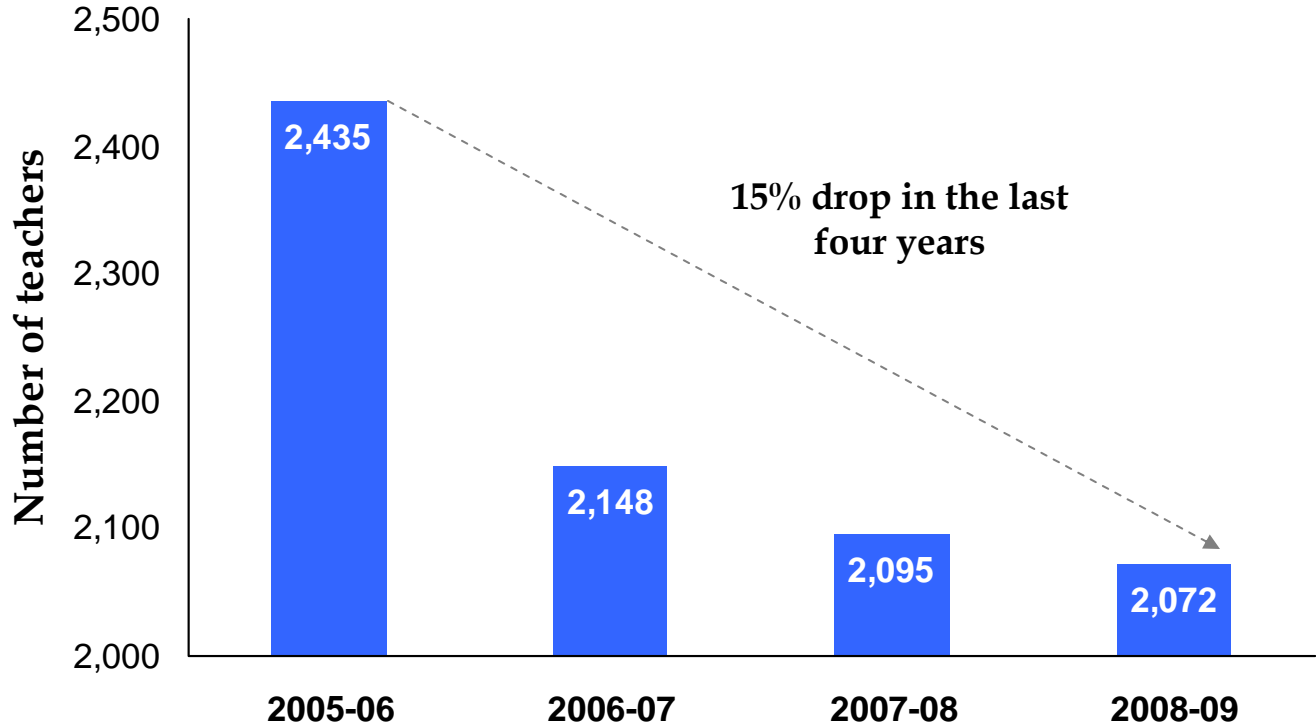




As a result, the MPS teacher workforce has also decreased in size.



### Classroom Teachers in MPS





## External volatility has driven significant internal instability for MPS teachers and schools.

On average, over the last two years in MPS...

7%

of the district's teaching force has been **laid off or released** each year.

17%

of the teaching force has **transferred** to a different school each year.

15%

of the teaching force has **gone on leave** each year.

16%

of the teaching force has been **excessed** each year. In addition, 24 percent of those teachers were **excessed again** the following year.

21%

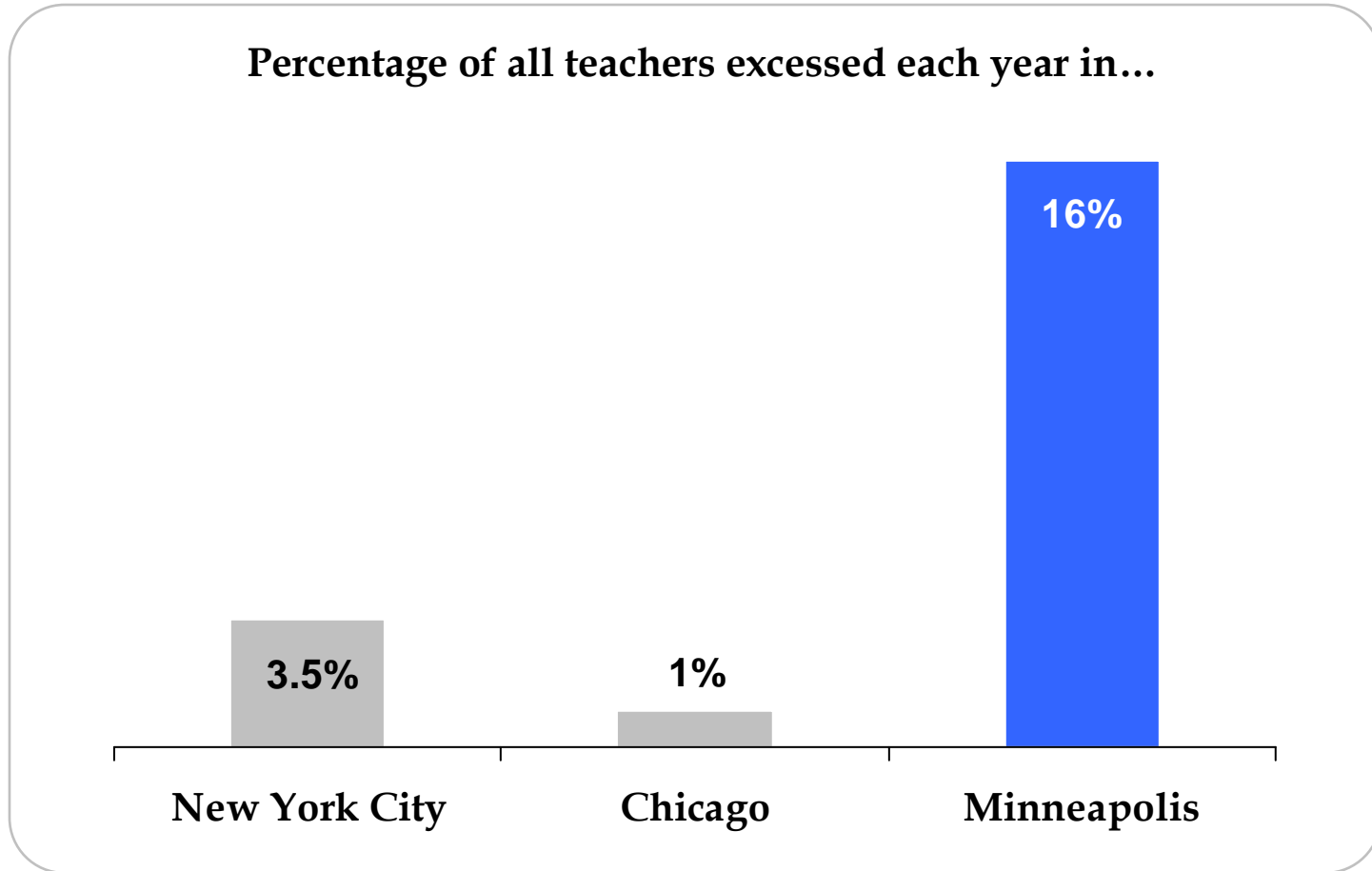
Average\* **annual turnover** in MPS schools over the last three years

51%

**Highest average annual turnover** for an individual MPS school over the last three years\*\*



In comparison, other urban school districts experience significantly less movement among their teaching force each year.



Note: NYC data from 2008 calendar year, Chicago from 2006-07 school year, Minneapolis from 2007-08 school year.



Unlike in other urban districts, almost every principal in MPS has lost a teacher due to layoff or excess whom the school wanted to keep.

Have you ever lost a teacher to layoff whom you wanted to keep?

98%

Urban district 1

51%

Have you ever lost a teacher to excess whom you wanted to keep?

93%

Urban district 2

48%

Urban district 3

57%

\*Comparison districts were asked: "Have you ever lost a teacher to consolidation (or displacement/reassignment) or layoff whom you wanted to keep at your school?"

\*\*Urban districts 1 and 2 were asked question on 4-point scale. These percentages reflect the top-2 responses, "frequently" and "sometimes."

MPS Source: TNTP survey conducted in December 2008 of 59 MPS principals.

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Additionally, the teachers whom MPS is losing to layoff appear to be high-quality teachers who positively affect their schools.

**Half of all MPS teachers report knowing five or more teachers who have left the district as a result of layoffs.**

**84%**

of teachers agree or strongly agree that the teachers lost to layoff were of high quality.

**72%**

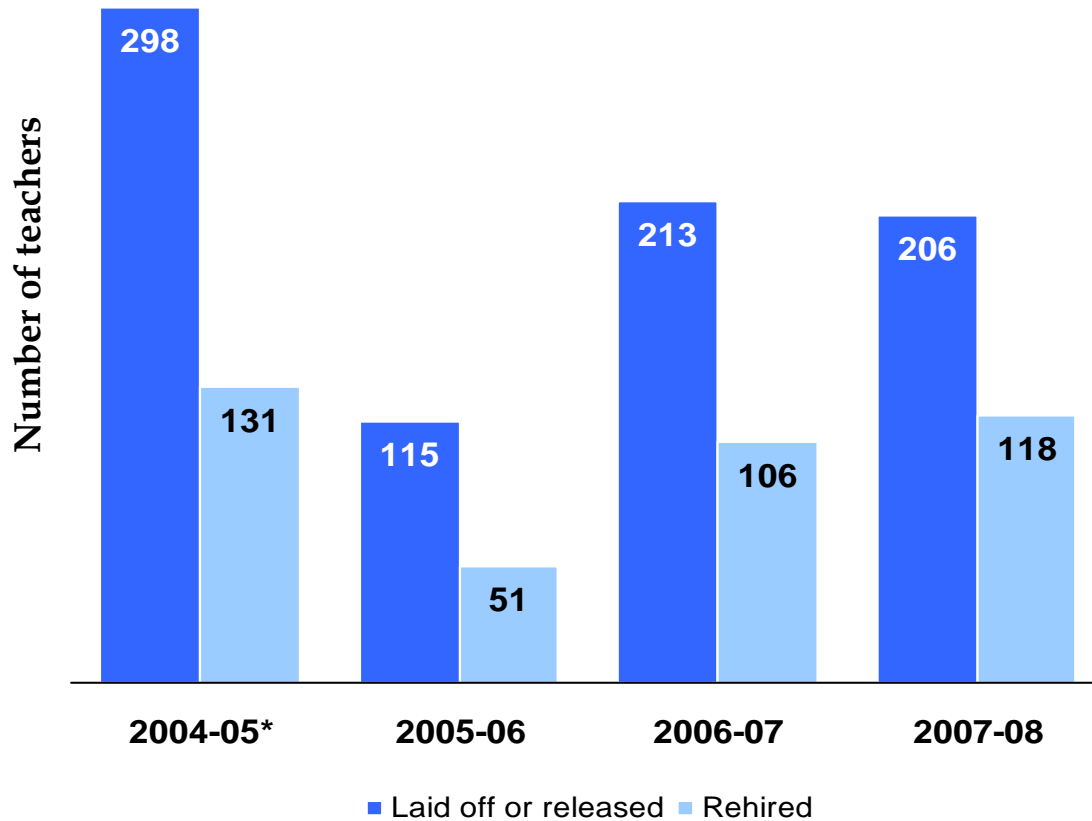
of teachers agree or strongly agree that the teachers lost to layoff were integral to the effectiveness of the school's teaching team.

Source: TNTP survey on working conditions conducted in April 2009 of 2,930 MPS teachers and staff. Response rate was 78%.



The sheer volume of movement is intensified by the large number of teachers who are laid off but later recalled each year.

**MPS Teachers Laid Off or Released and Rehired Each Year**



**49%**

of teachers, on average, are laid off or released then rehired.

Of these, **52 percent** return to teach in a different school from the one where they were laid off or released, **further increasing instability.**

\*2004-05 and 2005-06 data is for probationary releases ONLY. No layoff data available for these years.

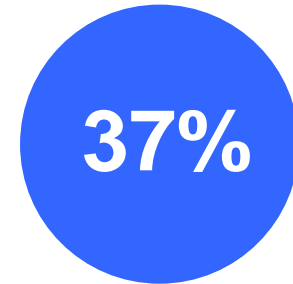


## Teacher workforce instability is damaging individual schools across the district.

On average, 1.7 teachers have filled each school position over the last four years.

For example:

- o At one elementary school in central Minneapolis with an average of 50 positions, 96 teachers have filled those positions.
- o At one middle school in north Minneapolis with an average of 33 positions, 68 teachers have filled those positions.
- o At one large high school in south Minneapolis with an average of 101 positions, 145 teachers have filled those positions.



of teachers in the last four years have **changed schools** at least once.\*

**Teacher instability is a systemwide issue, affecting both high- and low-poverty schools across MPS.**

\*Pool includes only those teachers who have taught in MPS every year for the last four years.



Schools are unable to build and maintain strong, stable instructional teams—and current layoff processes exacerbate the problem.

MPS principals who agree or strongly agree that they are able to...

...maintain the stability of their staff during the layoff process



...maintain a strong instructional team during the layoff process



“We need to try to have more stable school sites for our students. I have moved every year for the past 6 years. I'm tired of having to move. **It's not what's best for kids or teachers.**”

“I was part of a very successful teaching team for 6 years until being laid off, then bouncing from school to school to school for the past 4 years. **It does not make for good teaching or learning.**”

“I've worked for MPS for 11 years and I've been at 8 schools. **How does that benefit students and their families when teachers are changed so often?**”

“I have never had a choice for the school where I have taught since **I have been laid off every year...** Never knowing until right before school begins (or later)...puts me at a real disadvantage.”

Note: All quotes from MPS teacher survey.

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## School administrator positions are also highly unstable.

### Principals

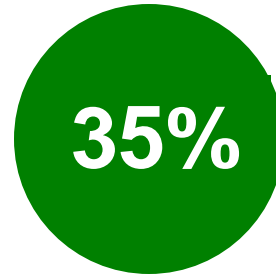


of all MPS principals transfer schools each year\*

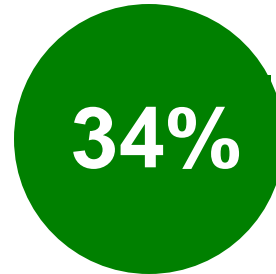


of transferring principals transfer again the next year\*\*

### Assistant Principals



of all MPS assistant principals transfer schools each year\*



of transferring assistant principals transfer again the next year\*\*

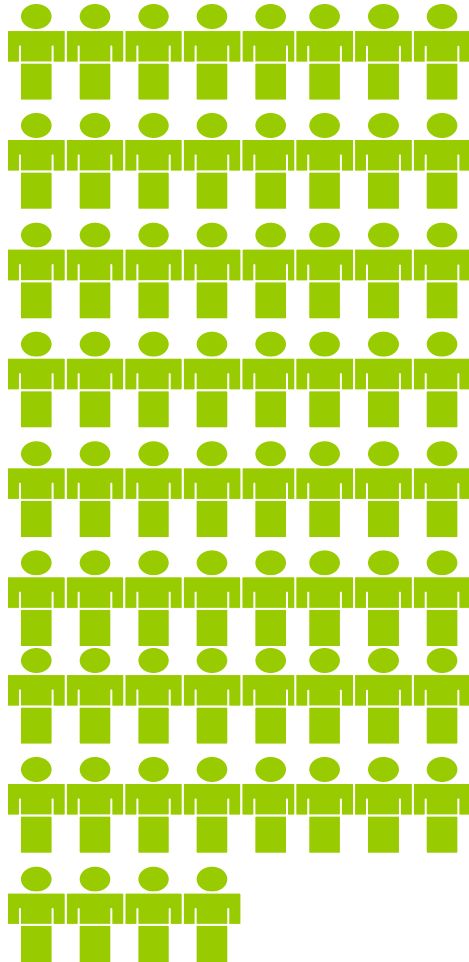
\*Average rate over school years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08.

\*\*Average rate over school years 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07.

