



# The Impact of State and Local Human Capital Policies on Rockford Public Schools

---

October 2009

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE**  
**October 27, 2009, 7:30 PM CDT**



# Contents

---

 **Background**

Findings

Recommendations

Appendix



# The New Teacher Project

**The New Teacher Project (TNTP) helps school districts and states fulfill the promise of public education by ensuring that all students – especially those from high-need communities – get excellent teachers.**

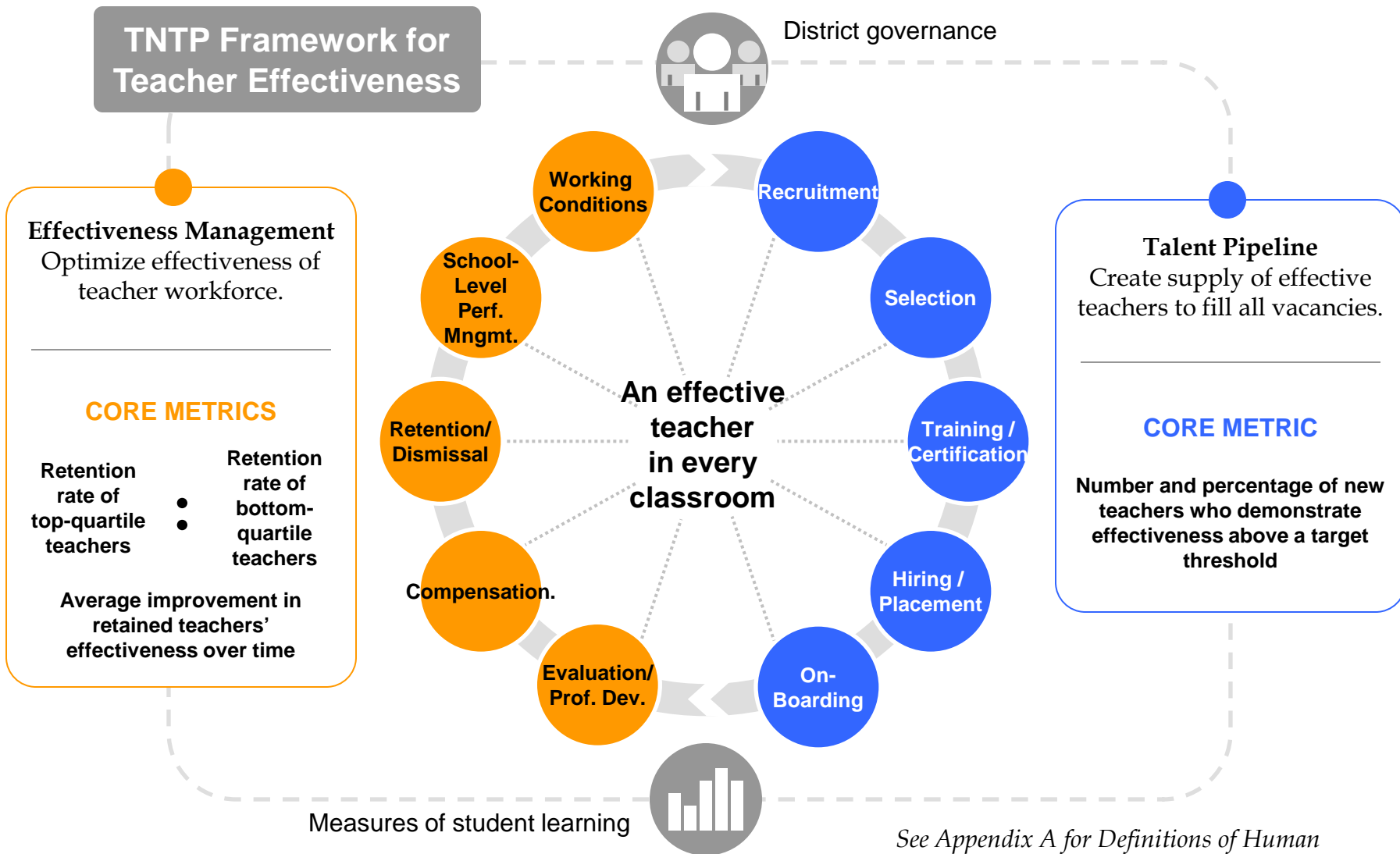
- National nonprofit, founded by teachers in 1997
- Partners with school districts, state education agencies, and charter schools
- Targets acute teacher quality challenges
- Delivers a range of customized services and solutions on a fee-for-service basis
- Approx. 200 employees, most embedded in school district offices; majority are former teachers
- Past and present clients include:

*Districts:* Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Memphis, New Orleans, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Antonio, Washington, DC

*States:* Alaska, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia

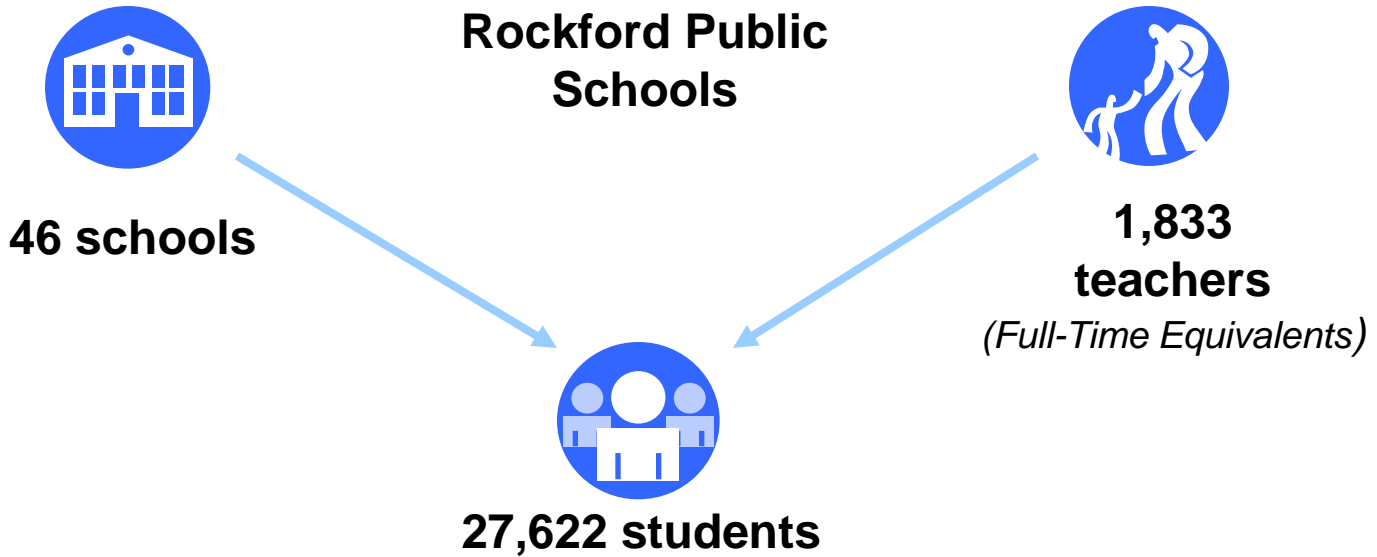


To realize sustainable improvement, effective teaching must be the guiding concern behind all elements of a district's human capital system.





