Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools

THE IRREPLACEABLES

5 WAYS PRINCIPALS CAN KEEP MORE IRREPLACEABLE TEACHERS

1. START THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The best teachers want clarity. Use meeting or orientation time at the start of the year to rally teachers around a clear and specific definition of excellent teaching and a set of goals for making the school a better place for learning. Then set individual goals aligned to that vision. Tell teachers that you will observe them frequently and that you will be honest when they are falling short. Be clear that ineffective teaching is not an option.

2. RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE PUBLICLY AND FREQUENTLY

Don't let success be a secret. Set aside 5 to 10 minutes in regular meetings to publicly celebrate teachers who have done exceptional work in the classroom or achieved a notable milestone with their students. Congratulate them and tie what they're doing to the school's goals and vision of great teaching. Don't praise everyone every time; nothing demoralizes Irreplaceables more than false praise for mediocre or poor performance.

3. TREAT YOUR IRREPLACEABLES LIKE THEY ARE IRREPLACEABLE

Make it hard to leave your school. List the teachers who are most critical to your school's academic success and spend time with them. Observe them at work and offer regular feedback. Get to know their interests and development needs, help them access resources, and give them opportunities to grow their careers and increase their impact. Invest them in the school by involving them in decision-making, and make sure other school leaders treat them well, too.

4. START HAVING "STAY CONVERSATIONS" BY THANKSGIVING

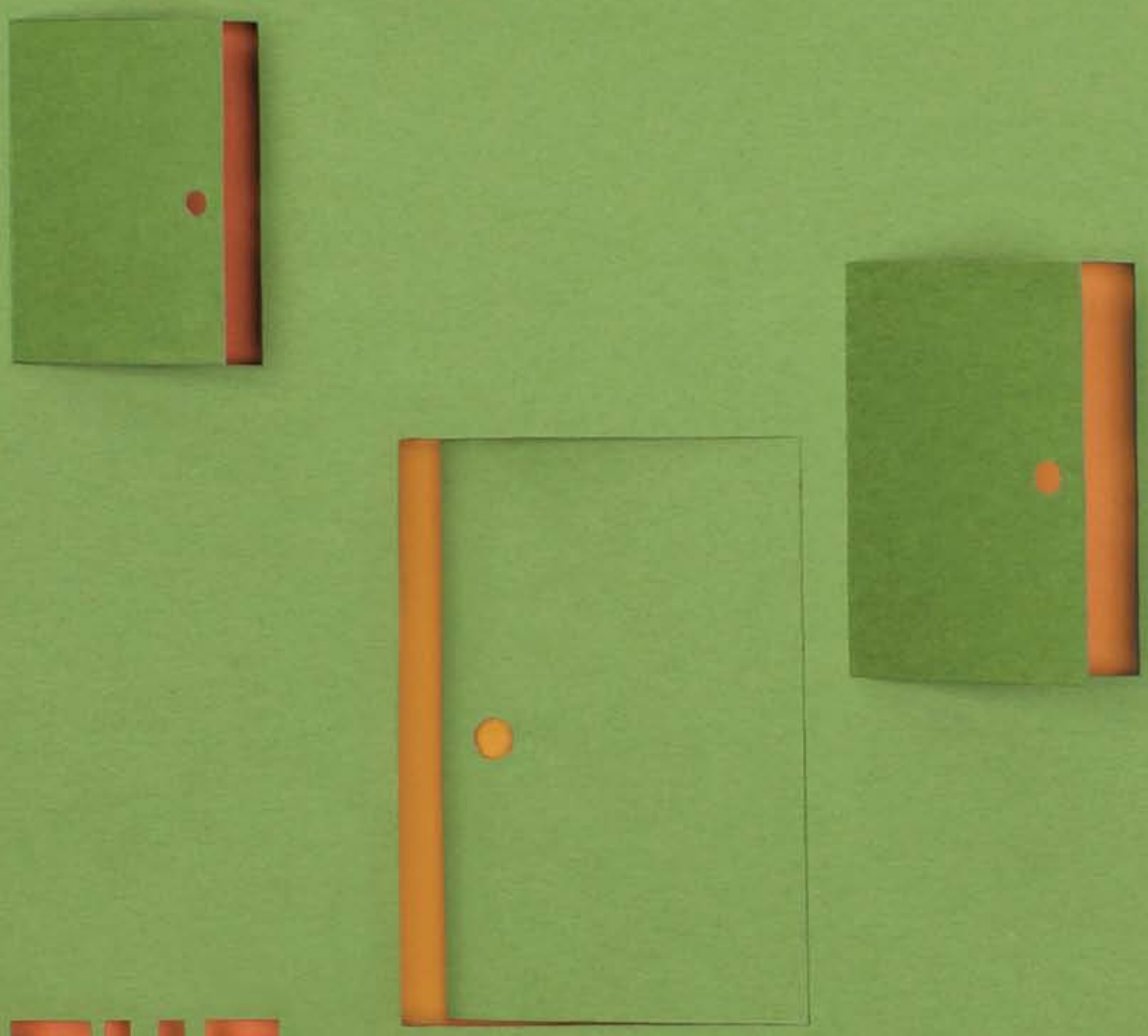
Many teachers use the winter holidays to think about what's next. Block off time after Thanksgiving to talk to your Irreplaceables and rising-star teachers about continuing to teach at the school next year. Tell them how important they are and how much you want them to return. Ask them about their own interests and concerns, and if they are considering other options, ask what you can do to convince them to stay.

