



Hiring, Assignment, and Transfer in Milwaukee Public Schools

September 2007



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About The New Teacher Project

- The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national non-profit organization, founded in 1997.
- Our clients are school districts, state education agencies, colleges and universities, and other educational entities.
- TNTP partners with its clients to:
 - o Increase the number of outstanding individuals who become public school teachers; and
 - o Create environments for all educators that maximize their impact on student achievement.
- TNTP's clients, past and present, include school districts in cities such as Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Houston, Memphis, Miami, Oakland, Philadelphia, New York and Washington, DC; and states such as Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Virginia.

Our totals to date

23,000

Teachers recruited, prepared and/or certified

40

Programs established

23

States in which TNTP has worked

200+

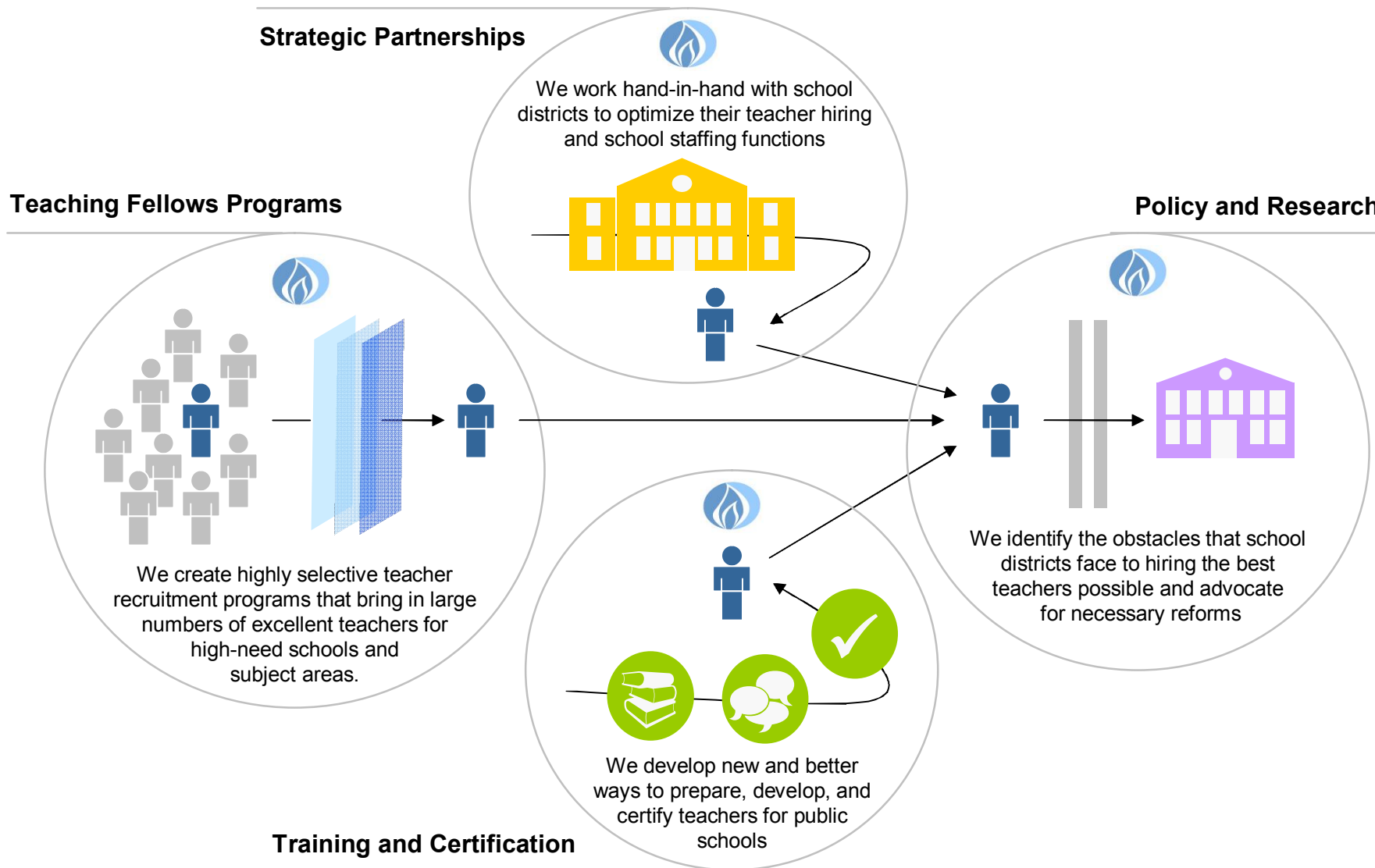
School districts with which TNTP has partnered

2,920,000

Students taught by TNTP-recruited/trained teachers (estimated)

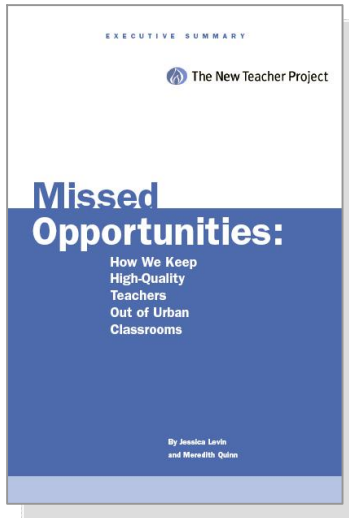


TNTP is unique in addressing the full range of factors involved in finding the highest-quality teachers possible.





