



Teacher Performance Management and Staffing in Jonesboro Public Schools

The New Teacher Project | September 2009



Agenda

 **Background**

The Widget Effect

Findings

Recommendations



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.

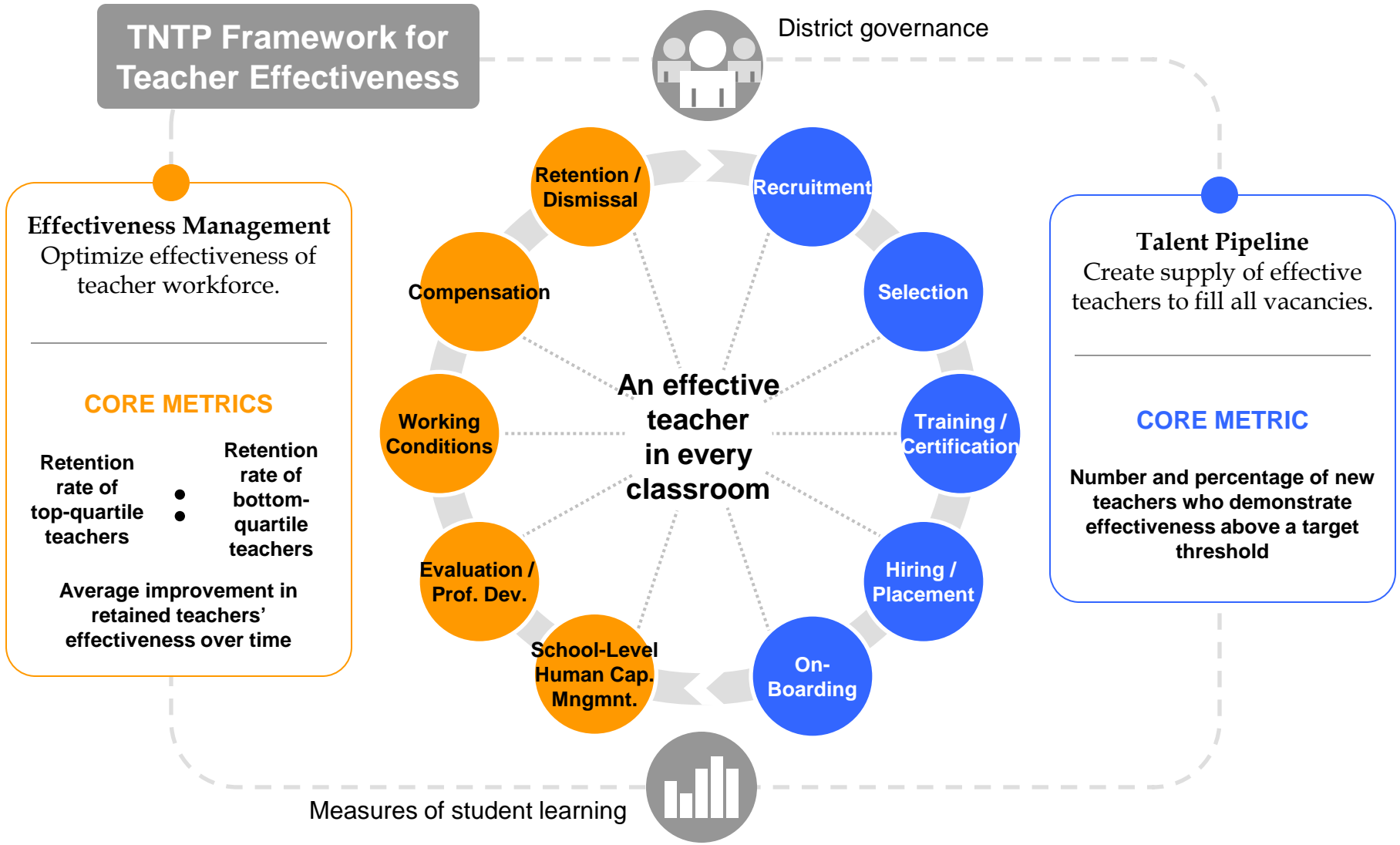
The purpose of this analysis is to increase the alignment of district human capital systems to the ultimate goal of excellent instruction in every classroom.

In general, 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?

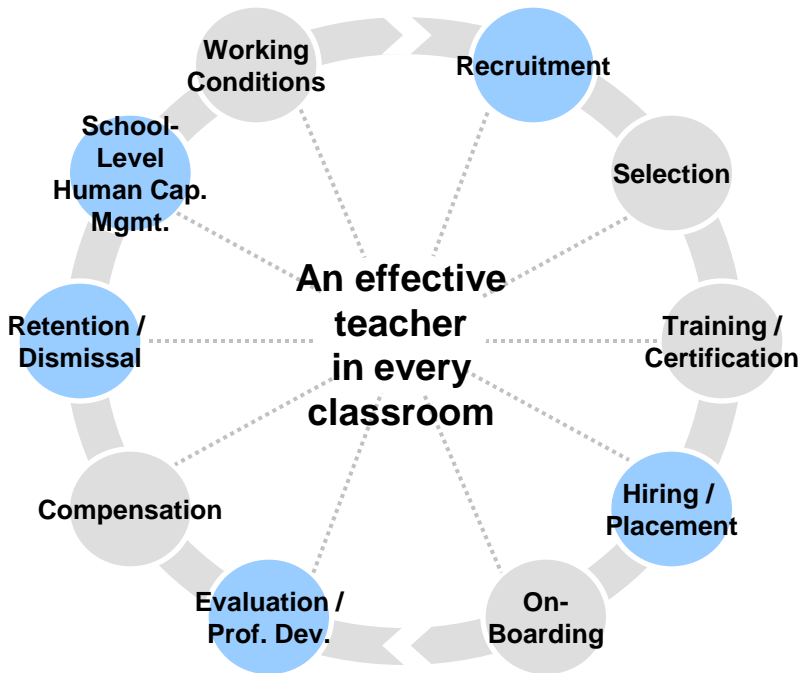


TNTP helps school districts align their policies and practices to the goal of an effective teacher in every classroom.





In 2008, TNTP began working with Jonesboro Public Schools (JPS) to analyze several points on the district's human capital continuum.*



TNTP's four primary analysis methods:

- 1 **Analysis of relevant policy documents**, including the JPS Certified Personnel Handbook and Arkansas state statutes.
- 2 **Stakeholder interviews** with district administrators, principals and teachers.
- 3 **District transaction data** for teachers, including records on hiring, transfers, separations and evaluations.
- 4 **Survey data** collected from district principals and assistant principals, as well as current and former JPS teachers. Surveys yielded a 88 percent response rate from current teachers and an 80 percent response rate from principals.**

*TNTP developed the continuum to represent its perspective on the various human capital components that are critical to ensuring an effective teacher in every classroom.

**n=323 for teacher respondents; n=8 for principal respondents



JPS also participated concurrently in TNTP's national report, *The Widget Effect*, which studied district evaluation and dismissal practices.

In fall 2008 through spring 2009, TNTP partnered with **12 school districts** in **four states** to analyze each district's evaluation, tenure, remediation and dismissal policies and practices, as well as each state's teacher performance management policies.

Arkansas

- El Dorado Public Schools
- **Jonesboro Public Schools**
- Little Rock Public Schools
- Springdale Public Schools

Colorado

- Pueblo City Schools
- Denver Public Schools

Illinois

- Chicago Public Schools
- District U-46 (Elgin)
- Rockford Public Schools

Ohio

- Akron Public Schools
- Cincinnati Public Schools
- Toledo Public Schools



Over 50 district and state officials and 25 teachers' union representatives actively informed the study through advisory panels in each state.

Panel members provided ongoing feedback and perspective and were invited to submit unedited written responses to the study's findings and recommendations.



Summary of Findings

1 JPS has a strong commitment to student learning and school-level accountability as evidenced by its recent focus on improving school leadership. The current teacher evaluation system, however, inhibits the meaningful differentiation, support and development of teachers as professionals – which ultimately undermines school leadership success.

2 Changing student demographics are pressuring the district to strengthen its focus on high-need teacher recruitment and support for all teachers.

3 The transfer system falls short of providing teachers and schools with satisfactory placements that support strong instructional teams.

In order to support and advance the district’s vision of high-performing schools, JPS must develop its human capital practices in two critical areas:

Development and implementation of a credible, comprehensive teacher performance management system.

Strategic management of the talent pipeline through improved use of data and targeted support.



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Widget Effect: A single, flawed assumption has fostered an education system that is generally indifferent to teacher effectiveness.

“When it comes to measuring instructional performance, **current policies and systems overlook significant differences between teachers**. There is little or no differentiation of excellent teaching from good, good from fair, or fair from poor. This is the **Widget Effect: a tendency to treat all teachers as roughly interchangeable**, even when their teaching is quite variable. Consequently, teachers are **not developed as professionals** with individual strengths and capabilities, and **poor performance is rarely identified or addressed.**”

The New Teacher Project, 2009



Secretary of Education Arne Duncan addressed the Widget Effect in a major policy speech to the National Education Association in July 2009.



“I believe that teacher unions are at a crossroads. These policies were created over the past century to protect the rights of teachers but they have produced **an industrial factory model of education that treats all teachers like interchangeable widgets.**”

“A recent report from The New Teacher Project found that almost all teachers are rated the same. Who in their right mind really believes that? **We need to work together to change this....**”

“It’s time we all admit that **just as our testing system is deeply flawed – so is our teacher evaluation system** – and the losers are not just the children. When great teachers are unrecognized and unrewarded – when struggling teachers are unsupported – and when failing teachers are unaddressed – the teaching profession is damaged.”



The Widget Effect in Teacher Evaluation: Summary of Findings

Treating Teachers as Interchangeable Parts

All teachers are rated “good” or “great.”

Although teachers and principals report that poor performance is common, less than 1 percent of teachers are identified as “unsatisfactory” on performance evaluations.

Excellence goes unrecognized.

When excellent ratings are the norm, truly exceptional teachers cannot be formally identified. Nor can they be compensated, promoted or retained.

Professional development is inadequate.

Almost 3 in 4 teachers did not receive any specific feedback on improving their performance in their last evaluation.

Novice teachers are neglected.

Low expectations for beginning teachers translate into benign neglect in the classroom and a toothless tenure process.

Poor performance goes unaddressed.

Half of the 12 districts studied have not dismissed a single non-probationary teacher for poor performance in the past *five years*. None dismisses more than a few each year.



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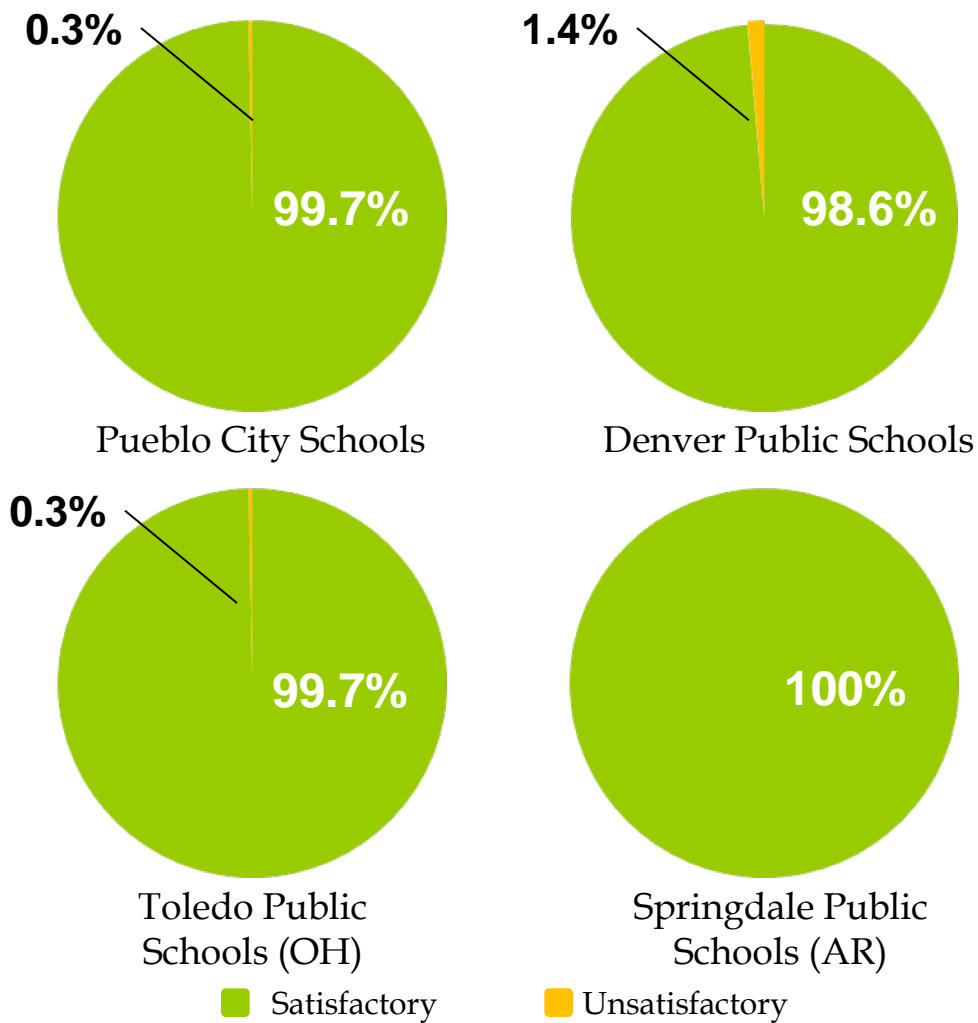
Finding #1

JPS' teacher evaluation system fails to differentiate instructional effectiveness and does not formally identify or address poor performance.