5. HOLD THE LINE ON GOOD TEACHING

Schools that refuse to tolerate poor teaching keep more of their top teachers. Inevitably, some teachers will struggle, despite good intentions and hard work. Be honest with them about their weaknesses, give them regular feedback and support, and set reasonable limits on how long they have to show significant improvement (months, not years). Make sure they don't get mixed messages from other school administrators or coaches. However difficult it may be, do not allow unsuccessful teachers to linger.

Top teachers who experience multiple high impact retention strategies plan to remain teaching at their schools for nearly twice as long (2 to 6 more years).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



THE IRREPLACEABLES

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URBAN SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE ARE FACING A TEACHER RETENTION CRISIS—BUT NOT THE ONE THAT EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT

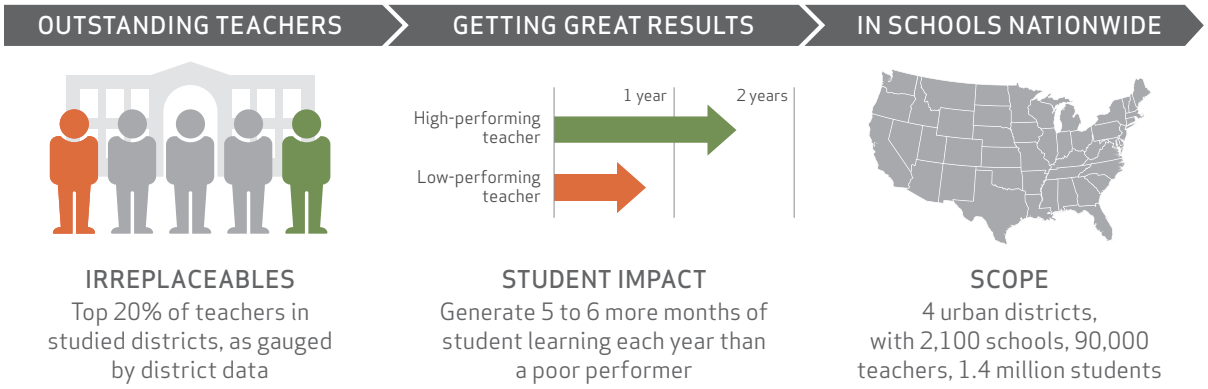
Discussions of teacher turnover usually focus on *how many* teachers leave schools each year, without regard for their performance in the classroom. This oversimplification masks the real teacher retention crisis: not only a failure to retain enough teachers, but a failure to retain the *right* teachers.

This paper examines the real retention crisis through the experiences of a group we call the "Irreplaceables": teachers who are so successful that they are nearly impossible to replace. Teachers of this caliber provide more engaging learning experiences for students and help them achieve five to six more months of learning each year than students of low-performing teachers—academic results that can be life-changing.

Of the 90,000 teachers we studied across four large, geographically diverse urban school districts, we estimate that about 20 percent are Irreplaceables. When one of them leaves a low-achieving school, it can take 11 hires to find just one teacher of comparable quality.

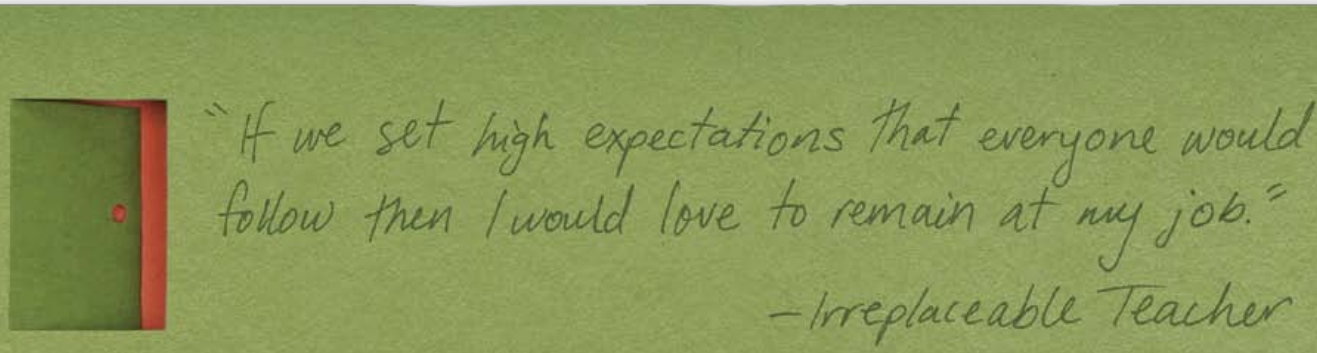
These are the teachers our urban schools desperately need to keep. Yet we found that they are ignored and undervalued at almost every turn. Their experience illuminates the true obstacles to turning around chronically low-performing schools and raising the status of the teaching profession.

FIGURE 1 | **WHO ARE THE IRREPLACEABLES?**



The "Irreplaceables" are teachers so successful that they are nearly impossible to replace.

Estimates of Irreplaceables percentage based on teachers with value-added or growth data; District A high performers: 21%; District B high performers: 20%; District C high performers: 20%; District D high performers: 18%; Student impact estimates calculated following the methodology of Hahnel and Jackson (2012). Source: District data from SY 2009-10 and SY 2010-11.