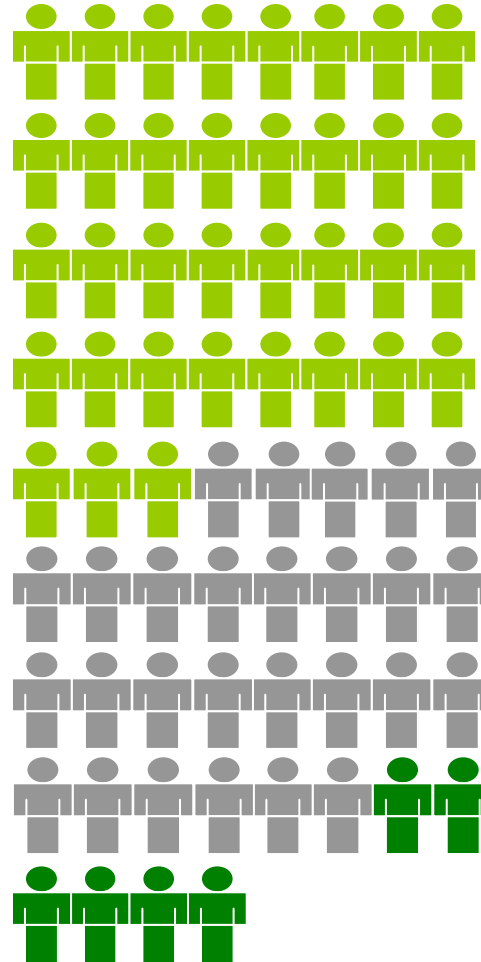


## In addition, MPS has a relatively high rate of principal attrition.

Of the 68 principals in MPS in 2004-05...



...just 54 percent are still principals in MPS today.



**Average principal attrition each year\***

37 percent of the original group have left the district

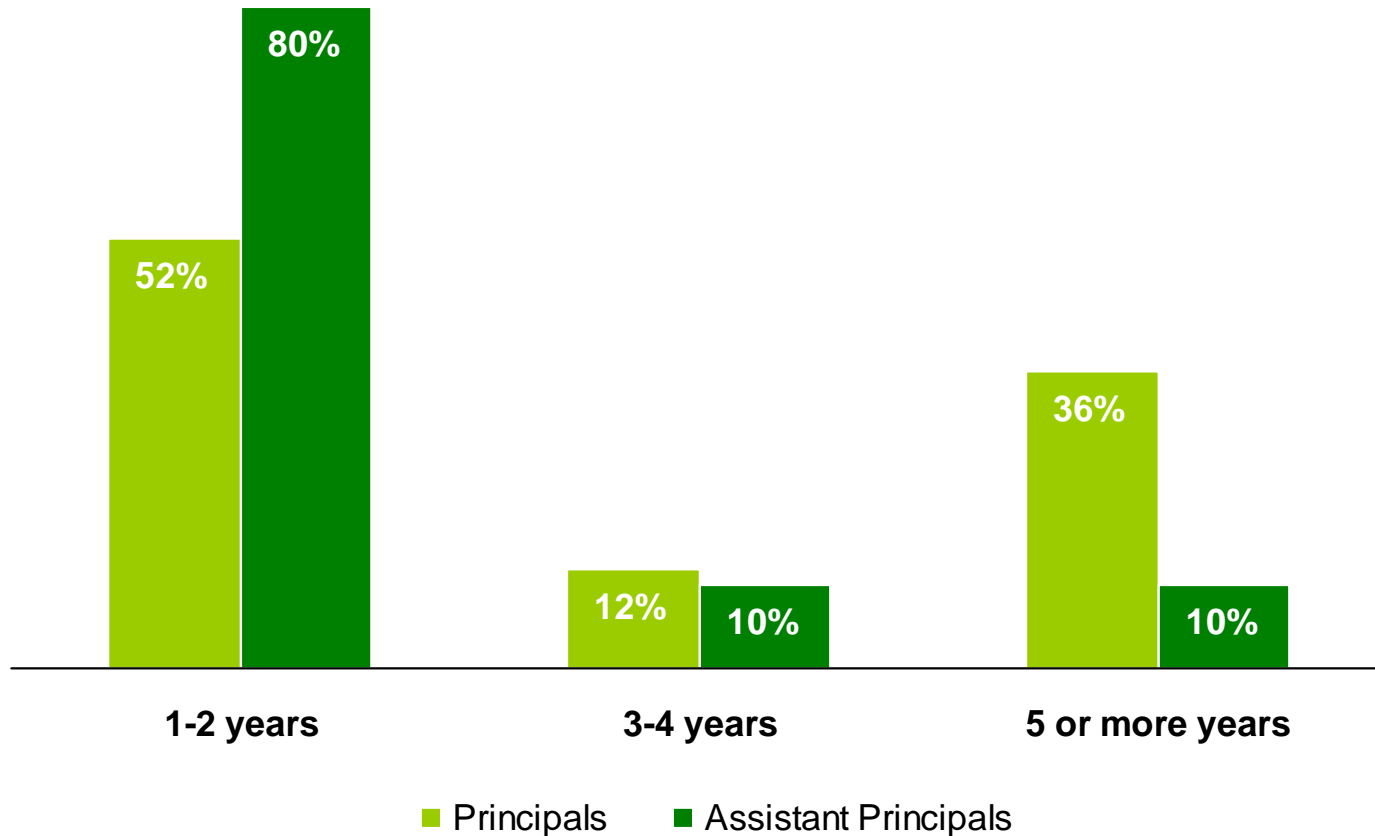
9 percent are serving as APs or are on special assignment

\*Average rate over school years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08.



Individual schools experience the negative effects of administrator instability; most principals/APs have been at their schools fewer than five years.

Principal and AP Length of Service at Current School





## Finding #2

Background

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# #2

**In the context of shrinking enrollment and systemwide instability, MPS staffing policies are particularly important. Current district staffing rules exacerbate the instability caused by contraction and do not consider quality when making staffing decisions.**



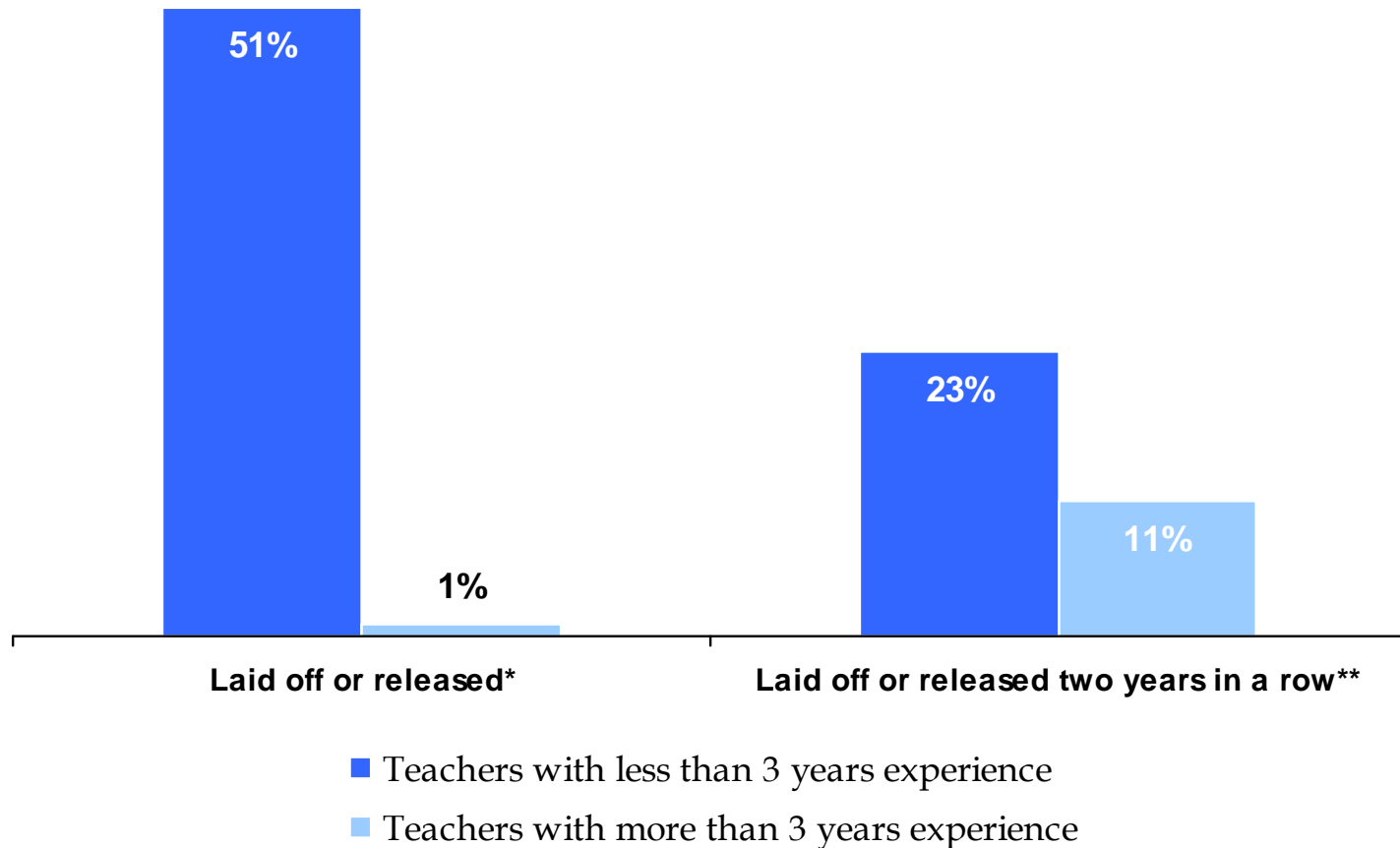
## MPS' current staffing rules primarily consider seniority and license area for employment and placement decisions.

Staffing Decision	Rules
<b>Excessing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on seniority within building, with the ability to take volunteers</li><li>• Occurs at the school level, primarily because of position or budget cuts</li></ul>
<b>Layoff/Release</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on district-wide seniority within subject areas (FTE taken into account as well)</li><li>• Probationary releases happen first, then tenured layoffs</li><li>• Layoff/release decisions centralized at the district level</li></ul>
<b>Tenured recall/ Probationary reappointment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recalls based on seniority within subject areas (FTE taken into account as well); laid off tenured teachers have first right of recall to vacancies or added positions in their subject area</li><li>• Reappointment of released probationary teachers occurs after tenured recalls are completed</li><li>• Principals can select the teachers they want to reappoint but cannot select the teachers they want to recall</li></ul>
<b>Realignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers who have an underlying certification area are moved from their current subject into their underlying area(s) as a strategy to reduce the number of layoffs</li><li>• Based on reverse seniority within underlying certification areas – the most senior teachers must move into areas of underlying certificates, regardless of desire or expertise</li><li>• Realignment decisions centralized at the district level</li></ul>
<b>Transfer (Bidding)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For excessed teachers, based on seniority within the subject area for which the teacher was excessed</li><li>• Site interview lists determined solely by seniority</li><li>• Bidding order determined by seniority, regardless of excess or voluntary transfer status</li></ul>



MPS staffing rules have left less senior teachers extremely vulnerable to losing their jobs, without regard to their teaching ability.

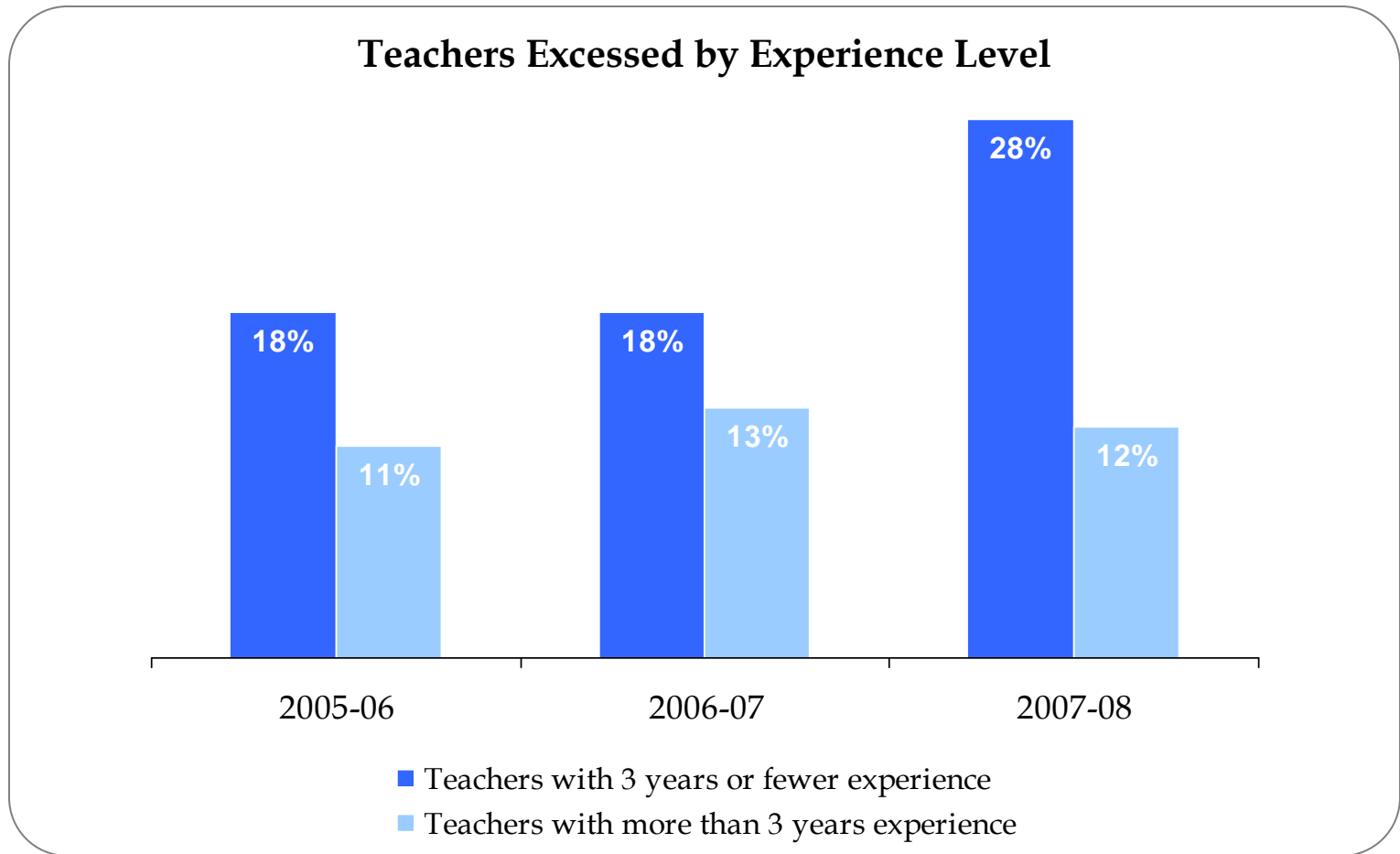
### Teachers Laid Off and Released, by Experience Level



\*Laid off or released in the summer of 2008. \*\*Laid off or released in the summer of 2007 and 2008.



For less senior teachers who are able to remain in the district, unstable placements and excessing are routine.