The Widget Effect found that in districts with binary rating scales, nearly every teacher was given a satisfactory rating.

Non-probationary teacher evaluation ratings are overwhelmingly satisfactory.



“When all teachers receive the same ‘rating’ of meeting expectations, it's demeaning for those who are doing well to be rated the same as those teachers who aren't.”

-JPS teacher



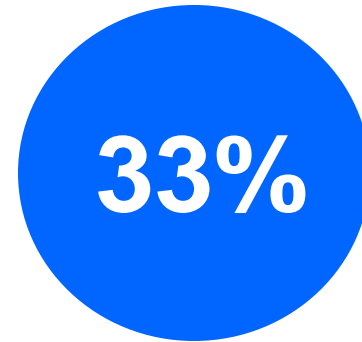
Likewise, though JPS teachers report poor instructional performance in their schools, teachers are rarely rated unsatisfactory or dismissed.



JPS teachers assigned a “**did not meet expectations**” rating in the last five years



Number of classroom teachers who have resigned or retired for poor instructional performance*



JPS teachers who believe that there are teachers in their school who should be dismissed for poor instructional performance but have not been

*District-provided data related to teacher resignations and retirements for poor instructional performance, corresponding to school years 2005-06 to 2007-08.



JPS principals also agree that poor instructional performance exists in their schools.

50%

JPS principals who report that **at least 10 percent of their teaching staff “needs improvement”** and are not meeting expectations

25%

JPS principals who indicate there was a non-probationary teacher teaching in their school last year who they believe **should have been dismissed for poor instructional performance**



Instead of assigning “did not meet expectations” ratings when warranted, principals use informal means to address poor performance.

Almost one-third of all principals have **assigned higher ratings to a teacher than the performance warranted**, mostly because of limitations in the evaluation process.

Top reasons for higher ratings than warranted:

- Did not have enough time to sufficiently observe the teacher to document poor performance.
- Can address poor performance without assigning a low rating; 45 percent of school administrators* have had one or more teachers resign or retire in response to their making the teacher aware of poor instructional performance.
 - *“95 percent of our teachers do a great job. You’d be crazy to not spend time with the 5 percent that don’t. I have pushed some of those 5 percent out – not dismissed, but you do whatever you can to get them to leave.”*
- Did not want a low rating to discourage teacher.
 - *“If I wrote someone up, everyone would know about it, and it would be destructive to the overall project of what we’re trying to do at the school. It’s a staff morale nuclear bomb.”*



Principals report failing to initiate dismissal proceedings because they believe it is an overwhelming process.

88%

Principals who say they would definitely or probably be willing to initiate dismissal proceedings for poor performers*

0

Principals who have ever dismissed or initiated dismissal proceedings for a teacher for poor instructional performance in the last five years

0

Non-probationary teachers who have been **formally dismissed** in the same time period



I don't have the commitment necessary to dismiss a teacher. There is one I would have, but she's still in the district. **If I had confidence that I would have won that battle, I would have tried to fight it, but I didn't have confidence that we could dismiss her.**"

"I don't have confidence that the dismissal process will result in dismissal. There's too much documentation, **it's too much of a battle.** I've seen the nightmare before."

"I don't have the time, capacity, or training to dismiss poor performers. Also, the money thing is huge. PD, hiring subs, getting other teachers to testify, more subs, etc. **It is extremely disruptive.**"

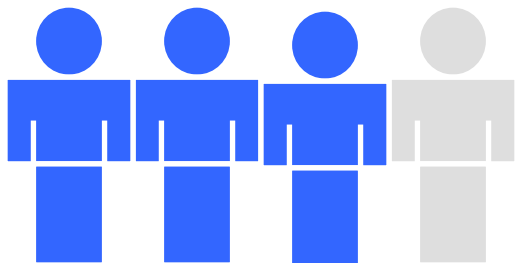
*7 out of 8 total principal respondents.

Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted November 2008 and district-provided evaluation data from 2003 to 2008.

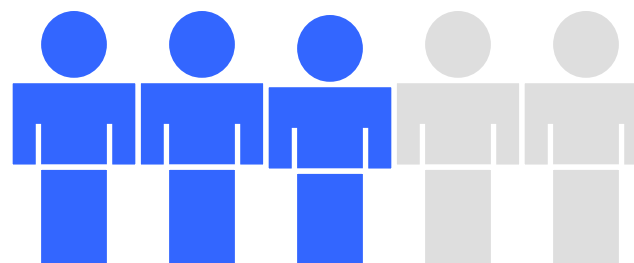
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Teachers recognize this shortcoming, yet believe dismissal is an important aspect of performance management.



Almost 3 out of 4 JPS teachers believe that dismissing teachers for poor instructional performance is an **important part of maintaining and developing a high-quality teaching staff.**



Over 3 out of 5 JPS teachers believe that **administrators fail to dismiss poor performers.**



Finding #2

Overall, the current evaluation process does not meaningfully support teachers to develop and improve their instructional practice.



Overview of Current JPS Evaluation Process

Evaluation process and instruments are the same for all teachers:

- Evaluated across eight competencies; competencies measure teacher input.
- Receive a binary rating for each competency (meet/did not meet expectations).
- No summative rating.
- Observations required each year.
 - For probationary teachers, two formal and one informal observations required.
 - For non-probationary teachers, one formal and one informal observations required.



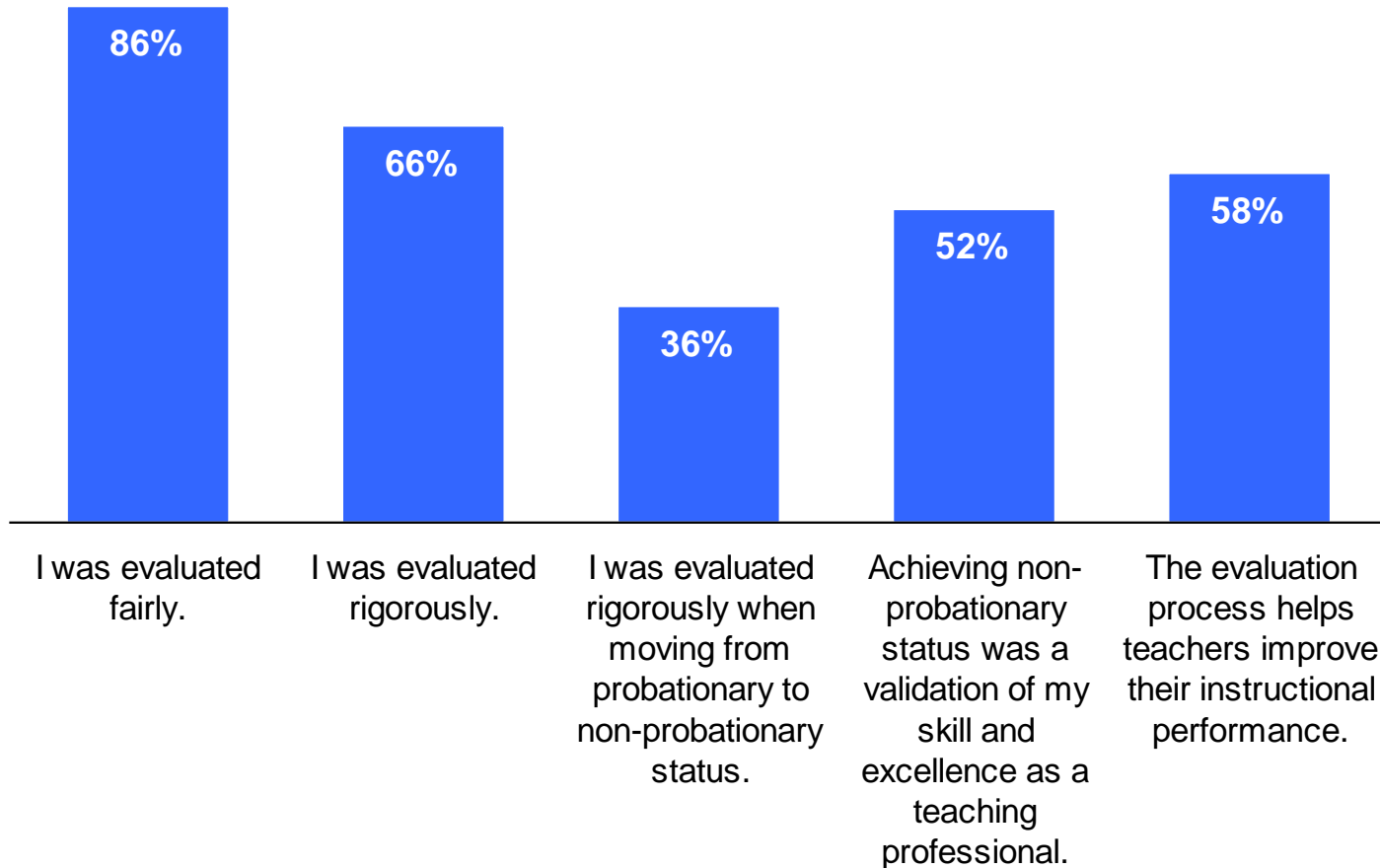
Current evaluation measures inputs (teacher characteristics), not outputs (student learning):

JPS policy explicitly states that “Student test results are not appropriate data for use in personnel evaluation.”



A substantial number of teachers perceive a lack of rigor in evaluations and do not believe the evaluation process helps them improve their practice.

Teacher Opinions* on Evaluation



*Percentage of teacher survey respondents who answer “agree” or “strongly agree” to the given statements.

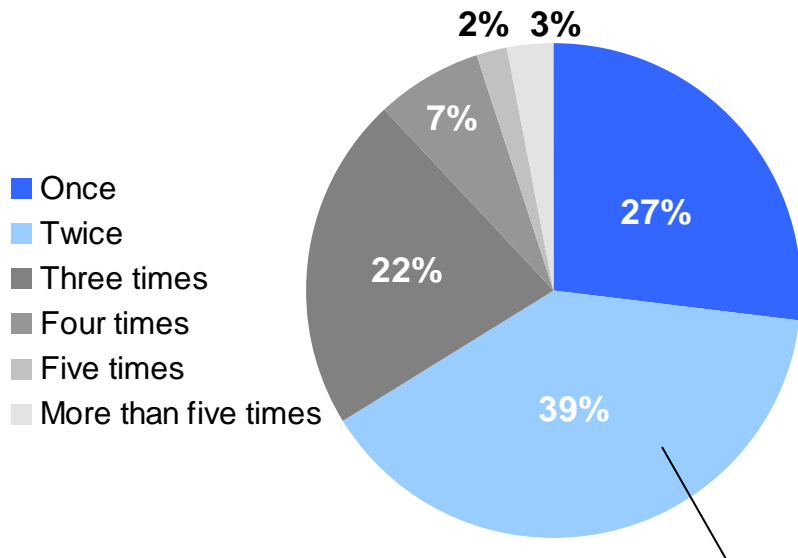
Source: JPS teacher survey conducted November 2008.

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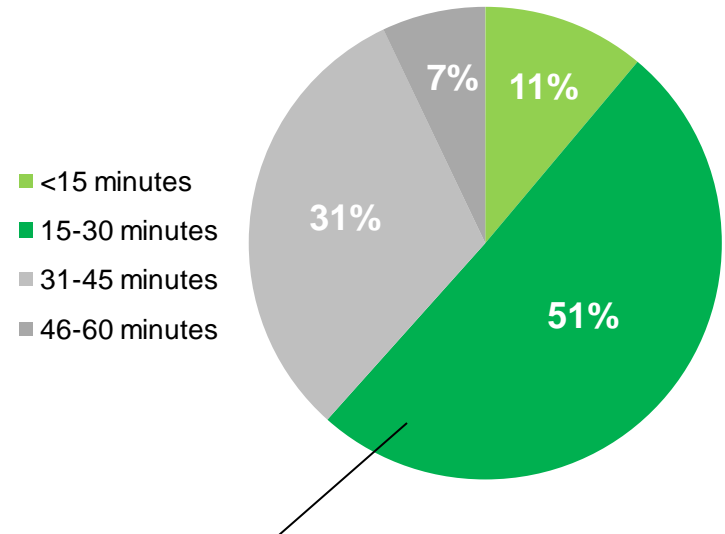
This perception could be the result of a process where ratings are assigned using brief observations that amount to snapshots in time.

Number of Observations Before Evaluation Rating Is Assigned



Two-thirds of teachers are **observed only once or twice.**

Average Length of Observations



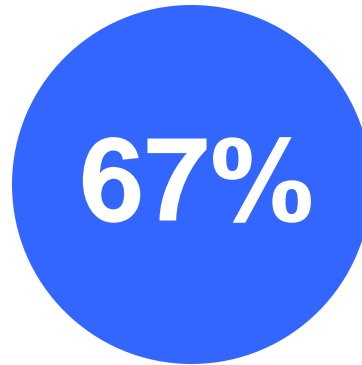
61 percent of all observations are **less than 30 minutes.**

The majority of annual evaluation ratings are assigned after **no more than one total hour's** worth of principal observations.



Additionally, 1 in 3 teachers reports that the process following observations does not always provide them with useful feedback.

“My evaluator provided me with constructive feedback.”