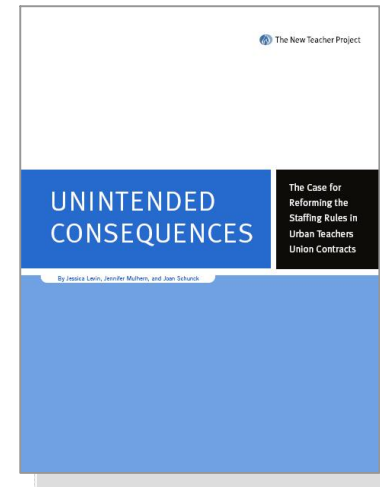
Our Research and Policy Reform Work



In 2003, TNTP published *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*, which focused on four barriers to effective teacher hiring:

1. Vacancy notification requirements
2. Staffing rules;
3. Budget timelines; and
4. Human Resources processes.

Our 2005 report, *Unintended Consequences*, takes a deeper look at one of the primary barriers to effective staffing: the rules governing transfers, excessing, and teacher placement.





Background – Methodology*

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the number of outstanding individuals who become teachers and to creating environments that allow teachers to maximize student achievement. The majority of our work has been with large urban districts.

In the winter of 2006, TNTP partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and the Joyce Foundation to analyze the extent to which current MPS staffing rules and processes support effective school staffing. TNTP collaborated with MPS and the MTEA to design a survey sent to all MPS teachers. To conduct this analysis*:

- 1 TNTP reviewed the MPS Teachers' Contract and provided a memorandum including our analysis of the relevant provisions and preliminary hypotheses. The memorandum was circulated within MPS as well as to the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA).
- 2 TNTP investigated the impact of MPS staffing rules through several avenues, including:
 - Analysis of Human Resources transaction data
 - Surveys of principals and current teachers
 - Interviews with principals and central staff

* For more detailed information about methodology, see Appendix A.



Overview of the 2006 MPS hiring process

1

Cycle 1: Filled by school-based interview process.

Open to currently employed certified MPS teachers.

141 positions filled.

Timing: May 8 – May 19.

2

Cycle 2: Filled by school-based interview process.

Open to currently employed certified teachers, student teachers, interns and fully-certified new hires to MPS.

138 positions filled.

Timing: May 31 – June 9.

3

Cycle 3: Filled by school-based interview process.

Open to the same groups of teachers as Cycle 2.

114 positions filled.

Timing: June 20 – June 29.



**July 7– September 30: Moratorium for school-based hiring.
262 positions filled by Human Resources.**



Methods by which teachers move between MPS schools.

1

Voluntary Transfers: Requests for reassignment shall be made no later than June 1 for the following school year. Teachers may interview with school interview teams during cycles 1-3. Unselected teachers will remain at their current schools.

2

Reduction in Enrollment. When a reduction in the number of teachers is necessary, qualified volunteers are the first reassigned. Then reassignment is made on the basis of years of service in the Milwaukee system, with the least senior teachers being reassigned first. Teachers not selected by interview teams will be slotted into vacancies, prior to new hires, by Human Resources.

3

Incompatibility. If a teacher believes that he/she is incompatible with his/her assigned school, that teacher may complete an incompatibility form and, at the earliest opportunity, be reassigned to another MPS school or be placed on day-to-day assignment. Teachers who have received an unsatisfactory evaluation form may not be reassigned under this provision. (Also called a Q9 transfer)

Source: MTEA Section V, Articles A-P.



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Fundamental human capital question:

#1

**Does MPS have an effective system
for facilitating teacher movement
between schools?**



Guiding Principles: Teacher Transfers

- 1) A well functioning transfer system respects the needs of both teachers and schools.
- 2) It is important for teachers to have broad options in seeking transfers to schools that are a good fit for them professionally.
- 3) Transfers work best when teachers and schools make well-informed selection decisions.
- 4) It is problematic when teachers are slotted into positions without their consent; likewise, it is problematic when schools are required to accept teachers without school consent.
- 5) The transfer process should result in strong instructional teams at the school level.



Teachers and principals are in agreement that school interview teams are an effective mechanism for staffing schools.