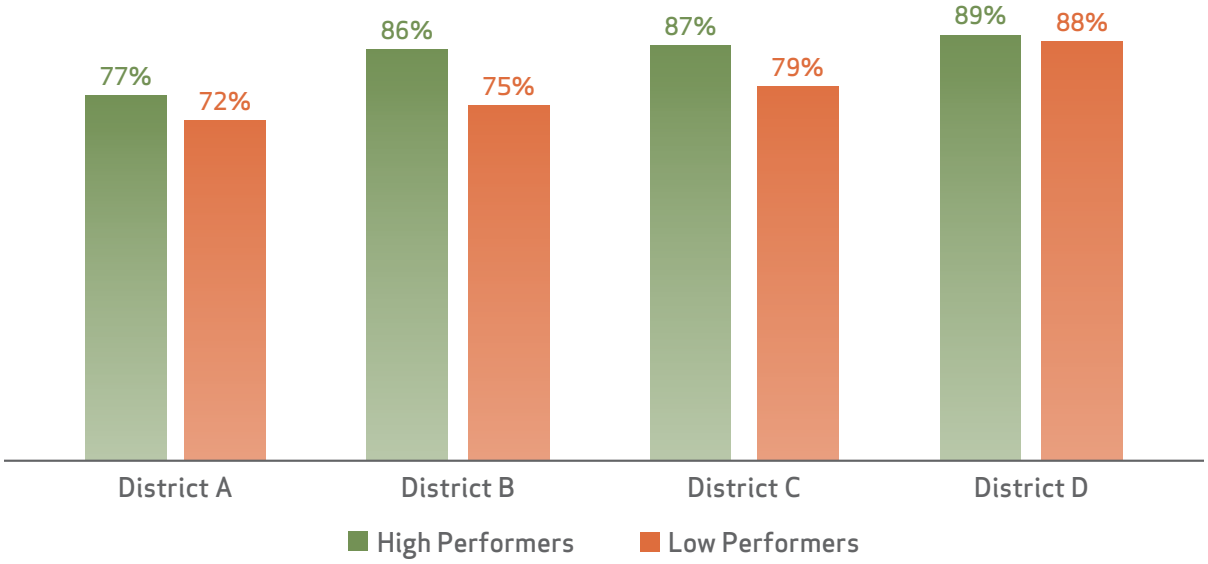
THE REAL CRISIS: NEGLIGENT RETENTION

Knowing the power of great teachers, one would expect schools to be sharply focused on keeping far more of their best teachers than their lower performers. Instead, they retain all teachers at strikingly similar rates; and about half of all Irreplaceables leave within their first five years *(Figure 2)*.

This means too many Irreplaceables are leaving too early—**we estimate that the nation's 50 largest school districts lose approximately 10,000 every year**—while too many struggling teachers remain for too long. We found that 1 in 10 classrooms in the districts we studied is led by an experienced but low-performing teacher. In fact, in these districts, **40 percent of teachers with more than seven years of experience are less effective at advancing academic progress than the average first-year teacher.**

The result: Rather than steadily improving the quality of instruction, schools are running in place.

FIGURE 2 | SCHOOL RETENTION RATES BY TEACHER PERFORMANCE, 2009-10



Most schools retain Irreplaceables and low performers at strikingly similar rates.

School retention defined as teachers remaining at their school from one year to the next.
Source: District data from SY 2009-10 through SY 2010-11.

"An effective teacher is worth his/her weight in gold. Too few people really know this."
– School Leader

THE CAUSES

These destructive retention patterns occur mainly because leaders at all levels let them happen. We identified three main causes of negligent retention:

1 Principals make too little effort to retain Irreplaceables or remove low-performing teachers

Less than 30 percent of Irreplaceables plan to leave for personal reasons beyond their school's control, and principals' actions have a significant impact on the decisions of the other 70 percent. We identified eight simple, low-cost strategies that helped boost teacher retention at the schools we studied—things like giving positive feedback or public recognition for a job well done. Irreplaceables receiving two or more of these strategies planned to remain at their schools *up to six years longer* than those who didn't, yet many Irreplaceables experienced few or none of these strategies. Two-thirds told us that nobody even encouraged them to return for another year *(Figure 3)*.

Meanwhile, principals rarely attempt to dismiss or counsel out chronically low-performing teachers, though we found teachers are nearly three times as likely to plan to leave if encouraged to do so. In fact, principals often work to retain low-performing teachers, even though a brand-new teacher will pay off in improved performance about 75 percent of the time. Most principals focus on development instead—more than 70 percent insist it is a top priority—even though the average experienced low performer we studied remained less effective than an average beginning teacher even three years later *(Figure 4)*.

2 Poor school cultures and working conditions drive away great teachers

At schools that retain high percentages of Irreplaceables, principals created cultures of respect and trust, but were also less likely to tolerate ineffective teaching. Turnover rates among Irreplaceables were 50 percent higher in schools with weak instructional cultures than in those with strong cultures. In three out of the four districts we studied, retention rates were higher at schools where teachers reported a low tolerance for poor performance—yet fewer than half of the teachers we surveyed believed that their own school has a low tolerance for ineffective teaching.