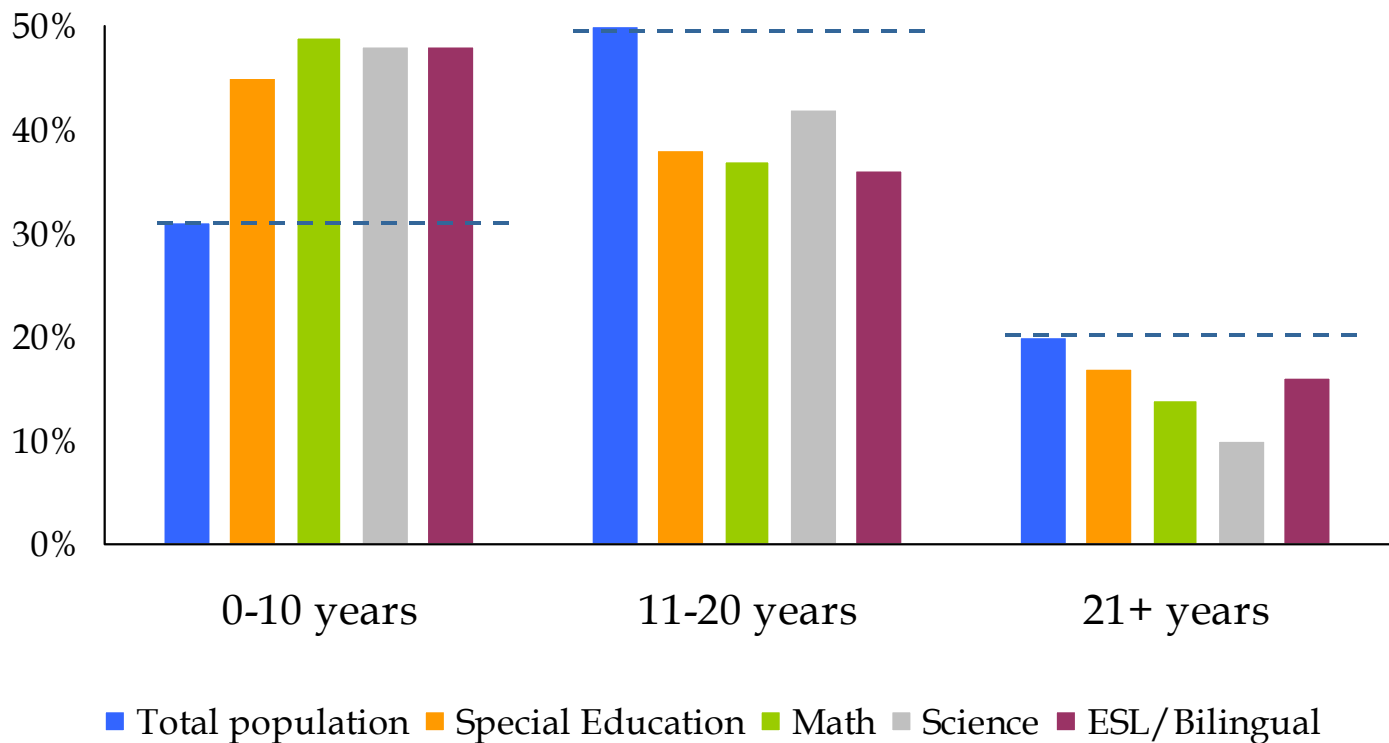


While teachers with fewer than 11 years of experience make up about **41 percent** of MPS teachers, they total **55 percent** of teachers who have been excessed over the last three years.



These less senior teachers are disproportionately more likely to be teaching high-need subject areas.

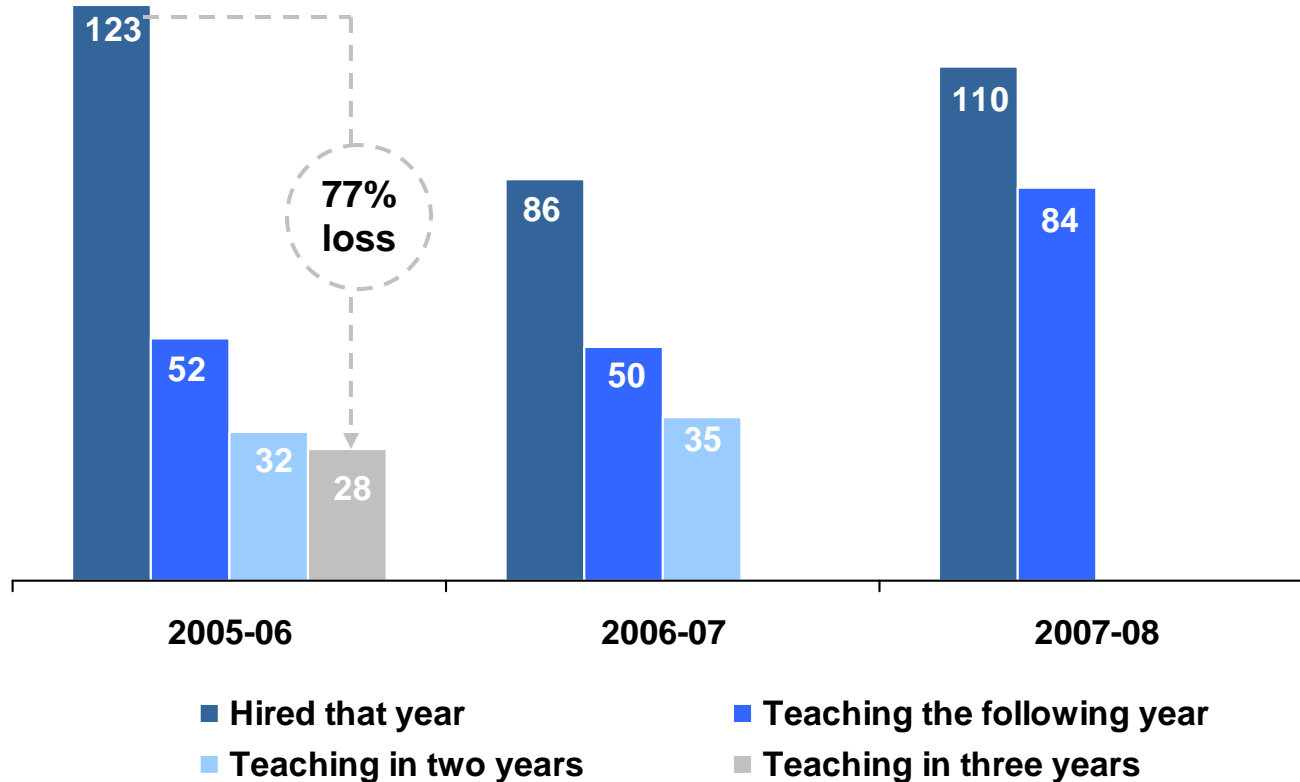
Distribution of Current MPS Teachers by Subject Area





In addition, MPS is unable to keep the vast majority of new teachers hired into the district each year.

New Hires Who Remain in MPS in Subsequent Years

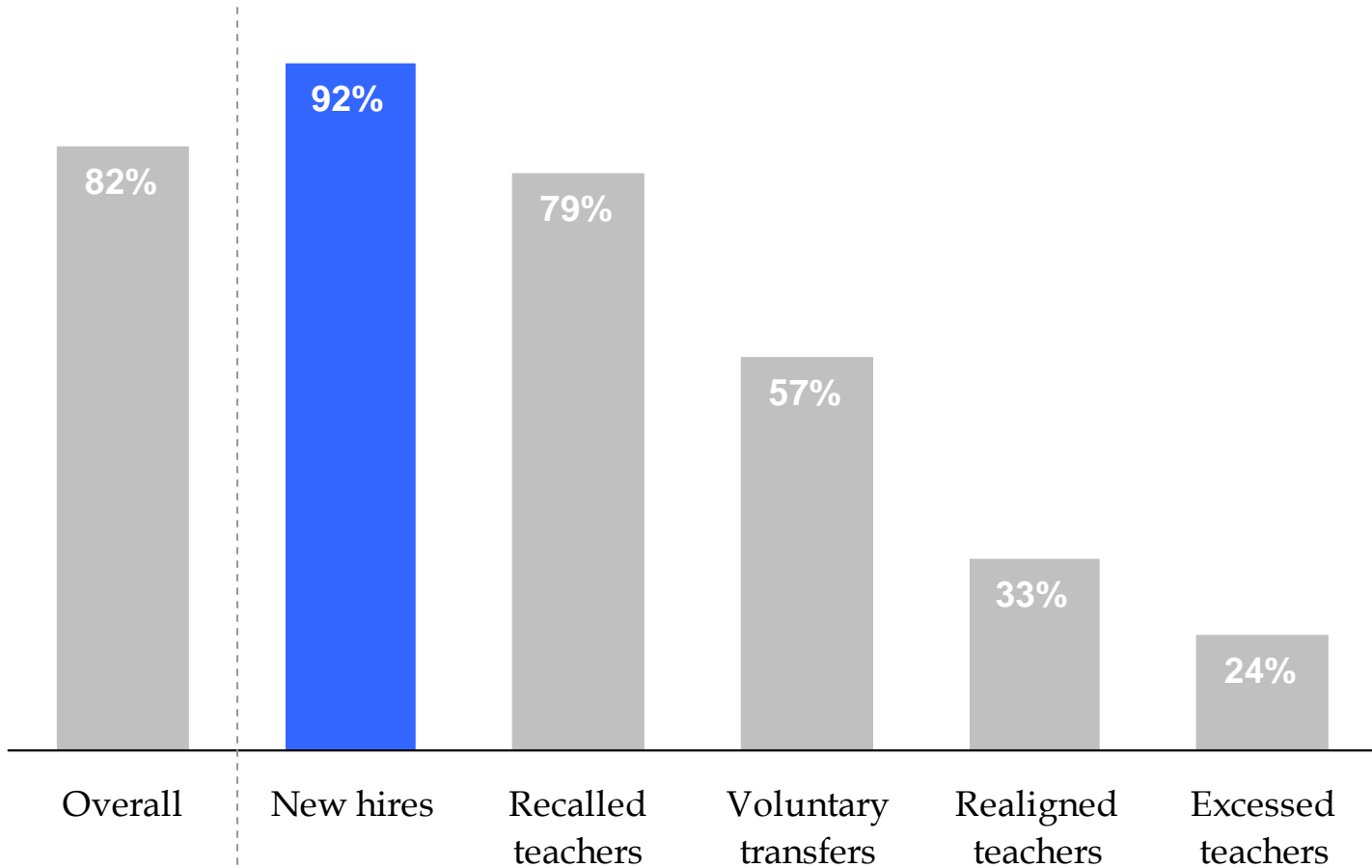


“There’s no way to protect new teachers. They **have no chance** of not getting laid off or bumped out.” -MPS HR recruitment team



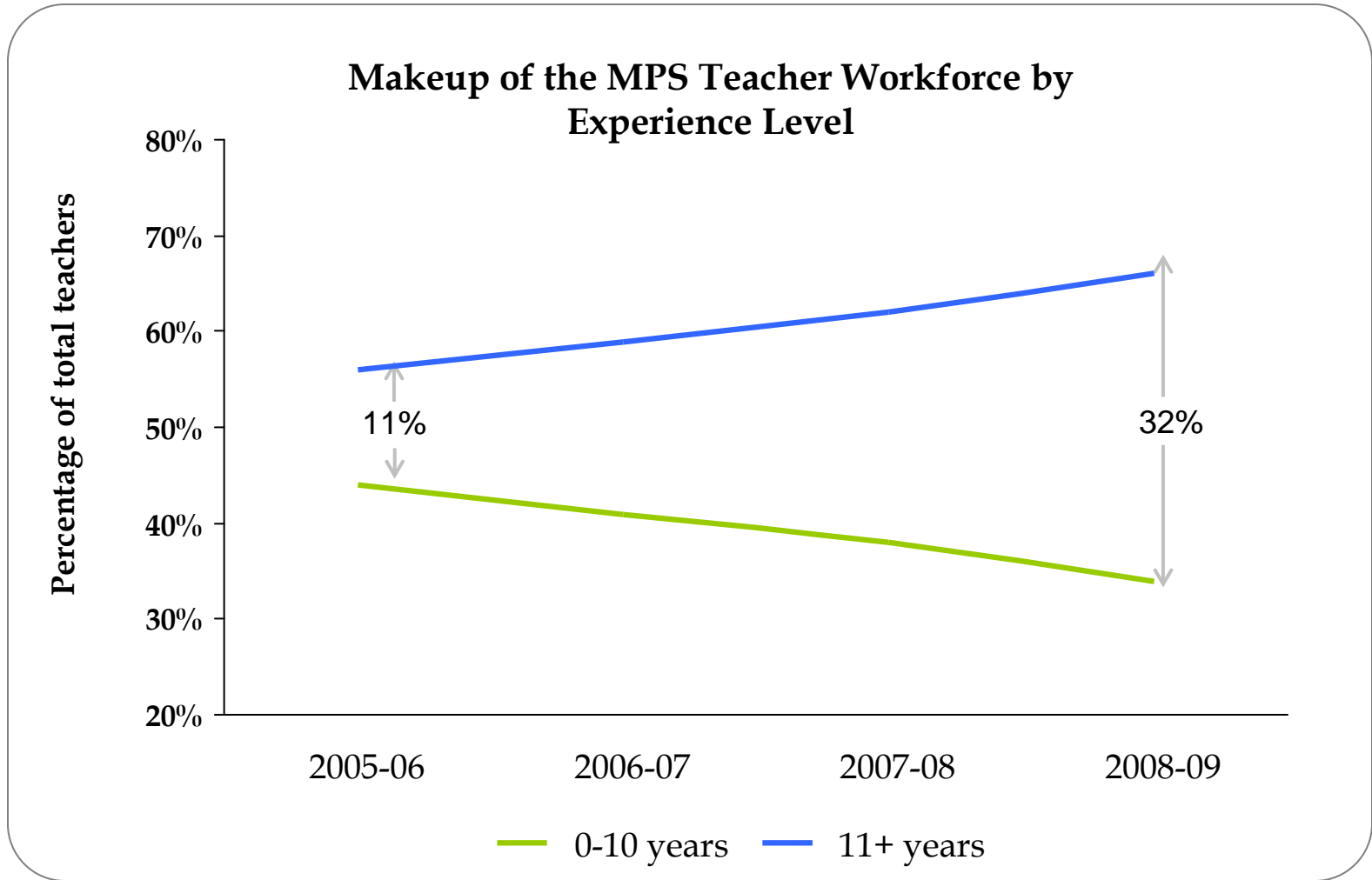
Principals are more satisfied with the quality of new hires than with any other hiring group.

Principal Satisfaction with the Quality of Teachers from Various Pools





The cumulative effect of these district staffing decisions is a 25 percent decline in the number of less senior teachers over the last four years.





## Finding #3

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# #3

**MPS is currently unable to use instructional performance to inform critical decisions because the current system fails to help schools manage instructional quality effectively.**



## MPS' teacher evaluation process is not consistently implemented but teachers and principals support a process that would achieve this.

At least two-thirds of teachers agree or strongly agree that:

**67%**

All teachers should be evaluated regularly.

**66%**

Evaluating all teachers regularly is an important aspect of building and maintaining a strong, effective teaching staff.

Almost all principals agree or strongly agree that:

**96%**

All teachers should be evaluated regularly.

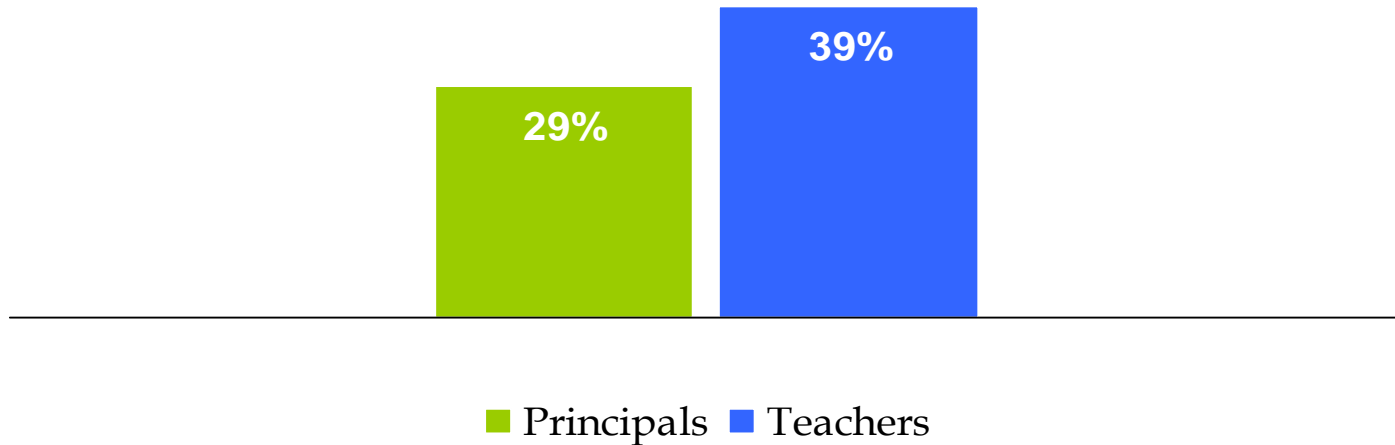
**98%**

Evaluating all teachers regularly is an important aspect of building and maintaining a strong instructional team.