Teachers

- 90% are satisfied with the quality of candidates selected by interview teams
- 88% agree that the administrator on the interview team can make good decisions
- 86% agree that the interview process builds the best possible instruction team for their school

Principals

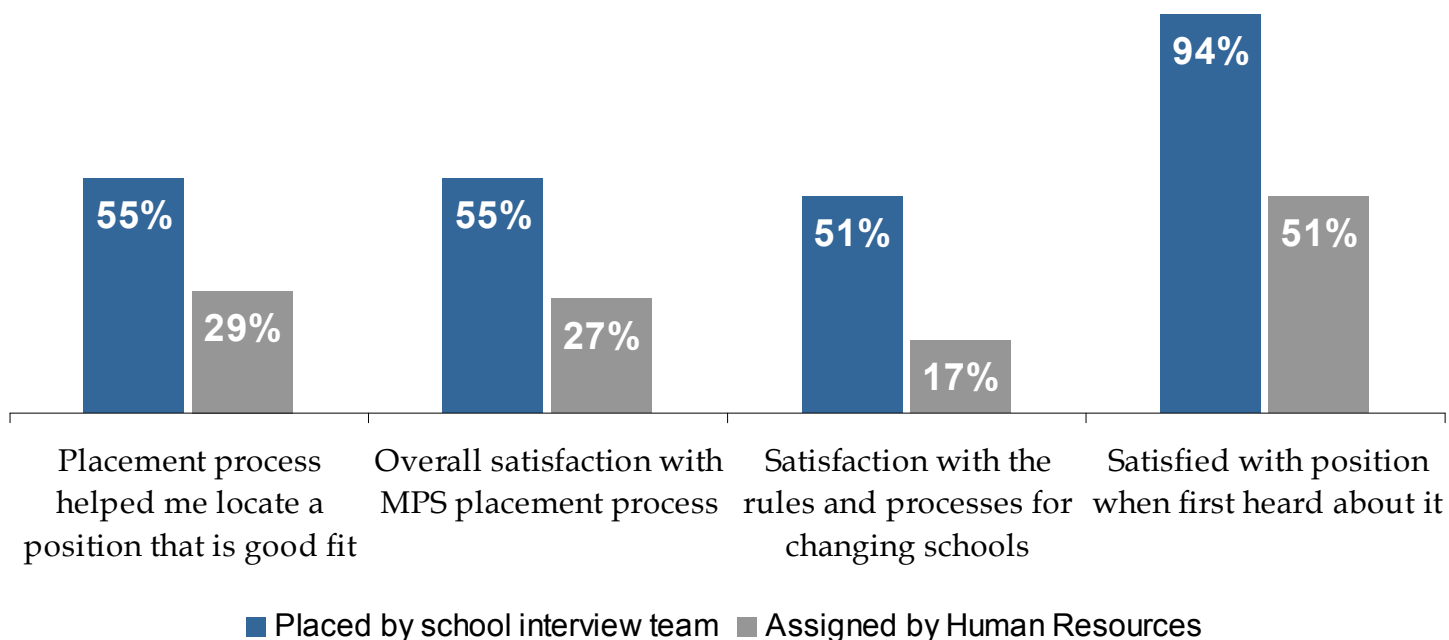
- 97% are satisfied with the contributions of teachers on interview teams
- 97% agree that the interview process builds the best possible instruction team for their school

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers and survey conducted in March of 109 MPS principals.



On each variable, teachers selected by school interview teams are nearly twice as satisfied with their positions as teachers assigned by HR.

Teacher Satisfaction with Process for School Movement



Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers.



Despite the best intentions, assignment by HR is not as effective as the interview team process, leading to serial teacher mobility.

52%

52% of teachers assigned by HR say that they may change placements again in 2007...

22%

...as compared to 22% of teachers who interviewed for their placements.



40%

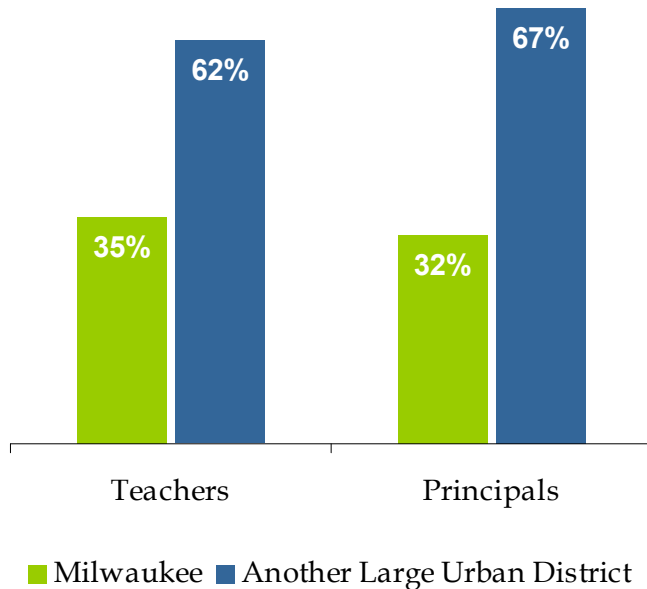
Approximately 40% of MPS positions in the 2006 hiring cycle were filled through HR assignment rather than mutual consent.

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers.