# Rockford Public Schools: 2008 District Report Card



72%  
*Low Income Rate*

14%  
*LEP\* Rate*

**NO**  
*District Meeting AYP*

61%  
*Students of Color\*\**

72%  
*Graduation Rate*

\*Limited English Proficient Rate.

\*\*Includes Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American and Multiracial/ethnic students.

Source: Rockford Public Schools 2008 Illinois District Report Card.

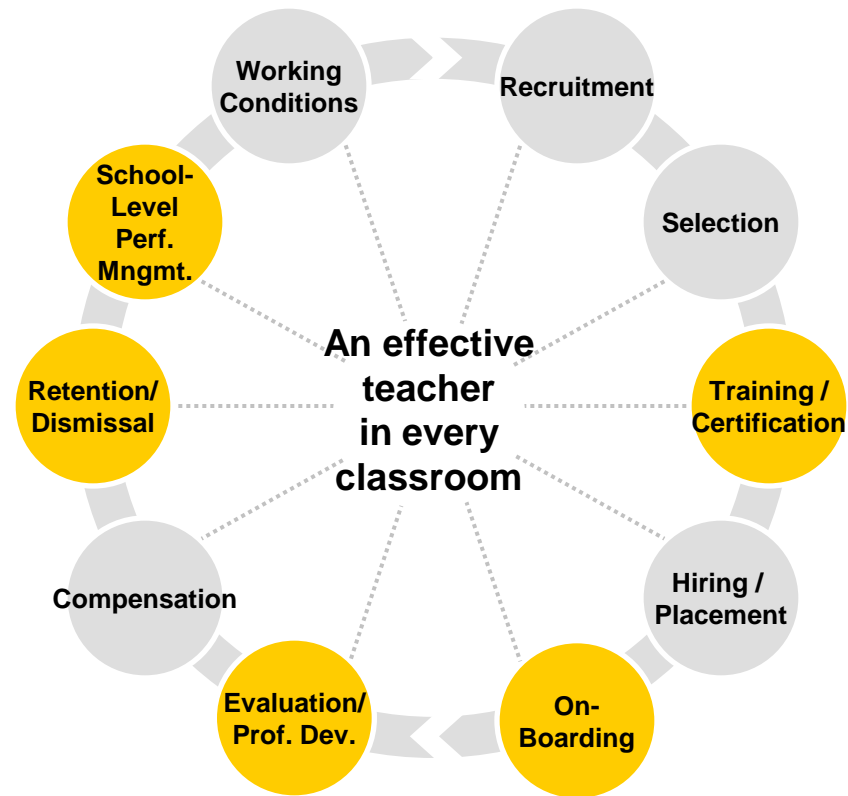
[http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getReport.aspx?year=2008&code=041012050\\_E.pdf](http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getReport.aspx?year=2008&code=041012050_E.pdf)



In 2008, TNTP investigated the impact of state and local policies on a range of Rockford Public Schools human capital practices.

TNTP conducted its analysis using four primary methods:

- **Analysis of relevant state and local policy documents**, including state laws, Illinois State Board of Education regulations, current Rockford Public Schools (RPS) procedures, and the agreement between RPS and the Rockford Education Association (REA).
- **Stakeholder interviews** with union leaders, district administrators, HR staff, principals and teachers.
- **Survey data** collected from district teachers, and administrators (principals and assistant principals). Surveys yielded a 55% teacher response rate, and a 86% administrator response rate.
- **Extant data** collected from 2003-2004 school year to the 2008-2009 school year.





RPS also participated concurrently in TNTP's national report, *The Widget Effect*, which researched teacher 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.



# Contents

---

Background



**Findings**

Recommendations

Appendix



## Summary of RPS Findings

- 1** State certification requirements **impede administrators from attracting and keeping teachers**, especially in high-need subject areas, and **teachers question the effectiveness of the certification renewal process**, which is confusing and cumbersome.
- 2** While RPS teachers and administrators support the mentoring program, **current practices lead to missed opportunities for new teachers to participate in and benefit** from the specific services that most improve teaching and learning.
- 3** Almost all RPS teachers **are rated good or great on their performance evaluations**, which are **not rigorous and do not provide sufficient feedback** to help improve performance.
- 4** RPS' current Reduction in Force practices result in unnecessary disruption to the teacher workforce and **the loss of high-quality teachers**.



**To ensure a high-quality teacher workforce, the state of Illinois and RPS must both reform their human capital policies.**



# #1

## ▶ Finding

**State certification requirements impede administrators from attracting and keeping teachers, especially in high-need subject areas, and teachers question the effectiveness of the certification renewal process, which is confusing and cumbersome.**



# Illinois State Certification Rules: Overview



## Illinois Certification Process

In 2000, Illinois instituted a three-tiered system, in which teachers hold one of three certificates:

**Initial** → **Standard** → **Master**

Teachers are required to at least gain and maintain a standard certificate in order to remain certified in Illinois.

Teachers who transfer from out-of-state or seek certification through an alternate route, hold a *provisional* certificate prior to receiving an initial certificate.

Teachers must hold an *endorsement* in the subject area they teach. Teachers may have multiple endorsements on one teaching certificate.

## Requirements to Maintain Illinois Certification

**Initial** certificate holders must complete four years of teaching and professional development options,\* which amounts to at least **60** professional development units in order to earn their standard certificate.

**Standard** certificate holders must renew their certificate every five years by completing professional development that amounts to at least **120** professional development units.

**Master** certificate holders must have gained National Board Certification and are required to renew their license every ten years based upon the standard certificate renewal requirements.

\*See Appendix B for types of activities that qualify as professional development options.



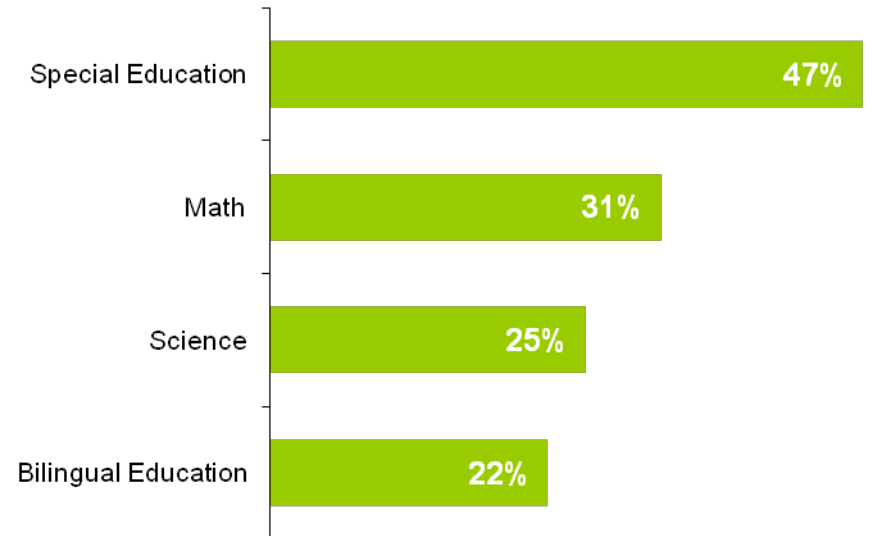
Illinois teacher certification requirements impede RPS administrators from attracting and retaining desirable teacher candidates, especially in high-need subject areas.

46%



of administrators report **having difficulty filling vacancies** at their school because of the state certification requirements.

