



School Staffing and Performance Management in Newark Public Schools

July 2009 (rev. December 2009)



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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.

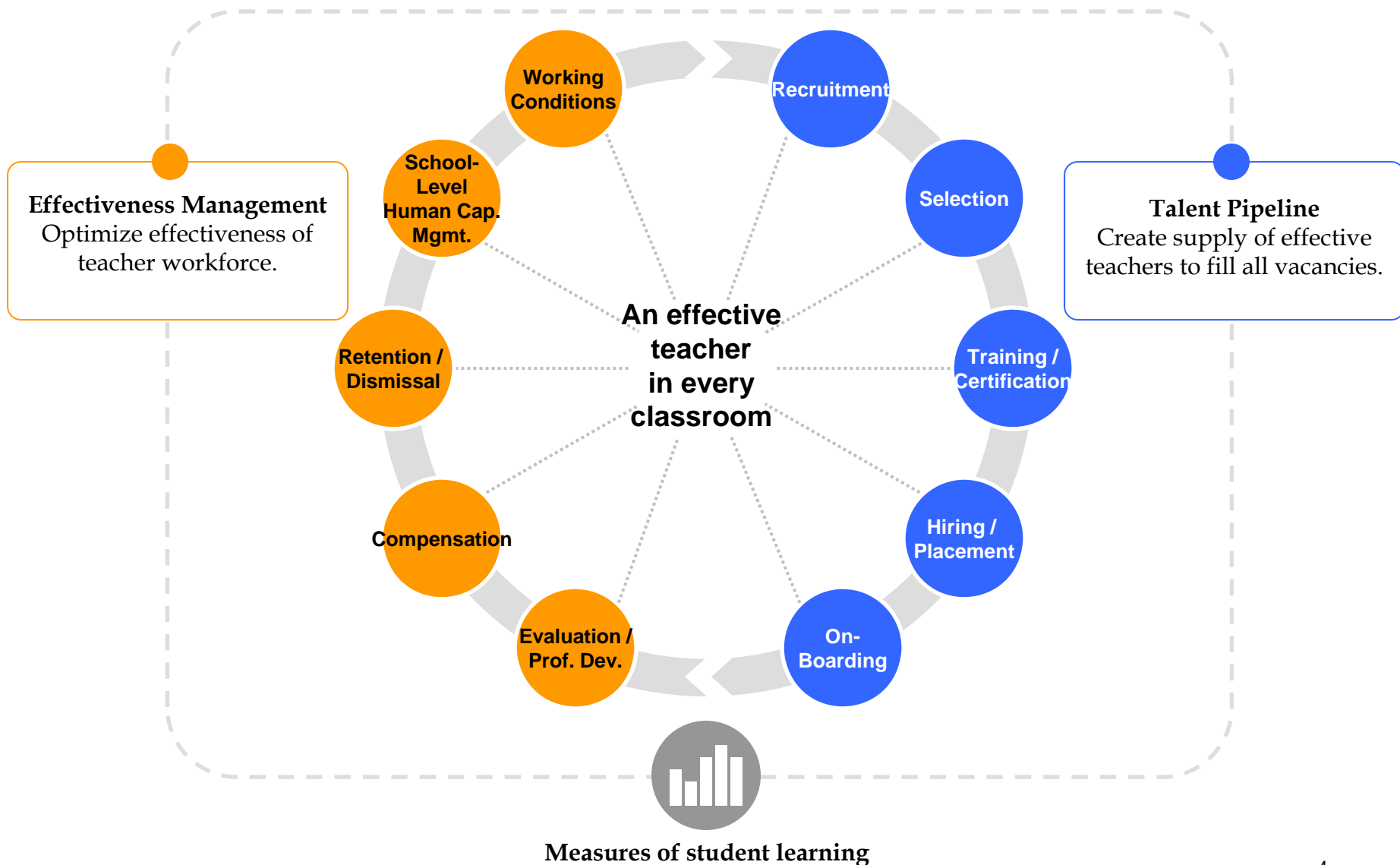
The purpose of this analysis is to increase the alignment of district human capital systems to the ultimate goal of excellent instruction in every classroom.

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 able to create effective instructional teams through the staffing process?
- ✓ Does the district effectively evaluate and support teachers to improve their instructional practice?
- ✓ Is the district retaining its best teachers?

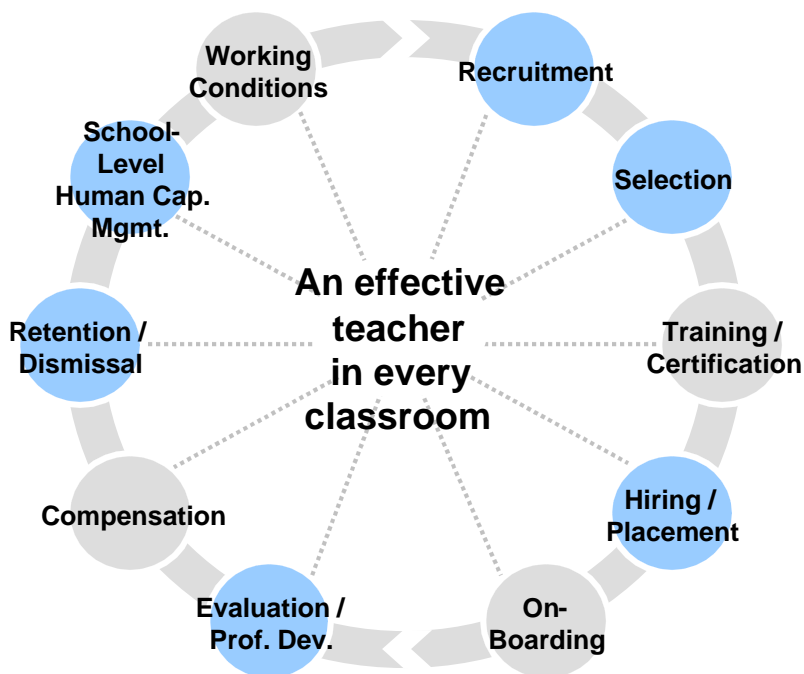


TNTP helps school districts align their policies and practices to the goal of an effective teacher in every classroom.





In the winter of 2009, TNTP partnered with Newark Public Schools (NPS) to conduct an analysis of several points on the human capital continuum.



Primary analysis methods:

- 1** **District teacher and administrator data** on hiring, transfer, separation, evaluation and demographics; also school- and district-level data.
- 2** **Survey data** from principals, teachers and recent teacher applicants, collected February-April 2009:
 - 767 teachers (24% response of ~3,180).
 - 125 principals, vice principals, and department chairs (42% response of ~300).
 - 795 teacher applicants since 2005 (80% response of 1,000 randomly selected recipients).
- 3** Analysis of teacher and administrator **collective bargaining agreements**.
- 4** **Stakeholder interviews** with central leadership, SLT administrators, principals and teachers.



Summary of Findings



Barriers to hiring: By failing to respond to applicants and delaying hiring until late summer, NPS hinders its ability to compete for high-quality candidates, particularly in high-need subject areas.



Preference for mutual consent: Teachers and administrators strongly prefer that teachers are selected for vacancies through the interview process, rather than being slotted or force-placed into positions.



Little acknowledgement of great, good or poor performance: Although the evaluation process results in some differentiation of teacher performance, there is no comprehensive or effective method to reward and retain top performers or address poor performers.



Summary of Findings (cont'd.)



Need to focus on retention of high-performers: Although NPS stands to retain more teachers than historical data suggests, projected retention of the lowest-rated teachers remains high.



Increased impact on high-need schools: The outcomes of ineffective hiring, staffing, and evaluation practices are even more pronounced in Newark's highest-poverty schools.



Insufficient administrator pipeline: Many NPS administrators are nearing retirement, but the district may not have a reliable pipeline from which to cultivate new school leaders.



Although NPS faces many challenges, there is a true opportunity to dramatically improve outcomes by adopting several district-level recommendations.

Recommendation	NPS Practice	NPS Policy	Significant Cost
Improved communication	X		
Earlier hiring	X		
Staffing through mutual consent	X		
Effective and meaningful evaluation process	X	X	
Strategically staff new schools	X		
Increase administrator training	X		

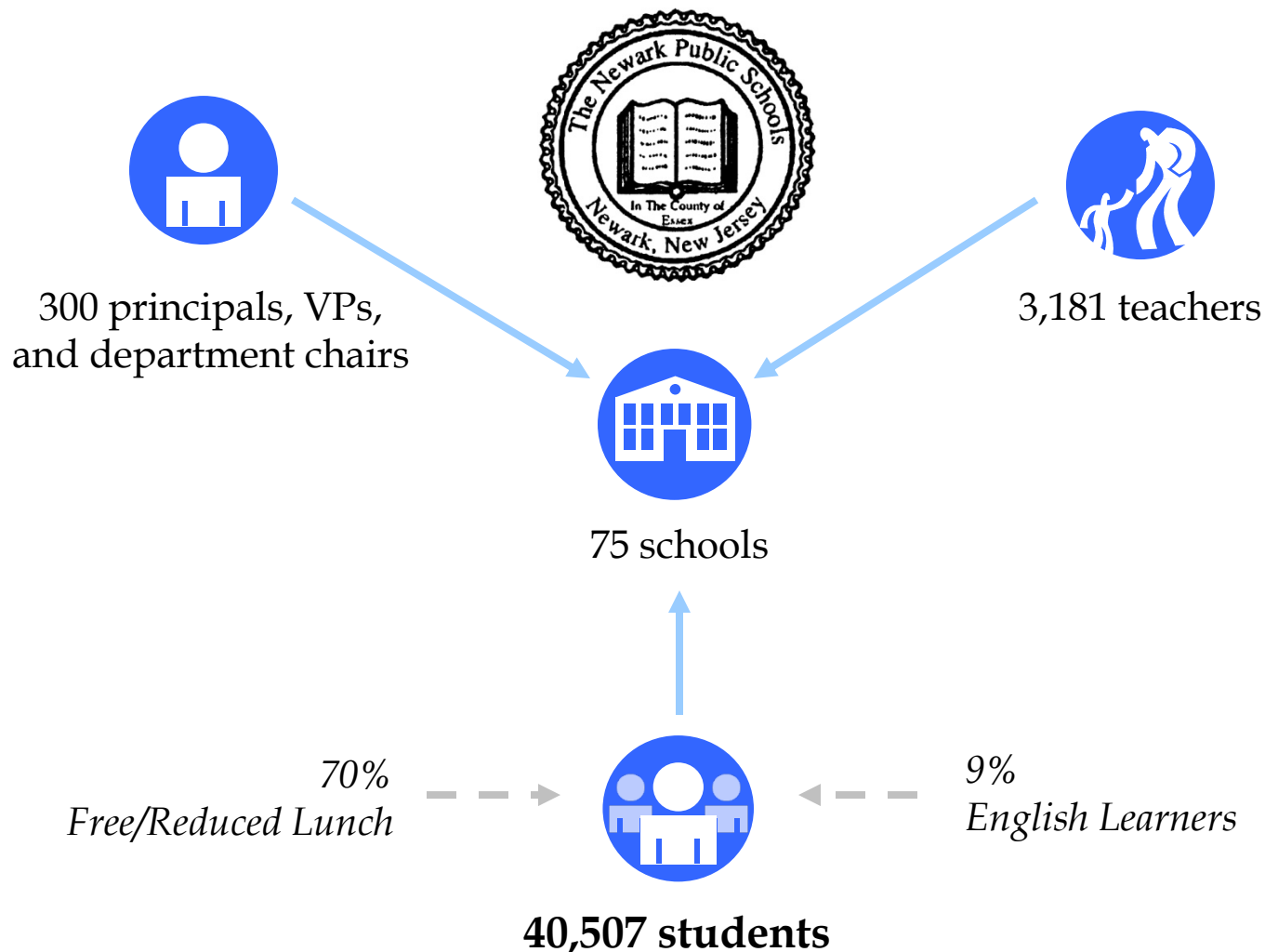


Summary of Recommendations

- 1 Improve customer service and communication both to new applicants and to current NPS teachers.
- 2 Move-up the hiring timeline; provide a specific focus on early hiring for shortage-area candidates and the highest need schools.
- 3 Prioritize school staffing based upon mutual consent.
- 4 Ensure the teacher evaluation process meets its goal of providing differential data, useful feedback and support to help teachers improve. Use performance evaluation data to drive staffing and retention strategy.
- 5 Strategically staff and manage performance at new schools.
- 6 Continue to increase administrator training, induction, and mentorship programs.



Background: Overview of Newark Public Schools, 2007-08



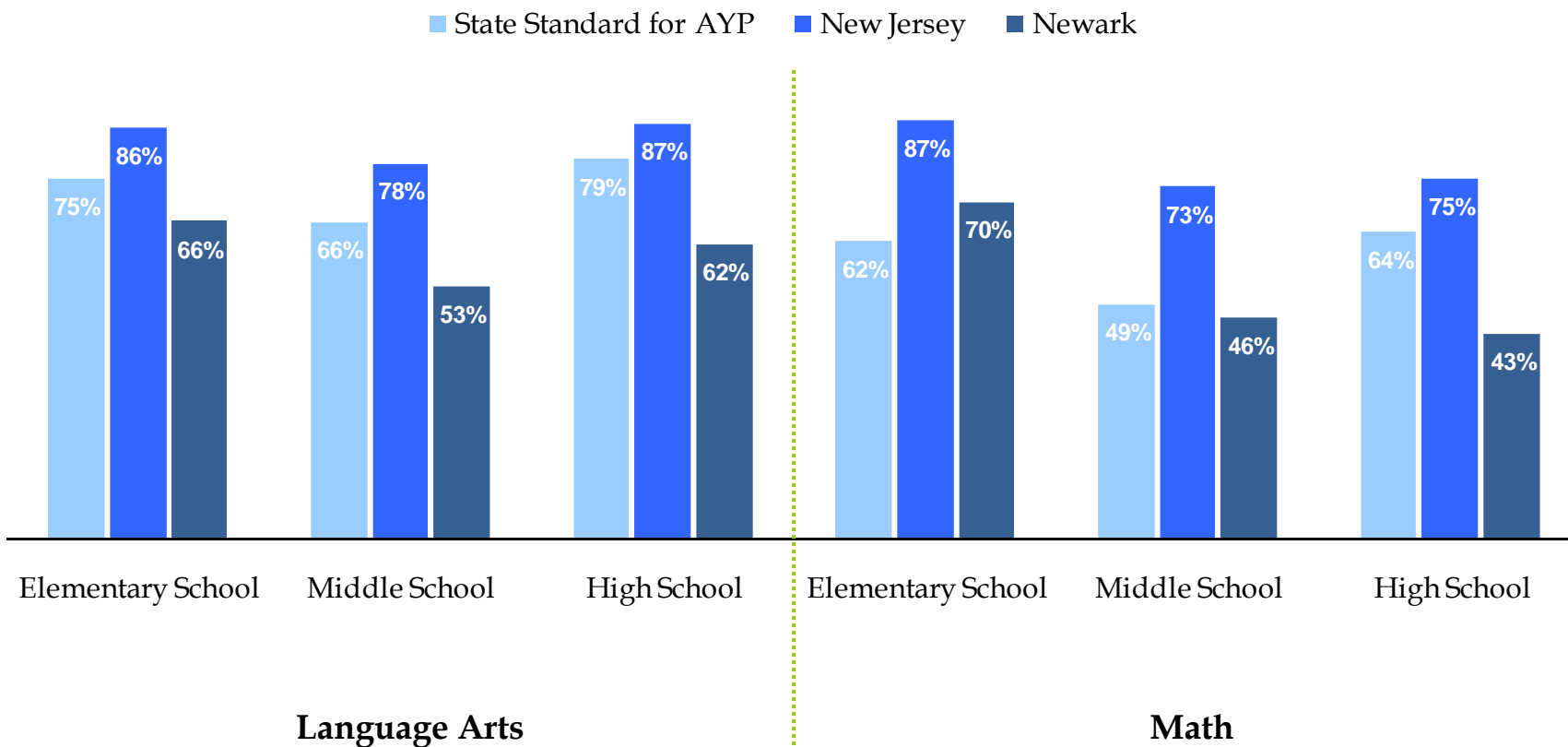
Source: New Jersey Department of Education. <http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/education/data/enr.pl>

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Background: Newark Student Outcomes

Percentage of Students Who Meet "Proficient or Above," 2006-2007 School Year



Source: New Jersey Department of Education school report cards.

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Inefficient communication and applicant cultivation undermines Newark's robust applicant pool.



NPS attracts a large and strong pool of applicants who want to work with Newark's students.

- In 2007-08, NPS attracted **1,791** applicants for **268** teaching positions.
- **39%** of newly-hired teachers* noted that their top reason for applying was that they “wanted to work with the types of students served by NPS,” while **14%** ranked salary and benefits as their top reason for applying to the district.

Qualifications of the Applicant Pool, by District**

	Applicants with advanced degrees	Average GPA	Applicants with 5+ years of experience
NPS	52%	3.27	34%
Minneapolis	47%	3.38	28%
Midwestern District	41%	3.23	27%
San Francisco	54%	3.33	38%
Western District	40%	3.23	25%

* Current teachers with two or fewer years' experience in NPS (n=220).