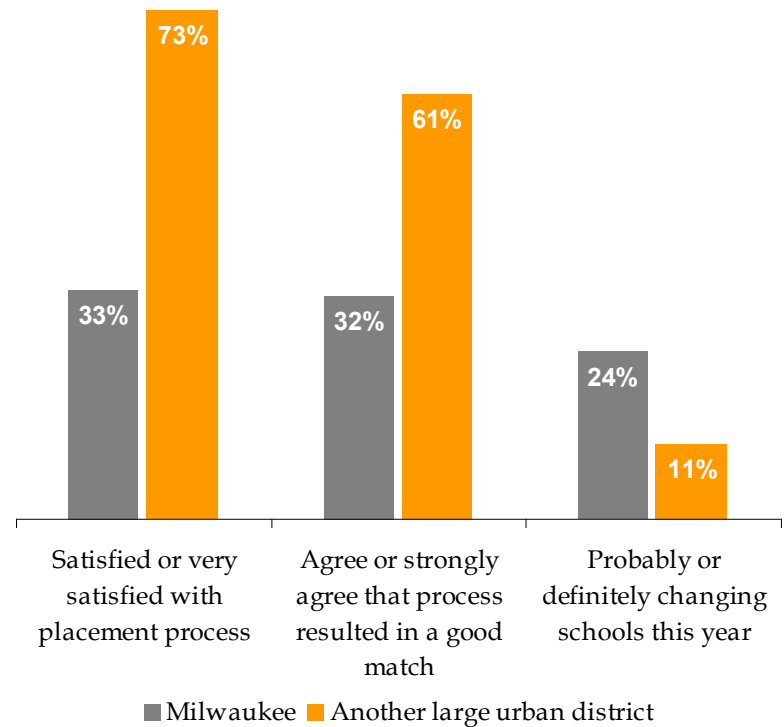


Teachers and principals in Milwaukee are far less satisfied with the transfer process than staff in another district that requires mutual consent – even though that district eventually dismisses teachers who do not locate positions.

Teacher and principal satisfaction with transfer process.



Satisfaction of excessed teachers



Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers and survey conducted in March of 109 MPS principals.



All Milwaukee Public Schools teachers can transfer at any time using a process called an “incompatibility transfer.”

“If a teacher assigned to a school believes that he/she is incompatible with the school, that teacher shall confer with his/her evaluator(s). An incompatibility evaluation form shall be written and the teacher shall, at the earliest opportunity, be reassigned to another MPS school or be placed on day-to-day assignment. Teachers who have received an unsatisfactory evaluation form may not be reassigned under this provision. When the transfer is made, the evaluation form shall be destroyed and there shall be no documentation of the reassignment in the permanent file of the teacher.”

- Part V, Section P, Item 7



Although well intended, incompatibility (or “Q9”) transfers do not result in better or more enduring teacher placements.

1 in 4

Only 25% of Q9 transfers believe the MPS placement process helped them locate a position in a school that is a good fit as a teacher.

1 in 4

Only 25% of Q9 transfers are satisfied with the MPS placement process.

56%

Of teachers who changed schools through the Q9 process say that they may, will probably or will definitely change placements again this year. **For voluntary transfers, the number is 25%.**

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers.



Furthermore, these transfers are deeply unpopular with principals and are particularly burdensome for high poverty schools.

28% Like teachers, principals express dissatisfaction with the Q9 process. Only 28% are satisfied or very satisfied with the incompatibility process; 49% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

48% Of schools with high poverty, 48% have received a Q9 transfer, as compared to **27%** of lower poverty schools

High poverty **Lower poverty**

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers. High poverty schools are those with at least 76% FARM.



Summary: Movement between schools

Summary

- Interview team system is successful for both teachers and principals
- Assignments by HR are unsuccessful for both teachers and principals
- Forced placements lead to teacher dissatisfaction and repeat movement
- Other schools systems are requiring mutual consent for all placements and achieving better outcomes
- Incompatibility transfers do not achieve their aims for teachers

Recommendations

- Build upon successful and collaborative MPS processes: allow interview teams to function year-round (possibly compensating teachers during summer months)
- Require mutual consent for all teacher placements
- Eliminate Q9 transfers
- Eliminate rule requiring three-year wait between voluntary transfers
- Create MPS/MTEA partnership to address teachers who cannot find mutual consent placements
- Task Human Resources with facilitating quality matches between teachers and principals



Fundamental human capital question:

#2

Is MPS hiring the best possible new teachers into its schools?



Guiding Principles: New Teacher Hiring

- 1) The market for teacher talent can be quite competitive, especially for certified teachers in high need subject areas.
- 2) To compete for top talent, the school district must hire new teachers in spring – typically in March and April.
- 3) School districts must be responsive to the hiring timelines of nearby competitors.
- 4) To hire early, the school district must identify hiring needs, communicate budget information to schools, develop a pool of available talent, and empower schools to take action on that talent.



Milwaukee's competitor districts place fewer restrictions on new teacher hiring, which allows them to select new teachers earlier.

- Of the six Wisconsin districts examined, Milwaukee was the **only** school system that had hiring cycles, or rounds, specified as a provision in the teacher collective bargaining agreement.
- Elmbrook requires teachers to announce their intention to enter the voluntary transfer process by Feb. 15. For Milwaukee Public Schools, the date is June 1.
- **44%** of teachers on interview teams and **63%** of principals agree that they have lost a desirable new hire because of the timeline.
- Only **42%** of principals agreed that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the MPS new hire timeline.