Evaluations should provide teachers with constructive feedback. There should always be areas to improve or suggestions/questions for the teacher about what is going on [in] classes. **Simply visiting a classroom twice a year is not helpful**, especially when there is no feedback.”

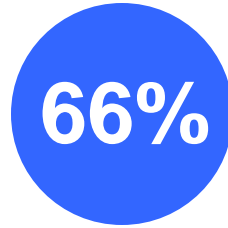
–JPS teacher



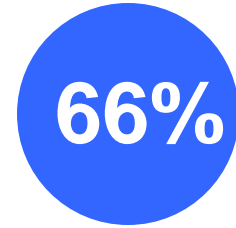
As a result, a significant portion of teachers do not believe the evaluation process is worth the required time.

JPS teachers who agree or strongly agree that...

...the evaluation process was worth their time and effort.



...they are satisfied with the evaluation process.



“A good administrator knows what is going on in his/her building and should do frequent drop-ins to see what is going on rather than **wasting half an hour** watching for certain things.”

“The evaluation process does allow us to get some feedback. However, it seems like **more of a formality than an accurate rating** of our teaching skills.”

“I don't think [the evaluation process] is **taken very seriously.**”



Principals are also dissatisfied with the evaluation process, and believe it fails to improve instructional performance.

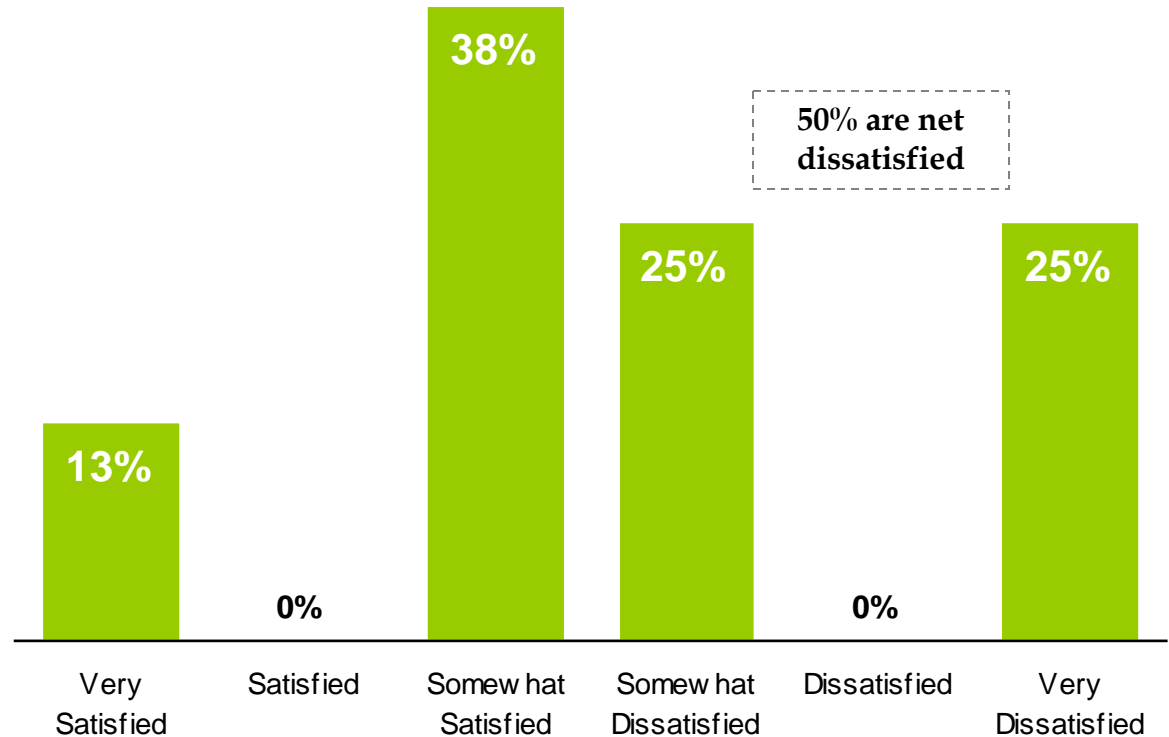
38%

Principals who agree or strongly agree that the evaluation process **helps their teachers improve** their instructional performance

25%

Principals who agree or strongly agree that the evaluation process allows them to **accurately assess their teachers' instructional performance**

“How satisfied are you with the evaluation process?”



Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted November 2008.

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Finding #3

Though JPS has taken the necessary initial steps to increase school-leadership capacity, principals need more training and support to become effective at performance management and the type of instructional leaders the district envisions.



Recently, JPS has taken steps to grow and develop school-level management capacity.

TNTP Guidelines for School-Level Human Capital Management

- Instructional leadership goals for each principal.
- Regular principal-assistant superintendent-superintendent meetings to provide guidance and direction around instruction.
- Structured improvement plans for principals who need additional support.
- A “culture of accountability” for principals to be held to high instructional standards.

In the past year, JPS has instituted:

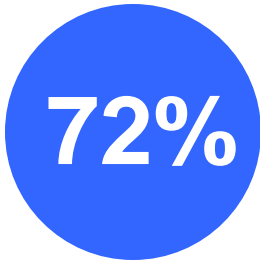
- Monthly school-level performance management sessions (direction-setting, coaching, peer-to-peer collaboration) with district administrators.
- Weekly meetings with administrators for continued growth and support.
- Structured improvement plans for principals in need of further support.
- Accountability of principals and other personnel who affect teacher effectiveness.
- Informed, accountable decisions on hiring and retention.

Source: Interviews with district administration.

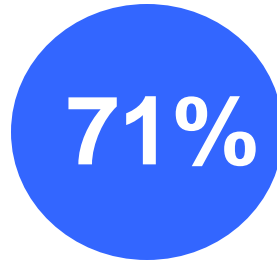
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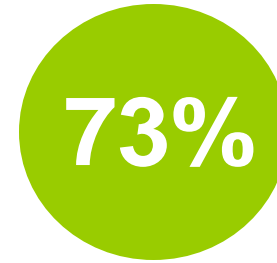
Commitment to student learning and school-level accountability is evident in JPS, but there remains room for improvement.



Teachers who agree that **the district** enforces a high standard of instructional performance for all teachers



Teachers who agree that **their principal** enforces a high standard of instructional performance



School administrators who agree that **the district** enforces a high standard of instructional performance for all teachers



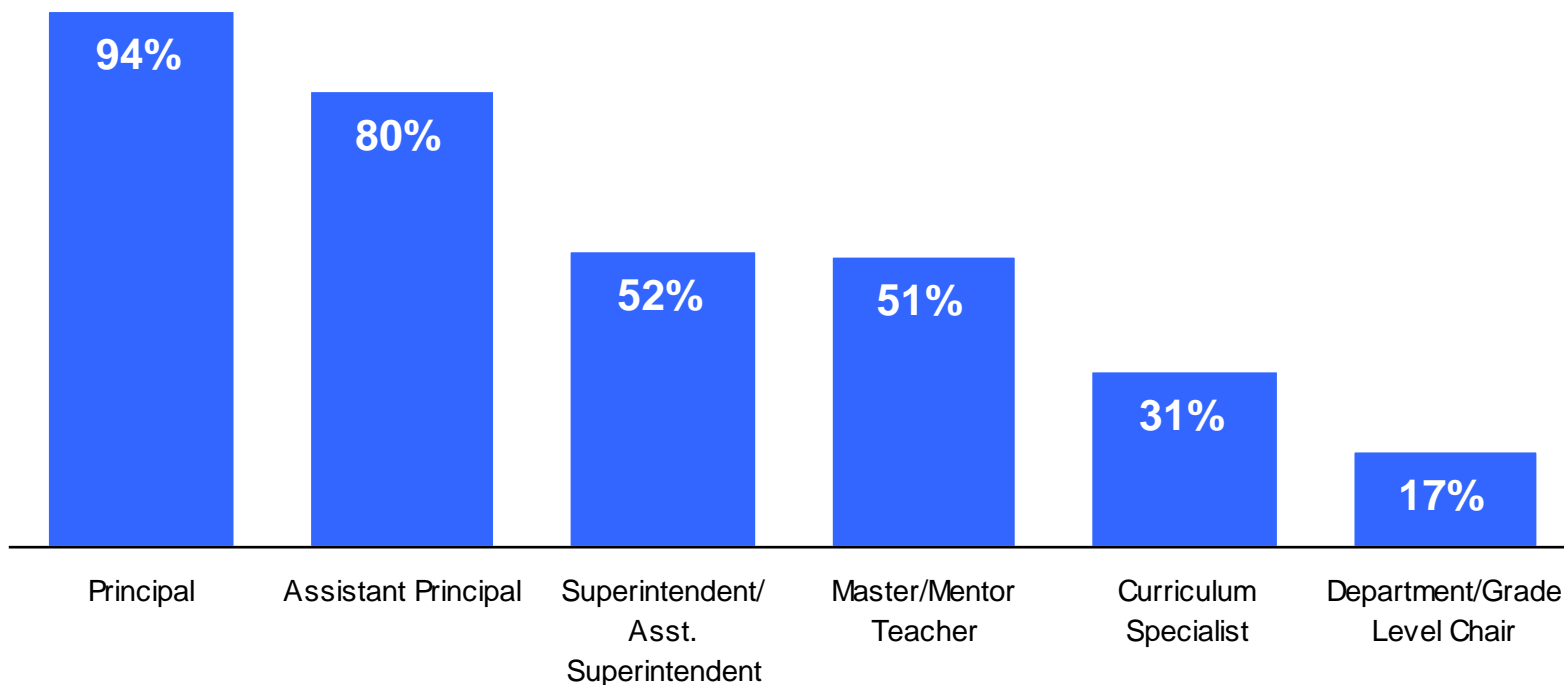
“Now, with **accountability**, the position of the principal has really changed. We are spending a ton of time this year **growing principals, empowering them**, because we can’t improve **teaching quality** until we can improve the ability to support that in the principal. We’re working on building principals as **true instructional leaders**.”

-JPS District Administrator



Teachers overwhelmingly believe that principals are qualified to evaluate instructional performance.

“Who do you think is qualified to evaluate teachers’ instructional performance?”



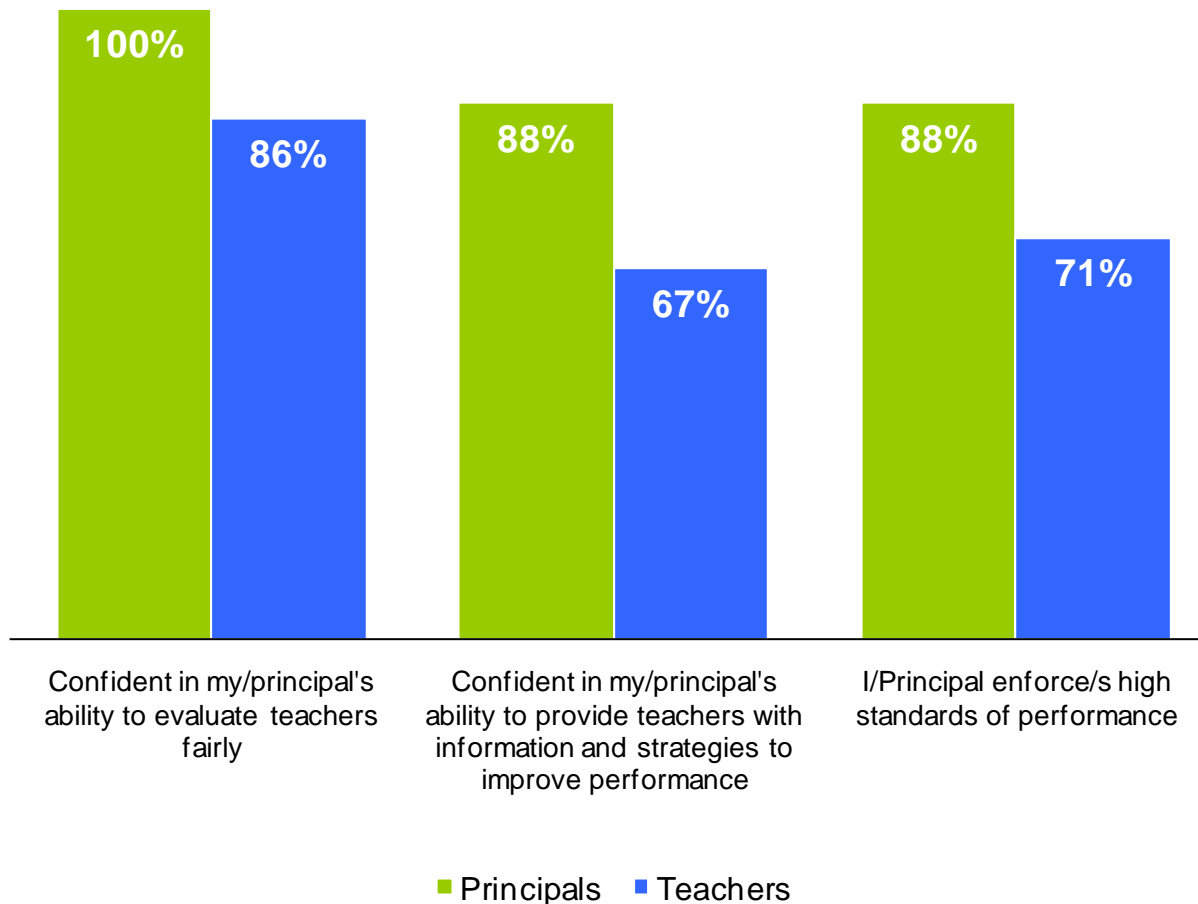
Source: JPS teacher survey conducted November 2008.