Few teachers and principals are satisfied with the current processes used for teacher evaluation in MPS.

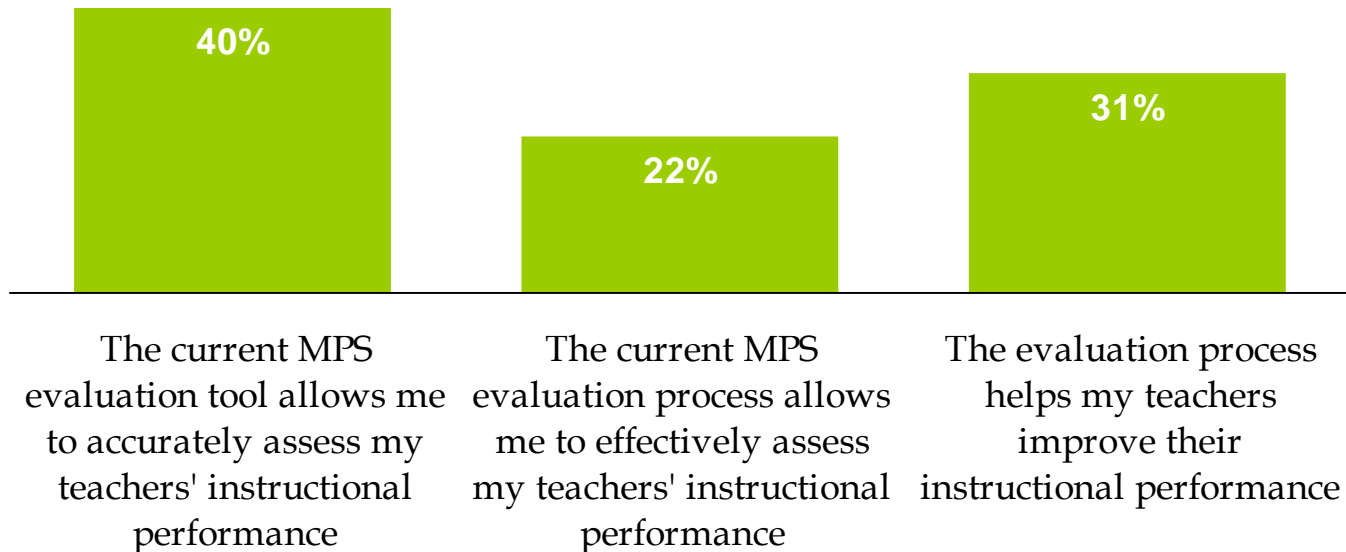
**“How satisfied are you with the evaluation system in your current school?”**





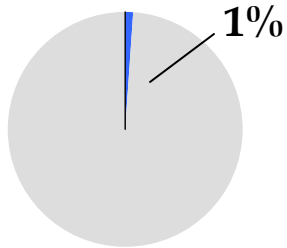
MPS principals also report that the current evaluation process is inadequate for supporting teachers' instructional growth.

Percent of principals who agree or strongly that...

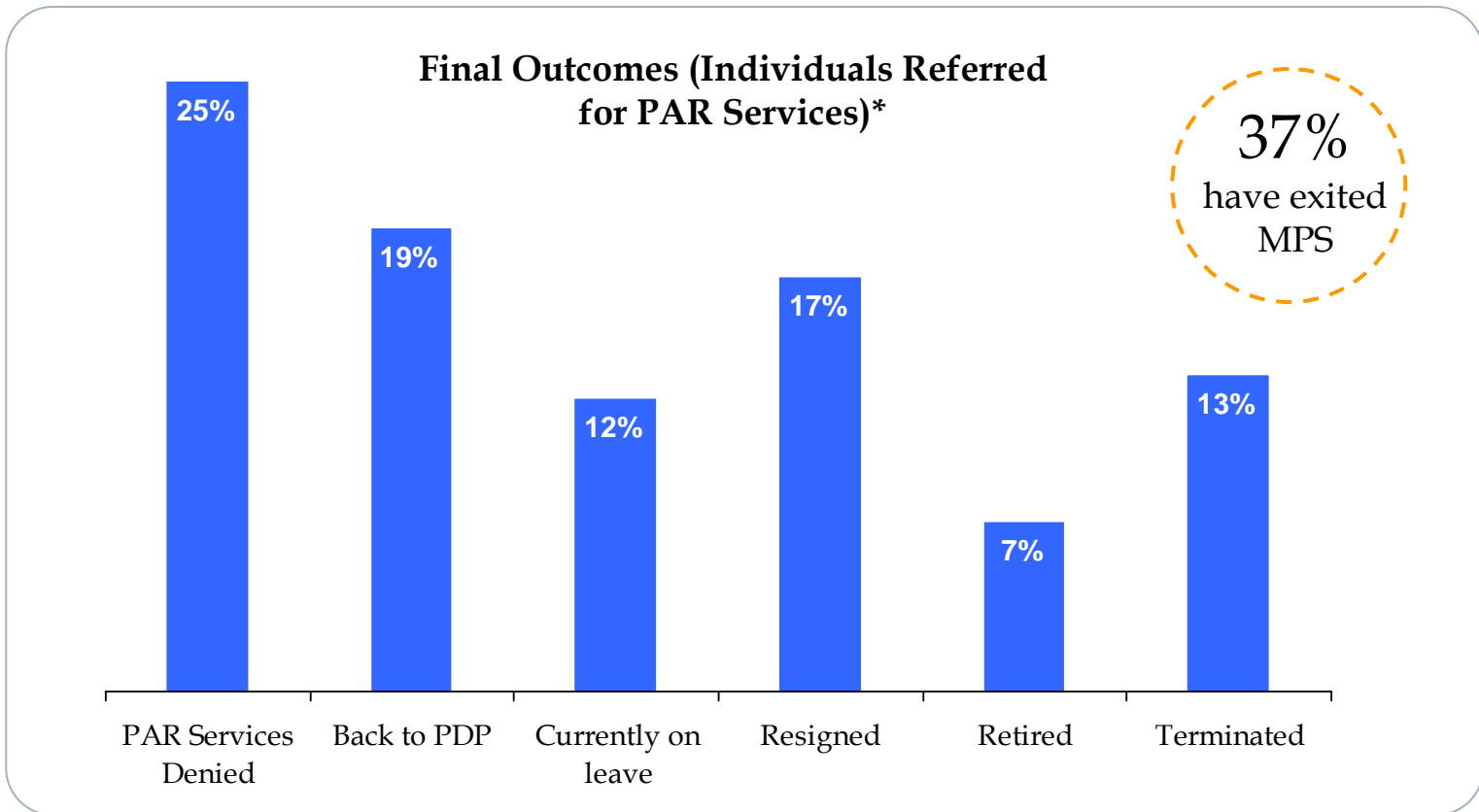




PAR rigorously addresses one component of a comprehensive assessment system, but has not yet been supported to reach all teachers.



1 percent of all tenured teachers have received/are receiving PAR services over the last four years (182 teachers).

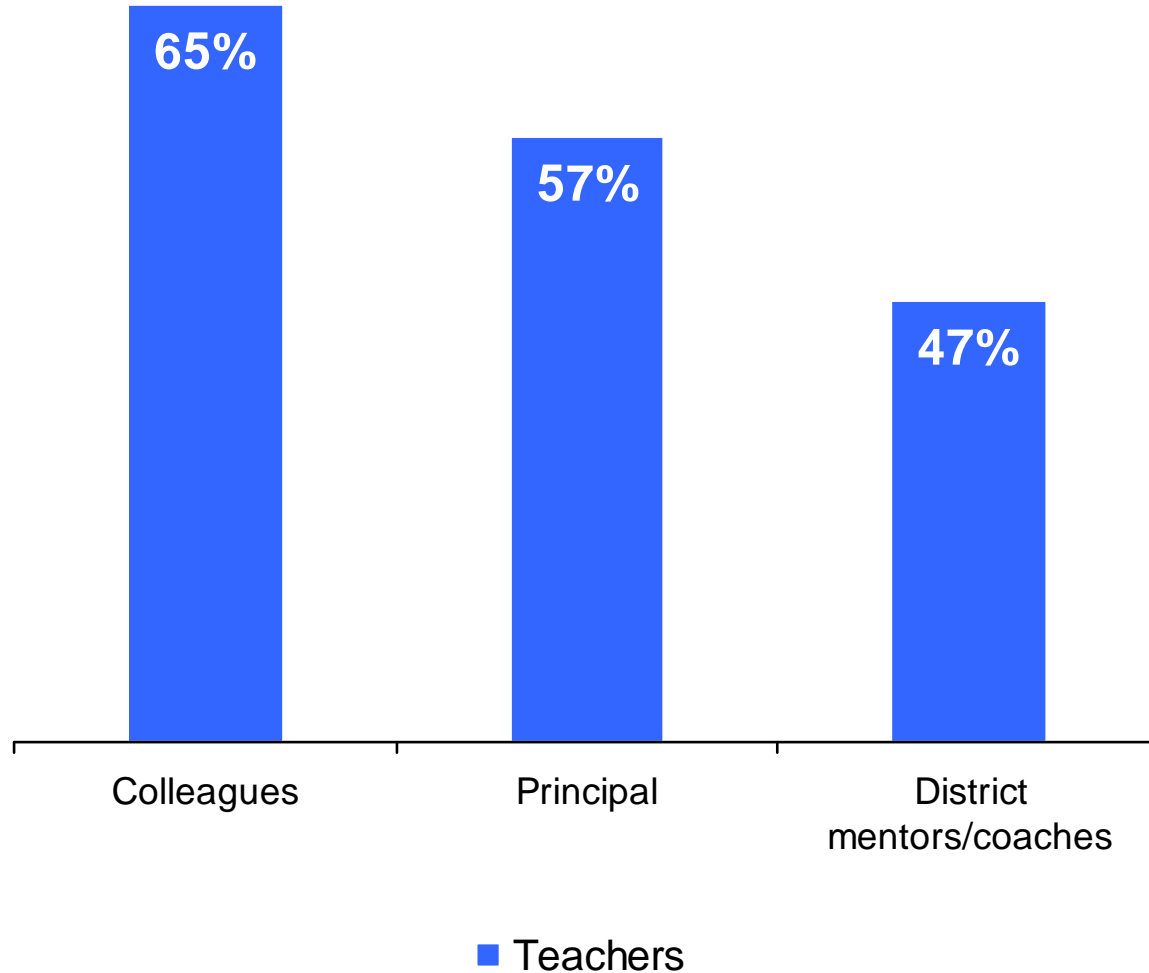


\*Does not include individuals with pending outcomes.



In general, teachers prefer to be evaluated by their colleagues, though most believe that principals can be viable evaluators.

Who, in your opinion, should conduct teacher evaluations?



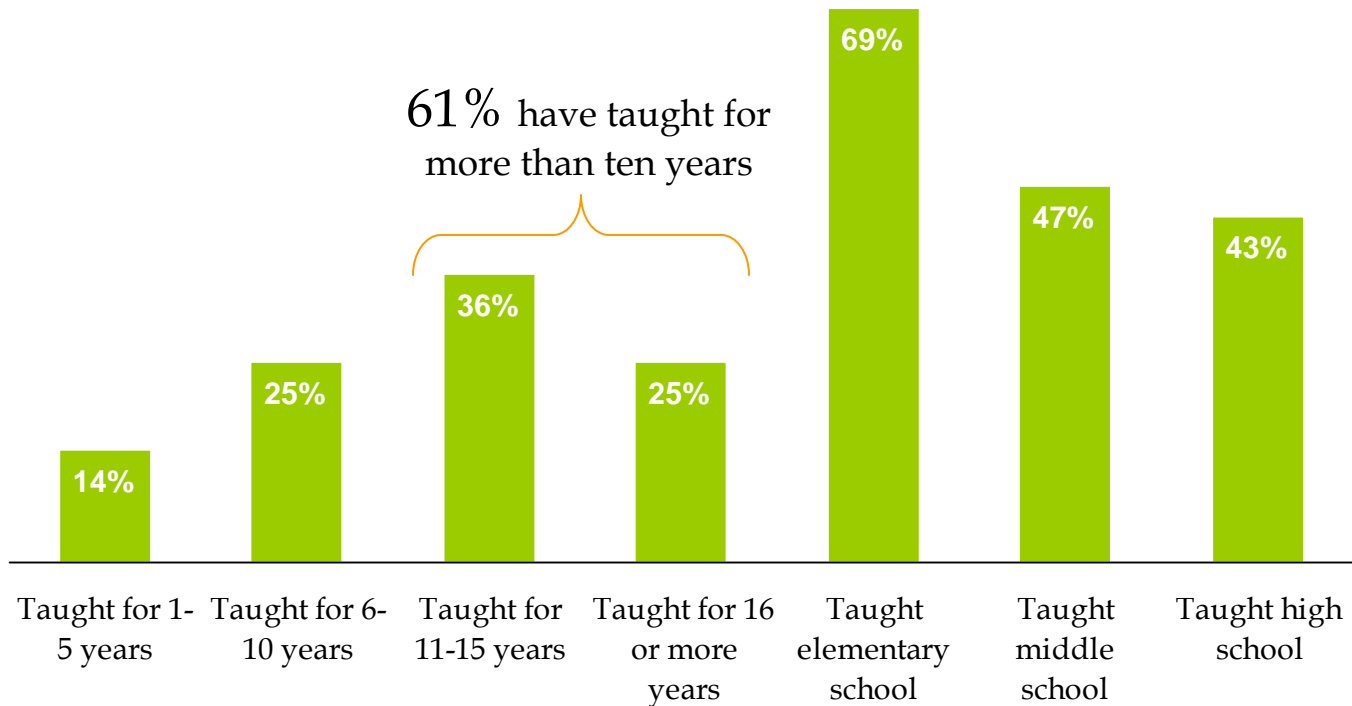


The majority of MPS principals do have significant classroom teaching experience.

86%

of MPS principals have classroom teaching experience

Principals' Classroom Teaching Experience





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Unfortunately, MPS principals are not as well trained or prepared to support their teachers instructionally as they should or want to be.

**88%** of principals believe their primary responsibility as a principal is to either be an instructional leader or provide instructional support for faculty...

...but only **15%** of teachers think principals are the individuals **best** equipped to evaluate them.

**43%** of principals think they **should** be spending more than half their time visiting classrooms and observing teachers...

...but only **11%** actually do.