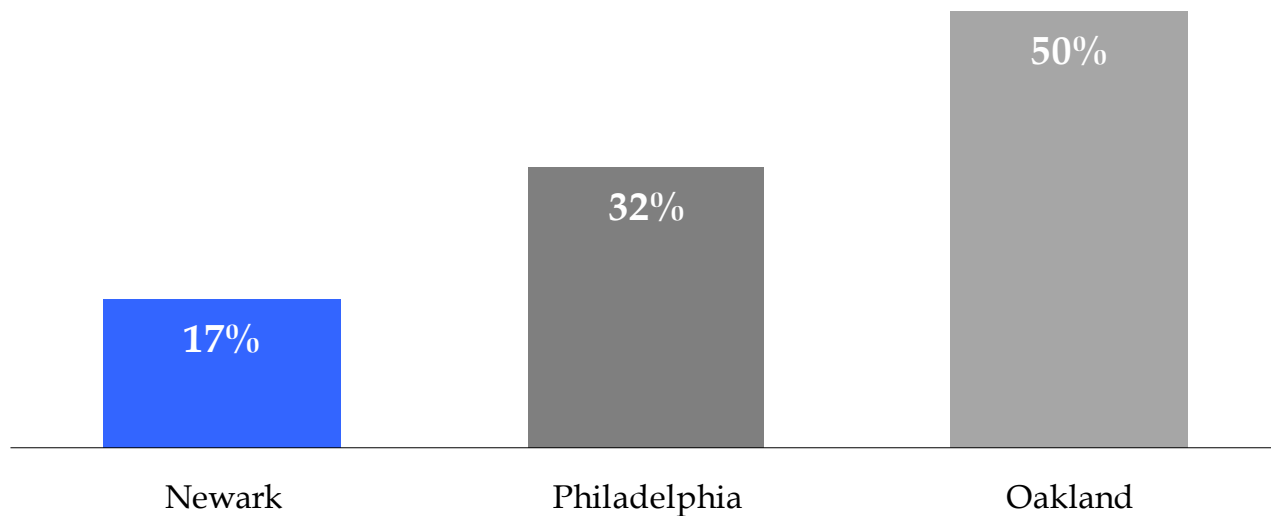
** Reflects only unhired applicants (NPS n=549).

Source: NPS HRS data; TNTP teacher survey; applicant survey; other TNTP research.



However, Newark struggles to attract applicants in high-need subject areas.

Percentage of Principals Who Responded that There Are Enough Applicants in High-need Subject Areas*



*In Newark, high-need includes math, science, special education and bilingual.

Source: TNTP administrator survey (principals n=29); other TNTP research.

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Newark fails to send a response to half of its applicants, including those in high-need subjects.

52% of applicants who were not hired report that they **did not receive a response** to their applications.*

Of these ~**792 applicants per year** who receive no reply, about:**

- **405** have advanced degrees.
- **633** have an undergraduate GPA higher than 3.0.
- **299** have more than 5 years of prior experience.
- **52** are former Newark student teachers.
- **208** are credentialed in math, science, or special education.

* Reflects applicants who are not still in process (n=359). ** Figures estimated from survey data percentages and HRS data from 2007-08.
Source: TNTP applicant survey, NPS HRS data.



This lack of communication from Human Resources Services causes Newark to lose strong candidates.

Not Hired



Special Education major with a 4.0 GPA and New Jersey credential. Now teaching in another public school district in the tri-state area.

“Newark was the only district I really wanted to teach in when I graduated college... I reached out to the district several times. I did everything I was supposed to plus more. I am very displeased... I really wanted to make a difference in Newark... The Newark Human Resources Department was not helpful at all. I called continually to receive an update on the status of my application. Everything was disorganized and the staff was very cold.”



Physics major with 3.9 GPA and New Jersey credential in science, currently pursuing a Master's degree at Columbia University.

“More clear communication, even if it is a ‘no’ right off the bat. I am not even sure if my application was ever received.”



Many applicants who receive responses from Human Resources Services emerge frustrated – and even angry – with NPS.

In open-response questions, applicants revealed common experiences:

“

37% mentioned unprofessional treatment from HRS:

“The way things are done at the present time shows no professional courtesy.”

“I found the staff at NPS to be very indifferent, impolite, discouraging, uninterested, not empathetic, and overall unwelcoming.”

“Communication is the key... Please don't be so rude on the telephone.”

“

22% complained of difficulties with the online application:

“The application online is very cumbersome and difficult to deal with.”

“The website was not updated for months at a time. The application process was unclear. Job postings were not always listed on the website.”

“

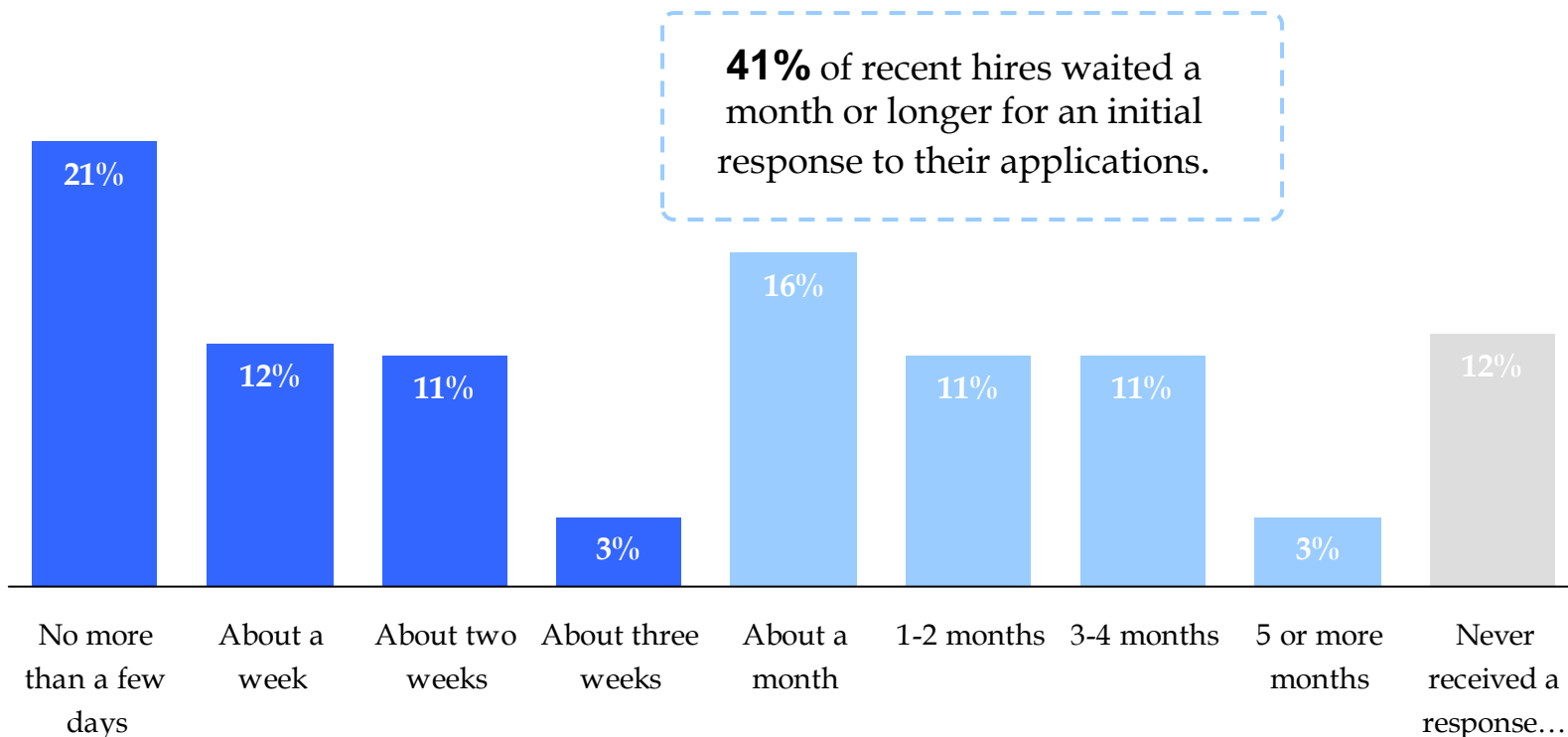
11% brought up confusion at hiring fairs:

“The disorder and chaos of the open interview system really gave a bad impression.”



Even teachers who were ultimately hired by NPS report inefficient communication during the application process.

“When you first contacted NPS about a teaching position, how long did it take for you to receive a response?”*



* Reflects current teachers with two or fewer years' experience in NPS (n=209).

Source: TNTP teacher survey.

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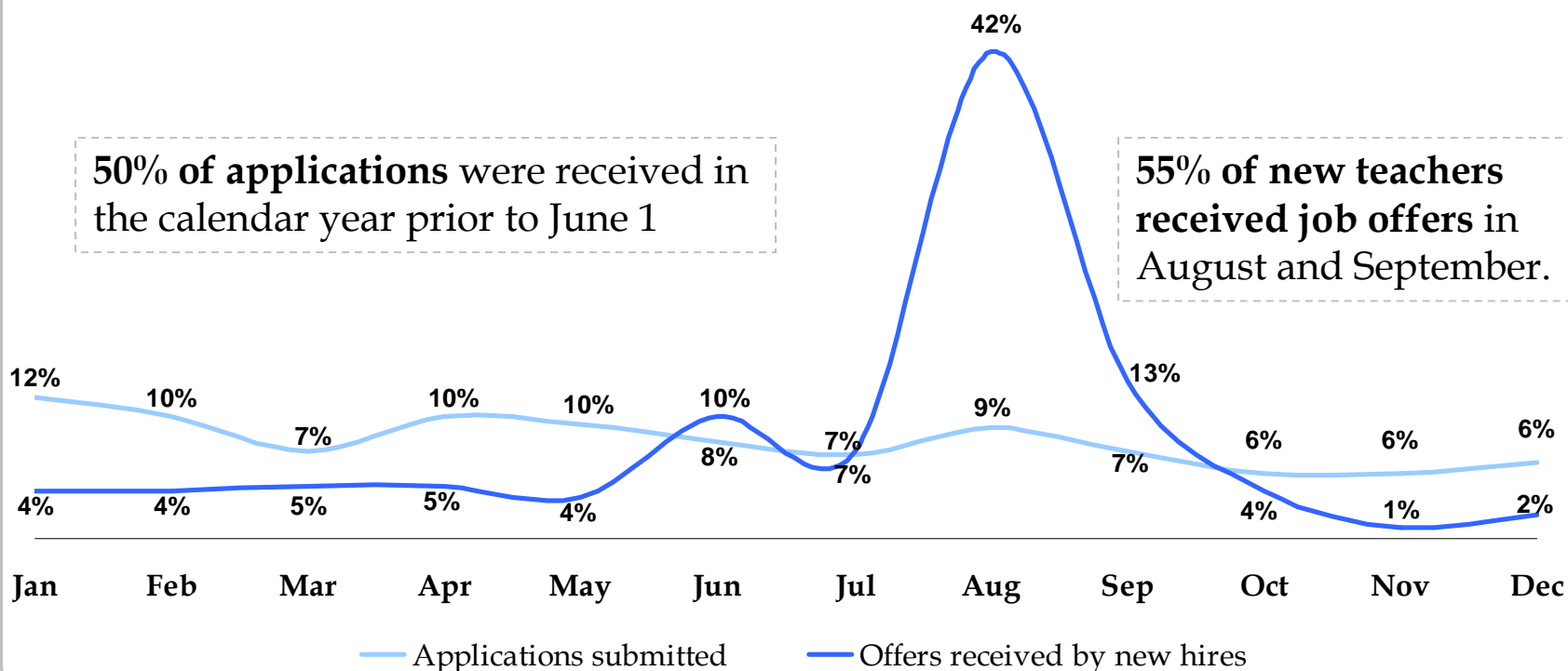
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NPS completes teacher hiring late in the summer months, preventing the district from competing for new talent.



NPS receives half of its applications by the end of May, but the majority of hiring doesn't happen until August and September.

Percent of Applications and Offers, by Month



Prior research by TNTP has shown that to capture the highest-quality applicants, districts must complete the bulk of hiring by May 1.

¹ J. Levin and M. Quinn, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*, (The New Teacher Project, 2003)
Source: TNTP teacher survey (n=202 recent hires with two or fewer years' experience in NPS); survey of unhired applicants (n=432).



Earlier applicants prove to be better teachers in Newark, but schools are losing out on opportunities to hire them.

Recent NPS Hires Rated “Distinguished” or “Proficient”*

84%

of teachers who applied
before June 1

vs.

67%

of teachers who applied
June 1 or later

“Have you ever lost a desirable teacher candidate from outside the school system because you were **unable to make an offer in a timely fashion?**”

73%

of administrators said “Yes.”

* Current teachers with two or fewer years’ experience in NPS. Mid-year applicants from November, December, and January excluded. Source: TNTP teacher survey (before June 1, n=74; June 1 or after, n=102) and administrator survey (n=66).



Applicants – especially in high-need subjects – are withdrawing and declining offers from NPS because of the late hiring timeline.

Of applicants who withdrew their application or did not accept an offer from NPS:

55% reported that **the interviewing and hiring timeline** was “important” or “very important” in their decision to do so, *including 67% of those with GPAs above 3.0.*

64% reported that they decided to withdraw or rescind their application because they **received an earlier job offer elsewhere**, *including 82% of those in high-need subject areas.*

53% were credentialed in **math, science or special education.**



High-quality candidates who withdrew or did not accept an offer cite the district's late hiring timeline as a primary reason.

X Withdrew or Did Not Accept an Offer



Biochemistry major with 3.7 GPA, Master's degree, five years' teaching experience, and science credential. The hiring timeline was "very important" in decision to withdraw. Now teaching in West New York.

"They need to move the hiring process more quickly and efficiently. In June, they already know who's retiring. Why wait until August to hire?"



Former Newark student teacher with a 3.9 GPA who was "very satisfied" with student teaching experience but "very dissatisfied" with the NPS hiring process. Currently teaching in Scotch Plains.

"I desperately wanted to teach in NPS, but, as a recent college graduate with no full-time employment or health insurance, I simply could not afford to turn down multiple job offers from other districts to see if NPS needed or wanted me as a teacher in the final weeks of August, when NPS notoriously makes their hiring decisions."



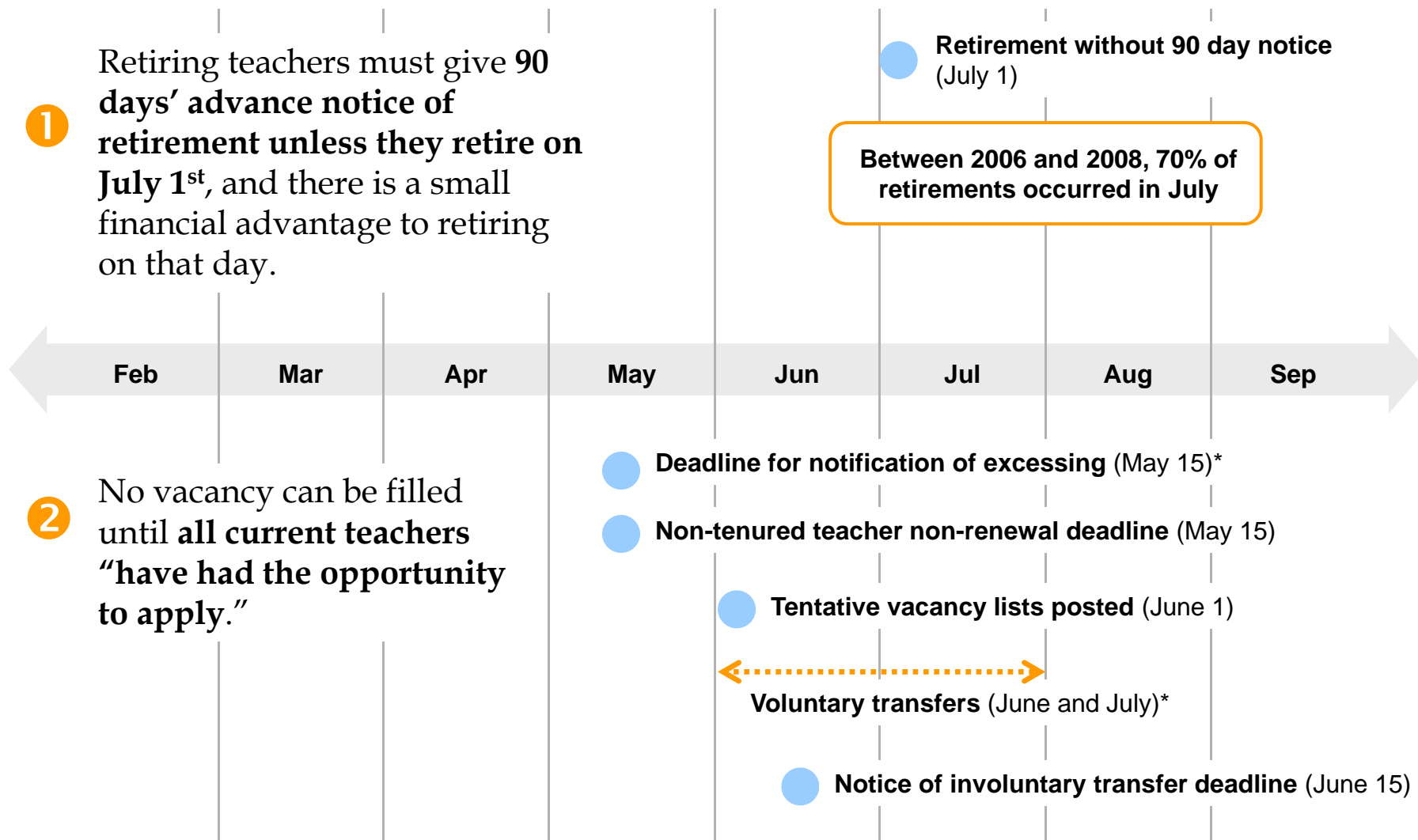
Late retirements and internal teacher placement practices cause delays in external hiring.