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Teachers and principals do not, however, share the same level of confidence in principals' abilities to conduct effective evaluations.

Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Principal Evaluation Effectiveness



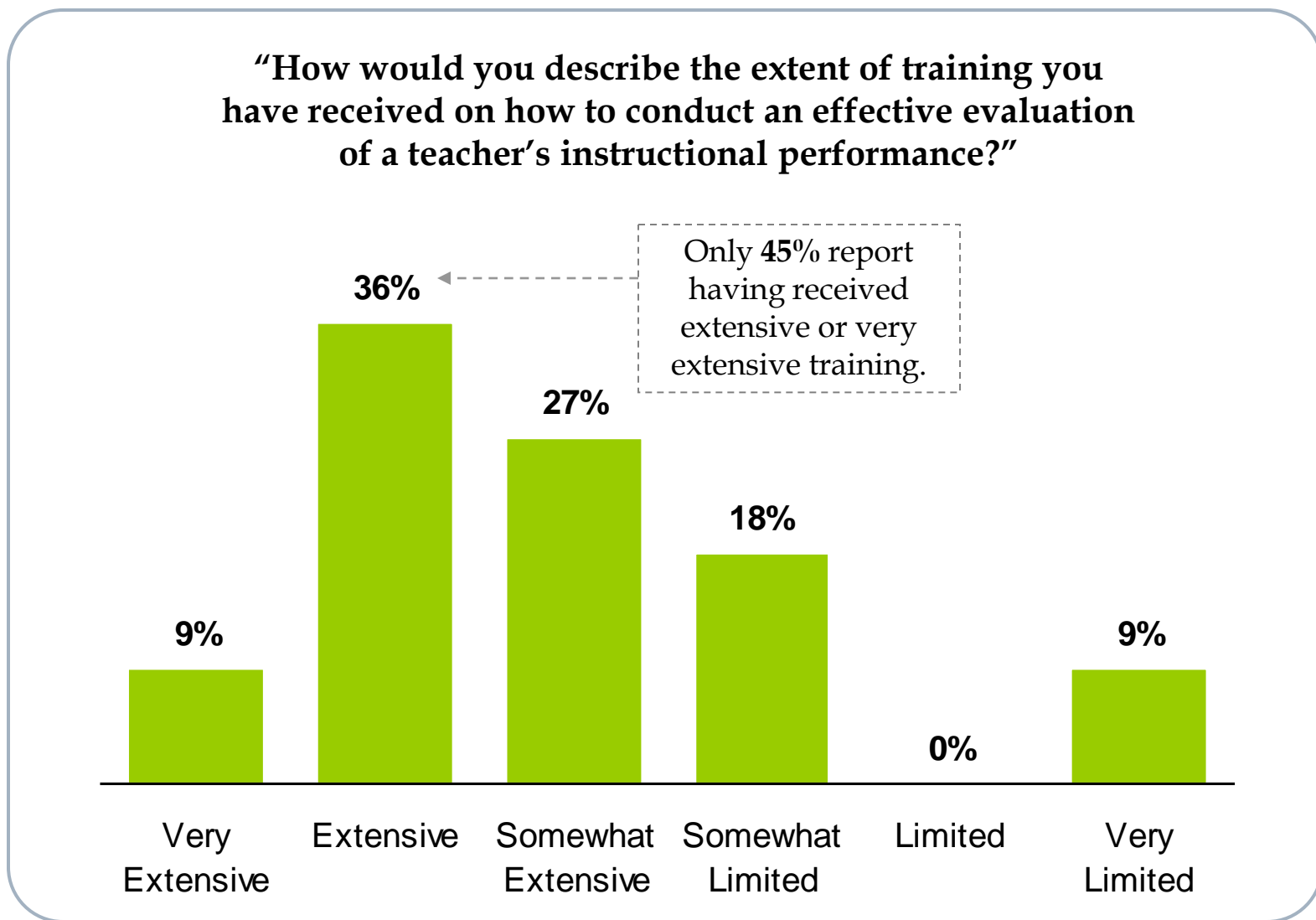
*Percentages reflect respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the given statements.

Source: JPS teacher and school administrator surveys conducted November 2008.

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Part of this confidence gap may be explained by the limited evaluation training that school leaders report receiving.



Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted November 2008.

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Principals report that limited support and limited time to observe teachers are also areas for improvement.



We need to change the culture so that principals are expected to and given the support to be an instructional leader. **Right now I spend too much time managing my building.** You have to organize your day so you can spend time on instruction, but... **I don't have time to evaluate and observe as much as I'd like or to conduct as rigorous evaluations as I'd like."**

"A lot of things are going on at the same time...I always feel like I'm behind this year, and I don't have adequate time to evaluate my teachers the way you want principals to. It would be nice to see teachers again, but at this point it's just getting through the observation checklist and get it done.





Characteristics of The Widget Effect vs. JPS Evaluation Policies and Practices

Widget Effect Characteristics

JPS Evaluation System

- | | |
|--|---|
| ○ Performance evaluations are perfunctory and infrequent. | ✓ |
| ○ The primary use of evaluations is to identify incompetence. | — |
| ○ Teachers expect to receive the highest possible rating, even during their first years in the classroom. | ✓ |
| ○ Evaluations do not yield meaningful feedback for teachers, and professional development is not aligned to evaluations. | ✓ |
| ○ Administrators are poorly trained to evaluate, and districts do not prioritize the process. | ✓ |
| ○ Teachers who receive feedback for improvement during the evaluation process tend to feel singled out, often unfairly. | — |



Finding #4

A changing student population is challenging JPS to continually improve its recruitment of high-need teachers and to provide all teachers with the necessary support to serve a diverse student population effectively.



In the fall of 2008, JPS developed a plan to “improve recruitment and retention processes” for instructional staff of color.

JPS Minority Teacher and Administrator Recruitment Plan

Stated Long-Term Goals



Develop and maintain a minority recruiting program that will produce a sizeable pool of highly qualified minority teaching...prospects for each hiring cycle.



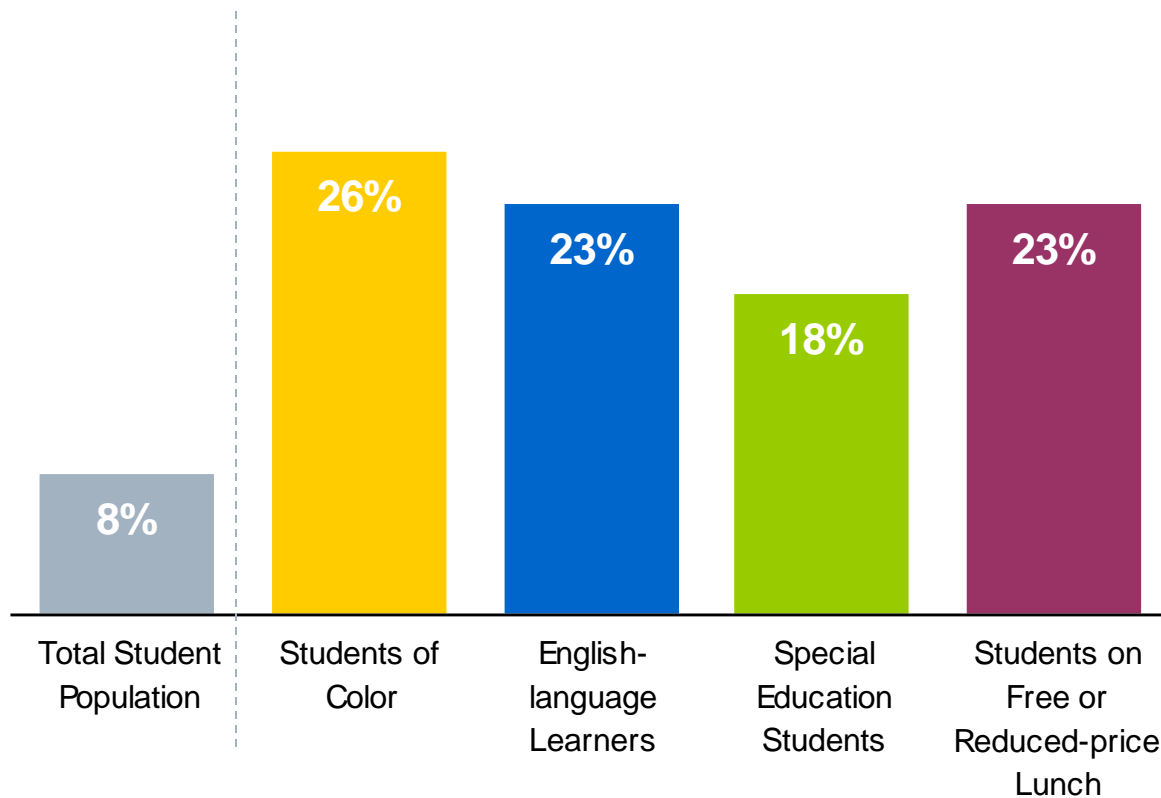
Develop a teaching...staff that reflects the demographic diversity of our community.

However, delayed resignation and retirement timelines and other practices have prevented JPS from maximizing high-need teacher recruitment and hiring.



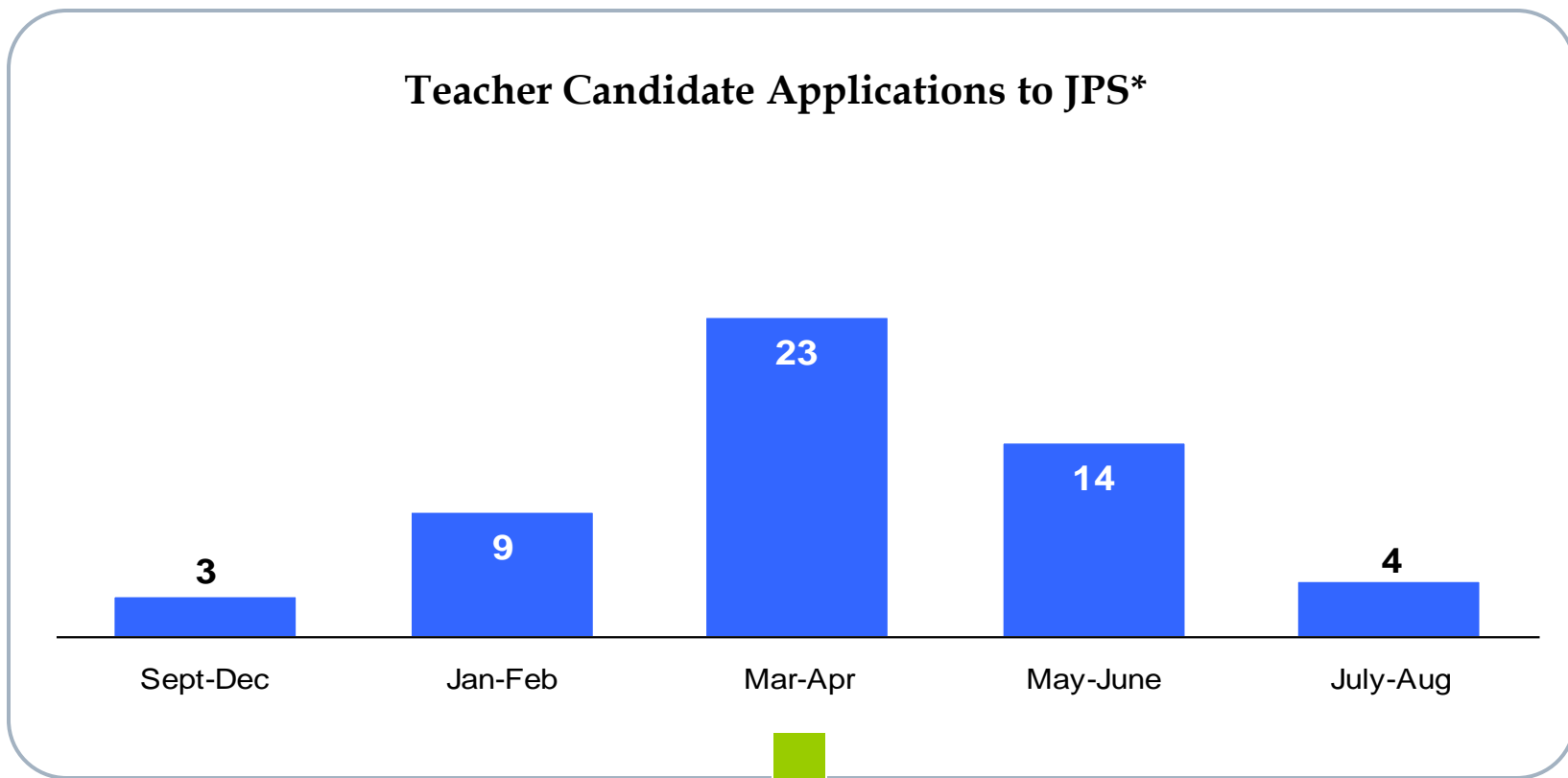
JPS' changing population means a more diverse set of student needs, underscoring the importance of strategic teacher recruitment.

Student Population Growth Between 2005-06 and 2008-09





As a result of JPS recruitment efforts, most teacher candidates apply early in the spring.