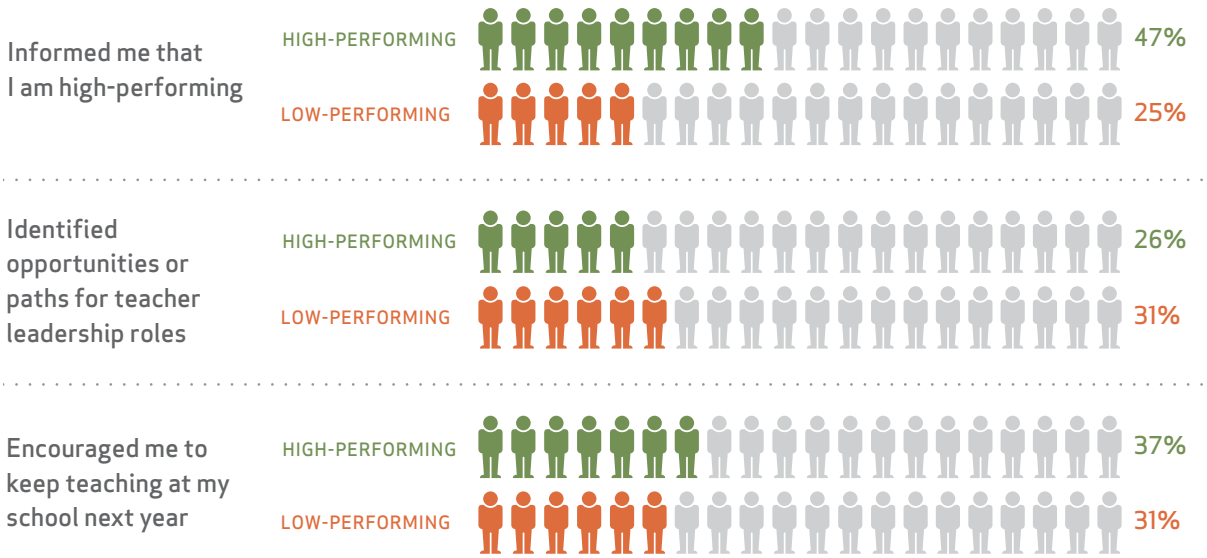
We believe the lesson is clear: Good teachers don't leave demanding schools that hold them to high expectations; they leave schools that aren't serious about good teaching.

3 Policies give principals and district leaders few incentives to change their ways

In most school districts, smart teacher retention is simply not a priority. In three of the four districts we studied, only 20 percent of principals agreed that their district had effective strategies to retain its best teachers. Furthermore, principals in most districts encounter a number of policy barriers that discourage or prevent them from making smarter retention decisions. Most notably, they are hamstrung by lockstep teacher compensation systems that are hard-wired to undervalue great teaching. Because these systems award most raises for seniority and advanced degrees, about 55 percent of Irreplaceables earn lower base salaries than the average ineffective teacher. Not surprisingly, **compensation was one of the reasons most frequently cited by Irreplaceables for leaving their schools.**

FIGURE 3 | TEACHERS REPORTING RECOGNITION AT SCHOOL

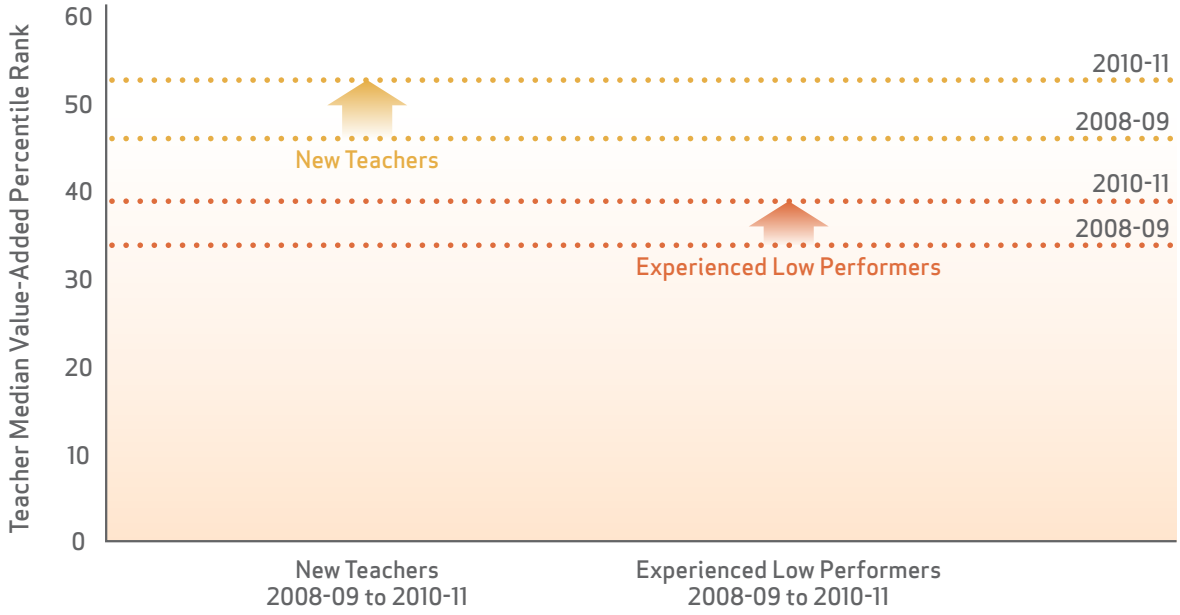
"Last year, someone from my school leadership team..."



Principals use retention strategies at similar rates for high and low performers.

Source: District B data and survey data. Trends confirmed across districts.

FIGURE 4 | PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OF NEW TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCED LOW PERFORMERS OVER THREE YEARS



Low performers rarely improve significantly.
Even three years later, most perform worse than the average first-year teacher.

Median percentile ranks by population scores; Populations defined in SY 2007-08. Source: District C data from SY 2007-08 through SY 2010-11. Trends confirmed across districts.

THE CONSEQUENCES

Negligent retention has dire consequences for students, teachers, and schools. Specifically:

1 School turnaround is nearly impossible

Current retention patterns lock our lowest achieving schools into a cycle of failure, keeping them from ever having enough good or great teachers to improve. Our analysis shows that **struggling schools can reach an average teacher composition after three to four years of smart retention practices**, but may never do so under a pattern of negligent retention *(Figure 5)*.

Put simply, most struggling schools won't ever have as many high-performing teachers as other schools—and are unlikely to improve significantly—without making smart retention a top priority.

2 The teaching profession is degraded

The neglect of Irreplaceables is just one glaring symptom of a wider problem: a profession that has become one of low performance standards and the lack of respect that accompanies them. Negligent retention sends the dangerous message that great teachers are expendable and that anyone can make a career out of teaching, regardless of how well they perform.