1

Retiring teachers must give **90 days' advance notice of retirement unless they retire on July 1st**, and there is a small financial advantage to retiring on that day.

2

No vacancy can be filled until **all current teachers "have had the opportunity to apply."**



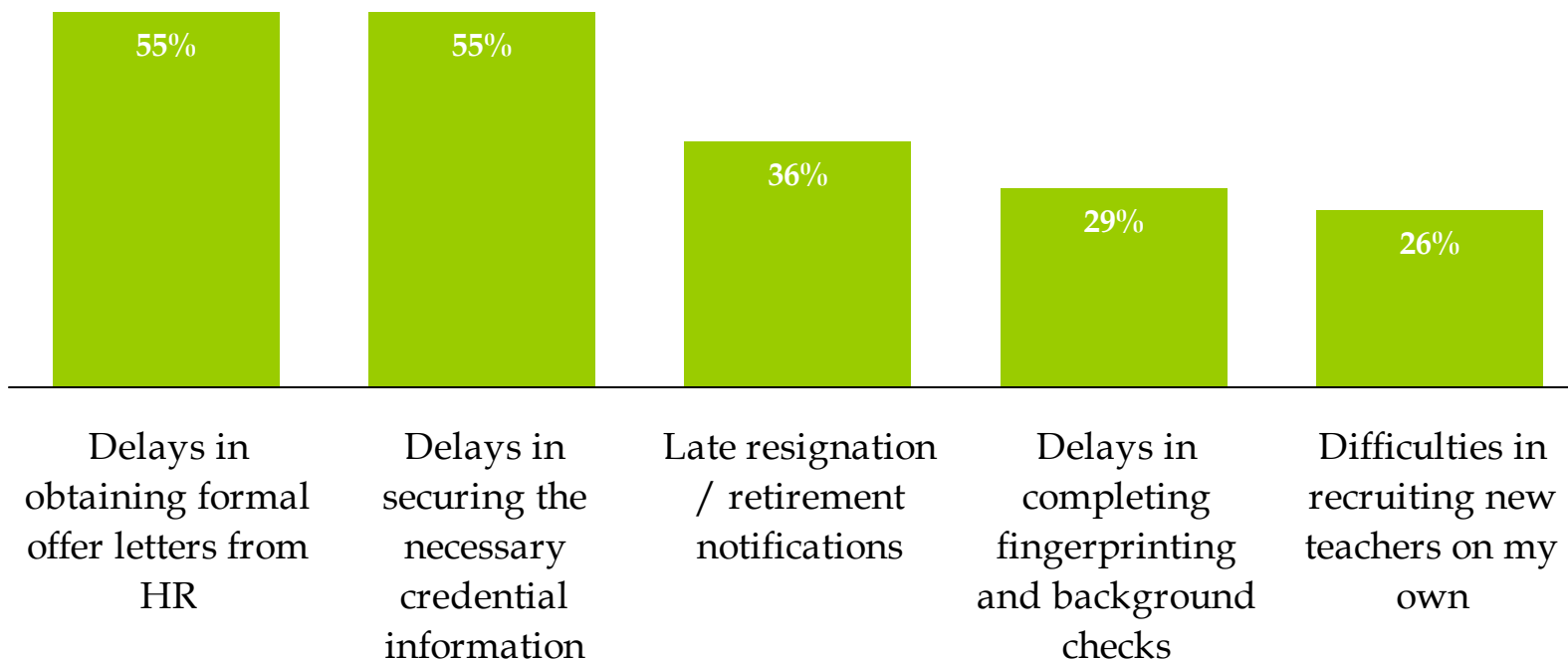
* There is no contractual deadline for notification of excessing or completion of voluntary transfers.

Source: NPS HRS data; 2006-09 NPS-NTU collective bargaining agreement (X.7.A-C; V.19.).



Principals also report significant delays because of credentialing and HR paperwork.

Top Five Factors Contributing to Hiring Delays at NPS Schools*



* Multiple responses possible.

Source: TNTP administrator survey (n=62).

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Although teachers prefer to interview for new positions, NPS places the majority of its internal transfers without consent, leading to widespread dissatisfaction.



NPS-NTU policy guarantees teachers the opportunity to apply for transfer and allows for discretion from school-level administration...

POLICY

- “Individuals shall not be placed in any position (permanent or acting) until such time as the position has been properly posted and all unit employees have had the opportunity to apply for such positions.” (V.19.)
- Tentative vacancy lists are posted “on or about June 1st.” Teachers may apply for voluntary transfers, and may list their preferred schools. (V.6.A.1-2)
- “Any employee who has applied for but not been granted a transfer, will be given an explanation, in writing, by the Human Resources Department.” (V.6.A.3.)
- There are no specific provisions on excessing or internal placement priority order.



... but in practice, NPS implements a restrictive transfer system controlled by central HRS and SLT administrators.*

PRACTICE

Excessed teachers

- In cases of budget cuts, program changes, school closures, or other cuts, the least senior teacher within a subject area is excessed.
- Excessed teachers have first priority for any vacancy for which they are qualified. If no vacancies exist for a tenured excessed teacher, a current non-tenured teacher in the same license area may be “bumped” out of his/her position.
- HRS or SLT administrators* may place excessed teachers into vacancies with or without the consent of the principal or the teacher. Excessed teachers are rarely able to interview at their new schools.

Voluntary transfers

- Any teacher can request to move schools, but voluntary transfers may only be completed with the consent of both the sending and receiving principals.
- Most voluntary transfers have the opportunity to interview at their new school, but some are placed by HRS or SLT administration.*

Involuntary transfer

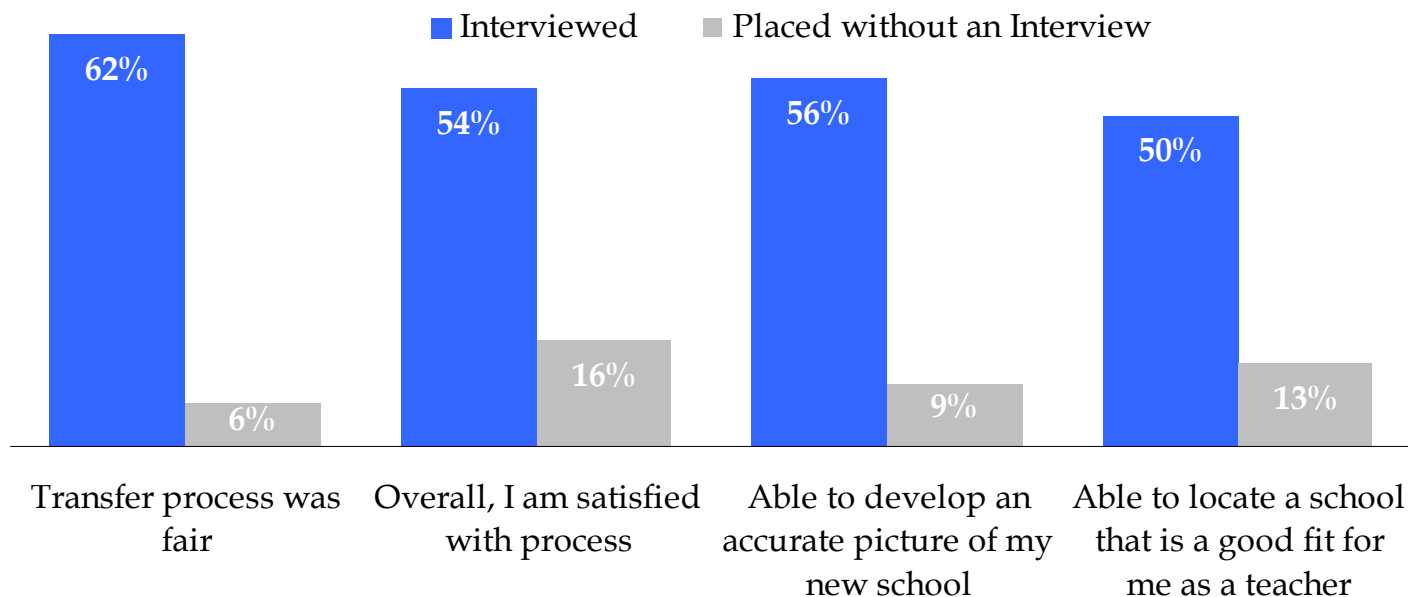
- Teachers facing disciplinary or Donaldson hearings may be moved out of their current schools, although according to HRS staff, this rarely or never occurs.

Source: Discussions with HRS staff. * Note: SLTs are no longer in use in Newark.



Transfer teachers who interview for their jobs are better able to find strong matches and are more satisfied with their new positions than those placed without an interview.

Transfer Teachers' Opinions on the Process*



Note: Almost all excessed or involuntarily transferred teachers are placed into new positions without an interview. Most voluntary transfers are able to interview, but some are placed without interviews.

* Responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree."

Source: TNTP teacher survey (Interviewed n=27; Placed n=32).

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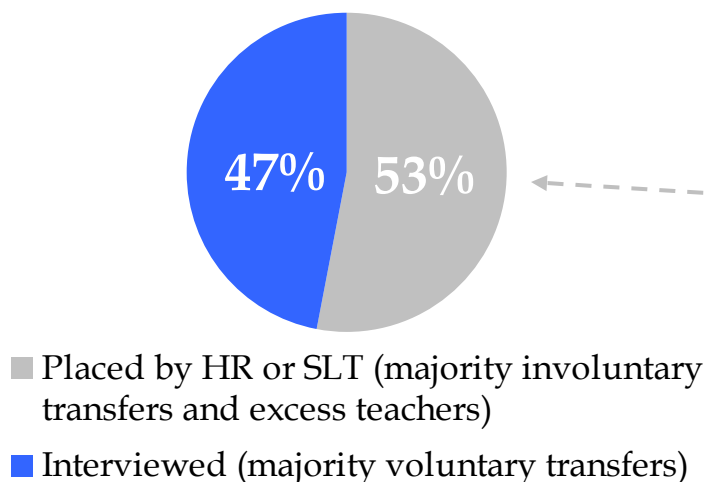
Unfortunately, the majority of Newark's teacher transfers are completed *without* interviews or teachers' school preferences.

339 teachers transfer schools each year, on average.

18% of NPS teachers have transferred or applied to transfer in the past five years.

9% of teachers plan to apply for a transfer at the end of this school year.

Transferring Teachers by Placement Method



Of teachers placed by HR:

86% were not able to provide a list of preferred schools to HR.

81% did not have the chance to visit their new schools before being placed.

"Teachers are not given the opportunity to choose their schools... They are assigned without meeting with the principal of the other school to discuss school assignment and fit!" –NPS teacher

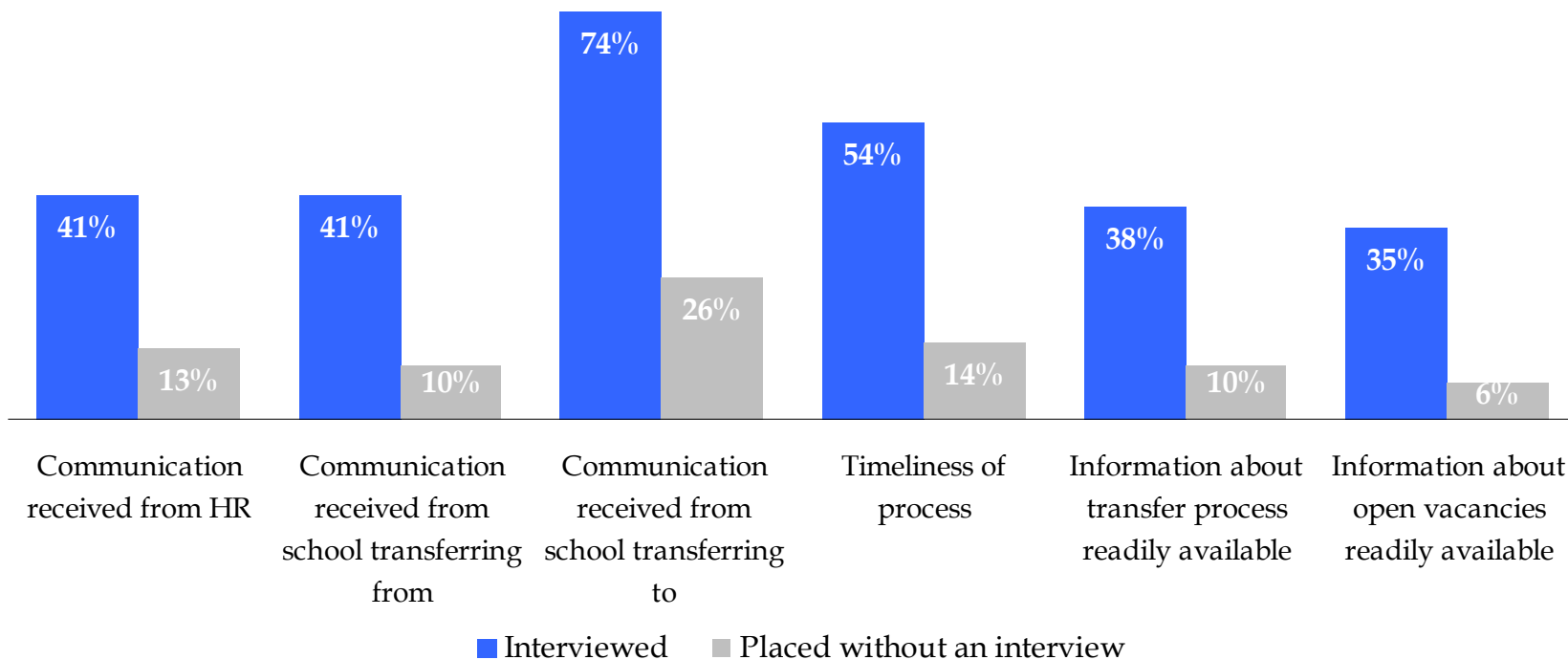




Weak communication from HRS exacerbates the difficulties faced by force-placed teachers and could be improved for all transfers.

18% of teachers who have been excessed or involuntarily transferred reported that they were **never given a reason why**, despite a contractual provision requiring principals to do so (V.6.C.1).

Transfer Teacher Opinions on Communication Around the Process*



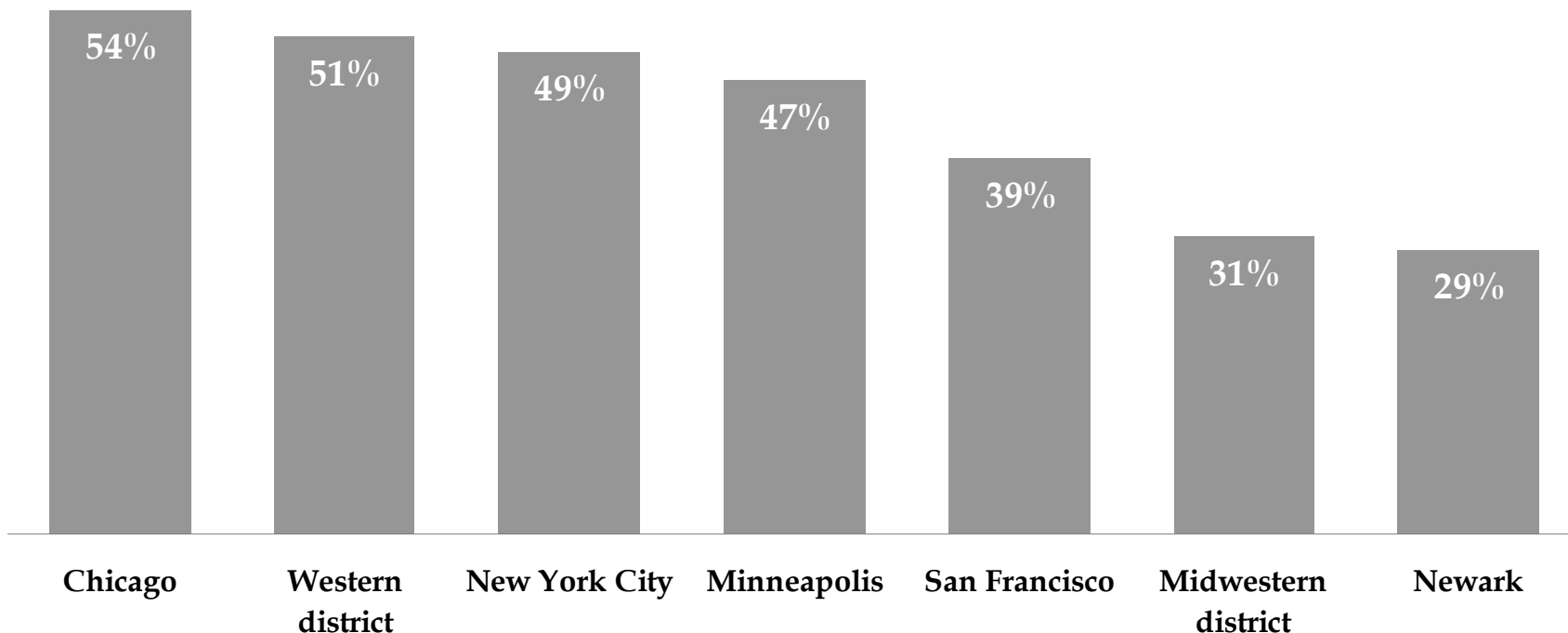
* Responded "Satisfied" or "Very satisfied" / "Agree" or "Strongly agree"

Source: TNTP teacher survey (Interviewed n=27; Placed n=31).