JPS received two-thirds of its teacher applications before May.

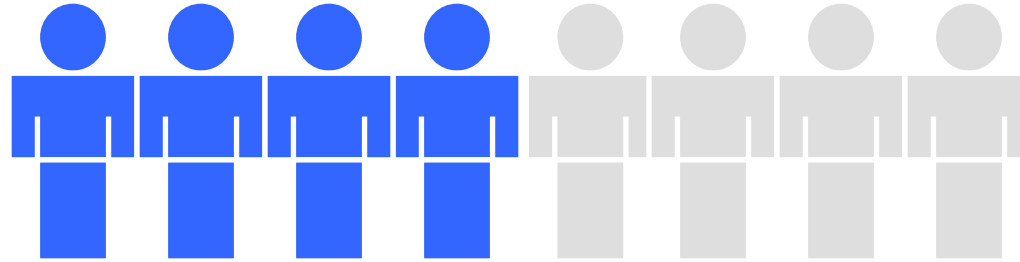
*Applicants and new hires in English, math, science and special education.

Source: Applicant and hiring data from JPS central office.

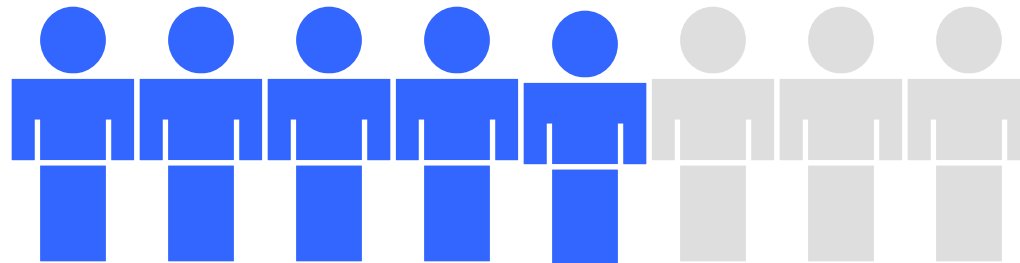
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Principals report, however, that they are losing teaching talent due to offer timelines and late resignation and retirement notifications.



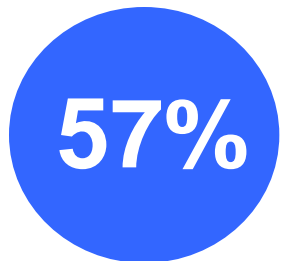
50 percent of principals have **lost a more desirable candidate** from outside JPS because the principal was unable to make a timely offer.



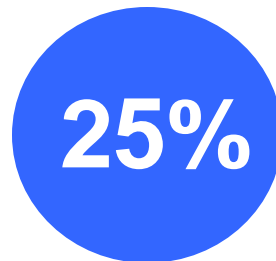
63 percent of principals attribute **late resignation and retirement notifications** as a factor in the delayed hiring of new teachers.



Recruiting and hiring high-need and diverse teacher candidates has been a challenge for JPS.



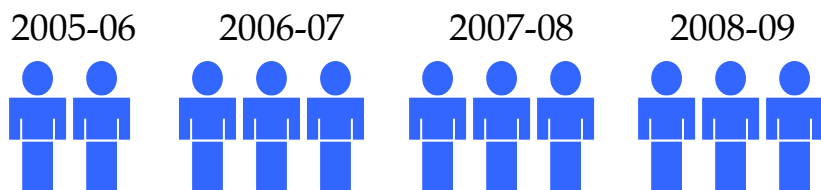
vs.



Principals who are satisfied* with the **quantity of applicants** to JPS

Principals who agree that the new hire pool includes **enough high-need candidates**

New Hires of Color



JPS has hired 11 teachers of color in the last four years. They comprised only 6 percent of all new hires.

*Survey participants who responded “satisfied” or “strongly satisfied.” All further satisfaction data reflect the same top-two responses, unless otherwise indicated.

Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted in November 2008; new hire data collected from JPS central office. District database not able to provide number of applicants of color.

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Strategically utilizing relevant applicant information can allow JPS to recruit high-need and/or diverse candidates more effectively.

JPS already collects valuable candidate data through its current application process. Applicants are asked to submit:

- Contact information,
- Preferred positions,
- Extracurricular interest,
- Educational background,
- Teaching experience,
- Certification areas,
- Race (optional),
- Gender (optional), and
- How the applicant learned of JPS or an opening at JPS (optional).

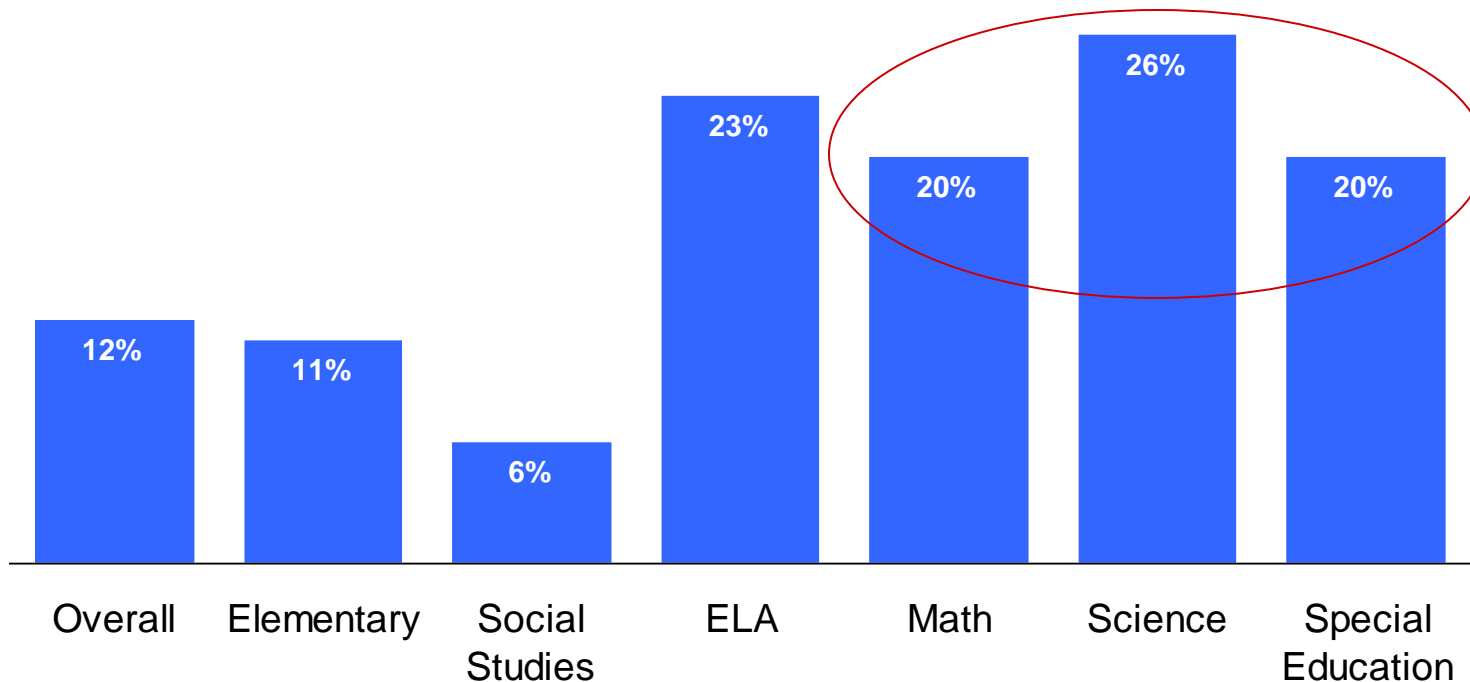
JPS does not, however, use the information it collects to the fullest extent possible.

- This data should inform future recruitment activities.
- By recording, maintaining and utilizing longitudinal applicant information, JPS can pursue the recruitment tactics and avenues that yield the most high-need and/or diverse candidates.
- The more data are collected, the more precise and effective the recruitment.



Adding to the challenge, high-need teachers are more likely to plan on leaving JPS in the short term.

Teachers Who Plan on Leaving JPS Within Three Years*



Special education teachers are disproportionately likely to leave: Though they make up 10 percent of survey respondents, they represent 20 percent of teachers who say they are planning on leaving JPS in the next three years.

*n=35; 50 percent of all JPS teachers are planning on staying in the district until retirement.

Source: JPS teacher survey conducted in November 2008.

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JPS does not have the necessary data to ensure the district's most effective teachers are being retained, as measured by outputs (student learning), not inputs (teacher characteristics).

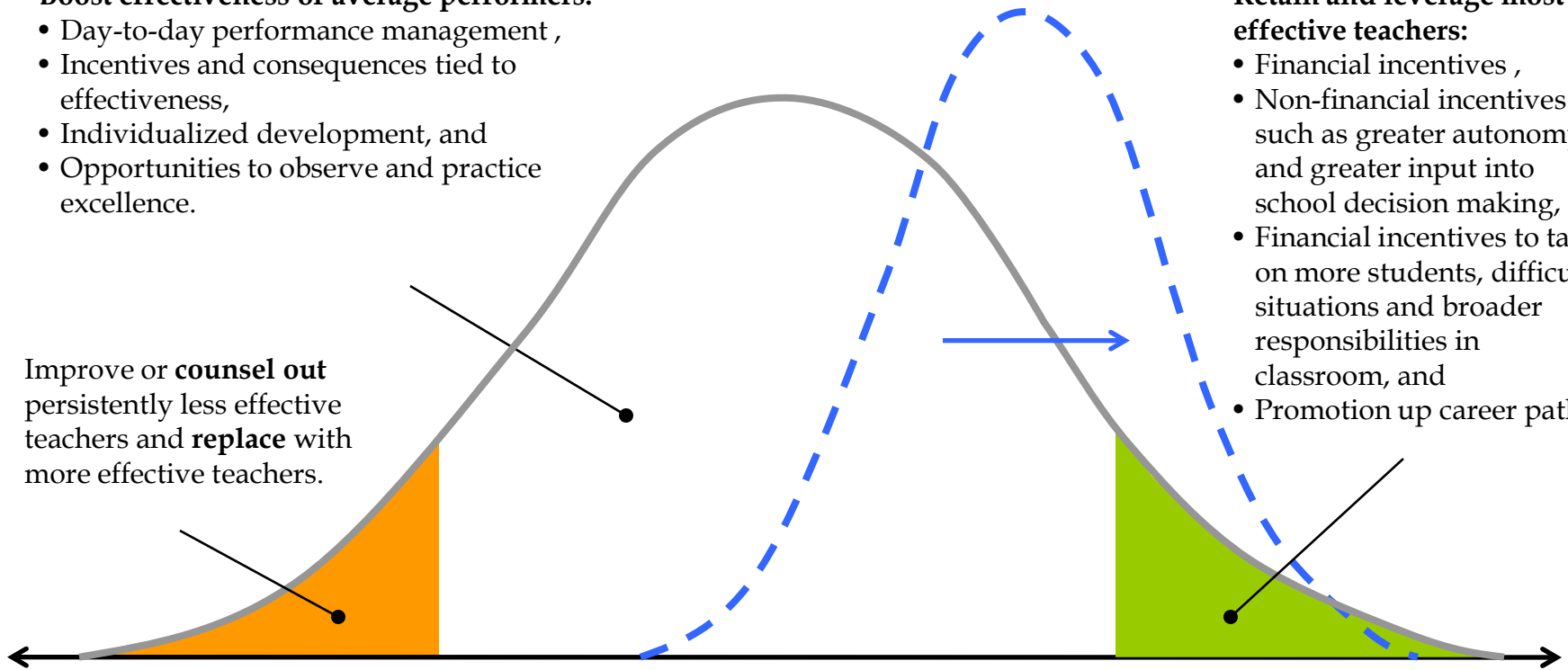
Boost effectiveness of average performers:

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

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, and
- Promotion up career path.