Subject areas in which administrators have difficulty filling vacancies due to certification requirements



Percent of administrators who report difficulty filling vacancies in these subjects due to certification requirements.

**32%** of administrators have **lost a desirable teacher candidate** because they were **unable to meet the state's certification requirements** for the position.



Once certified, RPS teachers find the renewal process confusing, and district and state support lacking.

Only **26%** of teachers with an Initial Certificate “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the process to gain their Standard Certificate is “Easy to Navigate.”

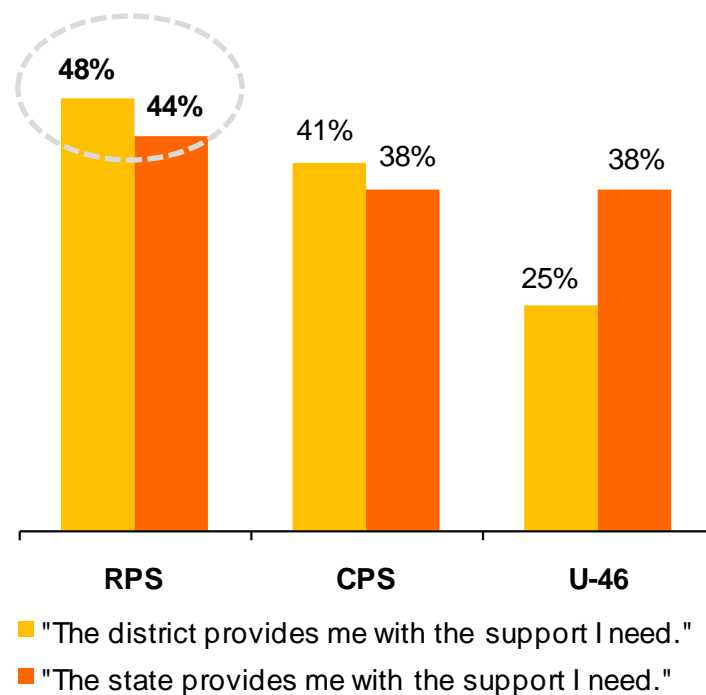
*“As a new teacher, there is no information for what you need to do for CPDU's or renewing your certificate.”*

*RPS Teacher*

*“The certification process is extremely confusing. I truly have no clue what is expected of me. Any clarification of the process would be helpful...”*

*RPS Teacher*

Percent of teachers who disagree\* that they receive the support they need from the district and state to obtain their Standard Certificates, by district



Source: TNTP survey conducted in October 2008 of 947 RPS teachers.

\*Includes: “Somewhat disagree” “disagree” “strongly disagree”



The confusion over the renewal process may contribute to teachers failing to keep their certification up-to-date, according to RPS administrators.

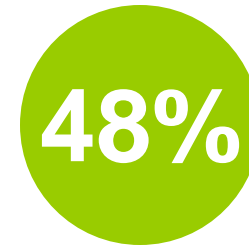
Among all RPS administrators surveyed,



report having had a teacher fail to keep his/her certification up-to-date.



Among these administrators, nearly half

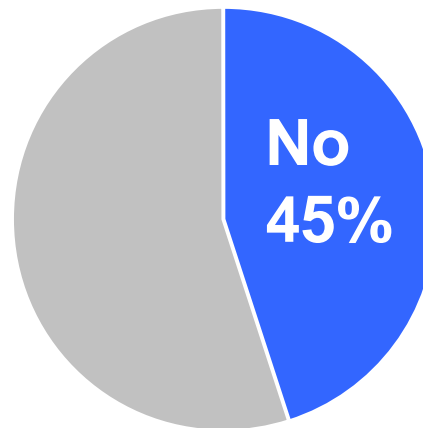


report **“Confusing Certification Requirements”** as a factor that contributed to the teacher being unable to keep his/her certification up-to-date.



Most importantly, many RPS teachers question the positive impact the renewal process has on their classroom performance.

**“Do you think that completing the Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) to maintain your certificate has helped improve your performance in the classroom?”**



*“I have taken many excellent workshops, seminars, classes that have been extremely helpful in my teaching career. The problem is that they have done absolutely nothing to help me when it comes to the requirements of recertification in the state of Illinois. I am left to search for less helpful, less useful and less meaningful ways to earn credits or CPDU's to continue my professional development...”*

*RPS Teacher*



## #2

### ▶ Finding

**While RPS teachers and administrators support the mentoring program, current practices lead to missed opportunities for new teachers to participate in and benefit from the specific services that most improve teaching and learning.**



# New Teacher Mentoring in RPS



## Illinois State Rules

- **Article 21A** of the Illinois School Code calls for the development of Induction and Mentoring programs for new teachers.
- Due to limited funding to support programs across the state, Illinois has developed the “Beginning Teacher Induction Pilot Program.” Districts may apply for grant funds by developing an induction plan that includes mentoring for new teachers.
- Approved programs include a mentoring component that provides teachers new to the profession (not to the district) with at least 1.5 hours of contact a week with their mentor.
- Mentoring programs may count toward the teachers’ professional development if they meet an additional set of standards.\*



## District Program

<b>Mentees</b>	Teachers who are new to the profession.
<b>Mentors</b>	Mentors are former teachers who are selected through an application process.
<b>Pilot Program?</b>	RPS is part of the “Beginning Teacher Induction Pilot Program” and is approved to allow new teachers to gain professional development credit for participating.

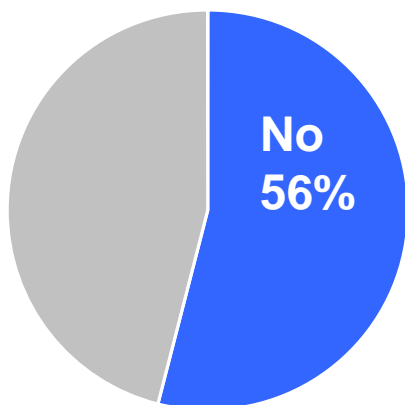
\*See Appendix C for such requirements.



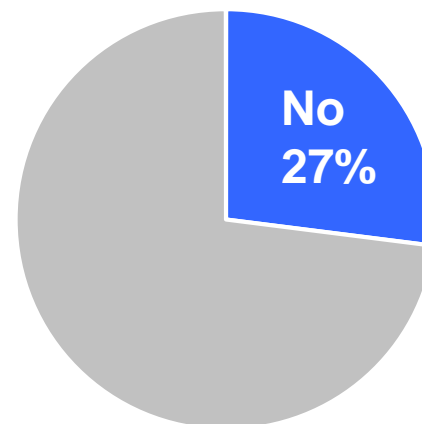
Since 2003, the majority of new RPS teachers did not have a mentor during their first year, though they believe one would have been helpful.

“Did you work with a district/school assigned mentor during your first year of teaching?”