Newark fares worse than comparable districts in helping transferring teachers find a school that is a good match for them.

“The selection process helped me locate a school that is a good fit for me as a teacher.”*



* Responded "Strongly agree" or "Agree."

Source: TNTP teacher survey (n=68 excessed and voluntary transfer teachers); other TNTP research.

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Ultimately, force-placed teachers are almost *twice as likely* to plan to leave NPS than teachers who have been placed with mutual consent.

**Transfer Teachers Who Plan to Leave NPS Within Five Years,
by Placement Method**

25%

VS.

14%

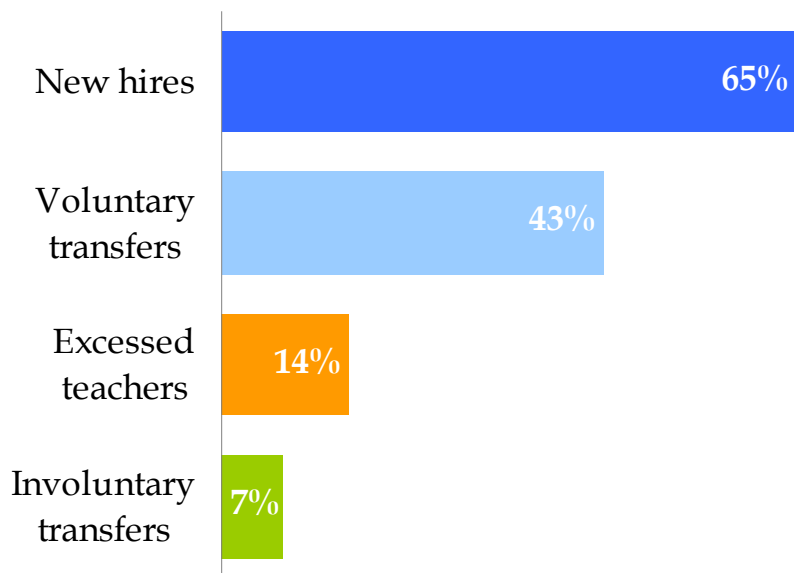
of transfers who were
placed by HR

of transfers who were able
to interview

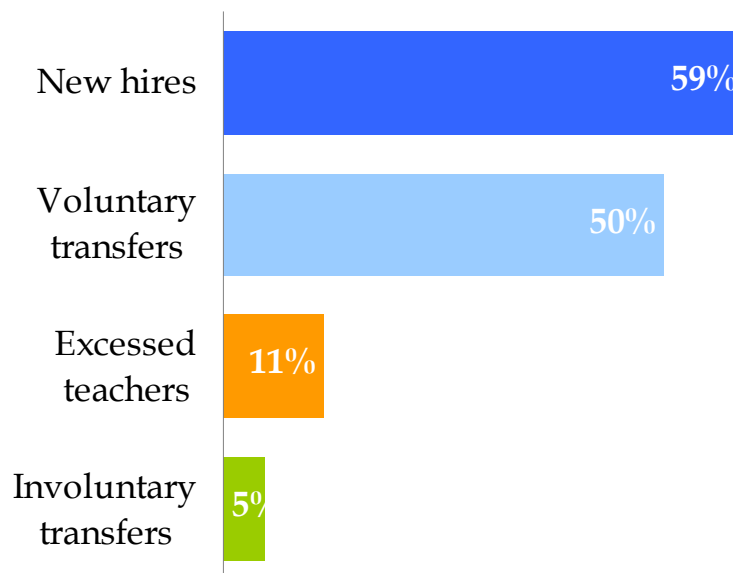


School administrators associate the amount of hiring discretion they have with the quality of the teacher pipeline.

Administrators' Satisfaction with the LEVEL OF DISCRETION They Have to Hire the Teachers They Want*



Administrators' Satisfaction with the QUALITY of Teachers in Each Applicant Pool*



“Transferring an unsatisfactory teacher does not improve the quality of the teacher... it only passes along the headache to another administrator.”

- NPS vice principal



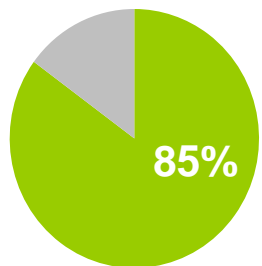
* Responded “Satisfied,” or “Very satisfied.”

Source: TNTP administrator survey (n=70).

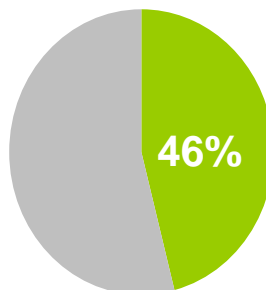


When positions are filled with placements from HRS, they tend to be filled with teachers whom principals do not want.

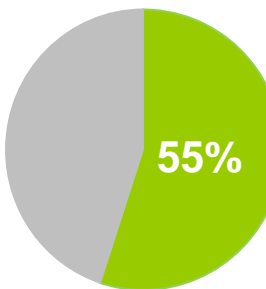
In the past three years:



85% of administrators have had a teacher placed into their school **without an interview**.



46% have had to hire an internal candidate over a **more desirable external candidate**.



55% report having had to take a **less desirable candidate** who was placed by HR.

Administrator Satisfaction with Quality of Candidates, by Placement Method*

11%

Satisfied with those placed **without an interview**

VS.

76%

Satisfied with those **interviewed and selected**

Source: TNTP administrator survey (n=79).

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* Responded "Satisfied," or "Very satisfied."



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Despite some differentiation among the teaching force, the NPS evaluation process does not provide any comprehensive or effective method to address poorly performing teachers or reward those who deliver exceptional instruction.



Background: Teacher Evaluation and Remediation in NPS

Evaluation

- The New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6:3-1.21(a)) requires that all teachers be evaluated annually.
- In Newark Public Schools, all teachers are rated on a four-point scale: Distinguished, Proficient, Basic, or Unsatisfactory.

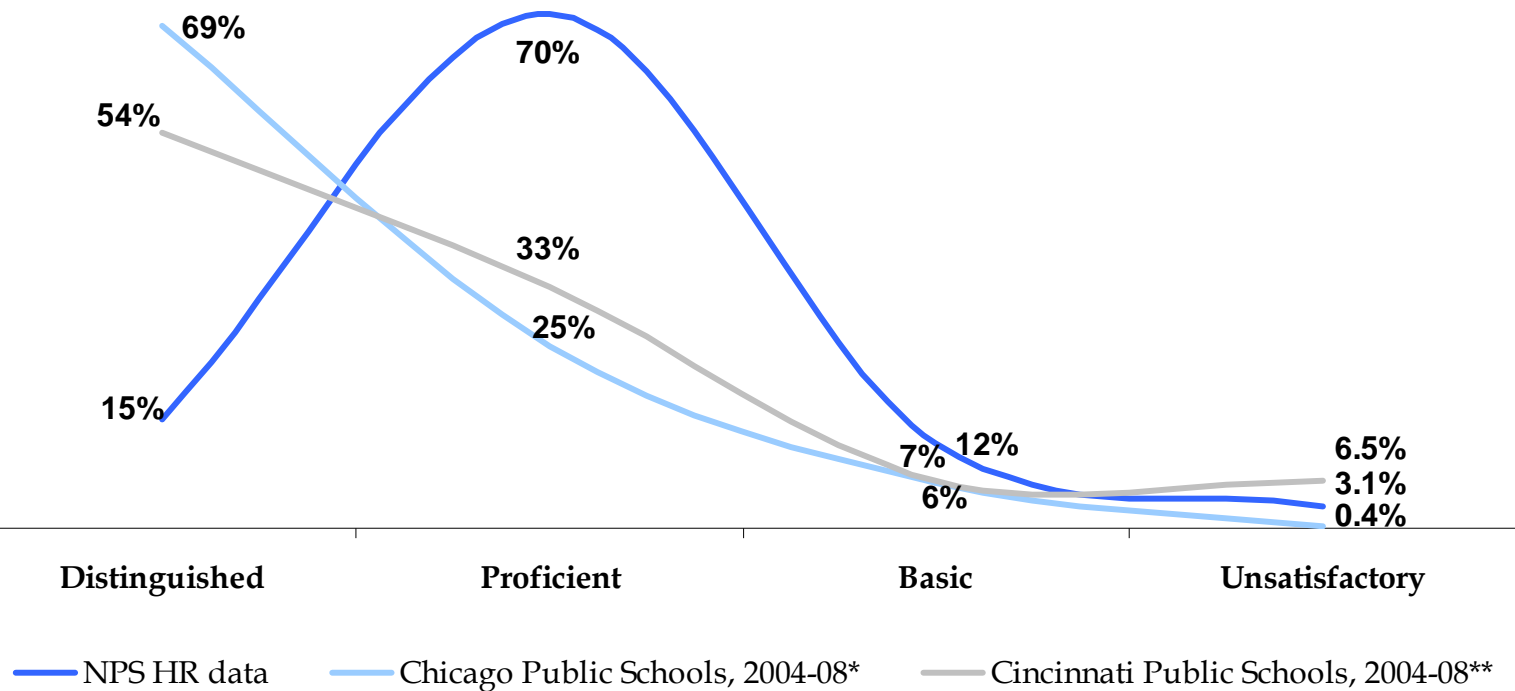
Remediation

- Contractually, evaluators rating teachers “Unsatisfactory” must provide the teachers with recommendations for improvement and support.
- Teachers rated “Unsatisfactory” may appeal for a different evaluator.
- Participation in the Teacher Assistance Program for remediation and improvement of teaching performance is *voluntary*.
- “Tier” system for teachers rated “Unsatisfactory” outlines three levels of continued observation, evaluation, improvement support (including TAP), and potential dismissal proceedings.



The NPS evaluation system provides better differentiation of performance than the systems of some other urban districts.

Distribution of Teacher Evaluation Ratings



* Chicago's four-point scale: "Superior," "Excellent," "Satisfactory," "Unsatisfactory."

** Cincinnati's four-point scale: "Distinguished," "Proficient/Satisfactory," "Not Proficient/Basic," "Unsatisfactory."

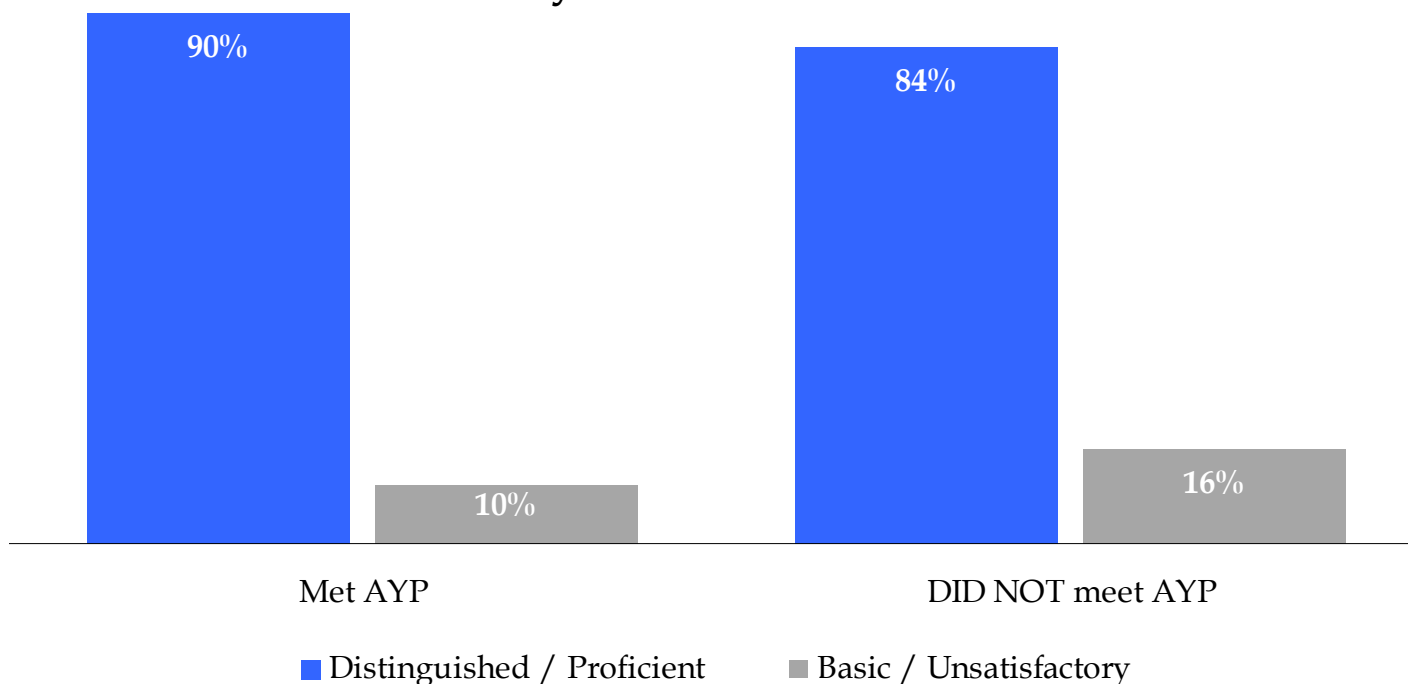
Source: NPS HRS data; other TNTP research.



Despite teachers' high evaluation ratings, many of Newark's schools have difficulty meeting student performance goals.

55% of schools failed to meet AYP in 2007-08.

**Percentage of Teachers Receiving Higher and Lower Ratings,
by School AYP Status**



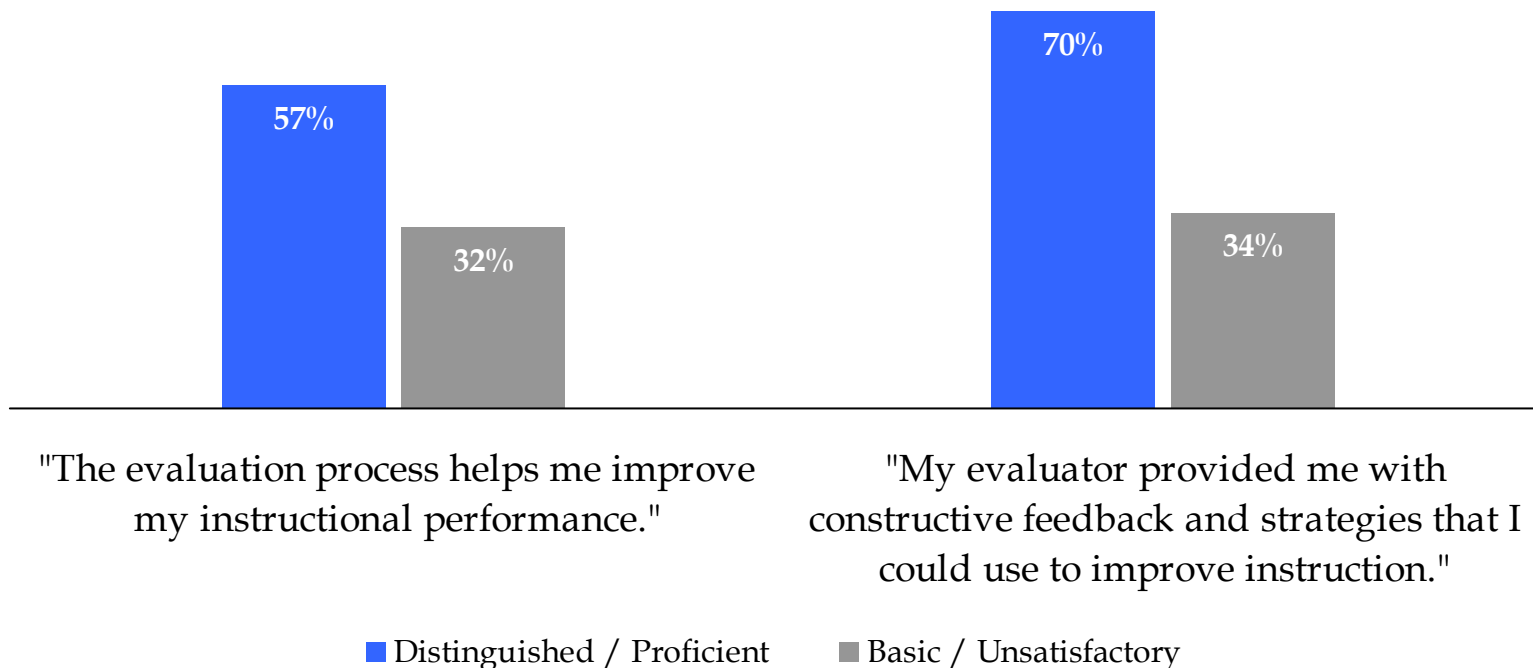
Source: NPS HRS data.

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The evaluation process does not lead to real improvement for struggling teachers.

Teacher Opinions on the Ability of the Evaluation Process to Support Improvement*



Of the 14 teachers who were rated “Unsatisfactory” in either/both of their prior two evaluations, only three have improved to “Proficient.”

* Responded “Strongly agree” or “Agree.”

Source: TNTP teacher survey (n=576).