“The single most important thing that could improve this process would be to allow interviews and hiring to take place throughout the year, especially in March/April. I feel that we lose the most qualified candidates from outside MPS due to the fact that they are not offered contracts until July or August.”

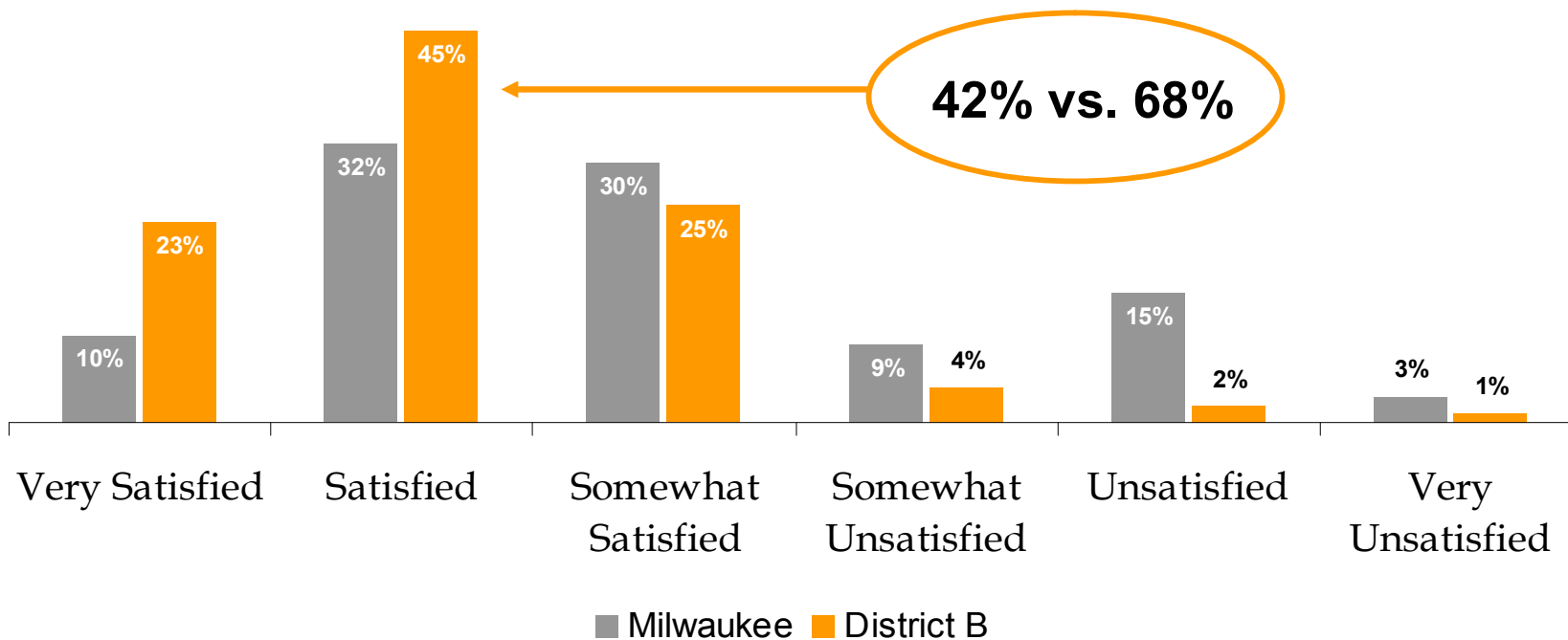
-- MPS Principal

Source: Elmbrook, Wauwatosa, Milwaukee, West Allis, Madison and Racine teacher collective bargaining agreements



Principals in a district that does not restrict hiring of new teachers are happier with the new teacher hiring timeline than MPS principals.

Principals were asked “How satisfied are you with the timeline for hiring teachers new to Milwaukee?”



Source: TNTP survey conducted in March of 109 MPS principals.



Summary: New teacher hiring

Summary

- Milwaukee's timeline for new teachers is too late to compete for top talent
- Competitor districts hire earlier
- Teachers and principals report that viable candidate are lost to MPS
- MPS principals are less satisfied with hiring timeline than principals in districts without cycles

Recommendations

- Allow new teachers to compete for positions on the same timeline as incumbent teachers
- Maximize effectiveness of district recruitment effort by making early offers to candidates
- Require notification of voluntary transfers, retirements, leaves of absence, etc., by February 1
- Identify excessed teachers by March 1
- Set a goal of matching 80% of new hires to school-level positions by end of June



Fundamental human capital question:

#3

Do MPS staffing rules and processes allow schools at all poverty levels to select the teachers they need?