All teachers new to RPS



Teachers with no prior experience



Of those teachers who did not work with a mentor,  
**nearly 3 out of 4 (72%)**  
at least somewhat agree that working with a mentor  
**would have helped improve their performance.**

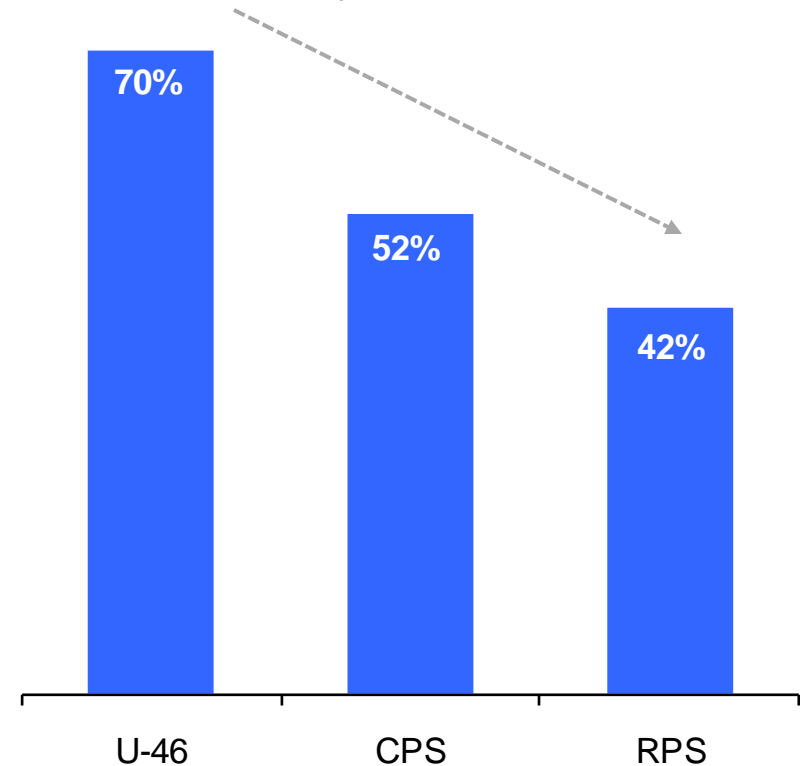


While mentor participants found the program valuable, RPS teachers are less satisfied with the program than their peers in other districts.

**54%**

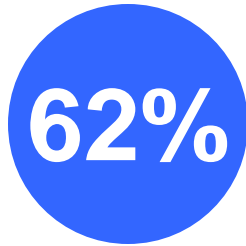
of mentor program participants “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that having a mentor helped improve their instructional performance during their first year of teaching.

Percent of teachers  
“Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied”  
with their mentor program,  
by district





Teachers' lack of enthusiasm may stem, in part, from infrequent opportunities to observe their mentor teaching.



Of teachers in the mentor program **never observed their mentor teaching** compared to **27%** in District U-46 and **35%** in CPS.

And though better than the other Illinois districts, still more than half of teachers in the mentor program

**54%,**

report receiving **three or fewer classroom observations** from their mentor during their first year.

Most effective mentoring activity, according to teachers and administrators:

**“Receiving feedback from my mentor on my teaching practice.”\***  
**“Being observed by a mentor as the new teacher delivers instruction.”\*\***

Source: TNTP survey conducted in October 2008 of 947 RPS teachers and 92 RPS administrators.

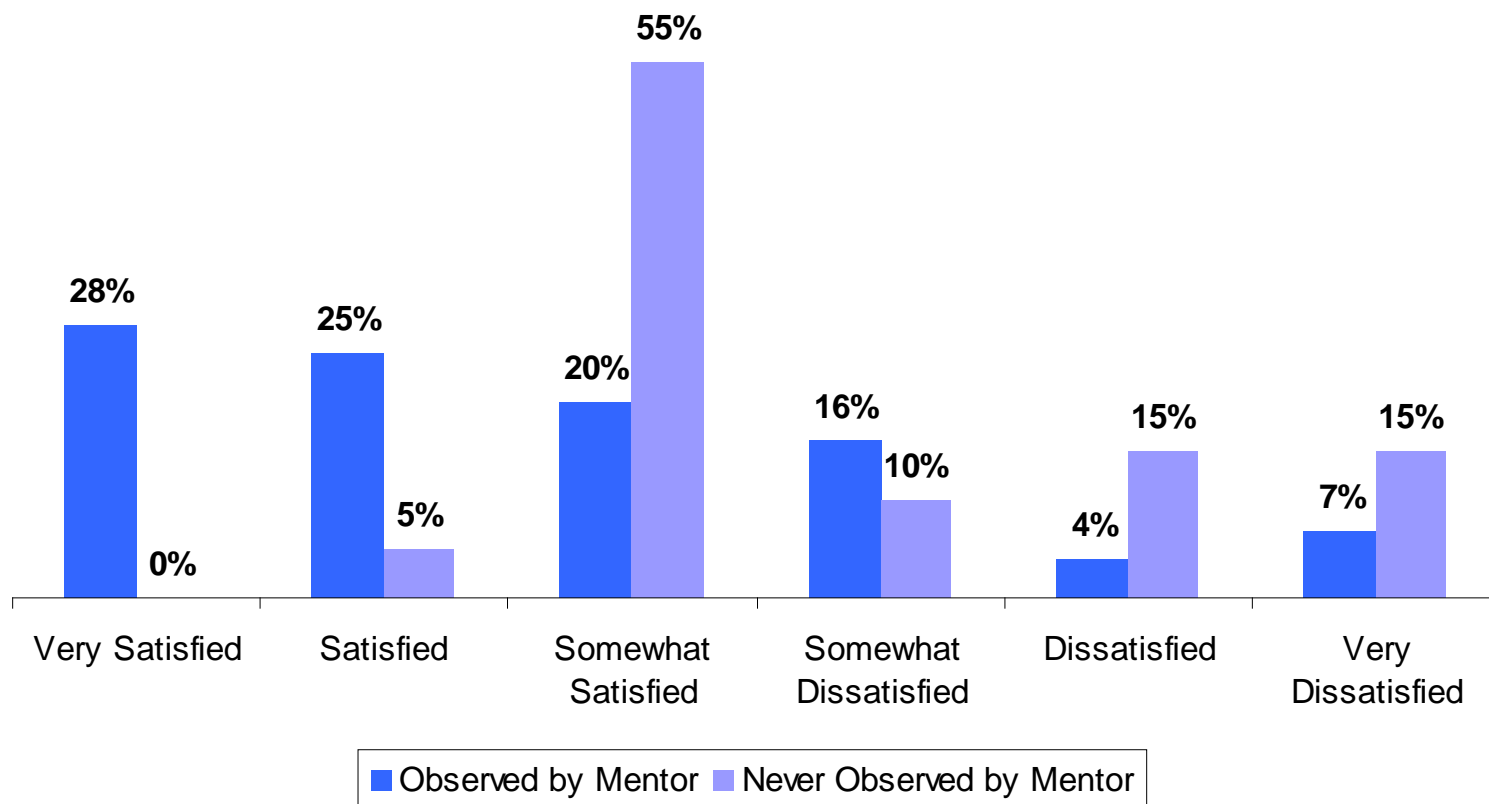
\*Top teacher response

\*\*Top administrator response



Those teachers who are observed by their mentors report higher rates of satisfaction with the program than those teachers that are not observed.