Tolerating poor performance keeps ineffective teachers in the classroom indefinitely, **demoralizes outstanding teachers, and allows the entire teaching profession to be defined by mediocrity** rather than excellence.

FIGURE 5 | SIMULATED TEACHER RETENTION PATTERNS IN 10 LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, EACH WITH 20 TEACHERS

NEGLIGENT RETENTION		200 Teachers Start Year 1	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	200 Teachers End Year 4 *Includes New Hires*
14% Low Performers Leave	Low Performers	38	5 leave	5 leave	5 leave	5 leave	34
14% High Performers Leave	High Performers	24	3 leave	4 leave	4 leave	4 leave	25
SMART RETENTION							
33% Low Performers Leave	Low Performers	38	13 leave	10 leave	7 leave	7 leave	17
4% High Performers Leave	High Performers	24	1 leaves	1 leaves	1 leaves	1 leaves	36

By changing which teachers leave, low-performing schools can reach an average teacher composition in a few years.

Number of total teachers is 200. Starting composition is 24 high performers, 138 mid performers, and 38 low performers. Ending composition for negligent retention is 25 high performers, 141 mid performers, and 34 low performers. Ending composition for smart retention is 36 high performers, 147 mid performers, and 17 low performers. Analysis only includes schools with a minimum of 7 teachers with value-added or growth data in each year. Composition data based on an average of 3 years; attrition and pipeline data based on an average of 2 years. Models using the teacher composition at low- and mid-proficiency schools, defined by school-level math proficiency quintile. Model does not assume any fluctuation in teacher populations at schools and assumes population of teachers with performance data reflects the effectiveness of all teachers at these schools. Overall attrition and incoming pipeline rate held steady each year. Source: District D data from SY 2007-08 through SY 2009-10.

THE SOLUTION: SMART RETENTION

Solving the real teacher retention crisis requires a new approach that revolves around smart retention: keeping more Irreplaceables and fewer low-performing teachers.

This approach could improve the quality of teaching at almost any school right away, and it has the potential to boost student learning substantially. We believe it represents the best way—possibly the only way—for low-performing schools to break their cycles of failure, and for the teaching profession to achieve the elite status it deserves.

Lamenting the low prestige of the teaching profession without addressing the low standards that perpetuate it will not solve the real retention crisis, nor will focusing on greater accountability for teachers without regard for the challenging circumstances in which they work. Education leaders at all levels need to embrace the more difficult, more complex work of demanding better working conditions for teachers along with higher performance standards. We make two main recommendations for solving the real retention crisis.

1 Make retention of Irreplaceables a top priority

A combination of focused strategies, focused leadership and focused policies will help keep the best teachers in the classroom longer. Education leaders should:

Set a goal of retaining more than 90 percent of Irreplaceables annually, and report progress towards that goal publicly

Overhaul principal hiring, support and evaluation to focus on instructional leadership abilities that result in smart teacher retention, like the ability and commitment to give teachers frequent, high-quality and rigorous feedback

Monitor school working conditions and address concerns at the policy and individual school level that drive away Irreplaceables

Pay Irreplaceables what they're worth and create career pathways that extend their reach

Protect Irreplaceables during layoffs

2 Strengthen the teaching profession through higher expectations

Education leaders must also address the other side of the retention crisis: the indifference to performance that has allowed so many unsuccessful teachers to remain in the classroom for years or even decades. This will require difficult decisions and long-deferred actions, but further delay will only exacerbate the problem.

Set a new baseline standard for effectiveness: Teachers who cannot teach as well as the average first-year teacher should be considered ineffective and dismissed or counseled out (unless they *are* first-year teachers)

Encourage low performers to leave voluntarily by creating alternatives to formal dismissal

Remove the policy barriers to higher expectations, such as forced-placement staffing rules and onerous dismissal processes

Neither the teaching profession nor our schools can move forward without these changes. Leaders at every level helped create the real retention crisis; they now have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to help solve it. The alternative is to continue standing by as thousands of Irreplaceables every year leave the schools and students who need them most.