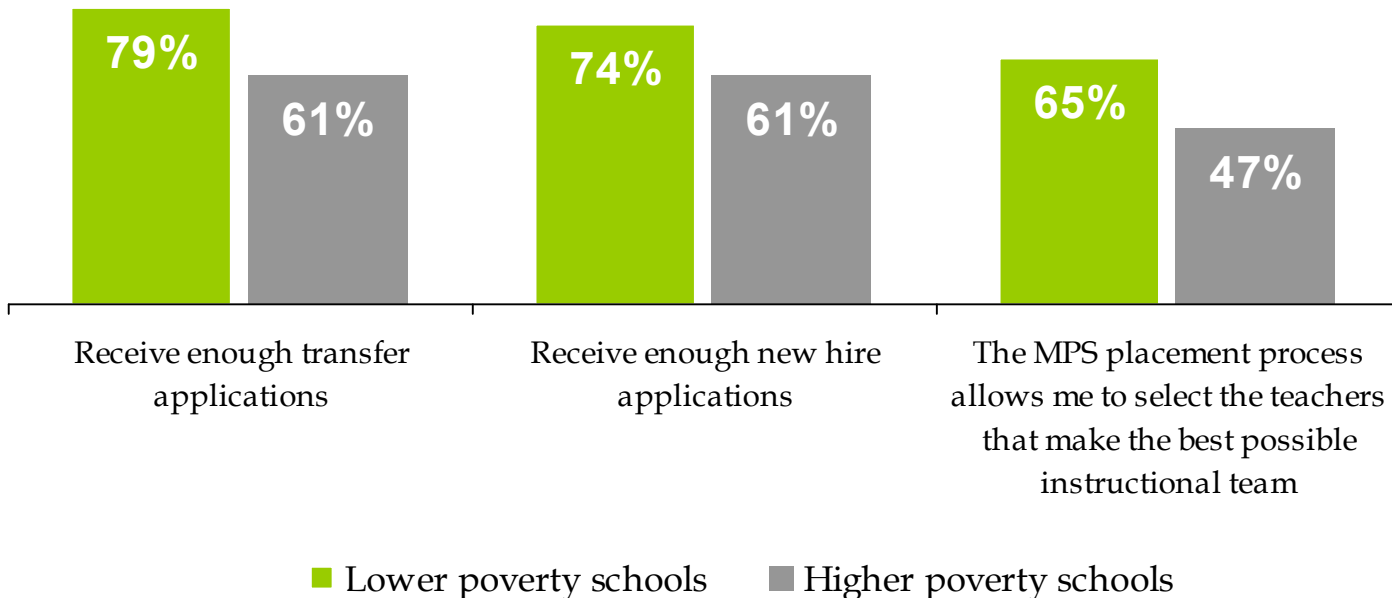
Guiding Principles: Equal Access to Quality Teachers

- 1) All students, regardless of background, need and deserve outstanding teachers.
- 2) It is cause for concern whenever staffing processes have a disproportionately negative impact on students who most need academic support.
- 3) If we want to hold our schools accountable for producing results, we must give school leaders the tools they need to build strong teams.
- 4) The best way to staff high need schools is to make them attractive to great teachers.



High poverty schools face a shortage of viable applicants, which makes it difficult to build strong instructional teams.

According to teachers on interview teams: applicant pool in lower poverty vs. higher poverty schools

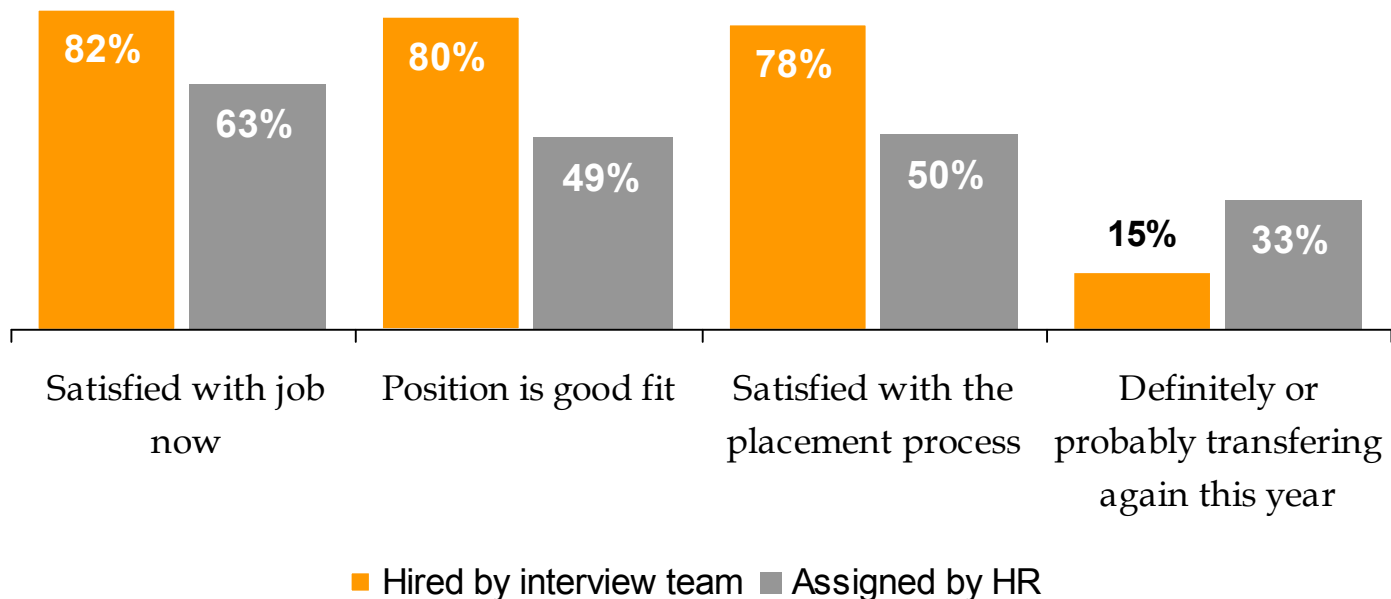


Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers. Higher poverty schools are those with at least 76% FARM.