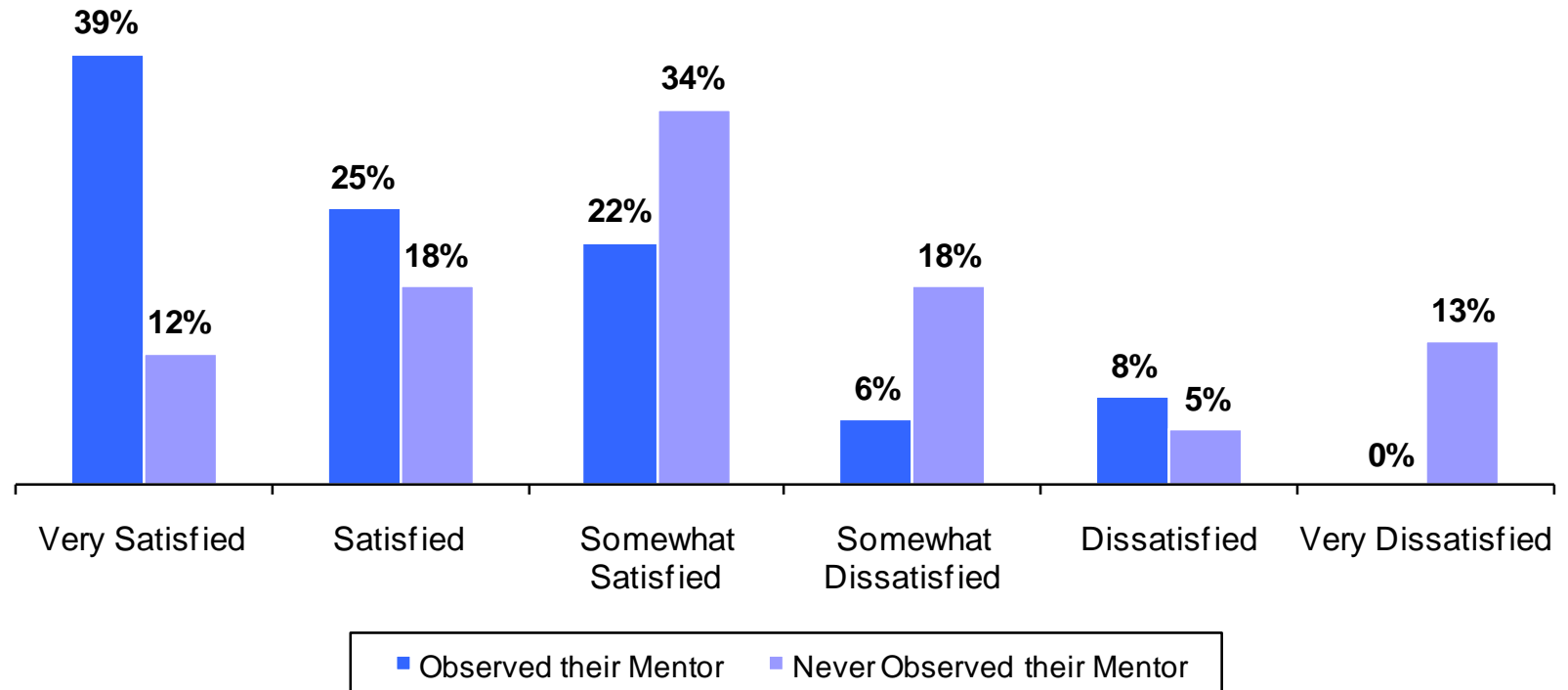
Overall, how satisfied are you with the mentor program in your district?





And, teachers who observed their mentor teaching report higher rates of satisfaction with the program than those who did not have that opportunity.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the mentor program in your district?





## #3

### ▶ Finding

**Almost all RPS teachers are rated good or great on their performance evaluations, which are not rigorous and do not provide sufficient feedback to help improve performance.**



# Teacher Evaluation in RPS



## Illinois State Law

**Evaluation Frequency** 1 per year for probationary teachers  
1 every 2 years for tenured teachers

**Observations Required** 1 observation per evaluation cycle for both probationary and tenured teachers

**Duration of Observation** No minimum time requirement for observations of both probationary and tenured teachers



## District Rules

**Evaluation Frequency** 2 per year for probationary teachers  
1 every 2 years for tenured teachers

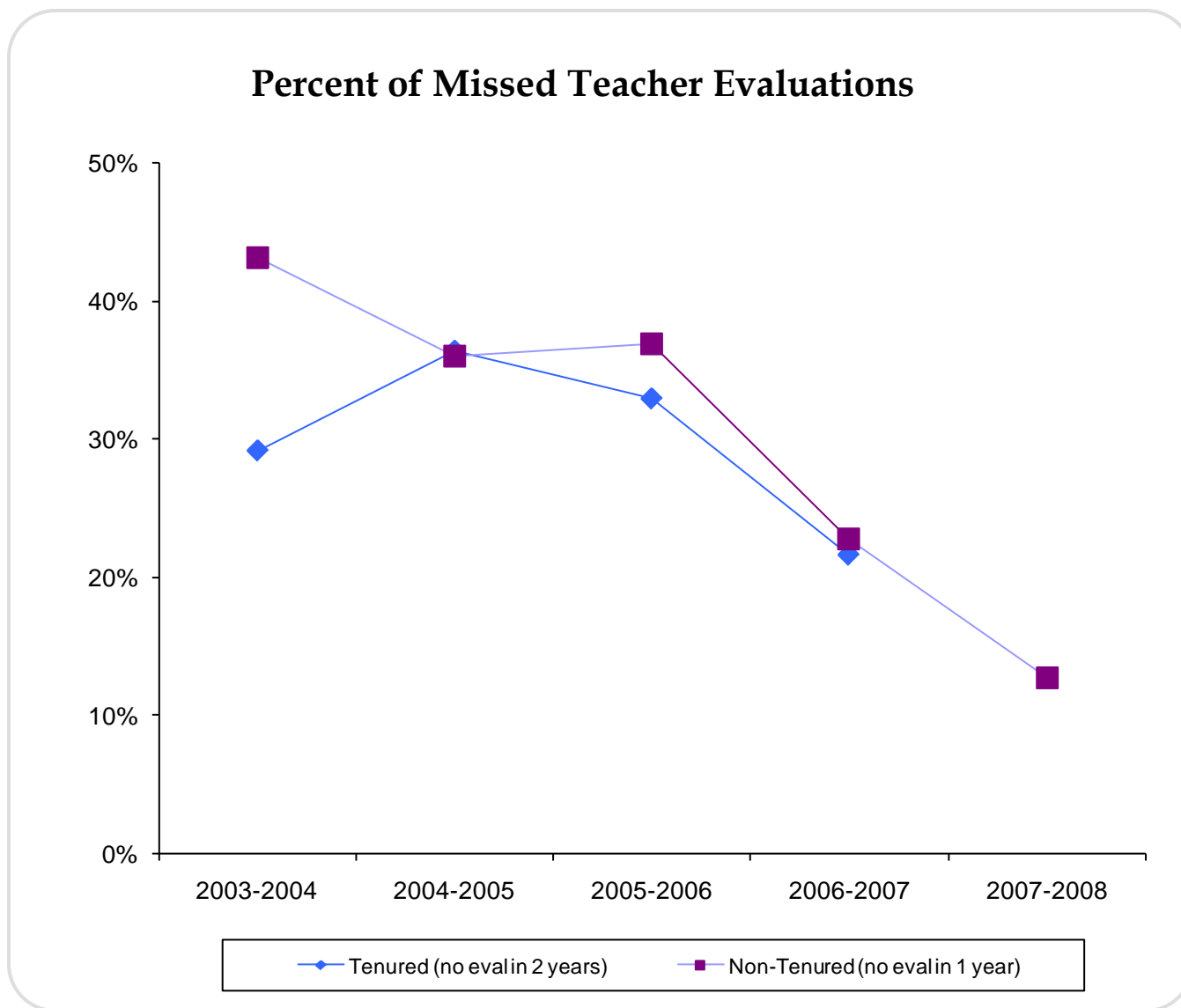
**Observations Required** 3 observations per evaluation cycle for both probationary and tenured teachers