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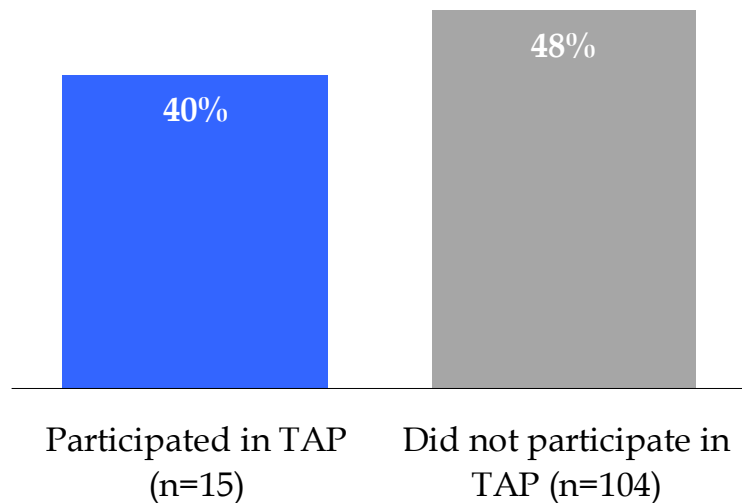
As it is voluntary, participation in formal remediation is infrequent and does not appear to be connected with instructional improvement.

Participants in the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP)*

12% 18 of the 146 teacher respondents who have received a “Basic” rating in the past three evaluation cycles have participated in TAP.

33% 7 of the 21 respondents who have received an “Unsatisfactory” rating in the past three cycles have participated in TAP.

Percent of Teachers Rated “Basic” or “Unsatisfactory” in Prior Two Evaluations Who Improved to at Least “Proficient” in Their Most Recent Evaluation



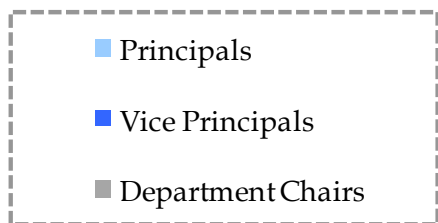
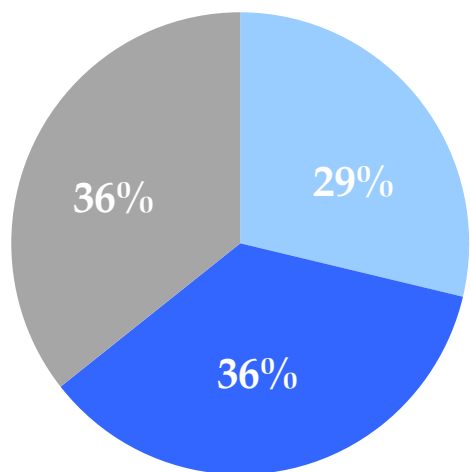
* The new “tier” system may increase required participation in TAP.

Source: TNTP teacher survey.

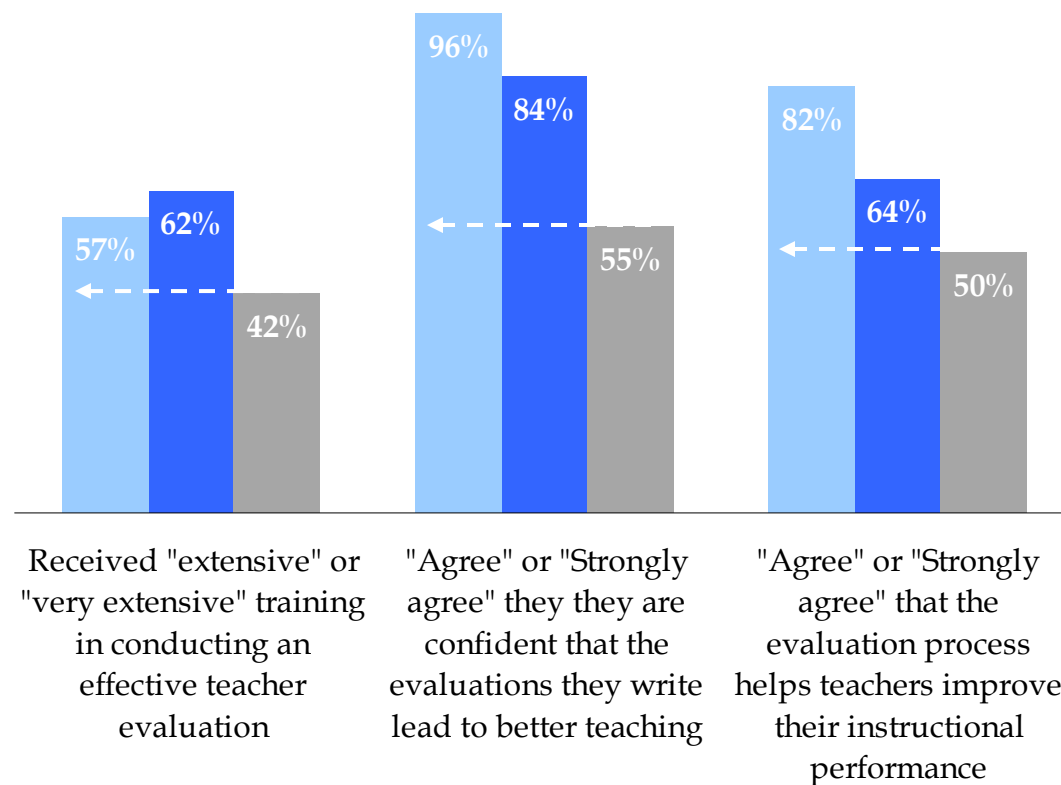


Lack of evaluation training for department chairs – who conduct over a third of teacher evaluations – may contribute to failure to provide teachers with meaningful feedback for improvement.

“Who conducted your most recent formal evaluation?”*



Opinions on Evaluation Training, by Administrator Type



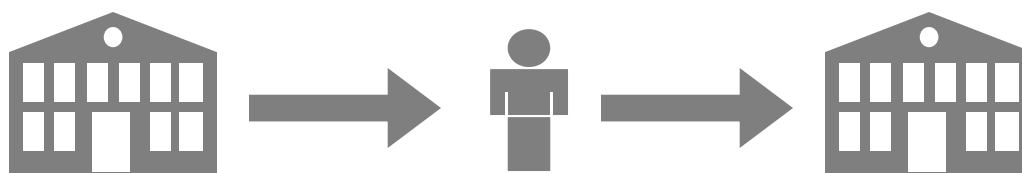
* Multiple responses possible.

Source: TNTP teacher survey (n=632) and administrator survey (Principals n=28; VPs n=45; Dept Chairs n=12).

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Without methods for improving teachers, some principals actively work outside the system to transfer or excess poor performers.



23% of administrators report having **encouraged a teacher to transfer** when the teacher was not performing well.

28% of administrators report having **excessed a poor performer**.

17% of administrators say they **“always” or “frequently” excess teachers** when the teachers are not performing well and are not improving.



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Although NPS stands to retain more teachers than historical data suggests, projected retention of the lowest-rated teachers remains high.



To realize dramatic gains in student achievement, districts must retain their most effective teachers, improve the performance of average teachers, and exit the persistent low performers.

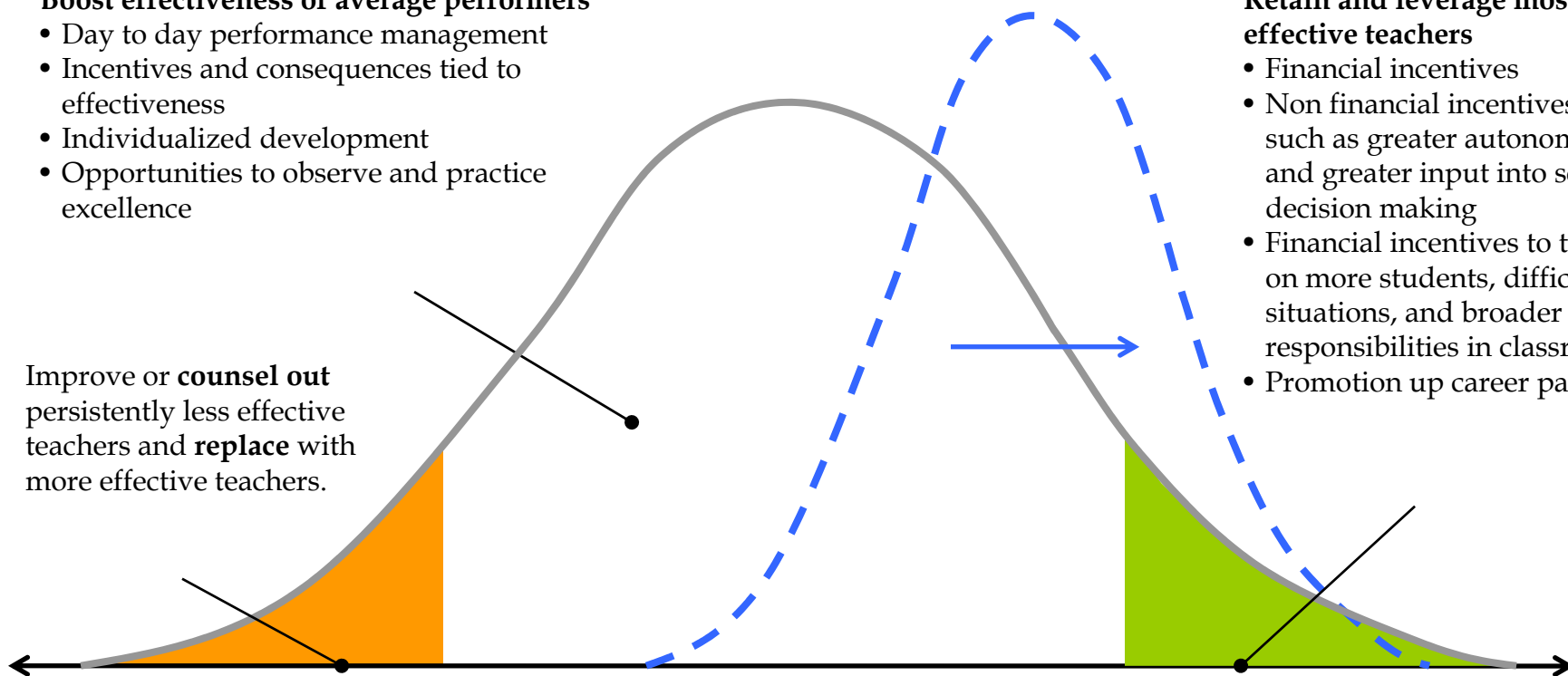
Boost effectiveness of average performers

- Day to day performance management
- Incentives and consequences tied to effectiveness
- Individualized development
- Opportunities to observe and practice excellence

Improve or **counsel out** persistently less effective teachers and **replace** with more effective teachers.

Retain and leverage most effective teachers

- Financial incentives
- Non financial incentives such as greater autonomy and greater input into school decision making
- Financial incentives to take on more students, difficult situations, and broader responsibilities in classroom
- Promotion up career path



Teacher Effectiveness
(e.g., Value Add, Growth, PE Rating)

————— Current performance

- - - - - Potential Performance

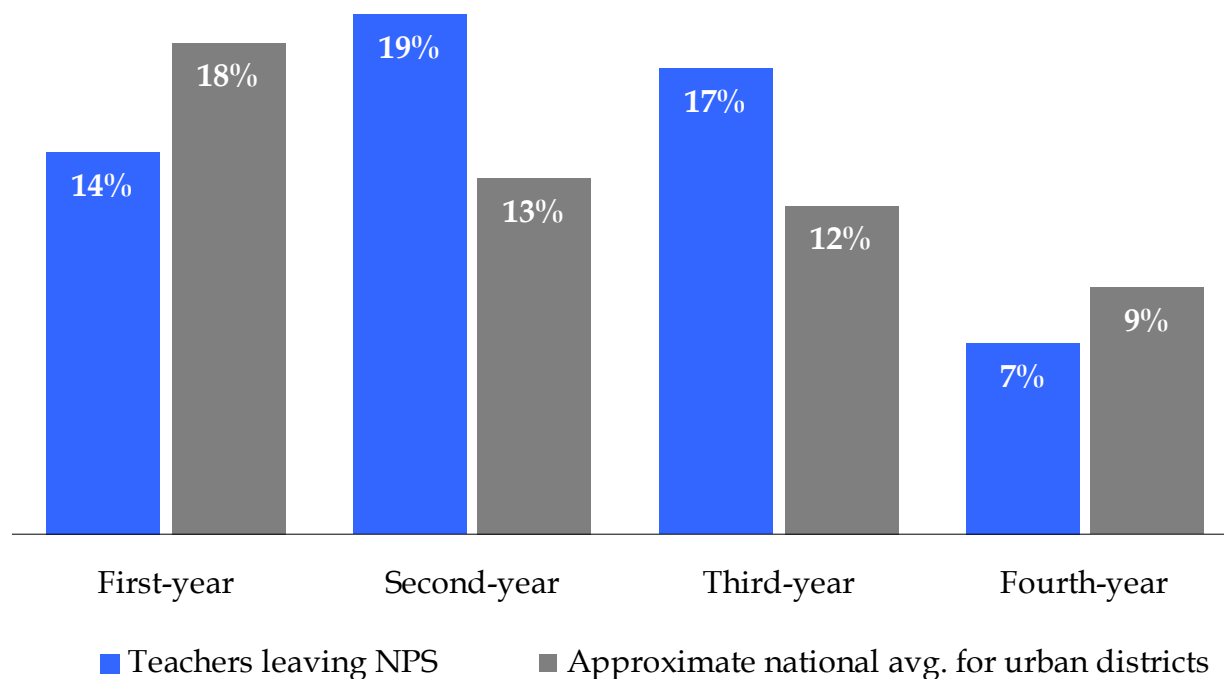


In past years, Newark's rate of teacher attrition has been high, and the current teacher population is nearing retirement.

10%

of NPS teachers leave the district every year.

NPS Teacher Retention in 2007-08, Compared to National Urban Averages



11% of NPS teachers have more than 25 years of experience.

58 is the median age of current NPS teachers.*

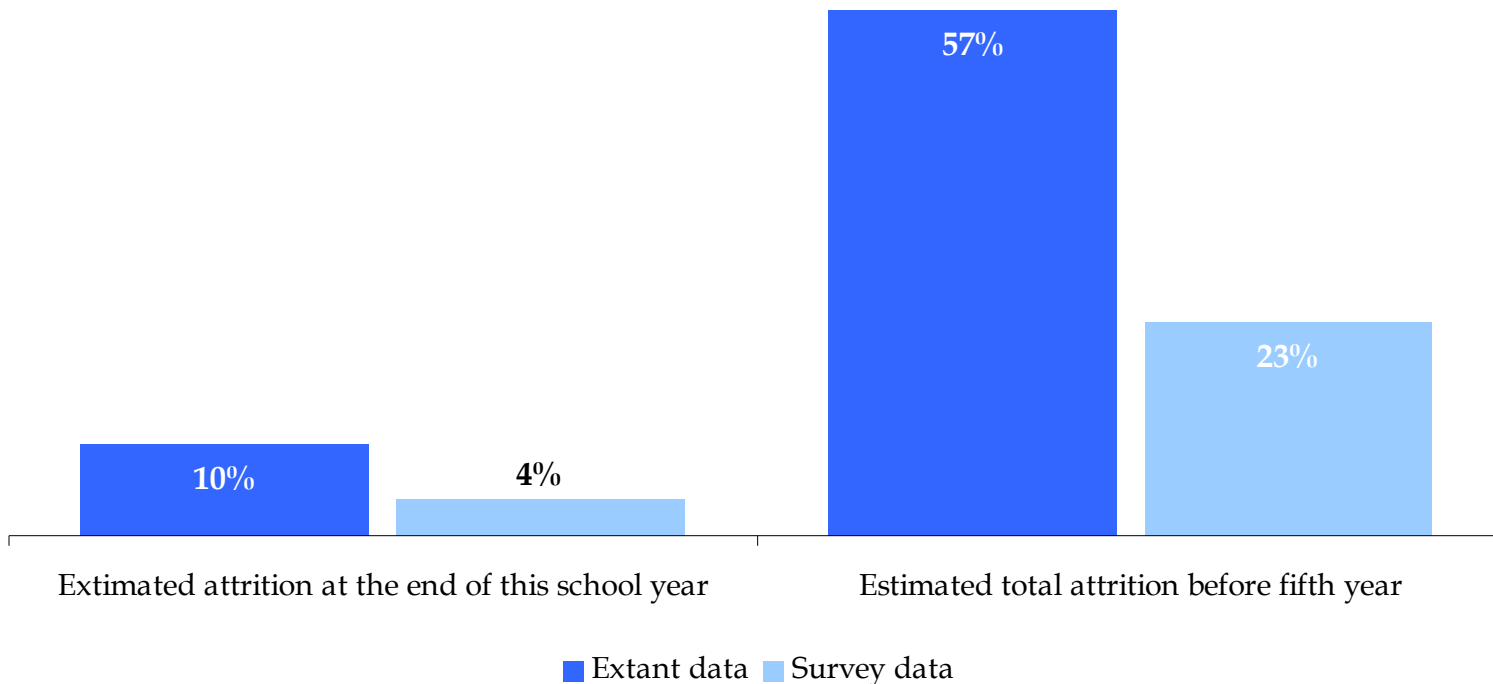
Source: NPS HRS data.

*According to HRS staff.



Survey responses suggest current teachers are planning to stay in the district longer than they have in the past.

Teacher Planned Retention, by Data Source



51% of NPS teachers are planning to stay **until they retire**.