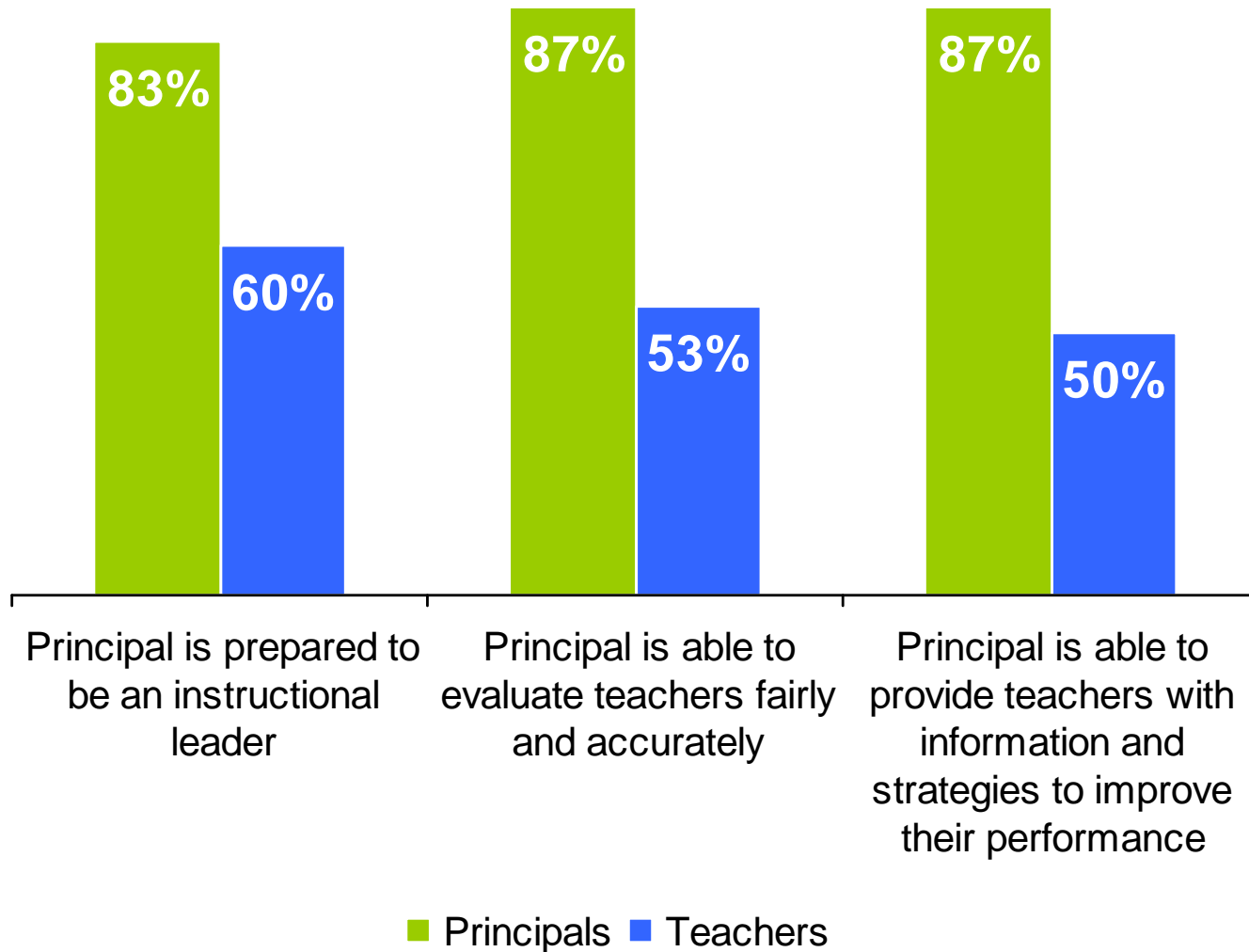
**33%** of principals report having received **limited or no training** on how to conduct an effective evaluation of a teacher's instructional performance.

**50%** of principals believe they are given adequate support to be an effective instructional leader.



As a result, significant gaps in perception exist between teachers and principals on principal ability to assess instructional performance.

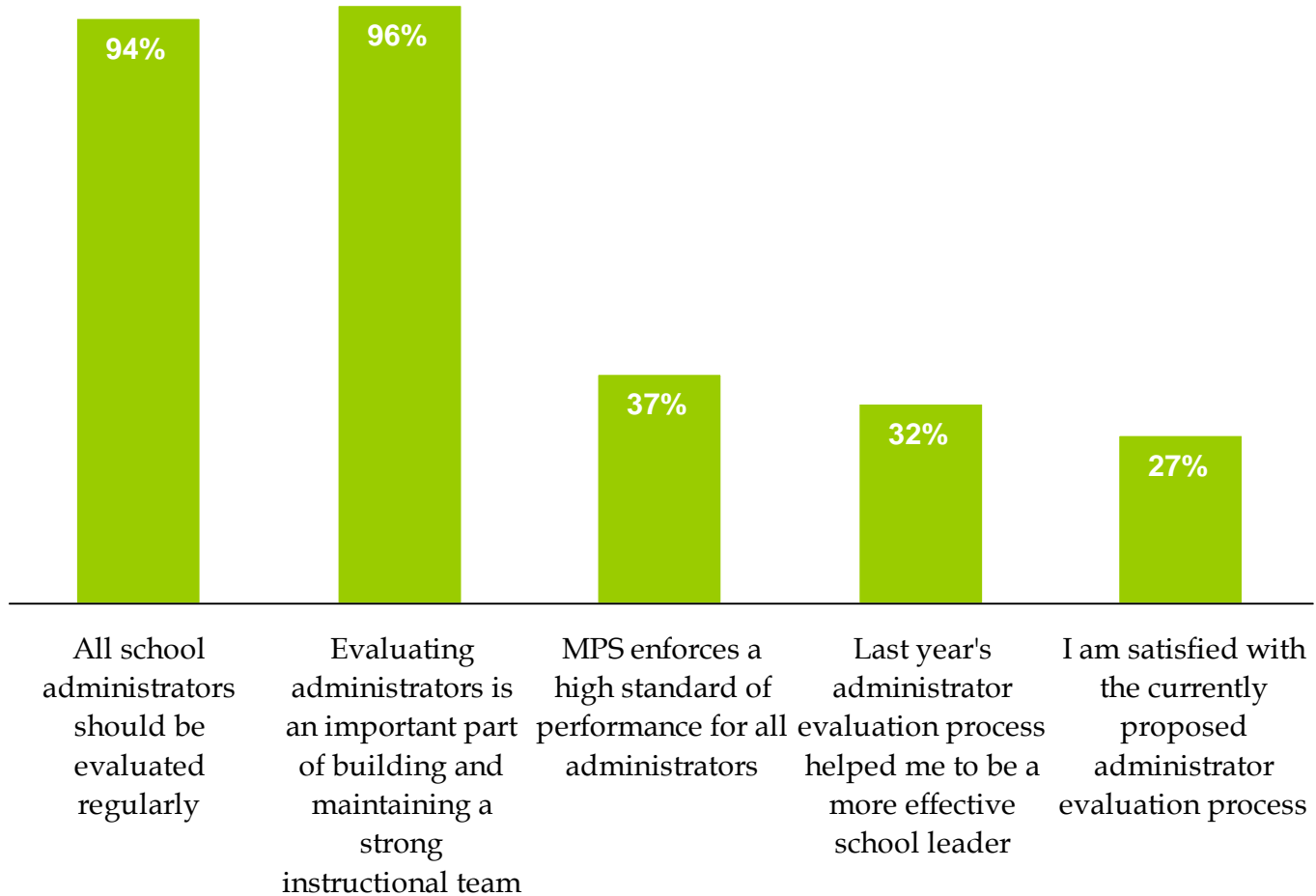
### Principal and Teacher Opinions on Principal Effectiveness





Although they are not currently evaluated regularly and rigorously, principals agree that they should be.

### Principal Opinions on Administrator Evaluations



\*Note: MPS implemented a new principal evaluation system for the 2008-09 school year with one-third of all principals participating. The data presented here were taken during a point of transition between the two evaluation systems.



## Finding #4

Background

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### #4

**While MPS has employed a variety of school staffing models that provide a range of consent to teachers and schools in making placement decisions, teachers and principals strongly agree with – and prefer – mutual consent practices.**



MPS currently uses three main staffing processes to assign teachers to schools.

**1**

### Bidding

Open to all MPS teachers, both excesses and voluntary transfers

**1st cycle:** April 25-May 7

**2nd cycle:** May 16-June 2

**3rd cycle:** June 13 (one day only)\*

**2**

### Interview and Select (I&S)

Open to all MPS teachers, both excesses and voluntary transfers. Schools are either mandated or elect to use I&S by teacher vote.

**Continuous cycle:** May 5-June 13

**3**

### Excessed Placement Process

Open only to excessed teachers who have yet to find a new position through bidding or I&S.

**Excessed placement day:** June 17

**Continuous placement by HR:** Throughout summer as needed



Prior to the 2008-09 school year, bidding and excessed placement were the only staffing processes used. The 2008-09 school year was the only year three processes were used. **The 2009-10 school year will use I&S and excessed placement only, no bidding.**

\* Teachers are not required to interview for positions on this bidding day.



# The degree of mutual consent exercised varies significantly across staffing options.

Less mutual consent	Excessed Placement	Bidding – Excessed Teachers	Bidding – Voluntary Transfers	I&S	More mutual consent
<b>Who chooses the position/vacancy?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR assigns teacher to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers bid on positions in seniority order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers bid on positions in seniority order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School interview team selects teacher for position</li> <li>• Must be unanimous decision (principal has veto power)</li> </ul>	
<b>Does the teacher have to interview before taking the position?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Top 10 most senior teachers who sign up are given interview slots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Top 10 most senior teachers who sign up are given interview slots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• Of the teachers who sign up, top five most senior teachers and five teachers of the school's choice are interviewed</li> </ul>	
<b>How much authority do schools and teachers have to choose their placements?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None; neither school nor teacher controls placement decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools have no authority; principals cannot decide who to interview and cannot reject teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited school authority; teachers must be approved by principal to claim position, but school cannot choose desired candidate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools control final hiring decision and can choose desired candidate</li> <li>• Teachers can accept or reject offer</li> </ul>	



Both teachers and administrators in MPS strongly believe in the principle of mutual consent.

93%

of teachers agree it is important that the **administrator** wanted them to come to their school.

90%

of teachers agree it is important that the **teaching staff** wanted them to come to their school.

100%

of principals agree that the **ability to choose new hires** is important for creating the best possible instructional team for their school.



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Furthermore, teachers believe both their colleagues and principals have the knowledge and judgment to make good hiring decisions.

95%

of teachers believe their **colleagues have the knowledge and judgment** to make good selection decisions.

96%

of teachers are **satisfied with the contributions of other teachers** on the interview team.

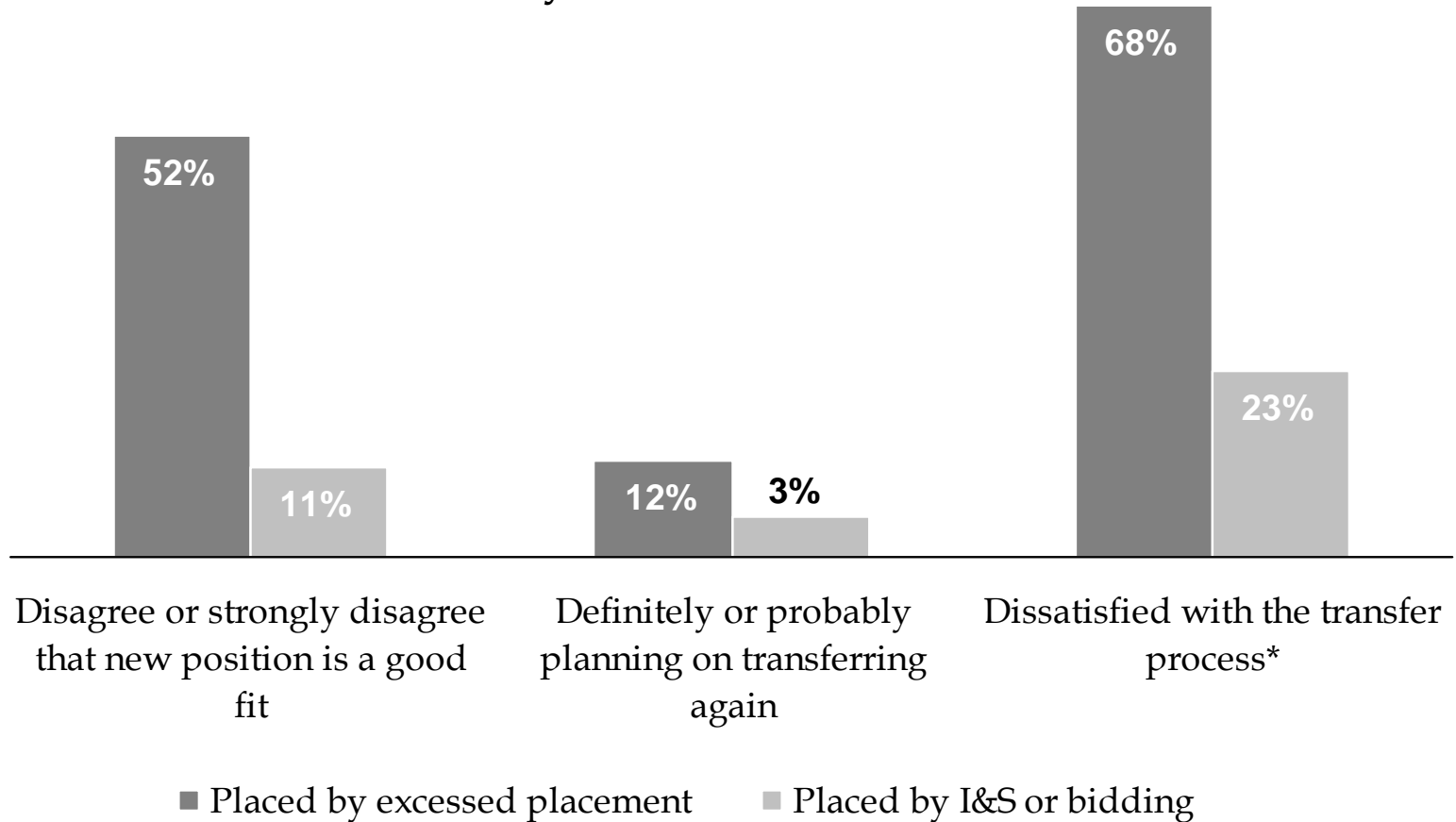
86%

of teachers believe their **school administrator has the knowledge and judgment** to make good selection decisions and are **satisfied with the administrator's contributions** on the interview team.



Teachers placed through the excess placement process, in which they have little or no say, express significant dissatisfaction.

**Teacher Opinions of New Positions and Transfer Process,  
by Placement Process**

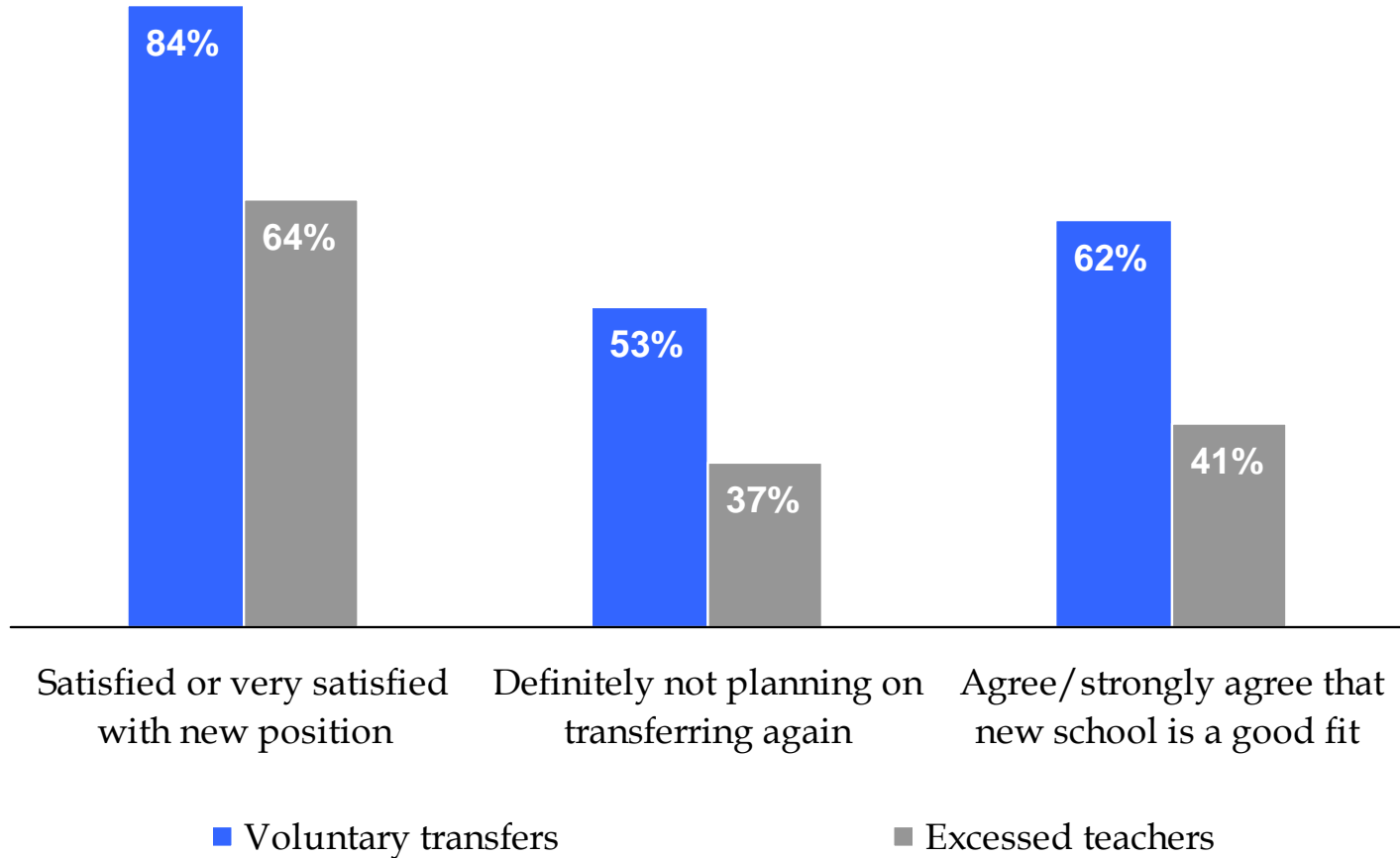


\* Teachers who answered "very dissatisfied", "dissatisfied", or "somewhat dissatisfied"



On the other hand, voluntary transfers, who can only be staffed through mutual consent, are far more satisfied with their new positions.