**Duration of Observation** 1 observation must be at least 30 minutes in length for both probationary and tenured teachers

**Rating Scale** "Excellent," "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory"



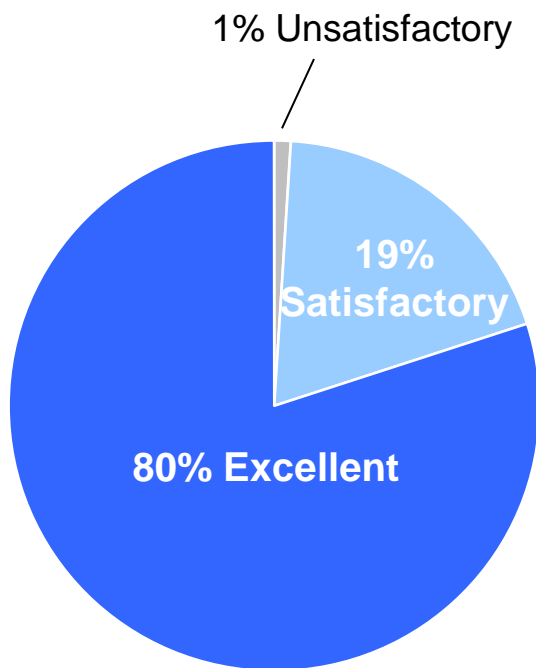
In recent years, RPS has improved in ensuring that teachers are consistently evaluated.



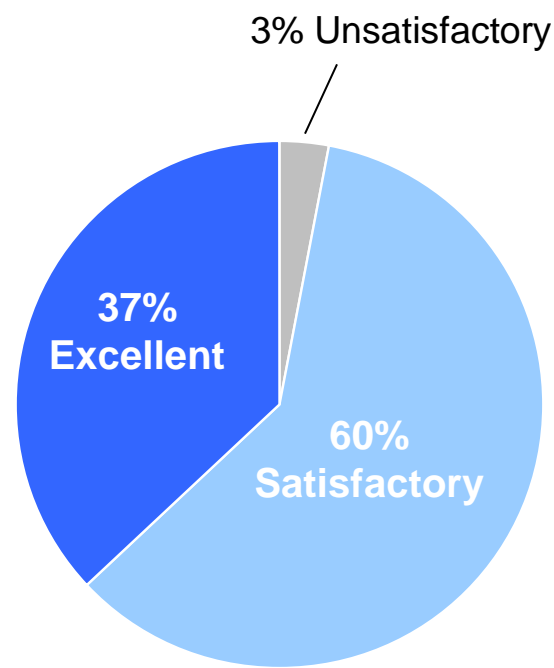


Yet performance evaluations result in almost all teachers being rated good or great.

**Tenured Teacher Evaluation Ratings,  
2003-2004 through 2007-2008**



**Probationary Teacher Evaluation  
Ratings, 2003-2004 through 2007-2008**





The lack of differentiation may be due in part to teacher evaluations that are based upon few and short classroom observations.

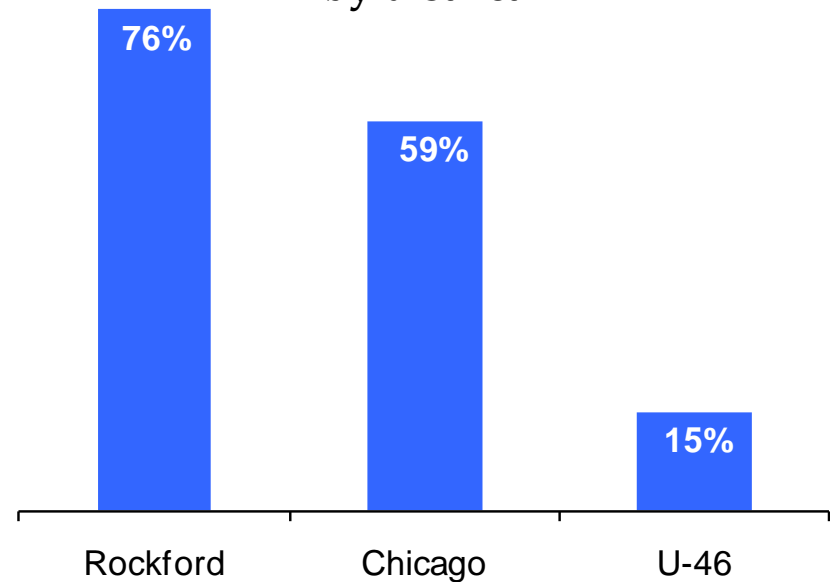
**82%**

of teachers report being observed **three times or less** during their most recent evaluation.

*“There should be more observations over a longer period of time. The observations are too close to an eye-blink in time...”*

*RPS Teacher*

**Percent of teachers reporting observations of 30 minutes or less, by district**

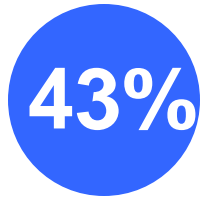


**1 out of 10**

RPS teacher observations last for less than 15 minutes.

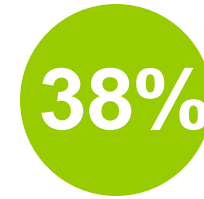


As a result, the evaluation process does little to provide teachers with feedback they need to improve their instructional performance.

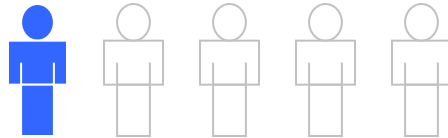


**Teachers**

Percent of teachers and administrators that “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that the current evaluation process **helps teachers improve** their performance:



**Administrators**



Only one in five RPS teachers report **having an area identified for improvement** on their last evaluation.



One in three RPS administrators report **receiving limited training\*** on how to conduct effective evaluations.

*“I was observed, but never got any feedback as to how I did.”*  
*RPS Teacher*

Source: TNTP survey conducted in October 2008 of 947 RPS teachers and 92 RPS administrators.

\* Includes: “Somewhat limited” “limited” “very limited”



## And poor performance goes unaddressed in RPS schools.

→ **43%** of teachers believe that there are tenured teachers in their building who **should be dismissed for poor instructional performance** but have not been.

→ **80%** of RPS administrators report that they have at least one tenured teacher in their school who is **not meeting performance expectations**.

*"...Poor teachers continue to come back year after year, and it's the students who ultimately suffer for it."*

*RPS Teacher*

Since the 2005-2006 school year in RPS,

**15**

**tenured teachers have been placed on remediation,**

**2**

**were successfully remediated and only**

**2**

**tenured teachers, 0.03% of the tenured teacher workforce, have been dismissed for poor performance.**



## #4

▶ Finding

**RPS' current Reduction in Force practices result in unnecessary disruption to the teacher workforce and the loss of high-quality teachers.**



## Reduction in Force Policy in Illinois and RPS



### Illinois State Law

According to *Statute 105 ILCS 5/24-12*, state law mandates that a “Reduction in Force” (i.e., teacher layoffs) be done in reverse seniority order.