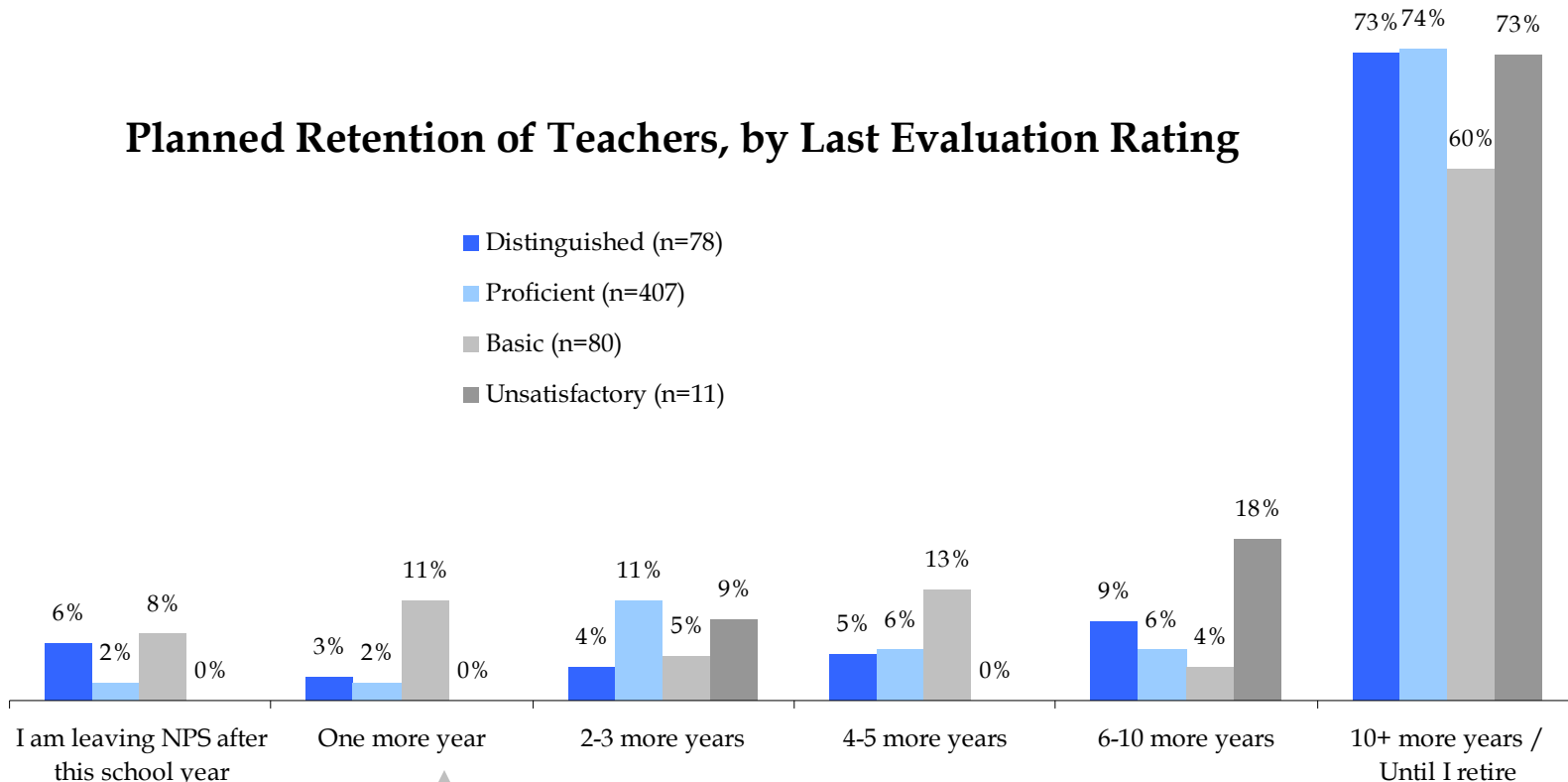
Source: NPS HRS data; TNTP teacher survey (n=687).

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There appears to be little difference in the planned retention of high- vs. low-rated teachers.

Planned Retention of Teachers, by Last Evaluation Rating



None of the 11 survey respondents who received “Unsatisfactory” ratings plans to resign after this school year or after one more year.

Source: TNTP teacher survey (n=576).



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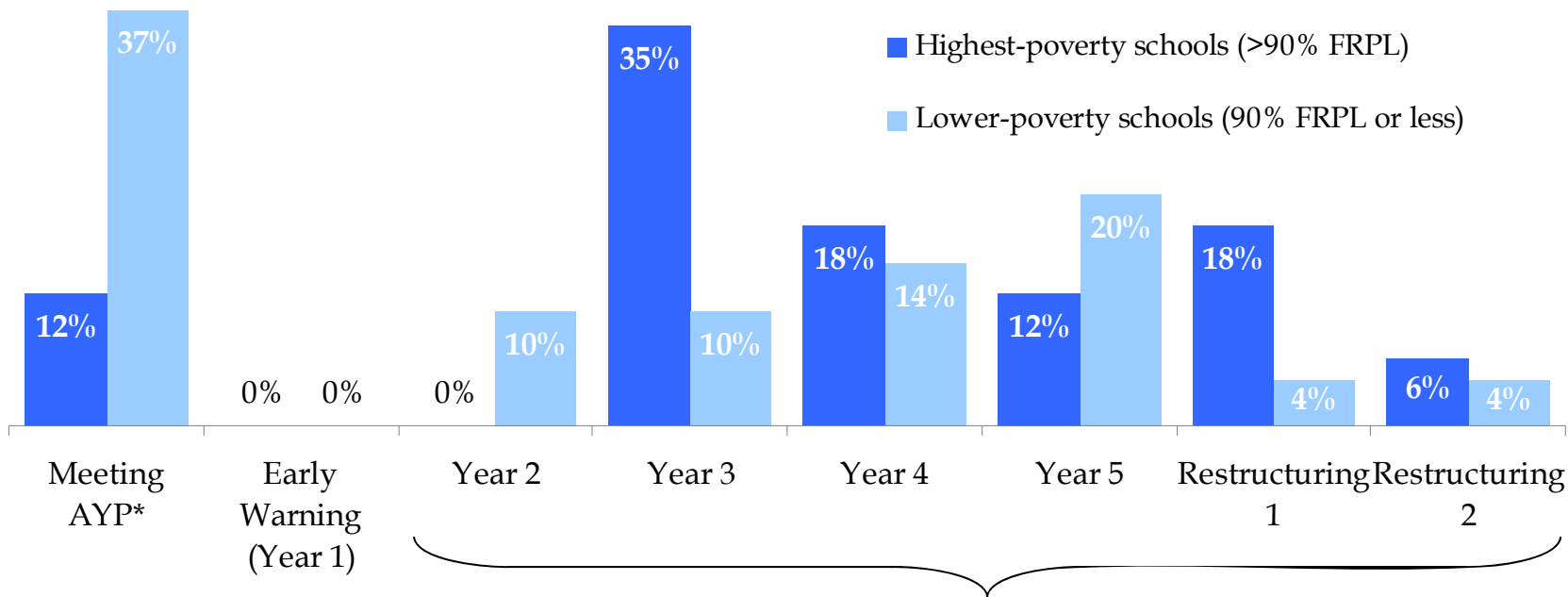
Appendix

The outcomes of ineffective hiring, staffing, and evaluation practices are even more pronounced in Newark's highest-poverty schools.



Newark's highest-poverty schools are also those with the most pressing need for effective teachers.

Percent of Eligible NPS Schools in Each Year of Improvement Status Under NCLB, by Poverty Level



88% of the **highest-poverty schools** have failed to meet AYP for two or more years, but only **63%** of **lower-poverty schools** have done so.*

* To be removed from Improvement Status, a school must meet AYP for two consecutive years.

Source: NPS HRS data; New Jersey Department of Education school report cards.



Teachers in the highest-poverty schools plan to leave NPS at higher rates, and these vacancies are filled by internal transfers.

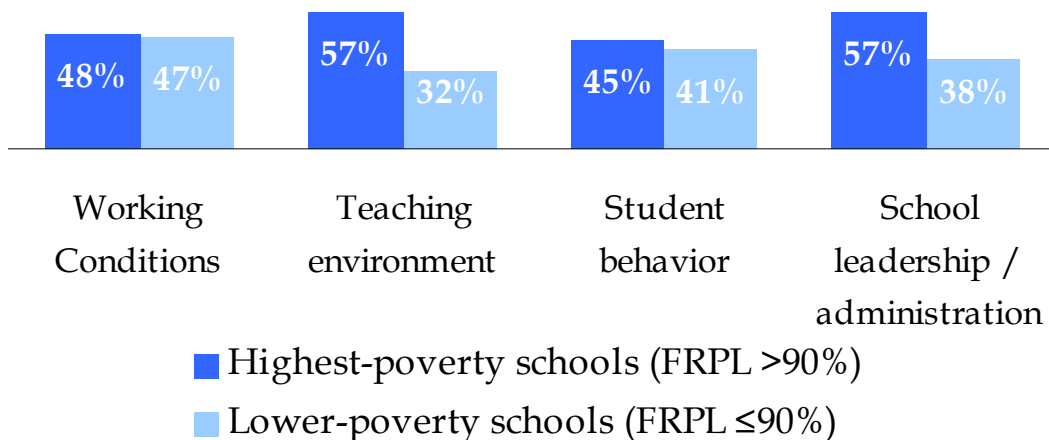
Percentage of first-year teachers who plan to leave within five years

43% vs. **30%**

Highest-poverty schools
($>90\%$ FRPL; $n=28$)

Lower-poverty schools
($\leq 90\%$ FRPL; $n=33$)

Reasons Teachers Plan to Leave NPS in <3 Years, by School Poverty Level



Although the highest-poverty schools account for only

19%

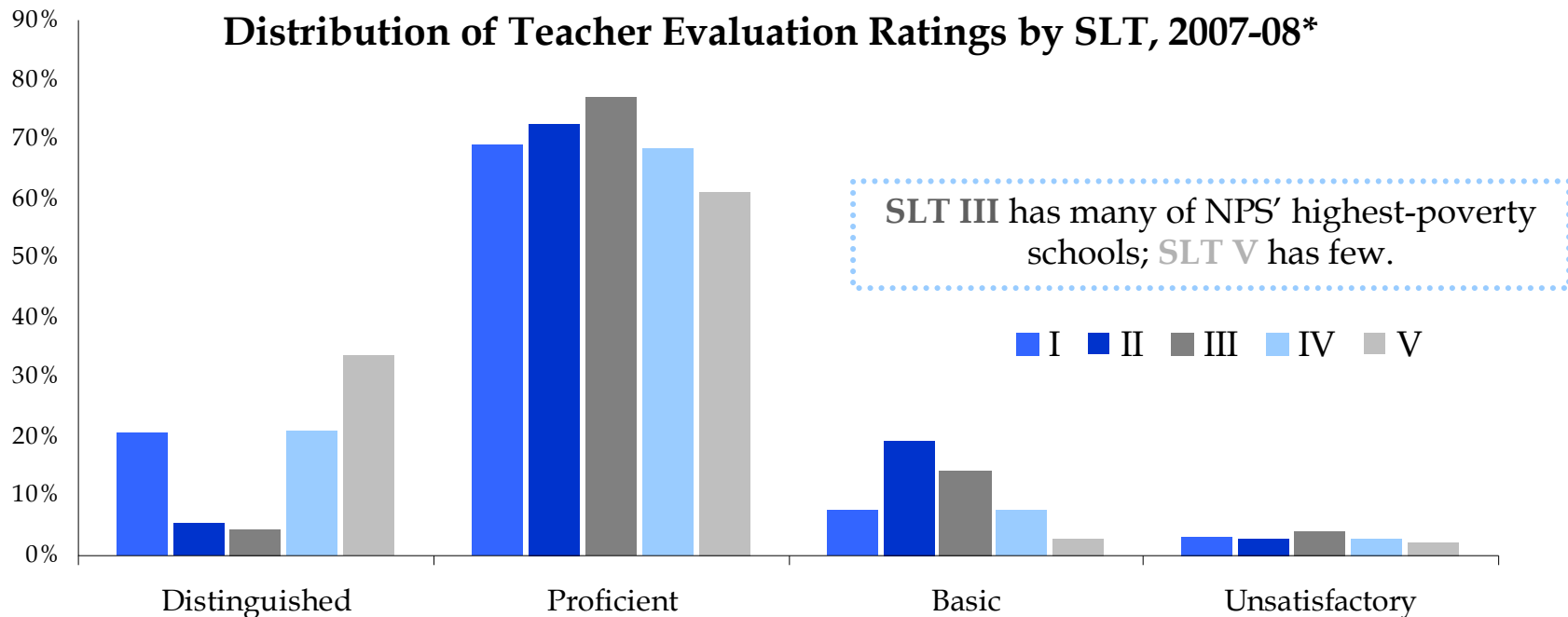
of Newark's teachers, they received

28%

of teacher transfers in 2007-08.



Ultimately, lower-rated teachers end up in the SLTs with the highest-poverty schools.*



“The evaluation process helps me improve my instructional performance.”**

44%

of teachers in the highest-poverty schools agree.

vs.

56%

of teachers in lower-poverty schools agree.

* Note: SLTs are no longer in use in Newark. ** Responded “Strongly agree” or “Agree.”

Source: NPS HRS data; TNTP teacher survey (highest-poverty n=196; lower-poverty n=216).



Principals at these schools report having received less training and support (except pre-training).

Percentage of Administrators Who Received Training or Mentoring, by School Poverty Level

	Highest-poverty Schools (FRPL >90%)	Lower-poverty Schools (FRPL ≤90%)
Mentoring	47%	68%
Induction	40%	50%
Pre-Training	30%	18%
Evaluation Training*	56%	61%
"I did not receive training"	21%	15%

* "Very extensive" or "Extensive."

Source: TNTP administrator survey (highest-poverty n=43; lower-poverty n=40).

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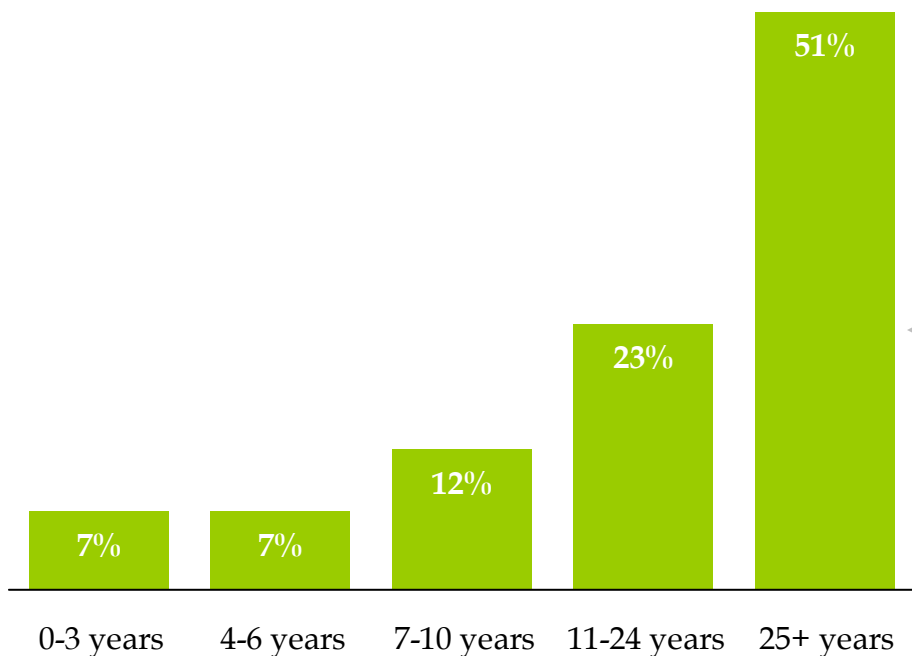
Appendix

NPS administrators are nearing retirement, but the district may not have a reliable pipeline from which to cultivate new school leaders.



Newark's principals have many years' experience; half already qualify for retirement.

NPS Principals' Years of Experience in the District



51%
of NPS principals have
**more than 25 years of
experience** in the district,
enough to qualify for
retirement.



Vice principals are well-qualified for the principalship, but less than half would like to become principals in NPS.

83%

of current principals
**have been vice
principals.**

60%

of vice principals **hold
advanced degrees** in
school administration.

96%

of vice principals **hold
principal licenses.**

47%

of vice principals **would like to become principals in NPS.**



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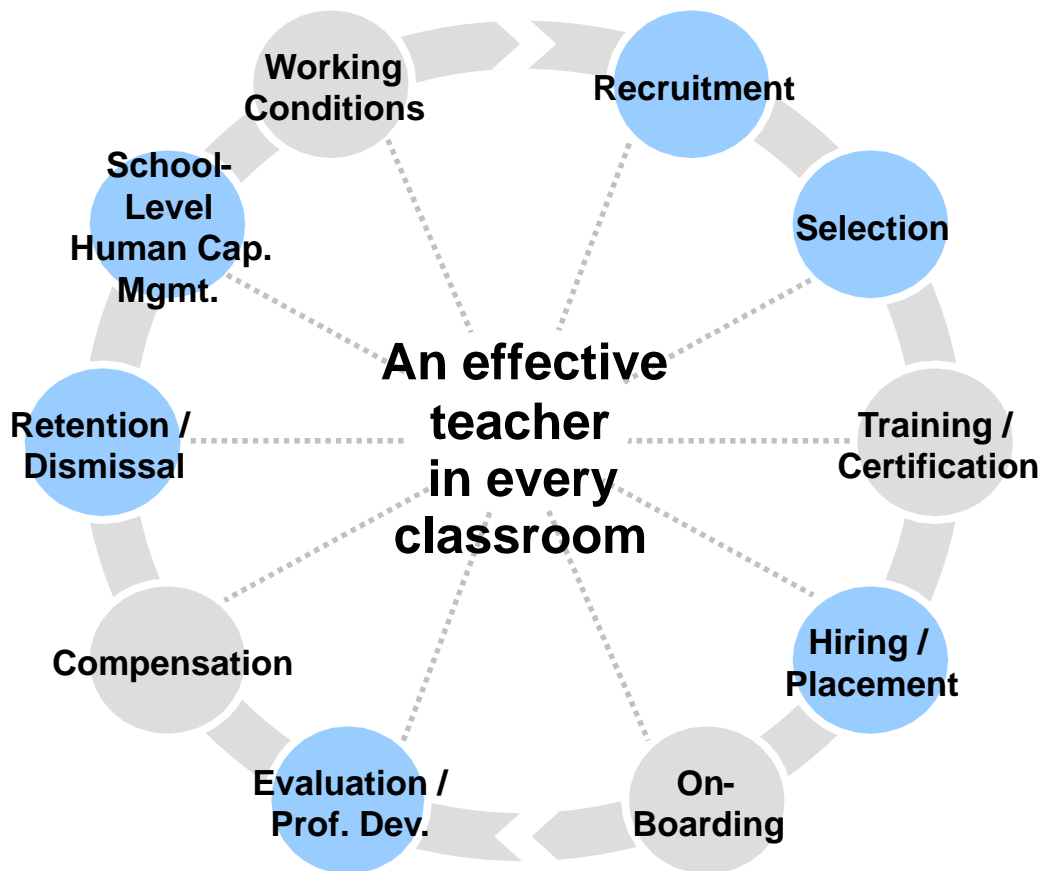


Recommendations

Appendix



Based on these findings, the following recommendations aim to support NPS in increasing the number of effective teachers in Newark classrooms.