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



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

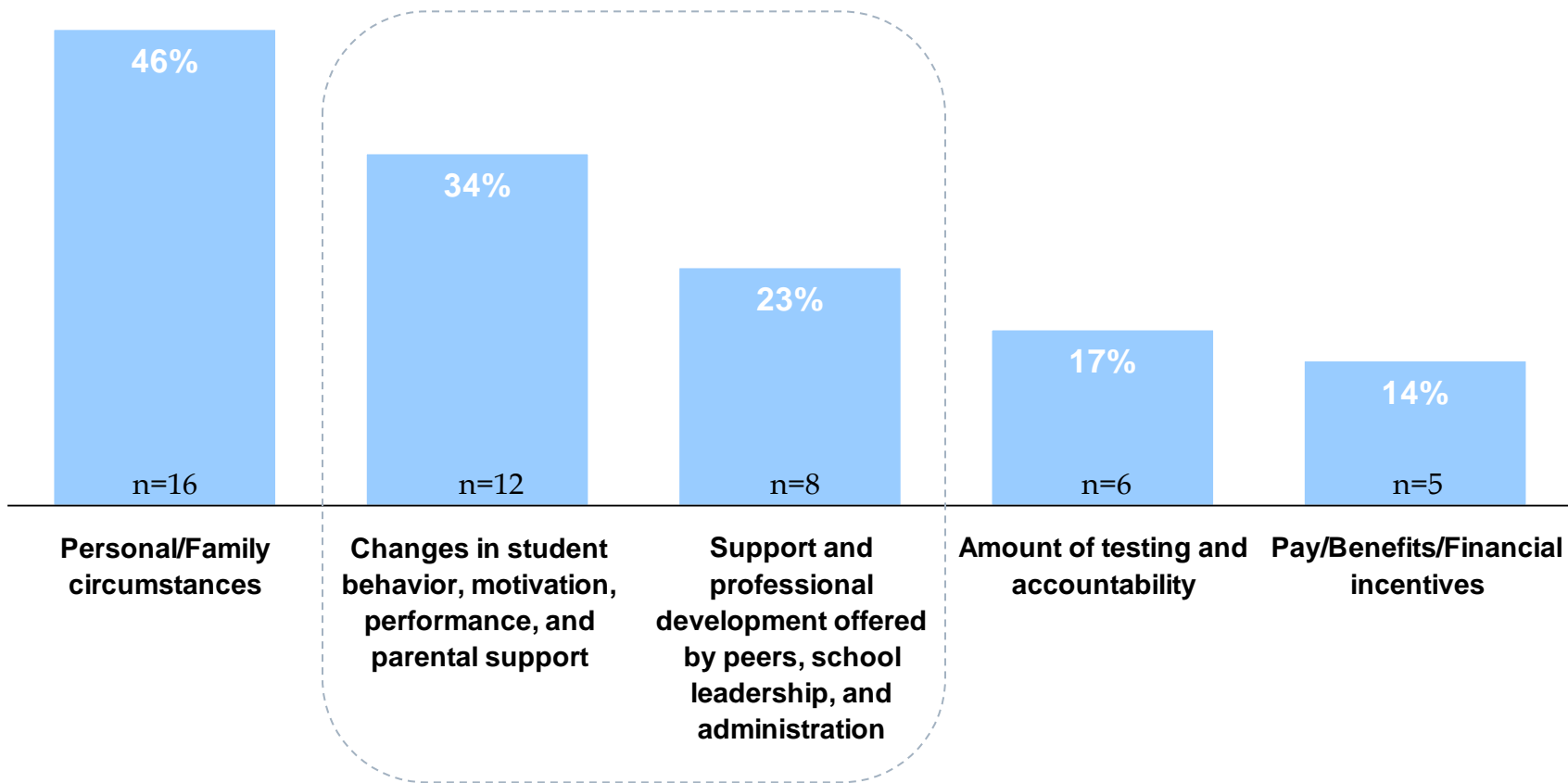
————— Current Performance

- - - - - Potential Performance



Teachers planning on leaving the district within three years cite changing student characteristics and inadequate support as reasons.

Teacher Reasons for Leaving JPS Within Three Years*



*n=35

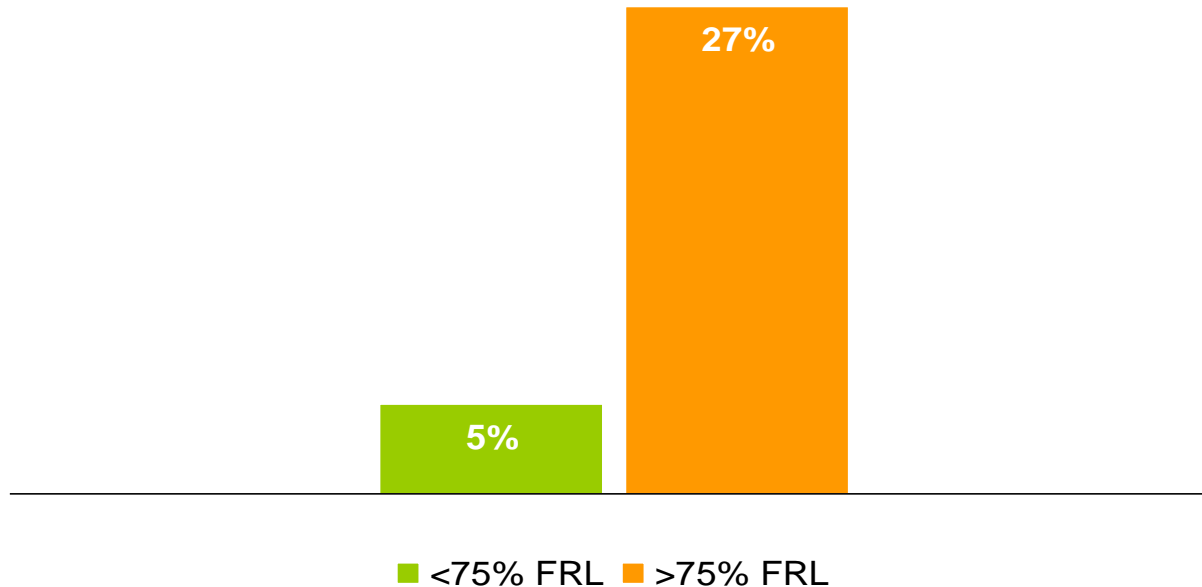
Source: JPS teacher survey conducted in November 2008.

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Teachers who report being in the highest-poverty schools cite changing student characteristics as the most important reason for leaving.

Teachers planning on leaving JPS within three years who respond that “changes in student behavior, motivation, performance and parental support” is the MOST important reason for leaving.



FRL refers to the percentage of students at school who are on free or reduced-priced lunch.

Source: JPS teacher survey conducted in November 2008.

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Finding #5

The transfer process does not fully support principals in building strong instructional teams, nor does it consistently help teachers find satisfactory and lasting placements.



Background: Timeline and Scale* of School Staffing Processes in JPS

Internal Transfers

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- Teachers complete intent forms. Central office uses these to begin planning for vacancies, new hires and transfers.
- Transferring teachers submit move preferences for position and school.

- The transfer list provided to principals.
- In general, all transfers are given at least a “courtesy” interview by principals with vacancies in the teacher’s preference area.
- The principal determines if s/he wants teacher at the school; offer is made.

- Goal: Complete all internal transfers before new hires are made, but there is no formal deadline to request a transfer.
- In a few cases, teachers are placed without an interview.

Late Jan-Feb

March-April

May-June

Summer

New Hires

259

- Recruitment begins, using a variety of tools.
- Applicants are typically screened by school committees.

- Applicants interview with principals.
- Offers made to applicants – majority of hiring completed by June.

- New hires are approved by school board.

*New-hire data gathered from 2003-04 to 2007-08 school years; number of teachers who transferred or applied for transfer in last five years according to JPS teacher survey conducted November 2008.

Source: Interviews with district administration responsible for recruitment, hiring and transfer.

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JPS principals have sufficient decision-making authority during the hiring process to shape strong instructional teams for their schools.

100%

Principals who are satisfied with the **level of discretion** they have to hire the teachers they want from the applicant pool.

0

Principals who have **lost a more desirable candidate** who they wanted to hire due to another teacher being placed in their school.



While the hiring process is successful, principals are less satisfied with the transfer process.

Principal Opinions* on Hiring and Transfer Processes



*Percentage of principal survey respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the given statements.

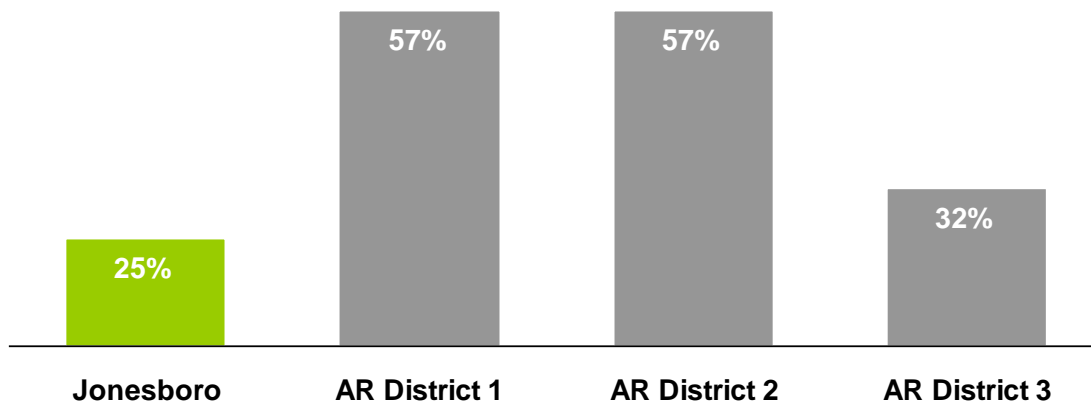
Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted in November 2008. n=8

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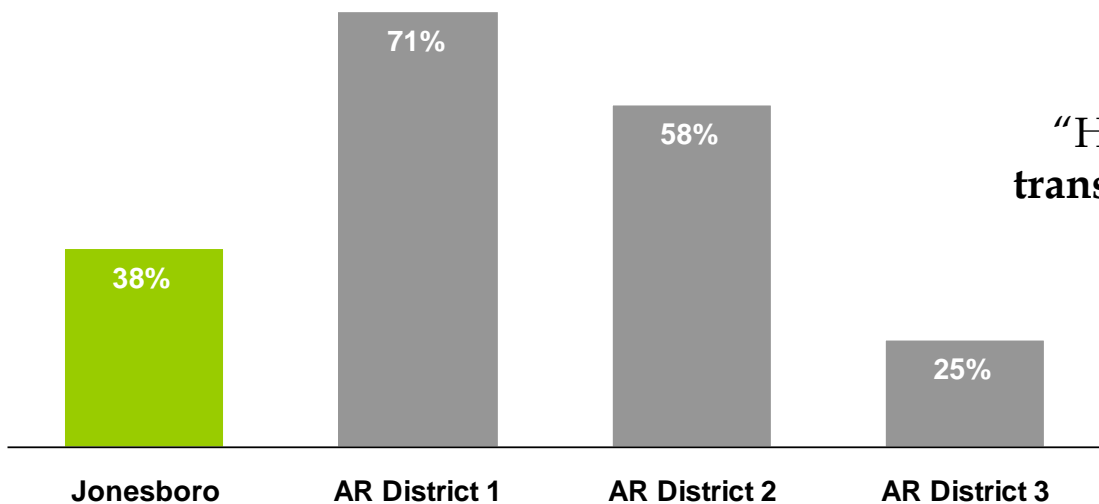


In addition, JPS principals are significantly less satisfied with the transfer process than most of their peers in other Arkansas districts.

“The transfer process allows me to hire the teachers that create the **best possible instructional team** for my school.”



“How satisfied are you with the transfer process in [school district]?”



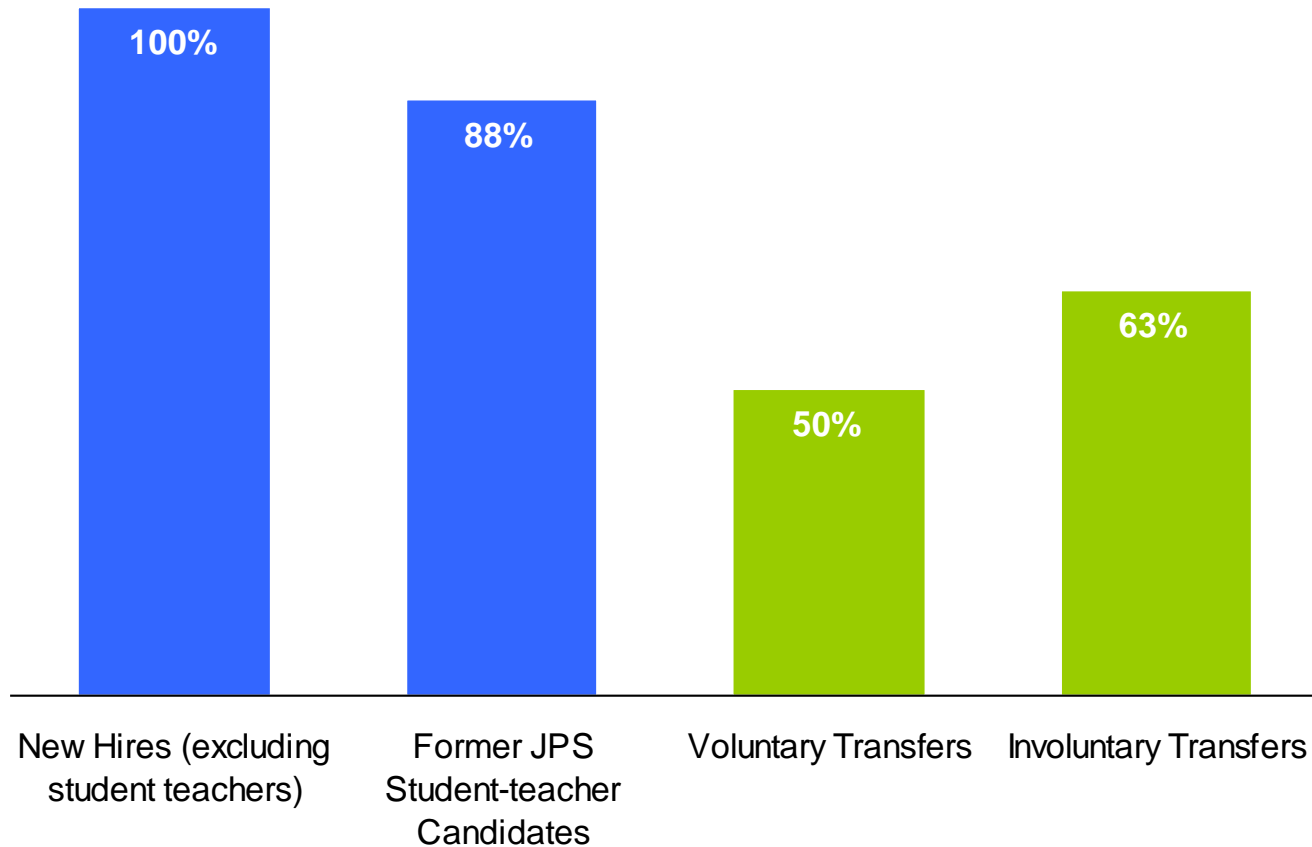
*Percentage of principal survey respondents who answered “agree” or “strongly agree” to the given statements.