#### Teachers that are laid off...

- Must be notified 60 days before the end of the school year.
- Are given priority placement for 1 year.
- Are given priority placement for 2 years if more than 15% of full time equivalent positions are eliminated.



### District Rules

When layoffs are necessary, RPS follows state law and teachers are laid off in order of reverse seniority.

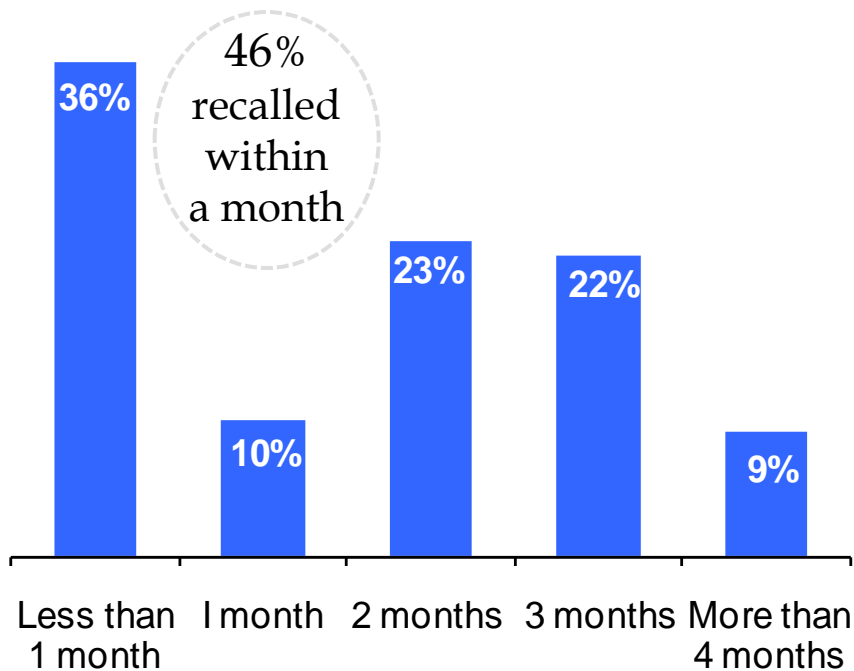
*Chapter 12, Section F* of the RPS-REA Agreement reads:

“... the Board shall remove staff members with the least District seniority, provided that non-tenured staff members shall be removed before removing any tenured staff...”



This practice may be counterproductive given that many laid off teachers are recalled within a month, many to the same school.

### Length of time it took to be recalled, according to teachers



Among the classroom teachers who were laid off and recalled in 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/2005 and 2008/09, almost half,

**48%**

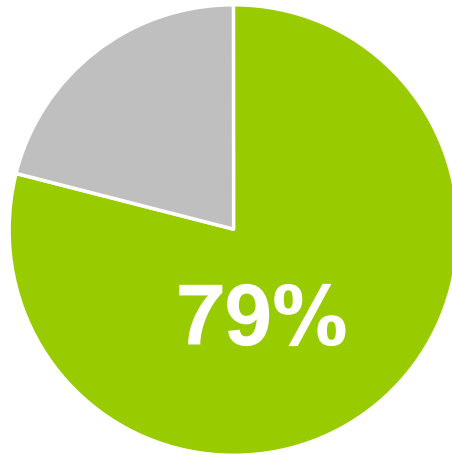
returned to the same school.

*“The district puts teachers through the stress and yet, hires most back anyway. What is the point? I know many we have lost because of this process.”*

*RPS Teacher*



Yet, while some teachers return, many of RPS' administrators report losing teachers they wanted to keep due to a Reduction in Force.



of administrators who have lost a teacher due to a Reduction in Force **report losing a teacher they wanted to keep.**

*"The RIF process cuts too deeply and teachers go elsewhere because they fear they won't be called back."*

*RPS Principal*

*"RIFs should be determined on a per case basis rather than arbitrarily having a particular number of years of experience be the deciding factor."*

*RPS Principal*

*"We lose great teachers that are replaced by not-so-great teachers."*

*RPS Principal*



# Contents

---

Background

Findings



**Recommendations**

Appendix



While significant changes are required at the state level, there are five key strategies RPS can implement independently.

**RPS Goal: Improve the district's human capital systems related to teacher certification, mentoring, evaluation, dismissal and layoffs.**

### **Five Key Strategies:**

- 1** Develop a cohesive district certification strategy, with a focus on hard-to-staff subject areas and enhanced teacher support.
- 2** Provide high-quality and desirable mentoring activities to new teachers.
- 3** Institute a performance evaluation process that rigorously and accurately differentiates teachers, provides meaningful feedback, and is used to inform key human capital decisions.
- 4** Provide increased support and training for administrators on the evaluation process and hold them accountable for implementing the system correctly.
- 5** Prevent unnecessary layoffs and loss of high quality teachers through improved forecasting.



**Strategy 1:** Develop a cohesive district certification strategy, with a focus on hard-to-staff subject areas and enhanced teacher support.

**48%**

Of teachers **disagree** that they receive the support they need from the district to obtain their Standard Certificates.

### Recommendations

- Seek out and work with local universities to develop alternative route certification programs for the district's hardest to staff subject areas and actively promote those programs to potential teacher candidates.
- Conduct information sessions, develop and distribute information packets and host drop-in office hours on the certificate renewal process for teachers.
- Conduct surveys of teachers and principals to identify professional development opportunities they find most useful, and tailor district offerings to reflect findings.
- Provide targeted professional development offerings differentiated to address specific needs of teachers identified through the evaluation process.



## Strategy 2: Provide high-quality and desirable mentoring activities to new teachers.

54%

report receiving **three or fewer classroom observations** from their mentor during their first year.

### Recommendations

- Require that mentees are observed by their mentor at least three times a semester.
- Permit current teachers to apply for and act as mentors, especially in areas where the district is unable to match a mentee with a mentor who has experience in their subject area.
- Provide new teachers with release time to observe other teachers in their building and other schools at least twice a semester during their first year of teaching.
- Increase the number of new teachers participating in the mentor program by actively promoting the program through induction events, upon hire, and during district-wide and school-based meetings.
- Evaluate the mentor program by tracking its impact on improved teacher performance.



**Strategy 3:** Institute a performance evaluation process that rigorously and accurately differentiates teachers, provides meaningful feedback, and is used to inform key human capital decisions.

### Recommendations

- Require that all teachers be evaluated on an annual basis, regardless of tenure status.
- Revisit the new evaluation process to ensure that it:
  - Bases evaluations upon a set of teaching standards designed to measure teacher effectiveness at promoting student achievement;
  - Utilizes multiple sources of data throughout the evaluation process, including student assessment data, daily student work, feedback from department chairs, student and parent survey data, and multiple unannounced observations of varying length;
  - Consistently identifies and communicates strengths and weaknesses in teachers' instruction; and
  - Provides for frequent informal and formal conversations between teachers and administrators about classroom instruction.



**Strategy 3 (cont.):** Institute a performance evaluation process that rigorously and accurately differentiates teachers, provides meaningful feedback, and is used to inform key human capital decisions.