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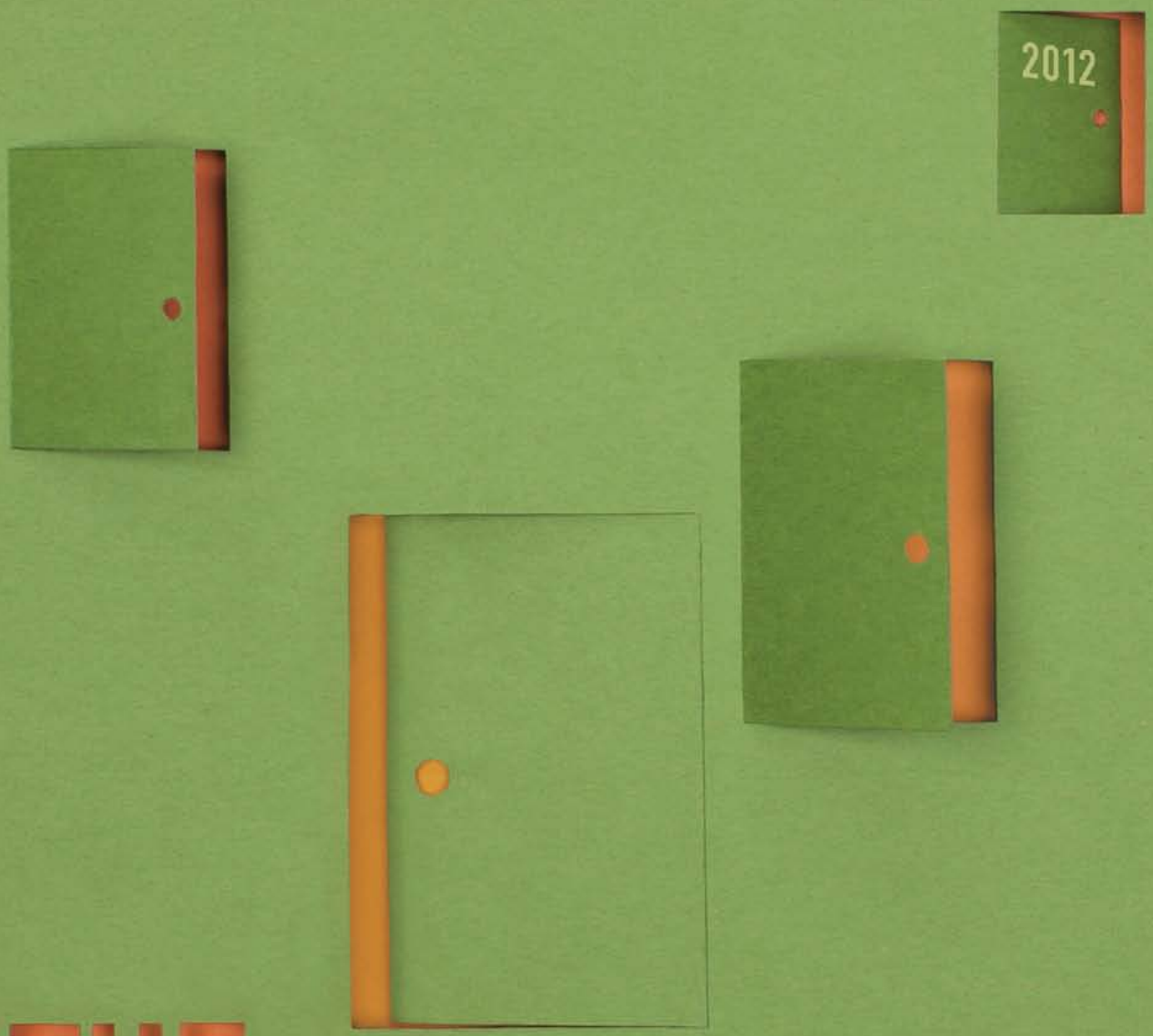

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Finally, we are deeply indebted to the **staff of the school districts** that took part in our study, and to the thousands of **teachers and principals** who answered our questions and helped us understand their experiences.

INTRODUCTION: LOSS OF A GREAT TEACHER

In late May of 2012, as students at Jefferson Elementary School cleaned out their desks and celebrated the start of summer, one of their favorite teachers was packing up her things and leaving, too. Only, unlike them, she wouldn't be back in the fall.

Sarah[1] was a successful public school teacher with more than three decades of experience in her large Southern city. She had come to Jefferson on a mission: to share her considerable skills with staff and students at a school struggling with painfully low achievement.

Despite the challenges her low-income students faced, Sarah helped them make extraordinary academic strides compared with other teachers in her school and district. Almost all of her two dozen fourth-grade students spoke Spanish at home, and their English skills were shaky. But when they took required math and reading tests in English that spring, all but one passed the math exam, and all but four passed reading.

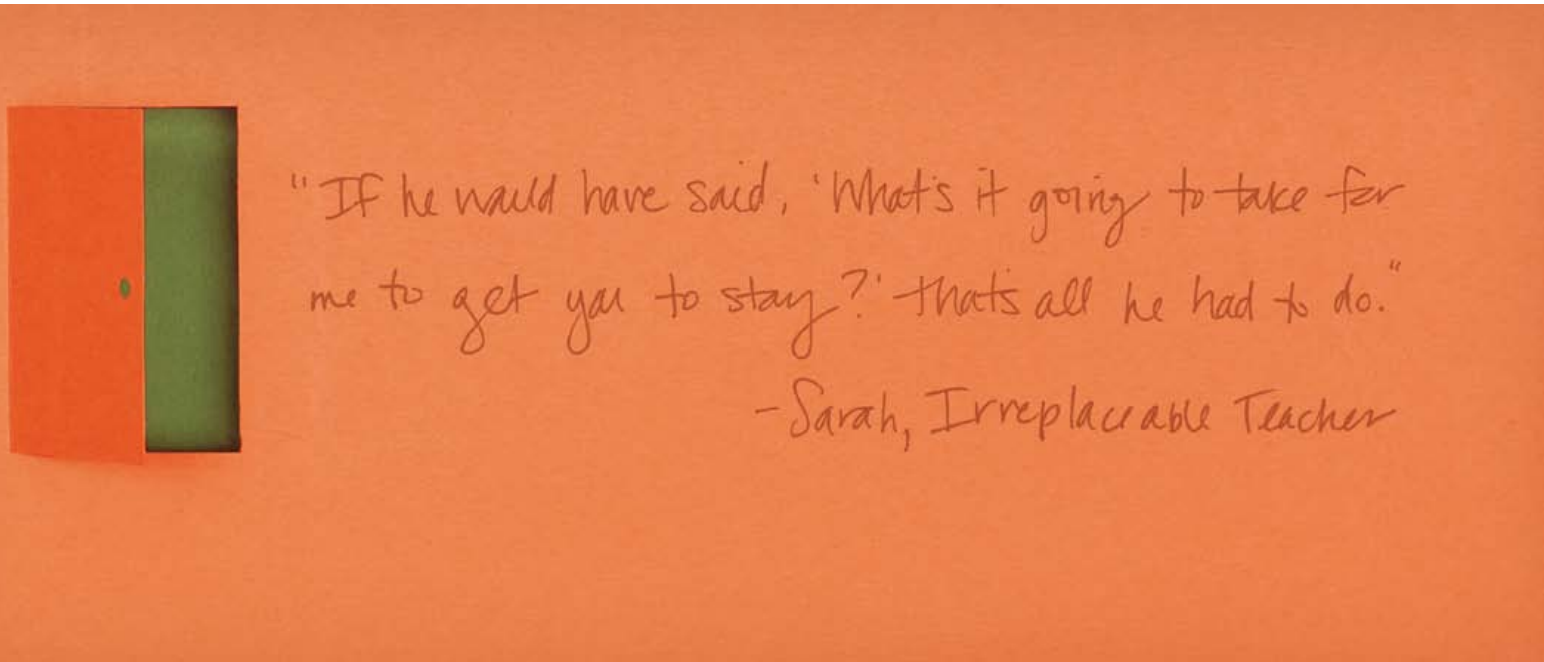
Just as important, students enjoyed spending time in her classroom. Raucous 10-year-olds who wouldn't stay in their seats in September were relaxed and reading together on the story rug by November. They treated one another with kindness, and looked to Sarah as a trusted ally and confidante. In turn, she felt committed to her students and proud of their accomplishments. She didn't want to pick up and move.