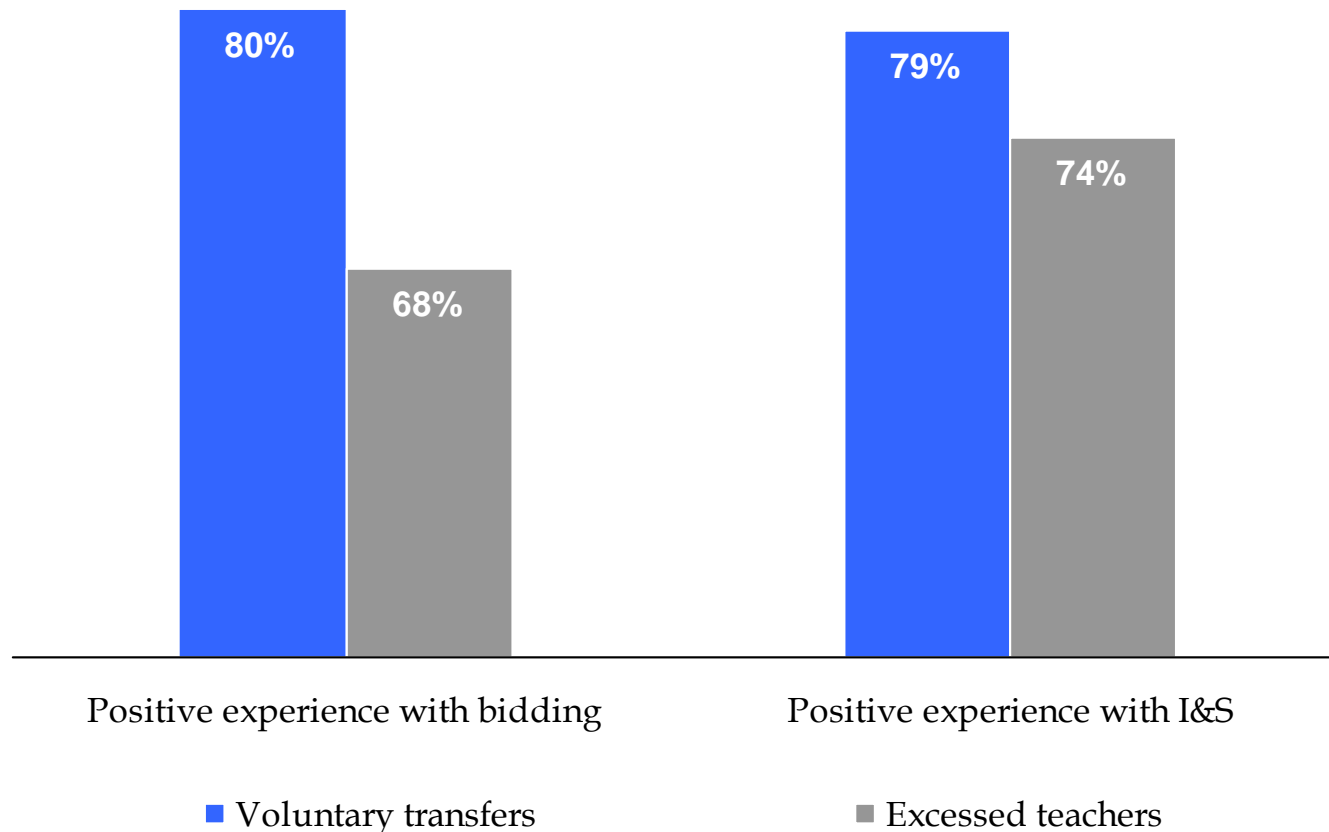
Teachers' Opinions, by Transfer Type





Further indicating positive views of mutual consent, voluntary transfers are more satisfied with the bidding process than excess teachers, but both groups feel similarly about I&S.

### Voluntary transfers and excess teachers' experience with bidding and I&S





While many teachers support I&S, the first year of implementation left significant room for improvement.

For those teachers who were **dissatisfied** with the implementation of I&S:

70%

disagree that the **process was sufficiently timely**.

67%

disagree that **communication and support received from HR** was adequate.

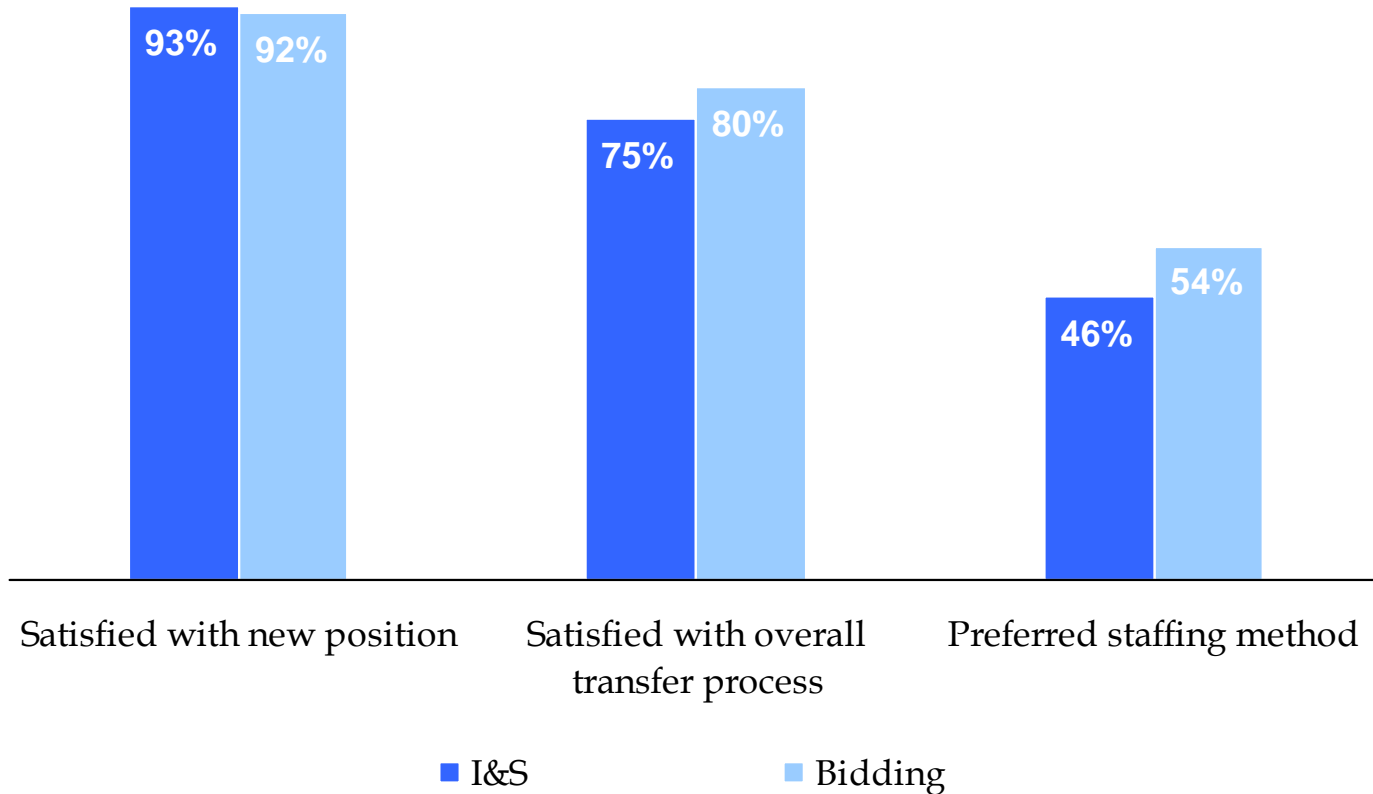
55%

disagree that the **rules for the process** were clear.



At first glance, transferring teachers who are placed through I&S and bidding do not appear to have a strong preference for either process.

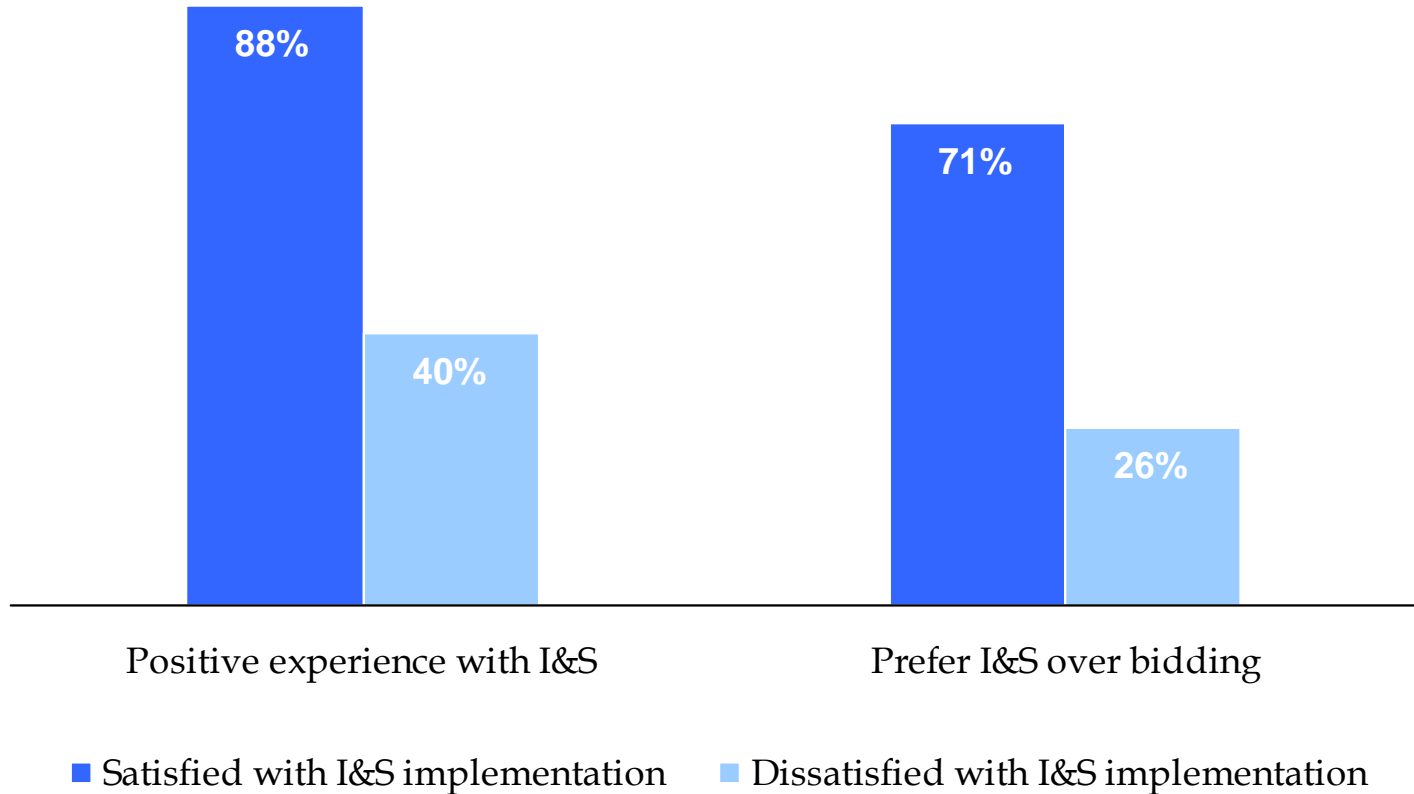
### Transferring Teacher Opinions





When teachers' perceptions of I&S implementation are taken into account, satisfaction with I&S increases significantly.

### I&S Teacher Opinions





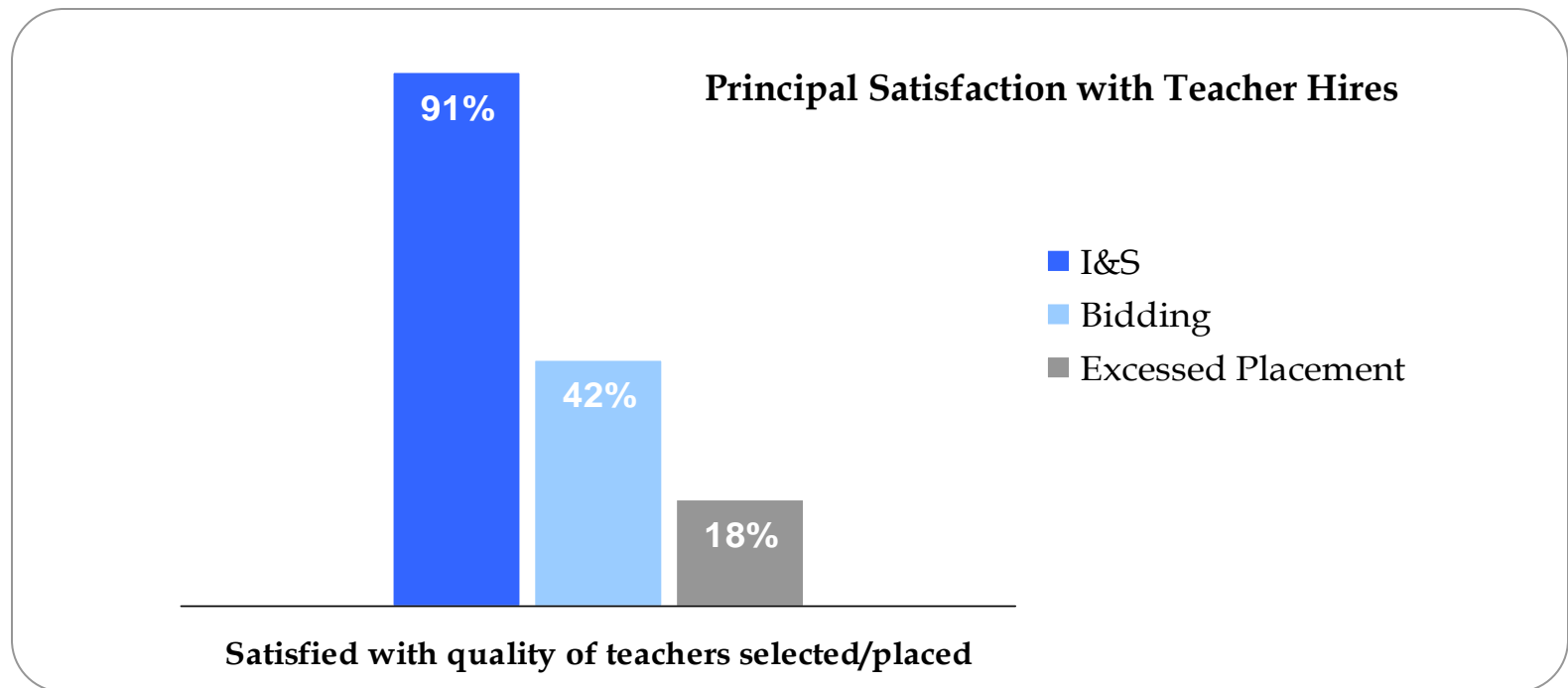
Principals are virtually unanimous in their preference for I&S, where they have significantly more choice in the process.