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Survey data suggest that principal dissatisfaction with the transfer process may be explained by perceived differences in teacher quality.

Principal Satisfaction with the Quality of Teachers from Various Pools



*Percentage of principal survey respondents who answered “satisfied” or “very satisfied” to the given statements.
Source: JPS school administrator survey conducted in November 2008.



Teachers overwhelmingly support the concept of mutual consent, but they do not always have the opportunity to interview.

98%

Transferring teachers* who agree that “It was important to me when changing schools that my new principal **wanted me to move to his/her school.**”

25%

Transferring teachers who were **assigned to their new position** by the central office**

38%

Principals who report they have had teachers placed in their schools **without the opportunity to interview**

*n=43 **While these teachers make up a quarter of all transferring teachers, the absolute figure for this group is 6.

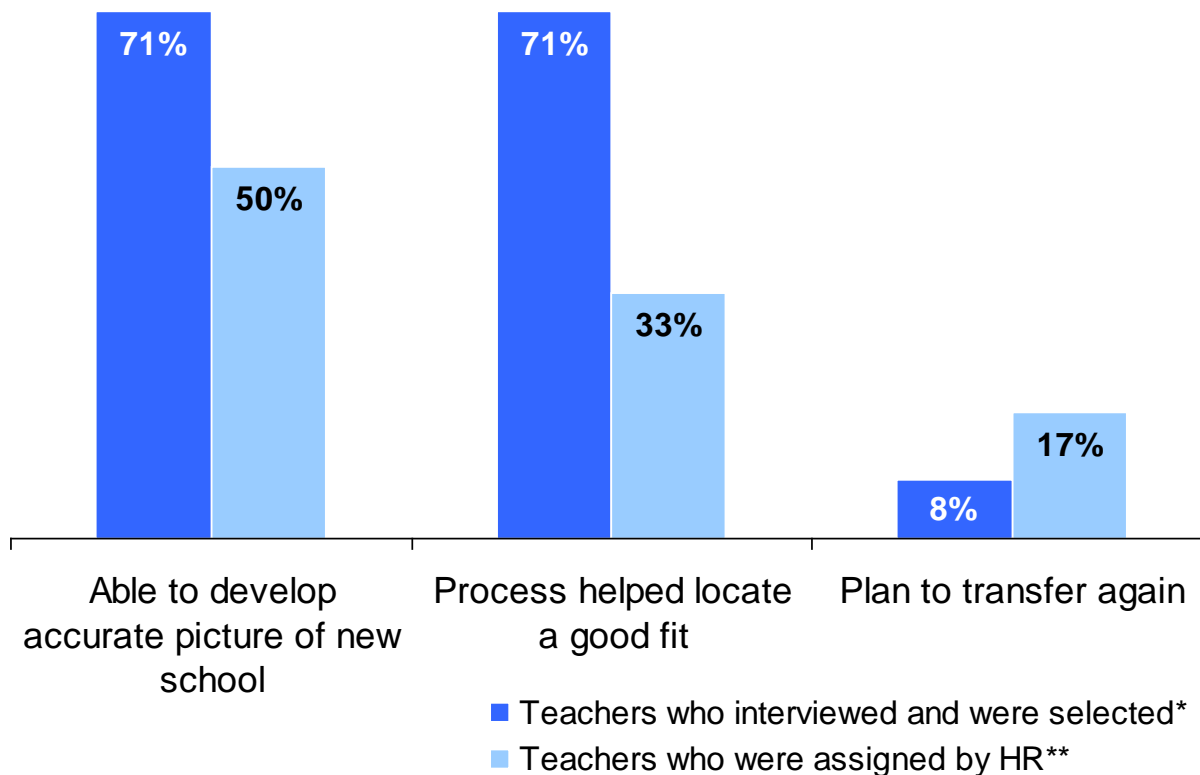
Source: JPS teacher and school administrator surveys conducted in November 2008.

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Overall, the transfer process is more effective for teachers who receive placements through interviews.

Transferring Teacher Opinions, by Placement Method



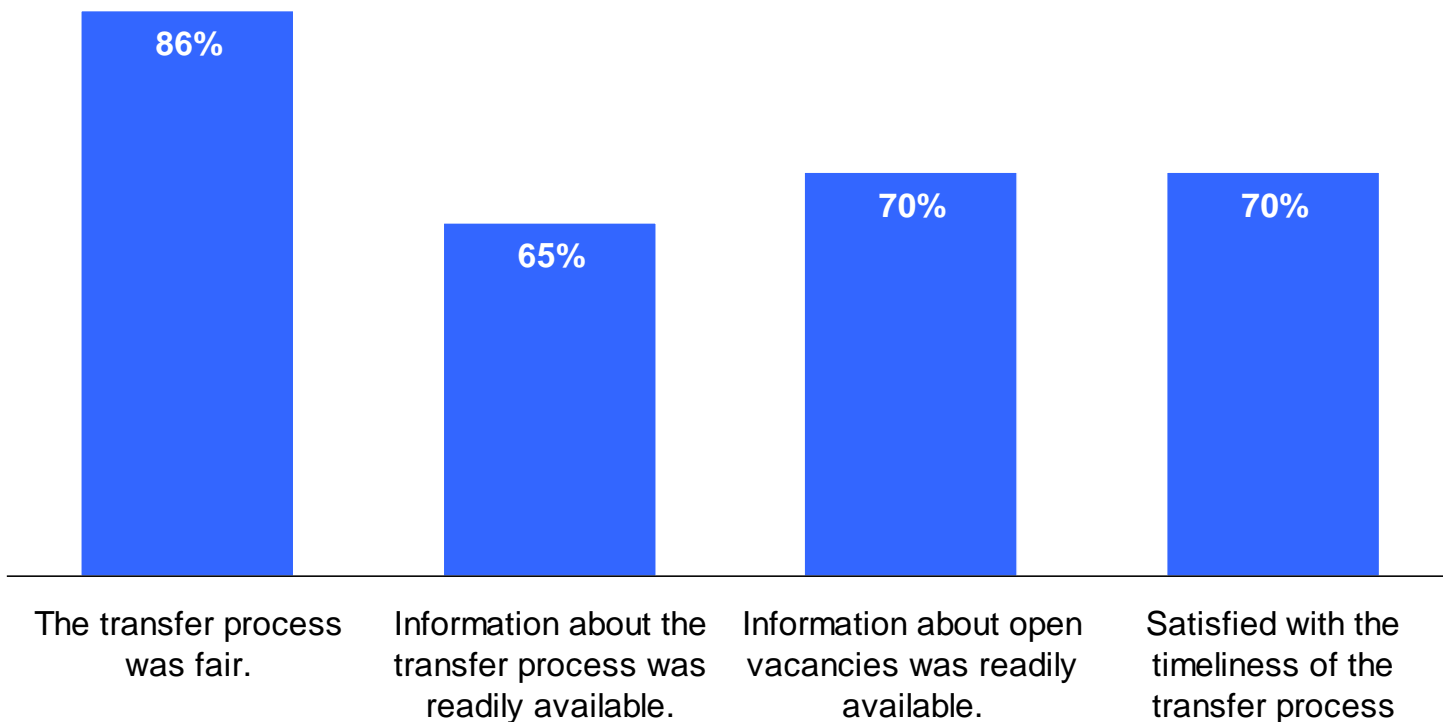
Percentage of teacher survey respondents who answered “agree” or “strongly agree” to the given statements.

*n=14 **n=6



Transferring teachers report that though the transfer process is fair, access to relevant information and timing could be improved.

Transferring Teachers' Opinions on the Transfer Process



*Percentage of teacher survey respondents who transferred schools in the last five years (not counting elementary magnet transfers) and answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the given statements.

Source: JPS teacher survey conducted November 2008. n=43

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Agenda

Background

The Widget Effect

Findings



Recommendations



In order to support and advance the district's vision for high-performing schools, JPS must achieve two main goals.

Goal 1: Develop and implement a credible, comprehensive teacher performance management system.

Goal 2: Manage the talent pipeline strategically through improved use of data and targeted support.

1. Design and adopt a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that credibly and effectively assesses and develops each teacher.
2. Continue to invest in and build on high-quality training and ongoing support for principals to increase their effectiveness as instructional leaders.
3. Implement a data management system that allows the district to easily and reliably collect longitudinal data for all applicants and teachers.
4. Use collected data to inform key human resource decisions, including capitalizing on current applicant data to inform future recruitment tactics and evaluation data to improve support offerings, etc.
5. Set early deadlines for resignation, retirement and intent notifications to give principals and the central office ample time to recruit and make new hires as efficiently as possible.
6. Increase targeted professional development and support for all teachers about working with diverse populations; provide individualized support for teachers most at risk for attrition.



1. Design and adopt a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that rigorously and meaningfully assesses and develops teachers and exits poor performers from the district.

➔ TNTP understands that JPS is one of the districts participating in the Arkansas Department of Education's efforts to develop a new teacher evaluation tool. Meaningful assessment and development of teachers, however, can only be as successful as the implementation process associated with the tool.

Effective teacher evaluation must be conducted with a meaningful, user-friendly tool and implemented through a credible process. Both the tool and process must:

- ✓ Be fair, accurate and credible in differentiating teacher performance.
- ✓ Distinguish great teachers from good, good from fair, and fair from poor.
- ✓ Identify areas of improvement for teachers against clear performance standards and provide differentiated professional development to address those areas.
- ✓ Provide specific remediation steps and timelines for poorly performing teachers and exit those who do not become effective after given a fair opportunity.
- ✓ Base at least 50 percent of teacher performance measures on student learning outcomes.
- ✓ Be linked directly to performance standards that are tied to student outputs, tied chiefly to student outputs.



1. Design and adopt a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that rigorously and meaningfully assesses and develops teachers and exits poor performers from the district (cont'd).

A credible teacher evaluation process should:

- ✓ Perform summative evaluations of all teachers at least once a year using several measures, including multiple announced and unannounced classroom observations, parent and secondary-level student feedback, reviews of student work and assistant principal and district administrator feedback.
- ✓ Be continuously implemented, including regular walk-throughs by principals and regular monitoring and norming of evaluator judgments, e.g., through peer evaluation.
- ✓ Include conferences between the teacher and observer after any observation to communicate feedback using the evaluation tool; post-conferences for announced observations should include a discussion about strategies for growth in specific areas that are tied directly to performance standards and measured by student output.
- ✓ Recognize highly effective teachers by providing retention incentives, e.g., career ladder, performance-based pay or greater autonomy.
- ✓ Offer a low-stakes path out of the profession for poorly performing teachers who do not improve after support is provided, such as the denial of salary increases to low performers so as to encourage voluntary resignation, multi-year, unpaid sabbaticals for veteran teachers and buy-outs offered on a case-by-case basis.
- ✓ Keep observation and evaluation records in an easily accessible, electronic format for district administrators, the teacher's current principal and the teacher to review at will.



2. Invest in and build on necessary training and ongoing support for principals to increase their effectiveness as instructional leaders.

- ✓ **Continue allocating resources to provide intensive and ongoing training for principals**, specifically related to differentiating teacher performance. Training should enable principals to:
 - Set rigorous yet achievable performance standards for teachers.
 - Objectively measure teacher performance against those standards.
 - Provide frequent constructive and actionable feedback to teachers.
 - Provide differentiated support teachers need to meet or exceed the standards.
 - Lead a change to a performance-based culture where excellence is recognized and celebrated and constructive feedback is not a “nuclear bomb.”

- ✓ **Provide principals with additional support and resources** to increase their ability to genuinely manage the performance of their teaching staff.
 - **Conduct a study of principal duties** to identify non-critical responsibilities that can be eliminated or delegated, such as facilities management.
 - **Set expectations around principal walk-around time**, including goals for number of unannounced classroom visits for all teachers and hold them accountable for meeting goals.
 - Use currently planned monthly or quarterly meetings to reinforce key performance management strategies and allow principals to reflect upon their practice in this area with their peers.



2. Invest in and build on high-quality training and ongoing support for principals to increase their effectiveness as instructional leaders (cont'd).

- ✓ **Planned development of an improved evaluation tool for administrators should:**
 - Hold principals accountable for using the evaluation system effectively, including:
 - Faithful implementation of the teacher performance evaluation system, including fair and accurate ratings of instructional effectiveness;
 - Support of teaching staff to improve and excel instructionally; and
 - Effective exiting of poor performers who do not improve.
 - Make teacher performance management a primary component of principal evaluation, using a 360-degree review process as a data source.
 - Align principal incentives to be consistent with those set for teachers, i.e., primarily based on student learning outcomes.
- ✓ **Enact consequences** for principals who inflate teacher evaluation ratings, use illegitimate means to address poor performance, or fail to give teachers timely and actionable feedback and support to improve.