Yet there she was at the end of the year, relocating to a public school across town. There was little point in sticking around Jefferson, she figured, since school leaders gave her little recognition, failed to take advantage of her instructional expertise and stymied the sort of team-building and collaboration that had helped her boost performance among students and fellow teachers at other schools for decades.

Sarah made the heartbreaking decision to leave after she began to feel that she was only supporting a failing system. "I get strong results with students consistently, year after year after year," she said. "These kids have learned so much and come so far. They've really stepped up to the plate. But if they go back to a bad teacher, what good did I do?"

She felt Jefferson's indifference to her talent and contributions to the very end. When she resigned, the principal "just signed my paperwork, and didn't even say a word," she said. "It made me feel like he couldn't care less, not about me and not about this school."

"If he would have said, 'What's it going to take for me to get you to stay?' that's all he had to do," she said. "Most people, if they had a really dynamic teacher, wouldn't they say, 'What's it going to take?'"



WHO ARE THE IRREPLACEABLES?

Sarah isn't alone in her success in the classroom or her experience at her school. She is part of a group we call the "Irreplaceables"—teachers who are so successful they are nearly impossible to replace, but who too often vanish from schools as the result of neglect and inattention.[2]

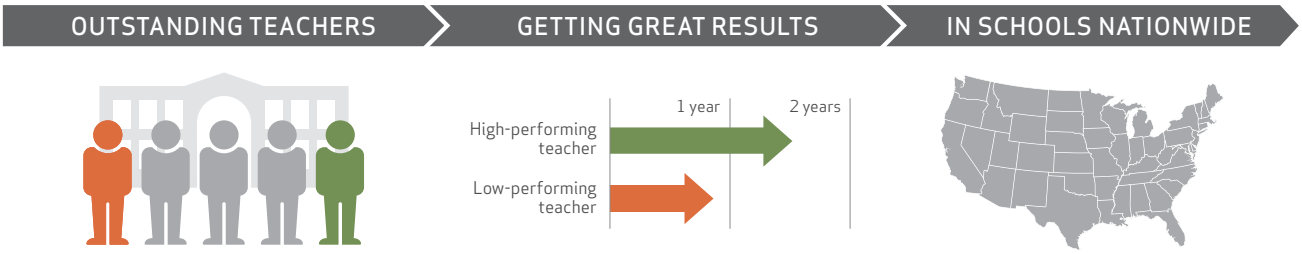
To identify and better understand the experience of these teachers, we started by studying 90,000 teachers across four large, geographically diverse urban school districts. We also examined student academic growth data or value-added results for approximately 20,000 of those teachers. While these measures cannot provide a complete picture of a teacher's performance or ability on their own—and shouldn't be the only measure used in real-world teacher evaluations—they are the most practical way to identify trends in a study of this scale, and research has demonstrated that they show a relationship to other performance measures, such as classroom observations.[3] We used the data to identify teachers who performed exceptionally well (by helping students make much more academic progress than expected), and to see how their experiences and opinions about their work differed from other teachers'—particularly teachers whose performance was exceptionally poor.

So who are the Irreplaceables? They are, by any measure, our very best teachers. Across the districts we studied, about 20 percent of teachers fell into the category. On average, each year they help students learn two to three additional months' worth of math and reading compared with the average teacher, and five to six months more compared to low-performing teachers.[4] Better test scores are just the beginning: Students whose teachers help them make these kinds of gains are more likely to go to college and earn higher salaries as adults, and they are less likely to become teenage parents.[5]

Teachers of this caliber not only get outstanding academic results, but also provide a more engaging learning experience for students. For example, when placed in the classroom of an Irreplaceable secondary math teacher, students are much more likely to say that their teacher cares, does not let them give up when things get difficult and makes learning enjoyable *(Figure 3)*.[6]

Irreplaceables influence students for life, and their talents make them invaluable assets to their schools. The problem is, their schools don't seem to know it.

FIGURE 1 | **WHO ARE THE IRREPLACEABLES?**



IRREPLACEABLES
Top 20% of teachers in studied districts, as gauged by district data

STUDENT IMPACT
Generate 5 to 6 more months of student learning each year than a poor performer

SCOPE
4 urban districts, with 2,100 schools, 90,000 teachers, 1.4 million students

The "Irreplaceables" are teachers so successful that they are nearly impossible to replace.