Principals who prefer I&S  
over bidding

97%

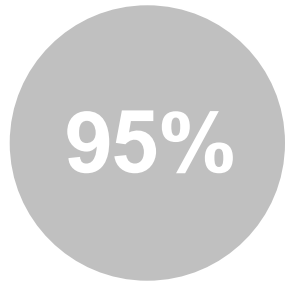
Principals who prefer I&S over  
excessed placement

100%



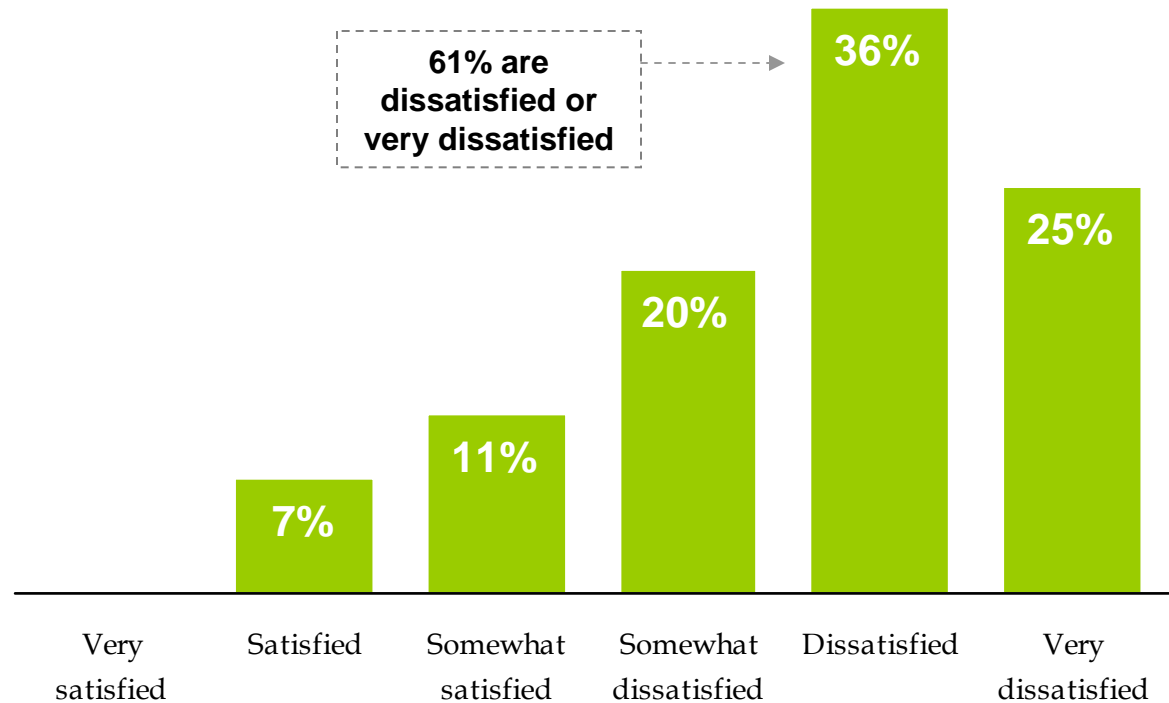


Like teachers, principals express significant dissatisfaction with the excess placement process, in which they have little or no say.



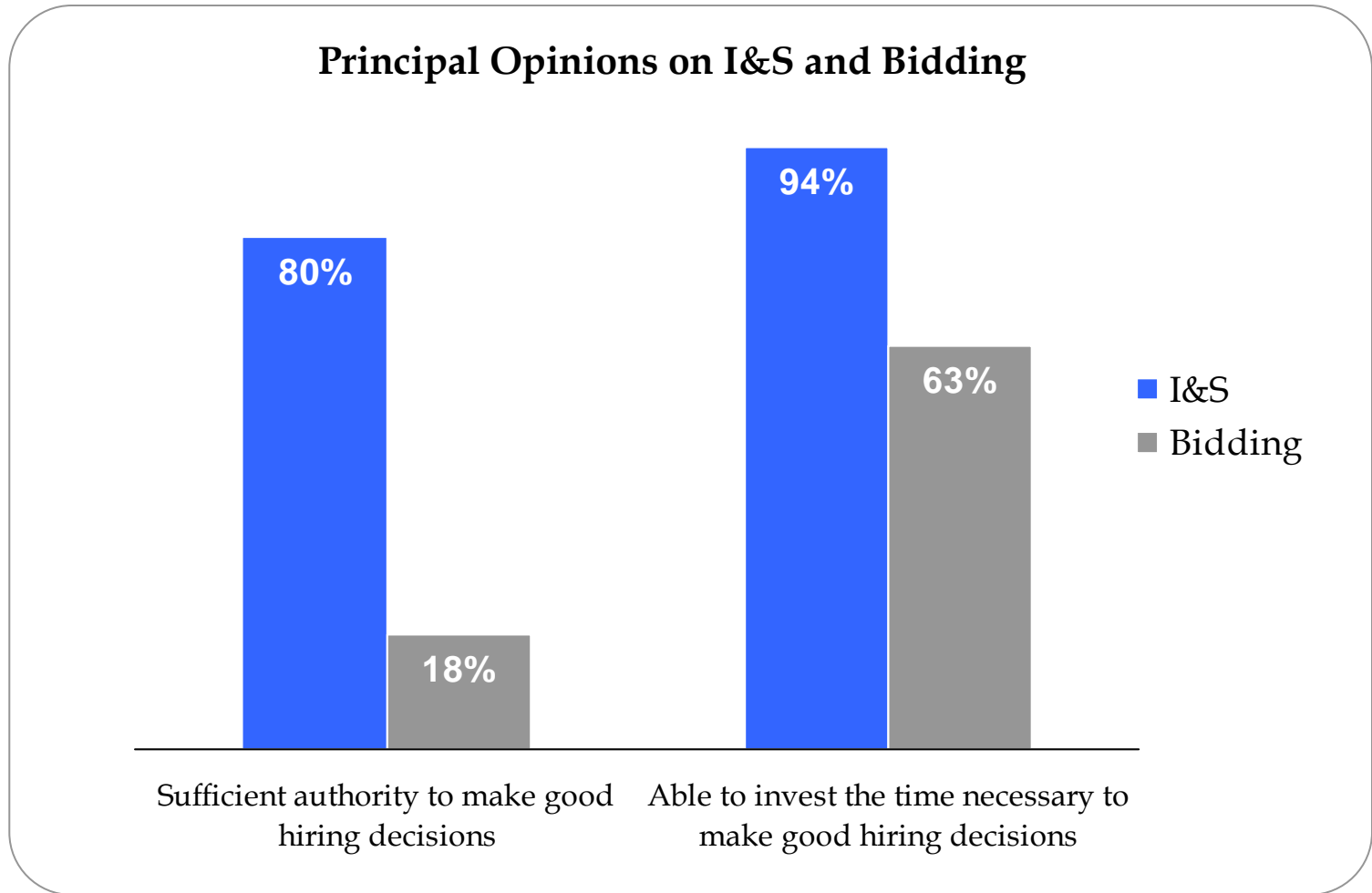
Almost all MPS principals have had a teacher placed in their school through the **excess placement process**, without the opportunity to interview.

“How satisfied are you with the quality of teachers placed through the excess placement process?”





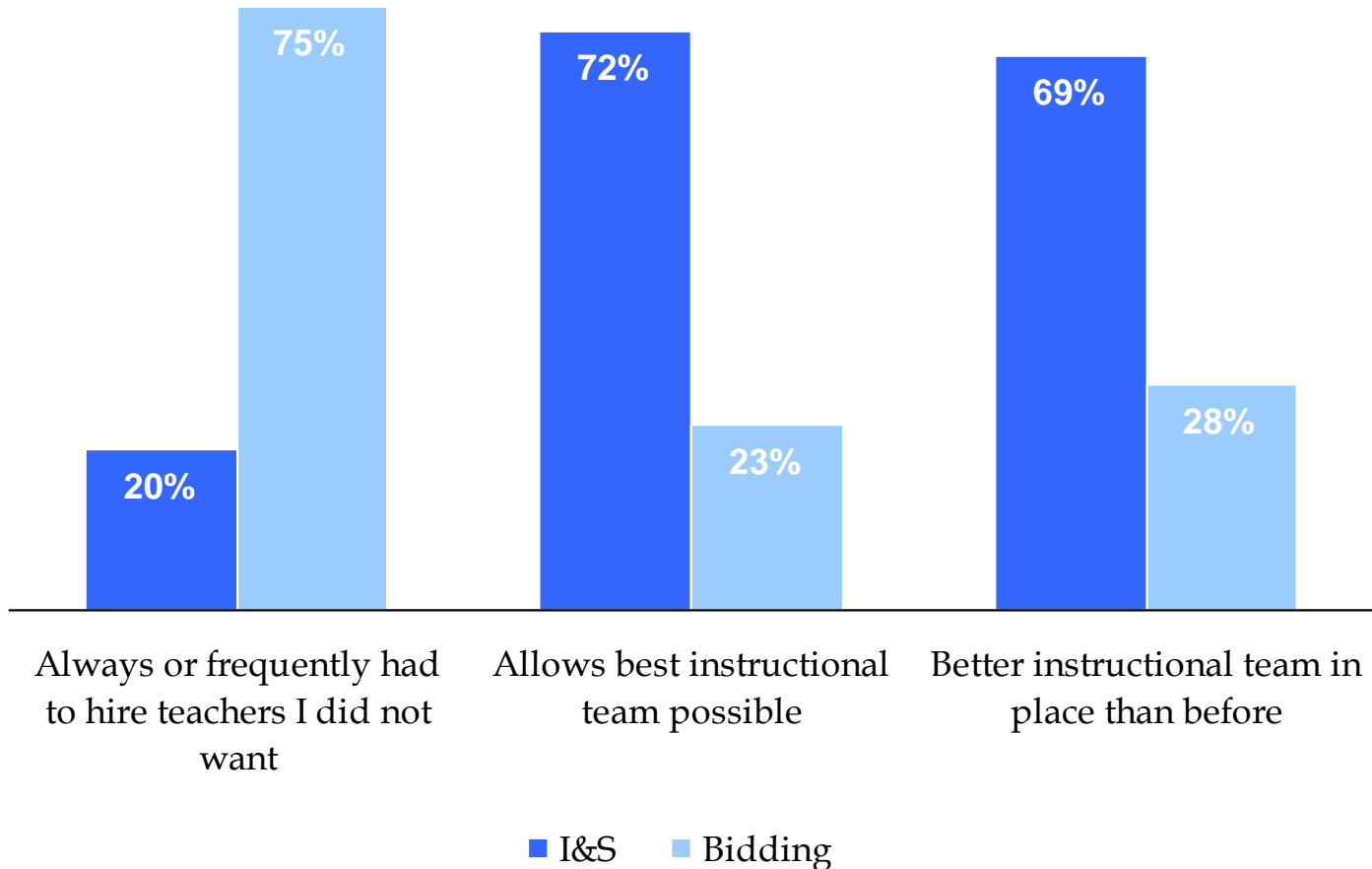
Compared to bidding, principals are engaged in I&S and are willing to invest the time to select the right teachers for their school.





Importantly, principals believe I&S produces stronger instructional teams.

### Principal Opinions About the Impact of I&S and Bidding on Instructional Teams





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Teachers and principals agree that the mutual consent principles promoted through I&S give schools opportunities to build strong teams.

94%

of current staff believe that the ability of **their school leader and colleagues to choose new staff members** is an important part of building a strong instructional team.

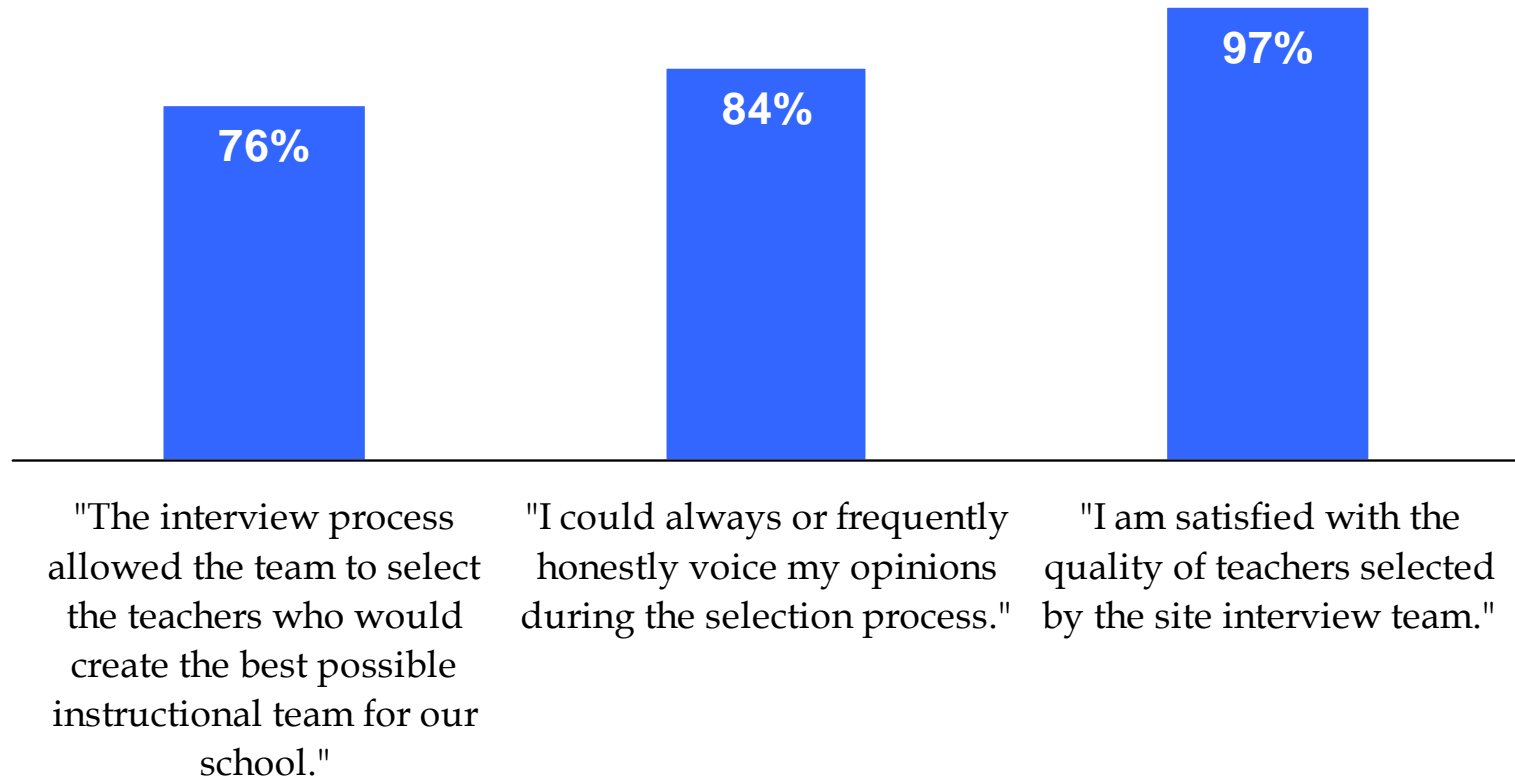
100%

of principals view **teachers as an important part of the interviewing process** in order to make good hiring decisions, and were **confident in teachers' ability** to select the best possible candidates for their school.



Additionally, teachers believe that the use of site interview teams to select new teachers is a valuable part of I&S.

### Opinions of Teachers Who Served on Site Interview Teams





## Summative Finding

Background

▶ **Findings**

Recommendations

Next Steps

**In order to remain sustainable as a district and viable as an option for the families of Minneapolis, MPS must decide how to address a number of key staffing issues using short- and long-term solutions.**



For district sustainability, dramatic short- and long-term changes in staffing policy and practice are necessary.

### Guiding Principles for MPS

#1

In the face of increased competition for students, MPS' driving focus is and should continue to be the provision of high-quality education options to Minneapolis parents and students. **Maintaining strong, stable instructional teams is critical** to MPS' ability to remain a viable option for Minneapolis families.

#2

Dramatic change is necessary. **Staffing decisions are paramount** to create stability for schools, retain the best teachers, and ensure schools can build and maintain strong instructional teams, particularly in the face of declining enrollment.

#3

Even within the context of declining enrollment, MPS has an **opportunity to act strategically** to maintain, and even further raise, the overall quality of the teacher workforce that remains.