Summary of Recommendations

- 1 Improve customer service and communication both to new applicants and to current NPS teachers.
- 2 Move-up the hiring timeline; provide a specific focus on early hiring for shortage-area candidates and the highest need schools.
- 3 Prioritize school staffing based upon mutual consent.
- 4 Ensure the teacher evaluation process meets its goal of providing differential data, useful feedback and support to help teachers improve. Use performance evaluation data to drive staffing and retention strategy.
- 5 Strategically staff and manage performance at new schools.
- 6 Continue to increase administrator training, induction, and mentorship programs.



Recommendation 1: Improve customer service and communication both to new applicants and to current NPS teachers.



Create a *communication and cultivation plan* that outlines NPS processes for how and when to interact with new applicants. Plan should provide specific staff responsibilities, guidelines for response times, and template emails, as well as “customer” satisfaction goals. District leadership should monitor compliance. For example:

- o All applicants should receive a confirmation of receipt of application within 48 hours of submitting application. Included in this email or letter should be a timeline for eligibility screening, interviewing, and expected hiring decisions.
- o All requests for information from current applicants should be answered within 48 hours.
- o Online vacancy information should be updated daily to reflect all current openings. Enable applicants to view the current status of their applications online.
- o Desirable shortage area candidates who cannot be offered contracts within two weeks of application should receive focused cultivation (intense communication) in the form of personal phone calls, opportunities to speak with teachers and school administrators, and any additional information about working in NPS.
- o Connect candidates to principals early in the application process. They are the key in a candidate’s decision to accept or understand an offer
- o Provide candidates with necessary information to complete the requirements for their Certificate of Eligibility (CE) or Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS).



Recommendation 1 (cont.)

To inform and assess the communication and cultivation plan, create and administer an *annual customer service survey* for recent NPS applicants (including recent hires) and internal transfer applicants to identify areas most in need of improvement and to collect benchmark data. Use survey responses to identify and prioritize customer service/communication items for improvement. Align NPS recruitment and hiring strategies/goals to each item Topics to include:

- o Timely responsiveness to new teacher applicants
- o Technical issues with the online application system
- o Satisfaction with access to transfer process information
- o Satisfaction with the open interview system and hiring fairs
- o General customer service quality of all HR-applicant interactions

Compile primary working email addresses for all NPS teachers to facilitate direct communication between district administration and NPS teachers. Use this communication channel sparingly for important announcements only.

Make information about the rules governing voluntary transfers and excessing easily available to NPS teachers, including instructions and “FAQ” on the NPS website, an informational email notice to teachers in advance of the transfer season, and a hotline for questions.

Host information sessions and office hours for all excessed and involuntary transfer teachers to ask questions and better understand the processes for seeking a new placement.



Recommendation 2: Move up the hiring timeline; provide a specific focus on early hiring for shortage-area candidates and the highest need schools.

- ▶ **Use historical vacancy and hiring data, in combination with projected budget and population trends, to project approximate hiring needs for each school year.**
- ▶ **Post known vacancies on March 1 and conclude the voluntary transfer process by March 30th.**
- ▶ **Complete at least 50 percent of new teacher hires (80 percent of new hires in shortage subjects and in the highest need schools) by May 1. Hire teachers in February to fill at least 10 percent of projected vacancies by giving site-specific “early contracts.”**
- ▶ **Evaluate the effectiveness of NPS current practice of offering “non-binding” contracts in keeping applicants until a formal offer can be made.**
- ▶ **Streamline internal processes to shorten the hiring timeline, including:**
 - Preparation and sending of formal offer letters upon receiving recommendation for hire from principals.
 - Turnaround time for fingerprinting and background checks.
 - Collection of the necessary credential information, and contacting applicants directly and immediately about any missing elements.



Recommendation 2 (cont.)



Encourage earlier notification of intent to resign and retire:

- Instate a district-wide informal intent program whereby principals begin conversations with staff with regard to their plans for the upcoming school-year in October, with the goal of having a list of informal resignations and retirements by February 1.
- Provide principals with the training and support to have these conversations and cultivate a school-wide culture where teachers are comfortable sharing this information (and are not penalized, formally or informally, for their choices).
- Provide a financial incentive, immediate payout of sick days, for teachers who choose to make notification of their retirement by February 1. Ensure health benefit coverage is sustained through the summer months.
- Collect this data anonymously in the aggregate at the district level to inform recruitment and early hiring decisions.



Create detailed applicant tracking system that collects applicant data which includes:

- Qualifications and background of teachers who apply, receive offers and accept positions each year
- Link this system with teacher evaluation data so to monitor actual effectiveness of new hires
- Use data to prioritize and evaluate recruitment and hiring in future years







Recommendation 3: Prioritize school staffing based on mutual consent.

- ▶ Provide all transfer teachers, including excesses and involuntary transfers, the opportunity to interview with principals for open vacancies.**
- ▶ Provide increased job search support to excessed teachers and involuntary transfers in the interview/hiring process.**
- ▶ Provide administrators with increased training on how to select teachers who will best fit their schools' mission and culture.**
- ▶ Complete 70% of all transfers through mutual consent during the next school staffing season, increase to 85% the following year, with the goal of moving the percentage as close to 100% as possible within three years.**
- ▶ When a placement cannot be made according to mutual consent, provide teachers with the opportunity to provide preferences and/or to meet new school administration (and take a school tour) in advance of the transfer date and provide principals with the opportunity to select from among excesses.**






Recommendation 4: Use teacher evaluations to provide feedback and support to help teachers improve, and to drive staffing and retention strategy.

-  **Revisit evaluation process (and any plans for a new process) to ensure that it fairly, accurately and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement, and that it is implemented with integrity.**
 - o Maintain system of multiple, distinct ratings that allow administrators to precisely describe and compare differences in instructional performance
 - o Impact on student achievement should be the predominant factor in teacher evaluations.
-  **Directly link teacher evaluations with targeted professional development to provide support for identified development areas and to eliminate extraneous spending on unnecessary modules.**
-  **Continue the process of incorporating evaluation data into an online data tracking system so that it can be readily accessed by principals to inform staffing decisions (hiring, selection, non-reelection, dismissal).**
-  **When excessing is necessary, allow principals to consider teacher performance data as a criterion.**



Recommendation 4 (cont.)

-  **Ensure that all administrators, including department chairs, are provided extensive training in rigorous teacher performance management, and that this training is refreshed frequently. This performance management training should emphasize not only rigorous teacher evaluation, but also effective methods for using evaluation data to help improve teacher performance (e.g. write meaningful evaluations, provide useful and rigorous feedback that helps teachers improve, develop individual growth plans which are tied to teachers' classroom performance).**
-  **Provide administrators, including department chairs, with additional resources so that they have the time to increase the frequency and duration of classroom observations and provide ongoing feedback and development to teachers.**
-  **Provide schools with differential attrition data so the district and schools are clear on the quality of teachers being retained and lost.**
 - o Provide incentives to schools that are able to boost the retention of their highest-performing teachers.
 - o Provide administrators with support needed to improve satisfactory teachers and exit those who cannot improve



Recommendation 5: Strategically staff and manage performance at new schools.

- ▶ Make all assignments at new schools through a school-based interview process and the consent of principal and teacher.**
- ▶ Provide principals with support necessary to effectively execute the performance management system as outlined above.**
- ▶ Set school-wide goals and provide incentives for successful differential retention of high performing teachers (i.e. high retention of the strongest performers and lower retention of poor performers who cannot be improved).**



Recommendation 6: Continue to increase administrator training, induction, and mentorship programs.

- ▶ Expand the provision of training, induction, and mentoring to all principals, vice principals and department chairs.**
- ▶ Establish evaluative metrics for administrator training, induction, and mentorship programs. Use survey and evaluation data to measure the effectiveness of the training opportunities.**
- ▶ Cultivate a larger pool of talented aspiring principals through:**
 - o Continuation of the Leadership Development Program,
 - o Exploring a partnership with New Leaders for New Schools,
 - o Expanded recruitment of principals from New Jersey and beyond.



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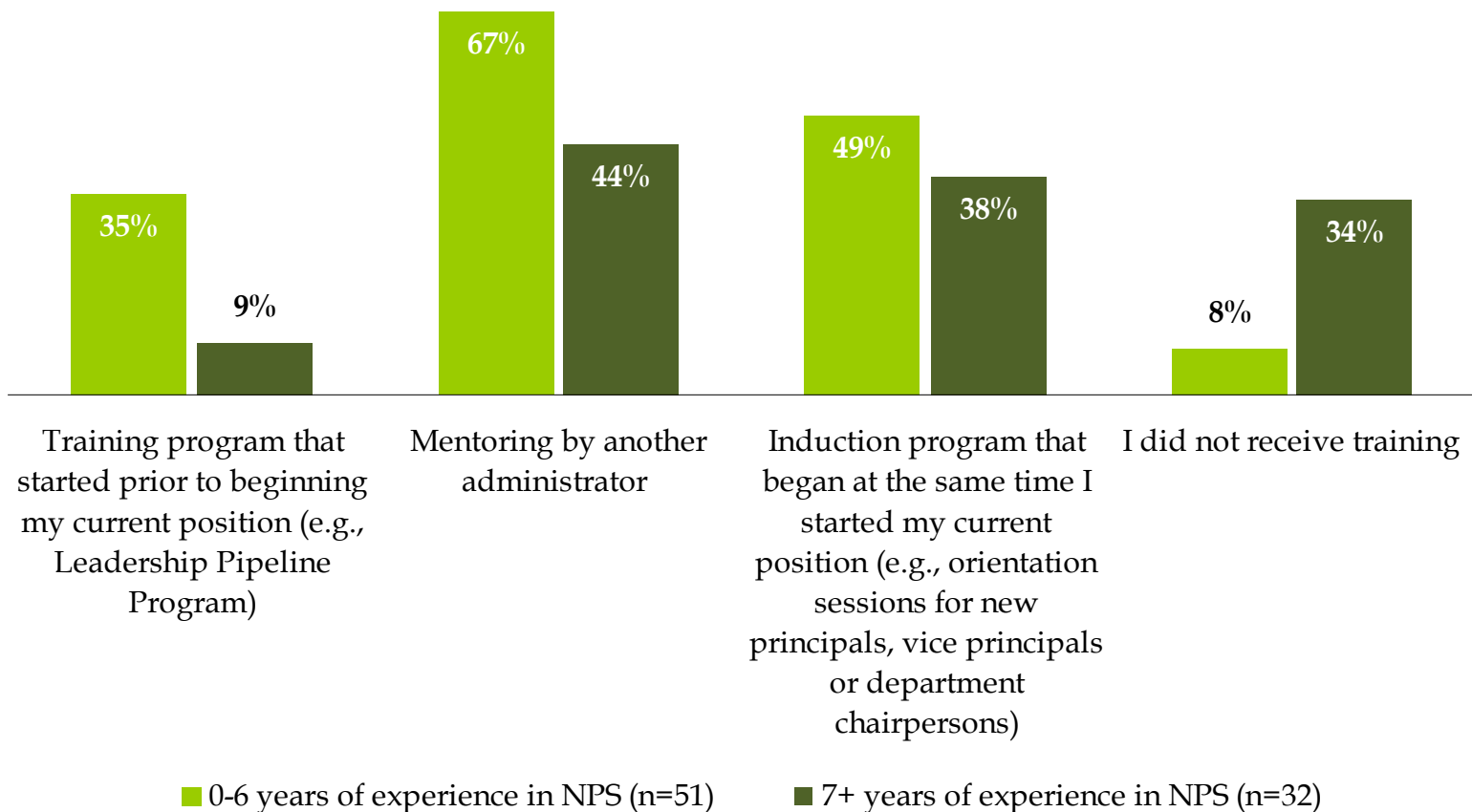


Appendix



Appendix A: Access to training experiences has increased dramatically for newer administrators.

“What Type of Training Did You Receive Upon Being Hired as a Principal, Vice Principal or Department Chairperson in NPS?”



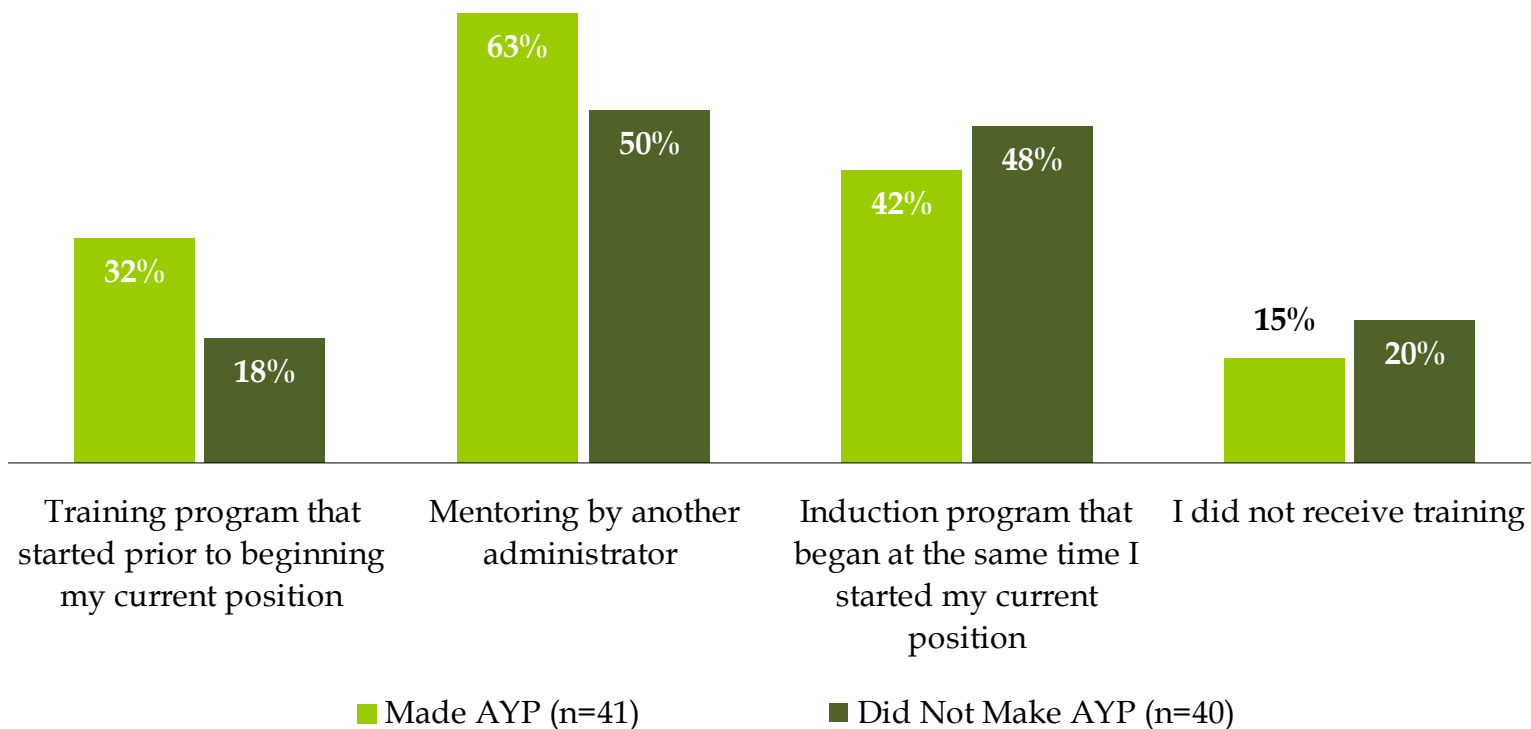
Source: TNTP administrator survey.

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Schools that made AYP are more likely to have administrators who had pre-training and mentoring.

“What Type of Training Did You Receive Upon Being Hired as a Principal, Vice Principal or Department Chairperson in NPS?”