Teachers in high poverty schools are happier with their positions and are less likely to transfer when they are hired through mutual consent.

Higher poverty schools: Hired through interview vs. placed by HR



Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers. Higher poverty schools are those with at least 76% FARM.



Principals of higher poverty schools are less satisfied with the transfer process. Principals of schools at all poverty levels in a mutual consent district are far more satisfied than MPS principals.

- 47% of principals from low poverty schools agree they are satisfied with the transfer process. In high poverty schools, the figure is 22%.
- High poverty schools have a higher number of their vacancies filled by HR: 32% as compared to 23% of low poverty schools.

MPS

Another District

| Principal satisfaction with... | Higher poverty schools | Lower poverty schools |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ... level of discretion for new hires | 95% | 93% |
| ... level of discretion for internal transfer hires | 85% | 93% |
| ... hiring timeline | 92% | 99% |
| Percent agreeing with the statement: "The transfer process allows me to hire the teachers that create the best possible instructional team for my school." | 92% | 95% |
| Overall satisfaction with transfer process | 91% | 91% |

Source: TNTP survey conducted in March 2007 of 109 MPS principals.



Summary: Equal access to teachers for all schools

Summary

- High poverty schools receive less interest from candidates and fill more vacancies through forced placement
- Teachers are quite happy transferring into higher poverty schools – as long as they themselves choose to do so
- Other districts are addressing this problem effectively

Recommendations

- In addition to requiring mutual consent for all schools, add additional staffing support for higher poverty schools
- Train principals and interview teams at higher poverty schools on how to effectively staff a challenged school
- Offer incentives to teachers who voluntarily transfer into higher poverty school – and remain there for a defined period of time



Fundamental human capital question:

#4

**Does MPS have appropriate
avenues for assessing and
addressing teacher performance?**



Guiding Principles: Teacher Performance Management

- 1) Teachers who are struggling should receive substantial, meaningful support.
- 2) Support mechanisms should be scalable so they can reach all teachers who require support.
- 3) School administrators bear responsibility for investing time in developing their teachers.
- 4) Struggling teachers should not be shuttled from school to school in lieu of a meaningful performance intervention.
- 5) Strong performance management systems incorporate collaboration between the teachers union and district.



Principals report that the TEAM process is effective, but not widely implemented.

92%

92% of principals who have used TEAM agree that “The TEAM process is effective for improving the performance of teachers who participate in it.”

40%

However, only 40% of principals have referred at least one teacher who was not performing well to the TEAM process



When a principal refers a poor performer to the TEAM process, that teacher is NOT required to participate in it.



As a result, principals often move teachers with performance concerns through other avenues.

- Over **half** of principals admit to having excessed a poor performer or to having encouraged a poor performer to volunteer for excessing.
- More than **one-third** of those principals responded that they did so because “the dismissal process is too cumbersome.”
- Only **31% of TEACHERS** on school interview teams were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of excessed teachers seeking a transfer to their school.
- And, nearly **9 out of 10** principals who have received a forced teacher from HR reported that one or more of those teachers **failed to meet their performance expectations.**

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers and survey conducted in March of 109 MPS principals.



Summary: Addressing poor performance

Summary

- TEAM process is promising but not widely used
- In place of TEAM, teachers often use the Q9 process and principals often excess teachers or encourage them to volunteer to be excessed
- Teachers on interview teams report lower quality in the pool of excessed teacher applicants
- Principals report that many excessed teachers assigned by HR are poor performers

Recommendations

- Expand and improve the well-regarded TEAM process. Make TEAM mandatory for teachers who require mediation
- Continue to support the TEAM process as a positive example of teacher-administrator collaboration
- After installing a mutual consent placement system, hold principals partially responsible for funding salaries of excessed teachers who do not find positions.
- Commission an independent panel (not MPS or MTEA) to design a streamlined teacher evaluation process



Fundamental human capital question:

#5

Does the MPS department of Human Resources best support the new teaching hiring and transfer process?



Guiding Principles: Human Resources Support

- 1) Customer service is a core responsibility of the human resources function.
- 2) A successful human resources operation supports teachers and administrators in staffing schools effectively.
- 3) Staff who serve on school interview teams should receive quality training to prepare them to make good selections.



Comments from teachers and principals suggest that HR must take steps to improve the new teacher hiring and teacher transfer processes.