**There is no one "silver bullet" solution.** While immediate changes can and must be made to correct the most urgent problems, longer-term solutions that allow schools to develop and sustain the most effective teaching teams must be considered with similar urgency.



# Goals and Strategies for Improvement

Background

Findings

▶ **Recommendations**

## **Big Goals:**

- **Increase school stability** by rethinking elements of both district practices *and* contract rules.
- Create an environment where **quality teaching and learning is a central component of all staffing decisions.**



## Six Overarching Strategies to Achieve the Big Goals

**Goal 1: Increase school stability by rethinking elements of both district practices and contract rules.**

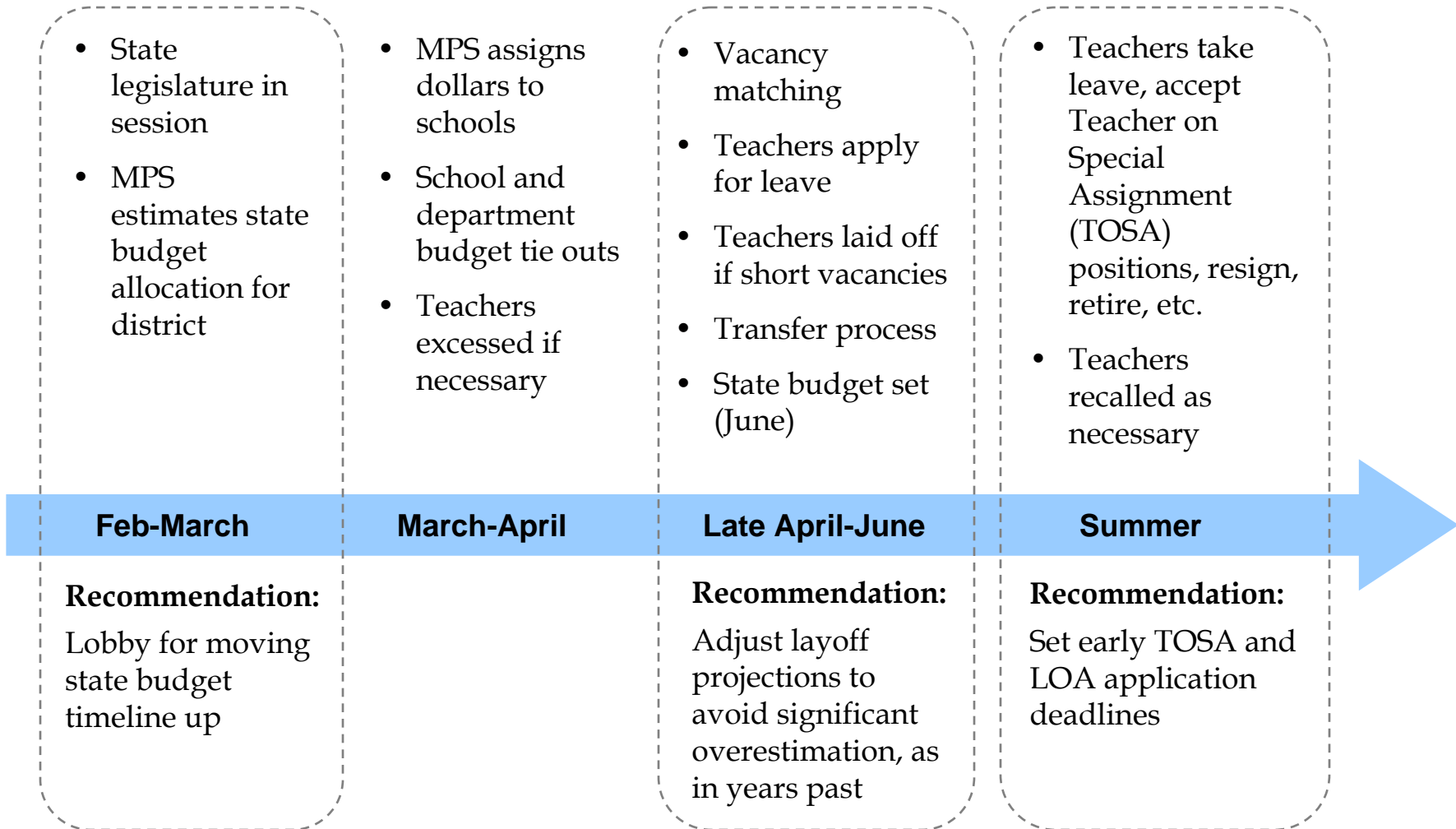
**Goal 2: Ensure that quality teaching and learning is central to all staffing decisions.**

1. **Modify layoff projection practices** to more accurately determine layoff needs each year and avoid the disruption that results from twice as many layoff notices being issued as necessary.
2. **Negotiate rules** around teacher layoffs, release, excess, and recall to allow schools to develop and maintain cohesive instructional teams while focusing on fair, transparent rules.
3. **Form school-based Human Resources committees** to make all teacher hiring decisions based on mutual consent.
4. **Adopt school-based decision making** to allow school-based HR committees to create alternative rules for excessing and layoff.
5. **Design and adopt a comprehensive teacher performance assessment and development system** that fairly, accurately, and credibly differentiates performance on the basis of teacher effectiveness in promoting student achievement outcomes.
6. **Continue focusing on building school leadership capacity** so that principals are better able to create an environment that is conducive to learning and ensure that teachers have the necessary support and resources to be effective in their classrooms.



# MPS' current budgeting and staffing timeline does not facilitate opportunities for effective vacancy and layoff projections.

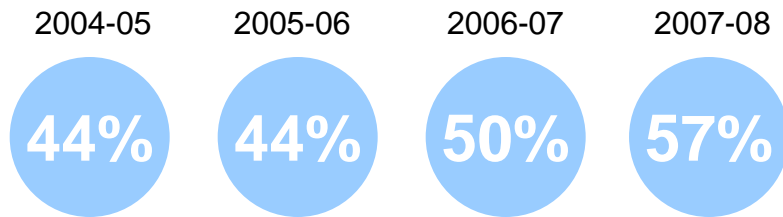
## Current Timeline of MPS Budgeting and Staffing Implementation



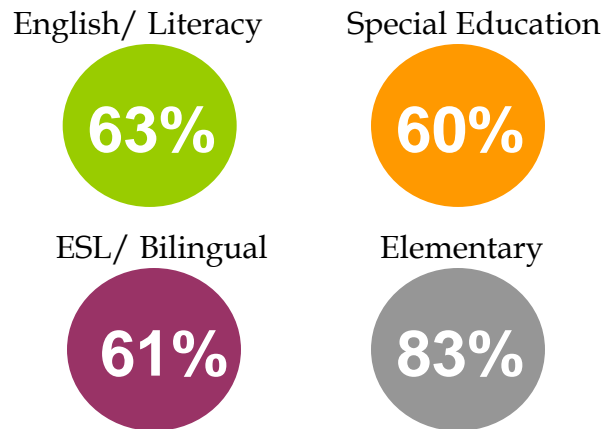


## Strategy #1: Modify layoff projection practices and timelines to minimize unnecessary teacher displacement and movement.

### Percentage of teachers laid off/released then rehired



### Percentage of teachers laid off/released then rehired, by subject area



### Recommendations

- ✓ Consider use of fiscal reserve pools in the budget and introduce more precise risk assessment and fiscal projection approaches based on what is now several years of declining budgets and overly conservative layoff projections.
- ✓ Set internal goal of no more than 20 percent “cushion” between the number of layoff notices and the number of actual layoffs by 2010-11 school year; use existing data to benchmark progress.
- ✓ Continue setting strictly adhered-to April 1 deadline for leave applications.
- ✓ Strictly adhere to March 15 deadline for resignation and retirement notifications.
- ✓ Lobby state for stable school funding (multi-year budgets, early projects, etc.) and advanced budget timelines.



## Strategy #2: Negotiate rules around layoff, release, excess, and recall to allow schools to develop and maintain cohesive instructional teams.

37%

Teachers who have **changed schools at least once** in the last four years

21%

Average **annual turnover** in MPS schools over the last three years

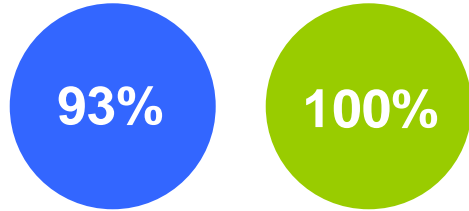
### Recommendations

- ✓ Create alternatives other than layoffs to meet needed district reductions in the number of teachers such as offering voluntary buyouts of teachers close to retirement or trading cash payments to teachers in select subject areas for moving them to the top of the layoff list.
- ✓ Exempt teachers in high-need subject areas from layoff/release regardless of seniority.
- ✓ Allow all laid-off teachers who are recalled, regardless of status, to be given the opportunity to return to the same school for the same school year at the discretion of the site principal if vacancies exist; teachers who reject offer of reappointment will enter the transfer pool.
- ✓ Allow site principal, in consultation with MPS and MFT, to protect a teacher or teachers who have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting student learning from excess and layoff:
  - ✓ Principal may select up to one teacher for every 300 students enrolled who will be exempted from layoff and excess, pending district approval
  - ✓ Principal **must** explain their decision in writing to MPS and MFT, with such explanation including specific evidence of teacher effectiveness; such explanation shall be provided to MFT with sufficient notice that it can provide comment to MPS or appeal to the superintendent if not satisfied with the written rationale or the ensuing district decision

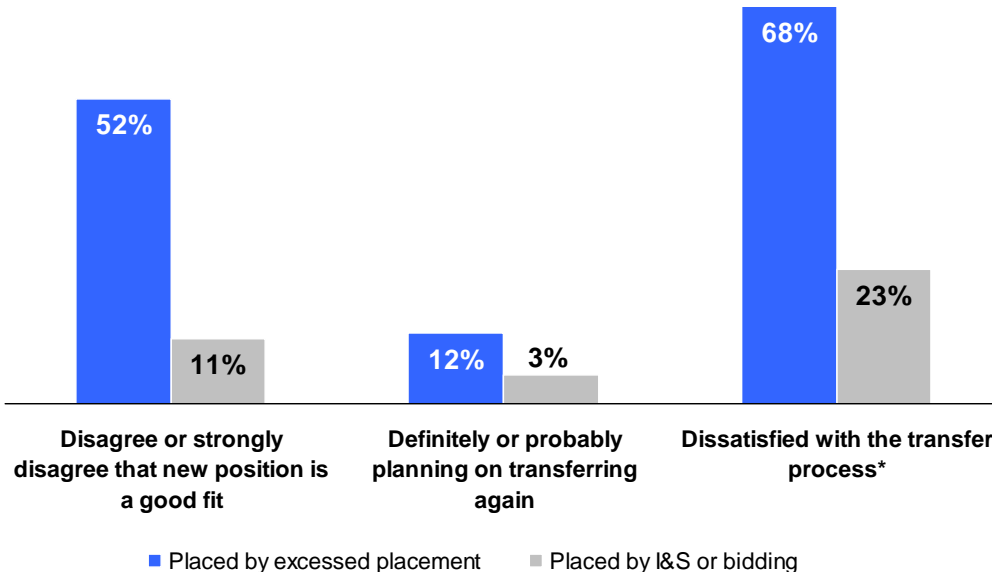


## Strategy #3: Form school-based Human Resources committees to make all teacher hiring decisions based on mutual consent.

Teachers and principals strongly agree with the principle of mutual consent



Teachers who do not have a choice in selecting their school placement are significantly less satisfied



### Recommendations

- ✓ All vacancies should be filled through one process; all teachers, regardless of voluntary transfer or excess status, must interview with a site interview team and be selected.
- ✓ Excessed teachers are offered preference in obtaining interviews for up to five vacancies.
- ✓ Eliminate the excessed placement process and realignment practices.
- ✓ While the district should retain the right to close or reconstitute schools when necessary, in that all vacancies will be filled by mutual consent, fresh starts should be done infrequently.
- ✓ Teachers who cannot find positions at the end of the selection process are placed in the reserve pool starting the second semester (they can continue to look for a position and will be given additional placement support); once without a position for one full school year from the time they enter the reserve pool, they are moved to the top of the layoff list.



## Strategy #4: Allow individual school-based HR committees to create alternative rules for excessing and layoff.

### School-Based Decision Making Guidelines

- ✓ Schools can opt-in to the school-based decision making (SDM) model for a three-year period through a majority vote of MFT members in a secret-ballot vote and with the assent of the principal. (Schools that elect to participate in SDM will be exempt from district-wide excessing and layoff practices.)
- ✓ Schools will be considered SDM schools as long as the original school site and leadership at the time of the vote remains intact.
- ✓ Excess and layoff rules in SDM schools will be made by a school-based committee of MFT members and administrators, with the majority being MFT members. Decisions should be made by consensus if possible, otherwise by majority vote.



**Strategy #5: Design and adopt a comprehensive teacher assessment and development system that credibly differentiates performance on the basis of teacher effectiveness in promoting student achievement.**

### **Rethink Assessment**

- ✓ MPS and MFT leadership should work in collaboration to design the system.
- ✓ Both teachers and principals should have a clear role in teacher assessments.
- ✓ Assessment/development system should be designed to maximize teacher effectiveness at **all** levels, not just identify incompetence.
- ✓ All teachers should be evaluated regularly, rigorously, and consistently to foster continuous growth; the system cannot be perceived as a “gotcha” game.
- ✓ In designing this evaluation system, the current PAR process should be carefully considered to avoid unnecessary redesigning of a brand new process because there are elements of MPS’ current system that are already effective and can be improved or modified; consider expanding the reach of the current PAR process to provide services similar to PAR support to a broader group of teachers.
- ✓ In addition to school-based decision making, district-wide rules based on teacher effectiveness should eventually be put in place, contingent on MPS having a functional evaluation system that credibly differentiates teacher performance.
- ✓ Once fully implemented, assessments of teacher effectiveness can become primary determinants of decisions regarding tenure, intervention, and dismissal.



## Strategy #6: Continue focusing heavily on building school leadership capacity.

### Enhance School Leadership Capacity

To perform at a high level, schools rely on many leaders, including teachers, principals, mentors, and coaches, to impact quality teaching and learning. Principals in particular play a critical role in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and ensuring that teachers have the necessary support and resources to be effective in their classrooms. In recognition of the important leadership role that principals play, the district should:

- ✓ Allocate resources to provide increased training and ongoing support for principals to ensure that support of effective teaching and learning remains a priority for school administrators
- ✓ Conduct regular and rigorous principal evaluations that focus on principals' ability to effectively:
  - ✓ Assess and support their teaching staffs to excel instructionally
  - ✓ Provide a working environment that contributes toward retention of highly effective teachers
  - ✓ Coordinate the efforts of other instructional leaders (master teachers, coaches, mentors) in the building and in the district to provide teachers with multiple options for instructional support
  - ✓ Provide targeted support and development opportunities to all teachers to help them become more effective (professional development and support in this manner should be driven by the school and/or individual teacher, not by the district)
- ✓ MPS cannot increase school stability without stable school leadership in place. District leadership should reassess principal and AP assignment practices with the goal of increased district and school stability through strategically increasing school administrator stability and length of service at each school site.



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## Appendix



## TNTP's framework for the purposes of a credible evaluation system

### **A credible evaluation system should:**

- Identify ineffective teachers who need intervention.
- Identify areas for development for all teachers.
- Provide consistent feedback for all teachers.
- Identify highly effective teachers for recognition.
- Provide targeted professional development supporting teachers in identified areas of development.
- Identify and remediate ineffective teachers.
- Offer a low-stakes path out of the profession for ineffective teachers who do not improve with support.



## TNTP's framework for the requirements of a credible evaluation system

A credible evaluation system requires:

- Clear and straightforward performance standards focused on student achievement outcomes and based on the standards of effective instruction.
- Multiple, distinct rating options that allow administrators to precisely describe and compare differences in instructional performance.
- Regular monitoring and norming of administrator judgments (e.g. through or with aid of peer evaluations, independent third party reviews, teacher surveys, etc.).
- Frequent and regular feedback to teachers about whether and how their teaching performance meets, exceeds, or fails to meet standards.
- Professional development that is linked to the performance standards and differentiated based on individual teacher needs.
- Intensive support for teachers who fall below performance standards.