3. Implement a data management system that allows the district to collect applicant, employment and performance data.

- ✓ Train two district employees in Microsoft Access to analyze electronic data. JPS' current database system as provided by the state should be able to export all data into spreadsheets to use in both Excel and Access.
- ✓ Database should collect and keep longitudinal records of:
 - Employee data, including basic information and teacher movement;
 - Teacher performance data, including observation notes and outcomes, evaluation ratings, and professional development records and results;
 - Applicant data; and
 - Student performance data.
- ✓ The database should be able to match teachers to school locations (past and present), students and student performance data. It should be able to track all movement/outcomes for any teacher, starting from initial entry point into the district.
- ✓ Analyze data to inform/ guide key HR decisions, including but not limited to:
 - Best recruitment/staffing practices;
 - Targeted retention efforts;
 - Individualized professional development and support;
 - Career ladder and lead-teacher opportunities;
 - Performance-based compensation; and
 - Layoffs, RIFs, etc., if ever necessary.



4. Use collected data to inform key human resource decisions, including those for recruitment, staffing, development and retention.

✓ Applicant Data

- o In addition to the information currently being collected, each applicant's file should also include district/school contact points and final outcome and placement.
- o All applicant information should be recorded electronically, including optional questions. If an applicant chooses not to answer an optional question, the field should be left blank. Ideally, applicants should be able to apply directly online so that all information is automatically recorded to a computer file.
- o Applicant data should be kept as a computer file for a minimum of five years.
- o Run historical applicant data every fall to analyze the success of the prior year's recruitment tactics and make necessary adjustments to the coming year's recruitment plan, particularly around high-yield avenues for diverse candidates. Several simple queries to automatically run these analyses can be set up using Access, with minimal time and financial investment.



4. Use collected data to inform key human resource decisions, including those for recruitment, staffing, development and retention (cont'd).

✓ **Teacher Evaluation Data**

- Include date evaluated, evaluator, summative ratings, feedback, goals, promised support/professional development and its ensuing results (as measured by instructional performance growth).
- When a comprehensive system is in place, performance evaluation data should be used for multiple human capital decisions, such as teacher assignments, compensation, retention, further professional development offerings and dismissal.

✓ **Current Employee Data**

- Record all internal teacher movement (and requests for movement) and separation from the district on an electronic spreadsheet.
- Once a year, analyze teacher movement and separation to find trends in teacher or school characteristics that can be used to inform recruitment, staffing and, if appropriate, professional development decisions.



5. Set early deadlines for resignation, retirement and intent notifications to give principals and the central office ample time to recruit and make new hires as efficiently as possible.

- ✓ **Continue using intent forms** with teachers in late winter, but set a deadline for teachers to return forms by the last week in February.
 - Incentive retiring teachers to return forms in time by offering additional assistance with paperwork and/or informational workshops designed to help retiring teachers navigate retirement funds, accounts and payout schedules for those who meet the notification deadline.
- ✓ **Set a March 15 decision deadline** for teachers who are planning on resigning or retiring at the end of the school year.
 - Provide incentives for early notification such as continued health care through the end of summer or early payouts of accrued vacation.
 - Train principals to conduct individual intention conversations and/or use school-level declaration of intent forms late in the fall; conversations should be designed to clearly communicate why early notification is important for the district and what it means for the teacher.

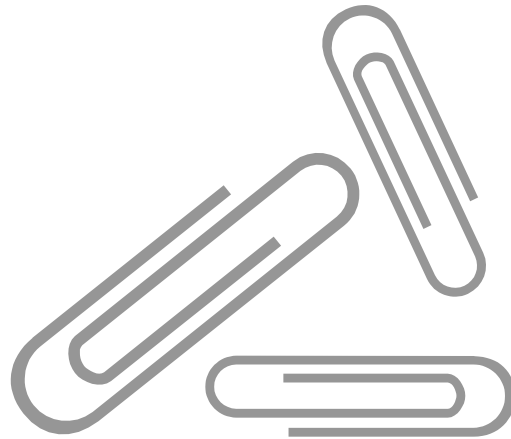


6. Increase professional development offerings about working with diverse populations, particularly for teachers most at risk for attrition.

- ✓ **Create a teacher retention task force** responsible for annually identifying effective teachers most at-risk for attrition and spearheading targeted interventions to support and retain those teachers.
 - Retention incentives (e.g., career ladder options, increased autonomy and performance bonuses) should be targeted to teachers who demonstrate effectiveness with high-need populations.
- ✓ **Collect non-anonymous, low-stakes survey data** to gauge workforce views around working conditions and school community issues; use the data to develop targeted professional development for select teachers.
 - Continue providing district-led training, but collect anonymous feedback from all participants immediately after the training is completed and then another anonymous follow-up check three months after to gauge the effectiveness of the training.
- ✓ **Invest in professional development and district-level support** for existing teachers to work more effectively with higher poverty and minority populations.
- ✓ Data to guide these development efforts should be **tied directly to teacher effectiveness**, as measured by the performance evaluation process.



Appendix





Methodology

The data presented in this report were gathered from four primary sources:

- Teacher demographic, hiring, transfer and dismissal data provided by Jonesboro central office.
- Teacher evaluation records (manually collected by TNTP staff from Jonesboro central office files).
- An online survey of district teachers, distributed electronically via SurveyMonkey.com during the period of October 31 to November 14, 2008. The teacher survey completion rate was 92 percent (335 out of 364).
- An online survey of district principals and assistant principals, distributed electronically via SurveyMonkey.com during the period of October 31 to November 14, 2008. The principal and assistant principal survey completion rate was 50 percent (9 out of 18). Of the 10 JPS principals to whom the survey was sent, 8 responded and 6 completed the survey.



A comprehensive approach to managing human capital will ensure that every classroom has an effective teacher.

Working Conditions

- Safe, healthy learning environments.
- Sufficient resources and technology to facilitate effective instruction.

School-Level Human Capital Management

- Informed, accountable decisions on hiring and retention
- School-level performance management (direction-setting, coaching, peer to peer collaboration).
- Accountability of principals and other personnel who affect teacher effectiveness.

Retention / Dismissal

- More effective teachers are rewarded non-monetarily.
- Probationary periods last long enough to assess effectiveness comprehensively.
- Tenure based on effectiveness.
- Fair but efficient process for exiting poor performers throughout career.

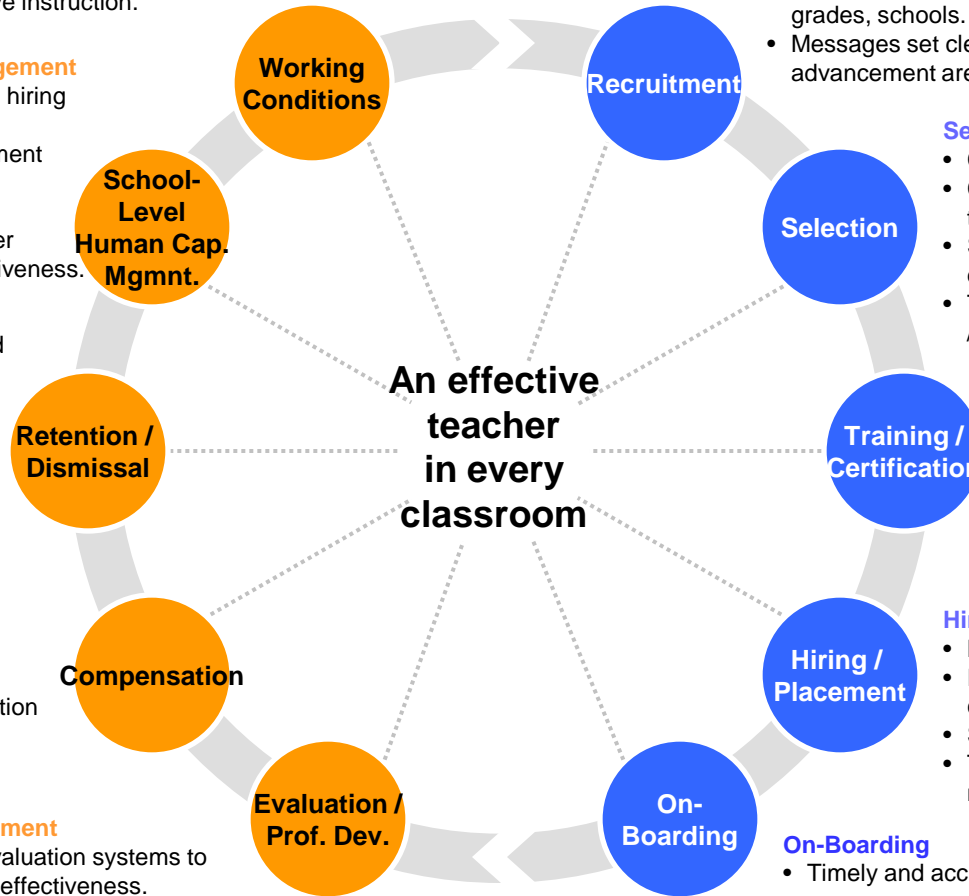
Compensation

- Responsive to supply/demand.
- Differentiated to drive strategic retention of top performers and attrition of less effective teachers.

Evaluation / Professional Development

- Assess teachers using credible evaluation systems to differentiate levels of instructional effectiveness.
- Link effectiveness to key decisions such as development, compensation, job security and career ladder.
- Recognize excellence and immediately offer support-focused interventions when there is evidence of ineffectiveness.
- Development tailored to each teacher's unique performance challenges.

District Governance
Timely and coherent governance and budget decisions aligned with HC goals.



Recruitment

- Prioritizes sources of most effective teachers.
- Cultivate candidates who have the qualities linked to effectiveness and are qualified for high-need subjects, grades, schools.
- Messages set clear expectation that employment and advancement are based on performance.

Selection

- Competency-based selection model.
- Criteria aligned with research findings on teacher effectiveness.
- Standardized tools and rubrics to support differentiation of candidates.
- Training and periodic norming for HR staff / principals.

Training / Certification

- Backwards design approach that explicitly emphasizes instructional effectiveness.
- Student growth data a primary factor in recommendation for certification.
- Tailored to district needs.

Hiring / Placement

- Based in mutual consent – no forcing.
- Early, efficient hiring to avoid loss of top candidates.
- Selection training and norming for principals.
- Technology supports and facilitates effective matching of candidates and schools.

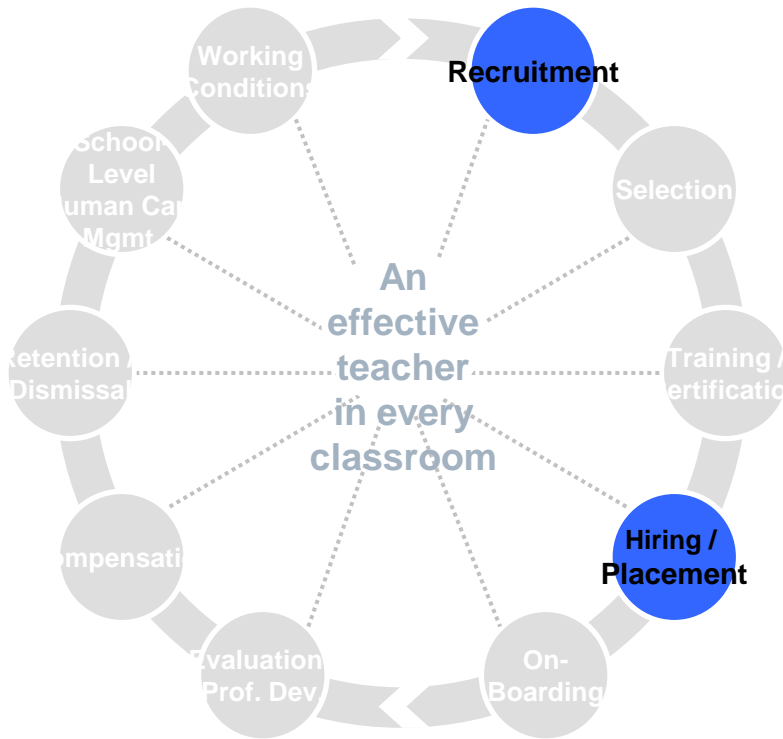
On-Boarding

- Timely and accurate payroll, benefits and other new-hire processes.
- Induction differentiated by subject, grade and school and that drives internalization of objectives, behavioral norms and performance expectations.

Measures of Student Learning
Accurately measures student mastery of important standards (including those that can't be measured on multiple-choice tests).



Focus Area #1: Effective Management of Talent Pipeline and School Staffing



Guiding Principles

- #1** School districts must prioritize sources of the most effective teachers and cultivate candidates who have the qualities linked to effectiveness and who are qualified for high-need subject areas.
- #2** Selection decisions should be aligned with models using current research on teacher effectiveness and supported with standardized tools and rubrics.
- #3** Early, efficient hiring of external candidates must be a core underpinning of the process.
- #4** All staffing and placement decisions, including staffing of new hires and transfers, must be made through mutual consent and respect the needs of both teachers and schools.
- #5** HR must deliver excellent customer service, treating teachers and schools as customers.



Focus Area #2: Development of a Credible Teacher Performance Management System

Guiding Principles

- #1** Performance evaluation must be a comprehensive system that fairly, accurately and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement.
- #2** School administrators must be trained to implement the performance evaluation system and be held accountable for using it effectively.
- #3** Performance evaluations need to be made meaningful by using them to inform key decisions such as teacher assignment, professional development, compensation, retention and dismissal.
- #4** Dismissal policies must provide lower-stakes options for ineffective teachers to exit the district, as well as a system of due process that is fair but efficient for teachers and principals.