### Recommendations

- Norm evaluation ratings to ensure consistent and fair implementation of the process across the district.
- Task school leaders, instructional coaches, and department/grade level chairs with providing every teacher with individually-differentiated tools and support, based upon development needs identified during the evaluation process.
- Train teachers in the standards and evaluation process, with special focus on the need for feedback for effective professional growth.
- Utilize ratings to inform key decision-making related to hiring, tenure, layoffs, displacements, compensation, dismissal and professional development.



## Strategy 4: Support and train administrators on the evaluation process and hold them accountable for implementation.

### Recommendations

- Train and support administrators consistently throughout the school year on how to:
  - Conduct rigorous evaluations of teachers based on the extent to which teachers promote student achievement;
  - Provide all teachers with frequent, meaningful and actionable feedback, which clearly articulates where their individual performance falls in contrast to district teaching standards: and
  - Utilize legitimate means to address performance concerns fairly, objectively and efficiently.
- Hold quarterly meetings for all administrators in which key strategies are reinforced and principals can share and reflect upon their practice in this area with their peers.
- Provide principals with additional resources so they have the time to increase the frequency and duration of classroom observations and provide ongoing feedback and development to teachers.
- Make teacher performance management a primary component of principal evaluation, using teacher feedback as a data source in this domain.
- Hold administrators accountable for fairly and accurately developing and evaluating teachers.



**Strategy 5:** Prevent unnecessary layoffs and loss of high-quality teachers through improved forecasting.

**79%** of principals who have lost a teacher due to a Reduction in Force **report losing a teacher they wanted to keep.**

### Recommendations

- Provide incentives for teachers to report resignation/retirement by March 15th, for example through early payout of accrued sick leave.
- Survey teachers on their intentions to return to the district the following year by March 15th.
- Study trend data from past layoffs to see in which areas teachers are most frequently recalled.
- Allow all laid-off teachers who are recalled the opportunity to return to the same school for the same school year at the discretion of the site principal, if vacancies exist.



# Contents

---

Background

Findings

Recommendations



**Appendix**



# Appendix A: 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.

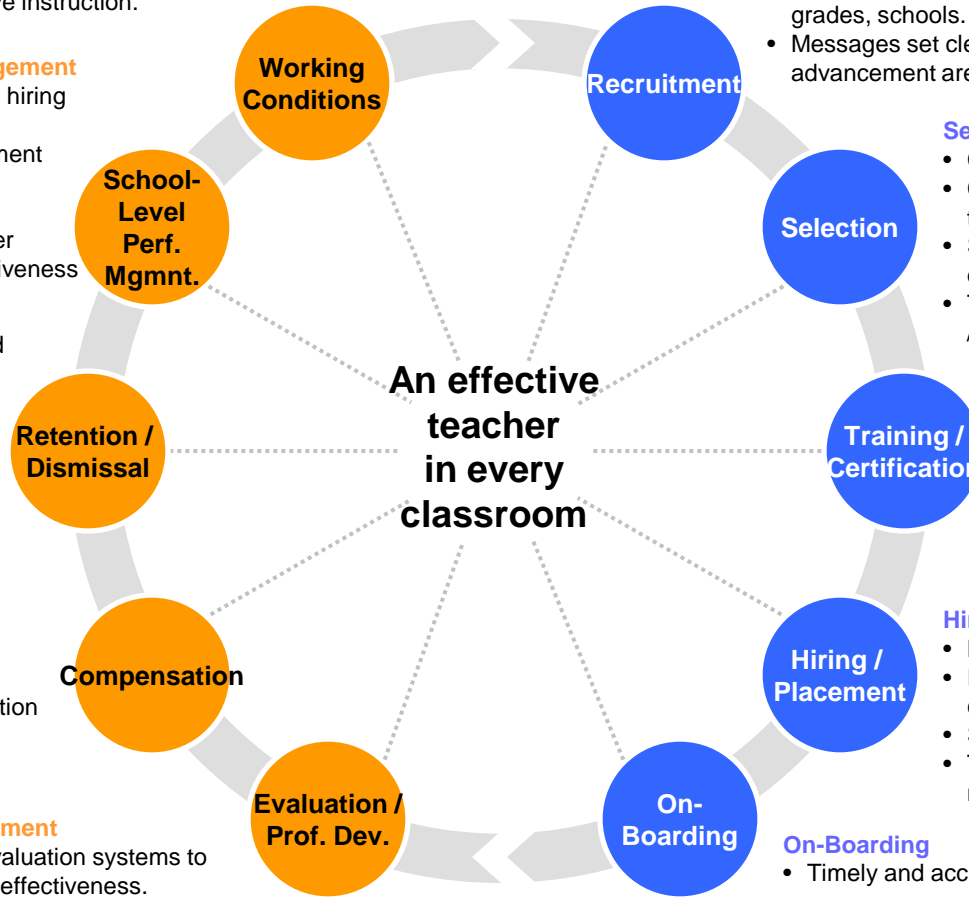
## Compensation

- 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).



## Appendix B: Potential Professional Development Activities

- Advanced degree
- Induction and mentoring program
- National Board for Professional Teacher Standards certification
- Education-related coursework (undergraduate- or graduate-level)
- Education-related professional development certificate
- Subsequent Illinois certificate or endorsement
- Requirements for becoming NCLB “highly qualified” in another area
- Graduate-level coursework in self-assessment or NBPTS certification preparation
- Continuing professional development units (peer mentoring, district workshops, etc.)



## Appendix C: Requirements for Mentoring Programs that Serve as Professional Development for State Certification Purposes

In order for a district's mentoring program to be considered as professional development for a teacher holding a initial certificate:

- New teachers must receive and participate in two years of mentoring support.
- New teachers who participate in an approved induction and mentoring program will receive:
  - formal mentoring from an experienced teacher;
  - three observations with prior preparation;
  - a response from the mentor with feedback, suggestions and techniques for each observation;
  - opportunities for contact so that the new teachers have professional and social support in the school environment;
  - orientation to the school improvement and professional development plans that apply;
  - help in understanding their employer's expectations regarding the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and the relevant content-area standards;
  - at least one opportunity each semester to observe experienced teachers and discuss aspects of teaching practice with these teachers or to participate in workshops, conferences or similar events or trainings to increase the teacher's skills relative to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards or their area of certification or assignment; and
  - a review from the mentor with written feedback on at least one of their written reflections on their teaching practice for each quarter of a school year.



## Appendix C: Requirements for Mentoring Programs (Cont'd)

- New teachers must have at least one opportunity each semester to participate in professional development activities that involve:
  - observing experienced teachers and discussing with them aspects of their teaching practices; and
  - participating in workshops, conferences, symposia, seminars or other similar training events designed to increase their knowledge and skills with respect to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards or the content-area standards relevant to their areas of certification or teaching assignment.
  
- The program must collect and maintain information for evaluation that will contribute to an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the induction and mentoring programs.
  
- Mentor teachers must hold or have retired while **holding a standard or master** certificate that should, to the extent possible, be the same type of certificate held by the new teachers to whom they are assigned. Mentors cannot be assigned to more than five new teachers during any given school year and must complete a training program that addresses topics such as adult learning theory, content knowledge and pedagogy, verbal and non-communication skills, etc.