Open-ended survey comments from MPS teachers and principals have suggested a number of ways that HR can improve services to their clients: teachers and schools. Many of these comments point to a more streamlined and clear application process, more effective and efficient communication and clarity on the hiring and transfer process.

Teachers

“I have heard countless stories from student-teachers and other new teachers trying to get into MPS who have had trouble getting through the process in a timely matter. The staff has not been nice or professional with them.”

Principals

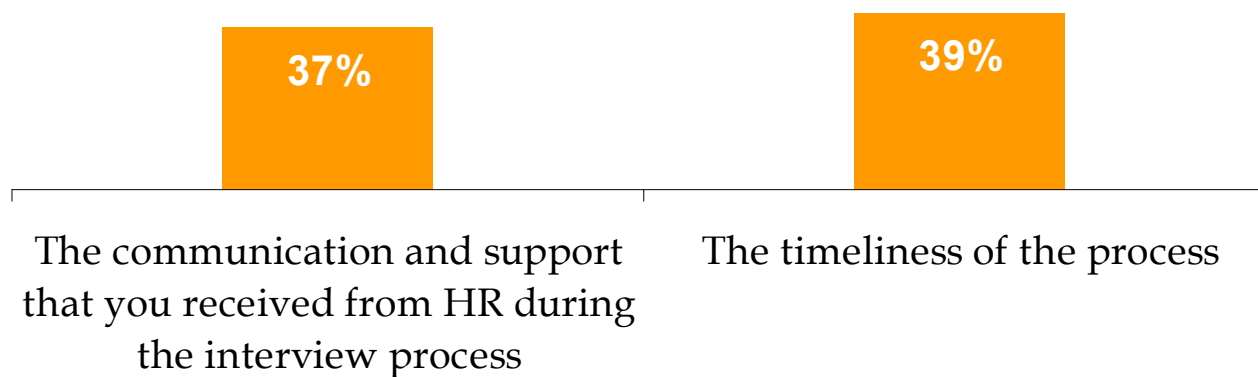
“Communicate information in a timely manner. Treat new teachers with respect and professionalism. MPS has to become more effective with the process of hiring teachers.”

Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers and survey conducted in March of 109 MPS principals.



Survey data suggest that Human Resources can improve upon the communication and support they provide during the interview process as well as the timeliness of the process.

Teacher Satisfaction with Human Resources



Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers. Responses represent answers of "satisfied" or "very satisfied".



Human Resources should strengthen the school interview team process by communicating more effectively with interview teams and providing them with effective training.

Satisfaction of Teachers on School Interview Teams



Source: TNTP survey conducted in April/May 2007 of 2,014 MPS teachers. Responses represent answers of "satisfied" or "very satisfied".



Milwaukee Public Schools has a number of important questions that can be answered through more extensive HR data collection and analysis:

- 1** Is Milwaukee's late hiring timeline leading to lower quality teacher hires?
- 2** Which nearby districts, private schools, and charter schools are hiring the teachers who could otherwise be hired by MPS?
- 3** What impact, if any, does the residency requirement have on MPS hiring and retention?



Summary: Human Resources support

Summary

- Teachers and principals suggest HR can do more to better support the teacher transfer and new hire processes
- Teachers on interview teams are not satisfied with the communication, interview tools or level of training they receive on selecting quality candidates that they receive from HR

Recommendations

- Implement a streamlined, cohesive, online application system
- Craft and implement a school interview team communication plan to ensure the timely flow of information to all school teams
- Increase and improve upon school interview team training, including lawful interviewing and successful selection techniques
- Increase HR data collection, reporting, and analysis
- Provide interview teams with candidate selection documents and resources



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Appendix A: Methodology

TNTP divided its work into the following two phases:

Phase 1: Off-Site Contract Analysis

TNTP gained a basic understanding of MPS contractual staffing rules and provided the district with a high-level overview. To achieve this, TNTP:

- o Analyzed the staffing rules in the MPS collective bargaining agreement, with a focus on the provisions governing voluntary transfers, involuntary transfers (excessed teachers), new teacher hiring timelines, evaluation, and teacher dismissal.
- o Talked with the district staff member(s) who could elaborate on how these rules work and answer our questions.
- o Provided a memorandum that included our contractual analysis and preliminary hypotheses, questions, and recommendations.

Phase 2: On-Site Data-Gathering

TNTP gathered the qualitative and quantitative data needed to understand the impact of MPS staffing rules and to build a strong, fact-driven case for change. To achieve this, TNTP:

- o Gathered data from existing district tracking systems on hiring timelines, the movement of voluntary transfers and excessed teachers, and evaluation/terminations. We focused on the following questions: Does MPS have effective systems for facilitating movement of teachers between schools? Is MPS hiring the best possible new teachers into its schools? Do all MPS schools have equal access to high quality teachers? Does MPS have appropriate avenues for assessing and addressing teacher performance?
- o Interviewed district staff and principals
- o Conducted surveys
- o Evaluated the impacts of the union staffing rules
- o Will deliver final report/presentation that includes TNTP's findings, analysis and recommendations