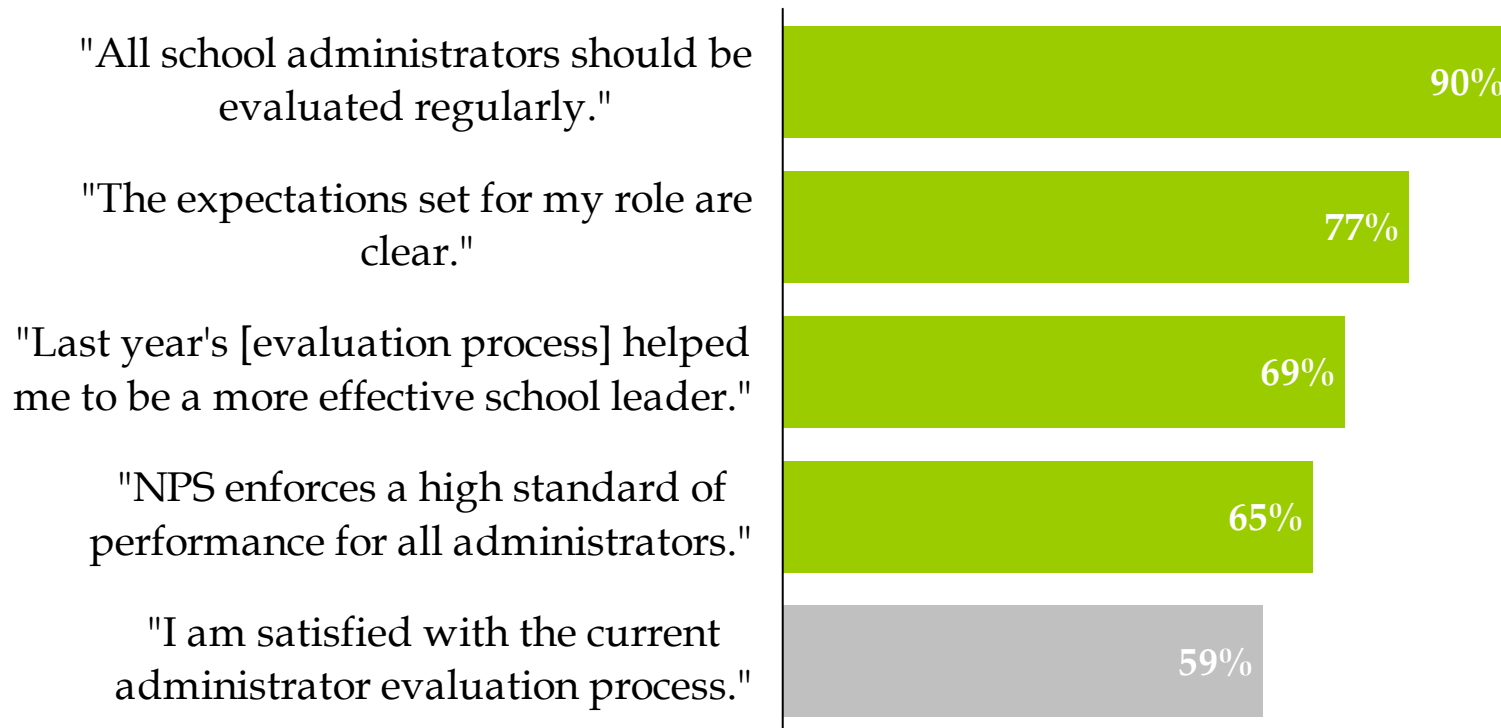


Note: From our data, it does not appear that there are any differences in the provision of principal training by school level.



The administrator evaluation system generally receives high marks from NPS administrators, but there is room for improvement.

Administrators' Opinions of Administrator Evaluation*



Despite positive feelings about many aspects of the administrator evaluation process, **only 2 in 3** principals are wholly satisfied with it.

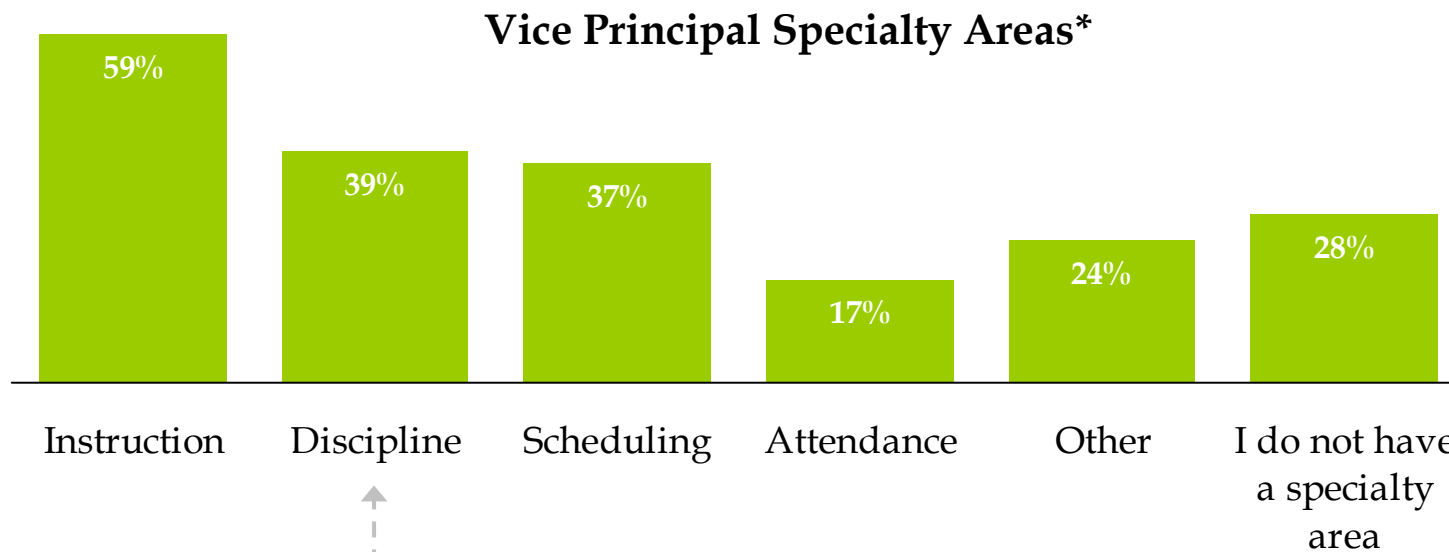
* Responded "Strongly agree" or "Agree."
Source: TNTP administrator survey (n=84).



Although most vice principals have multiple “specialty areas,” such segmentation may not serve well in training aspiring principals.

26% of VPs marked just one area of specialization:

- **17%** responded that they specialize only in “Instruction.”
- **9%** responded that they specialize only in “Scheduling.”



VPs with a specialty area in “Discipline” may be less likely to want to be principals: only 39% say they would like to become principals in NPS, compared to 47% overall.

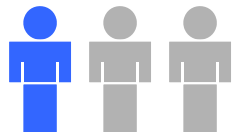
* Multiple responses possible.

Source: TNTP administrator survey (n=46 vice principals).

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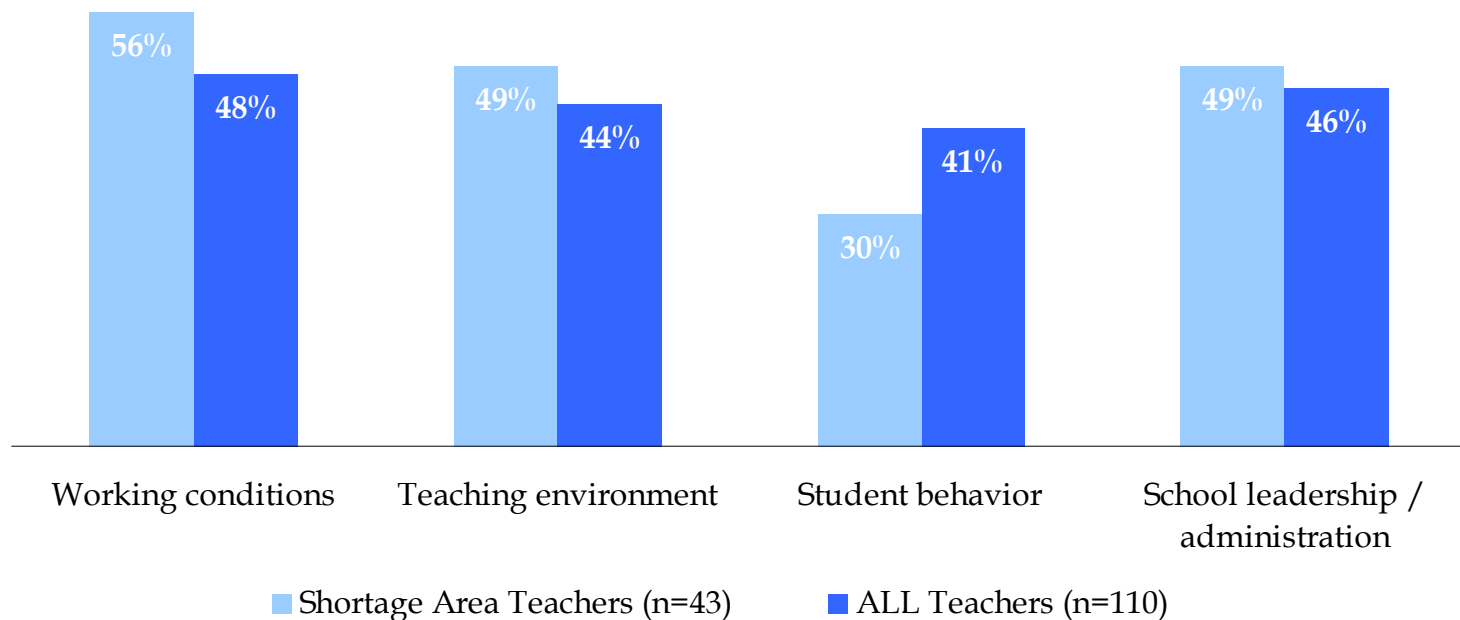


Appendix B: Working conditions and school leadership in Newark cause many teachers to leave.



Of the teachers planning to leave NPS in three or fewer years, **one in three plans to continue teaching** in public schools elsewhere (*equivalent to about 173 current teachers*).

Top Four Factors Contributing to Teachers' Plans to Leave NPS Within Three Years



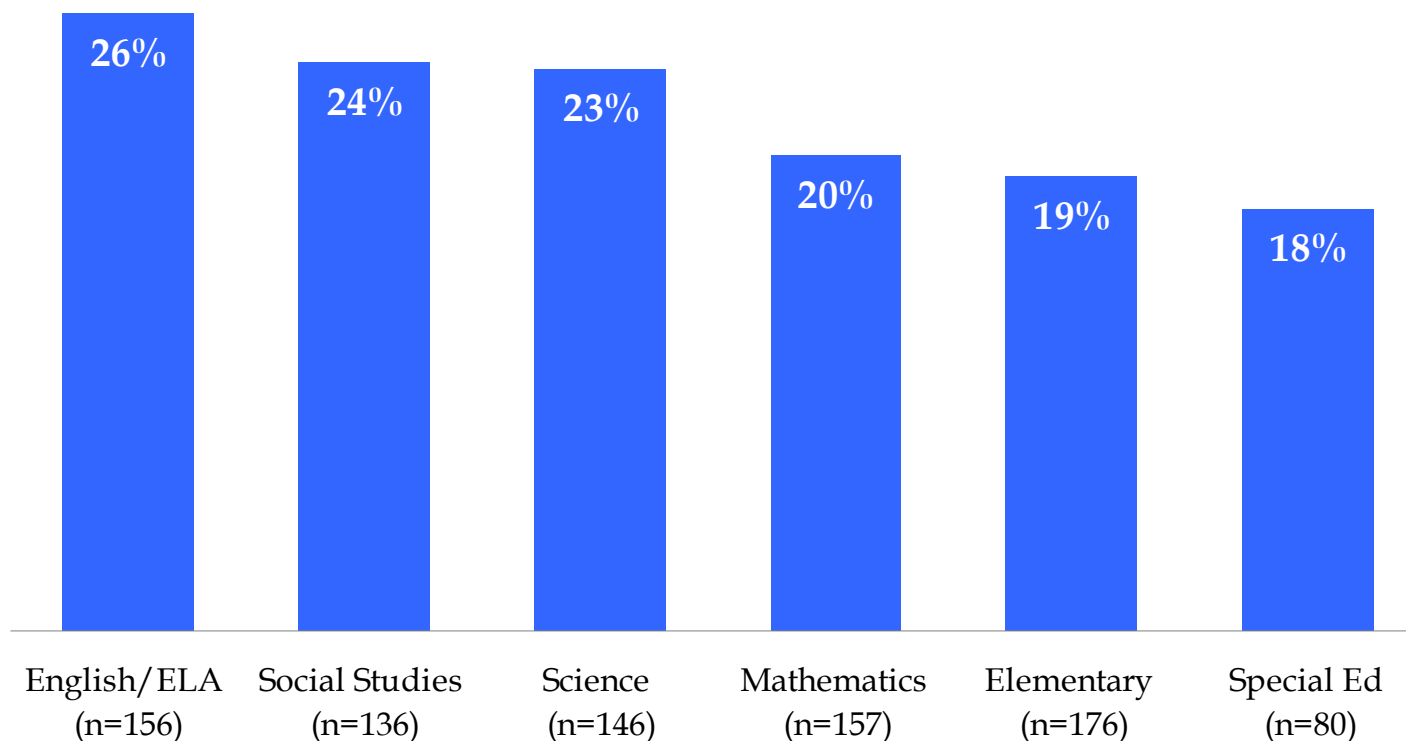
Source: TNTP teacher survey.

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English, social studies, and science teachers may be at higher risk for attrition than teachers in other subject areas.

Percent of Teachers Who Plan to Leave NPS Within Five Years, by Subject Area



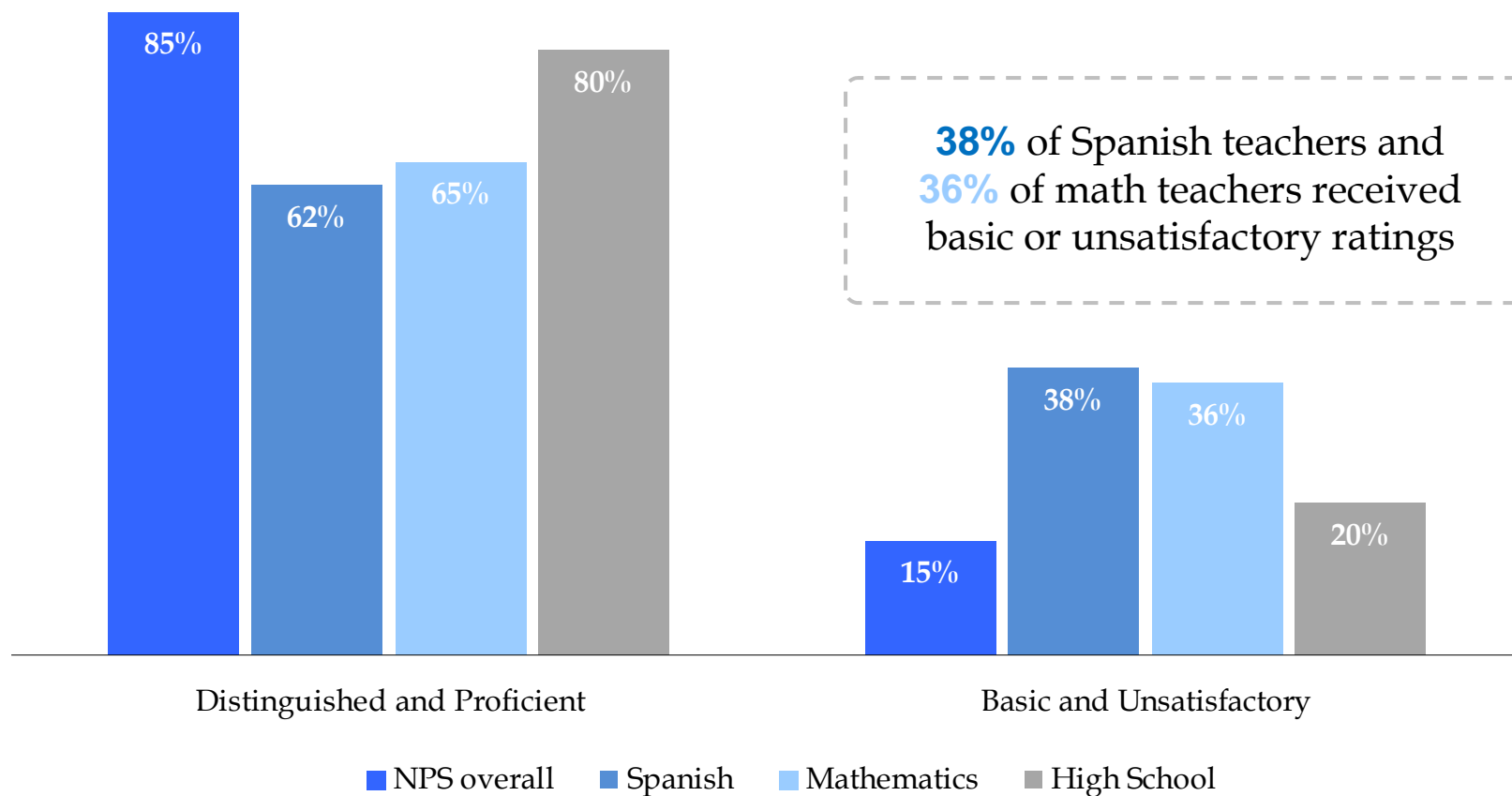
Source: TNTP teacher survey.

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Appendix C: In 2007-08, Spanish and math teachers received lower ratings than their colleagues, as did high school teachers.

Distribution of Teacher Evaluation Ratings 2007-08, by School Level and Subject Area



Source: NPS HRS data.

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