Estimates of Irreplaceables percentage based on teachers with value-added or growth data; District A high performers: 21%; District B high performers: 20%; District C high performers: 20%; District D high performers: 18%; Student impact estimates calculated following the methodology of Hahnel and Jackson (2012). Source: District data from SY 2009-10 and SY 2010-11.

IS GREAT TEACHING A MINDSET OR A SKILLSET?

Irreplaceables are not fictional superheroes. Aside from their outstanding results in the classroom, they don't fit a particular mold. They represent a wide range of experience levels and teaching styles. They teach similarly-sized classes as other teachers. They are just as likely to teach in impoverished communities as their peers *(Figure 2)*.[7]

That is not to say that Irreplaceables do not differ at all from other teachers in their views. Compared to low-performing teachers, for instance, Irreplaceables are slightly more likely to believe that effective teachers can help students overcome out-of-school challenges and are more likely to understand their own effectiveness.[8]

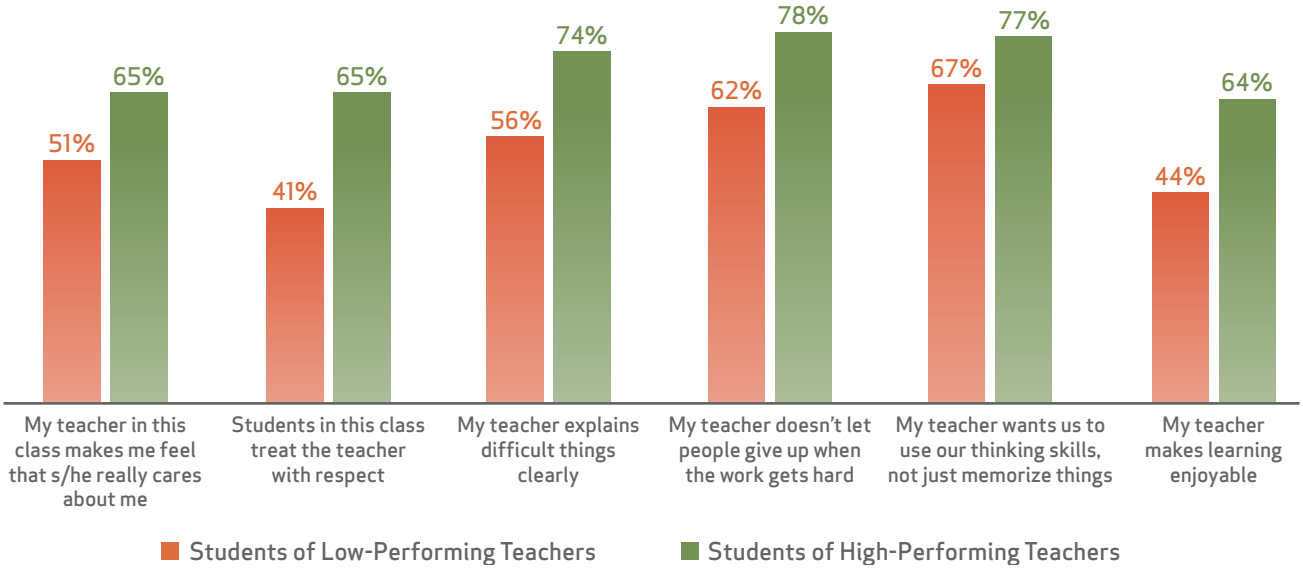
In general, though, the results suggest that great teaching is more a matter of skill than of mindset. For example, all the teachers in our study—Irreplaceables, low performers, and those in between—generally work very hard, about 50 hours per week.[9] Irreplaceables don't succeed because they are saints or workaholics, and low-performing teachers don't struggle because they are lazy or less committed to their students. In teaching, as in any other profession, some people are more successful at their jobs than others. Diligence and good intentions are poor predictors of good teaching.

FIGURE 2 | **CHARACTERISTICS OF IRREPLACEABLES**

		LOW PERFORMERS	ALL TEACHERS with Performance Data	IRREPLACEABLES
BACKGROUND & WORKLOAD	**Years of experience** as a teacher	10	9	9
	Total workload (hours/week)	50	50	50
	Class size (number of students)	28	27	27
	High-poverty students	85%	90%	90%
ATTITUDES & BELIEFS	**Belief** that effective teachers can lead students to success despite challenges	44%	50%	53%
	Understand how effective they are in achieving positive student outcomes	48%	57%	69%
RESULTS	**Additional months of student learning,** relative to a low performer, per year	--	+3 MONTHS	+6 MONTHS

Source: District D data and survey data. See Note 7 for more details.

FIGURE 3 | **SECONDARY-LEVEL STUDENTS RESPONDING "MOSTLY TRUE" OR "TOTALLY TRUE"**



Results based on yet unpublished analysis for TNTP by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project. See Note 6 for more details.

THE CHALLENGE: NEGLIGENT RETENTION

The real teacher retention crisis is not simply the failure to retain enough teachers; it is the failure to retain the *right* teachers.

When an Irreplaceable leaves a low-performing school, it can take 11 hires to find one teacher of comparable quality *(Figure 4)*. Yet schools tend to treat their best teachers as though they are expendable. Many Irreplaceables we surveyed—nearly half in some districts—indicated that their schools made little to no effort to retain them.[10] Just like Sarah, an astounding two-thirds told us that their principal hadn't even encouraged them to stay *(Figure 5)*.

Top teachers seem to be shortchanged at every turn. Policies at the state and local level often cause them to earn less than their least effective colleagues and fail to protect them in the event of layoffs. They endure districts and schools that fail to value their talents and do not provide them with supportive school cultures.

As we will show, this pervasive neglect of the nation's best teachers is a disgrace that derails school improvement efforts and robs millions of students of a potentially life-changing education. We estimate that in one year alone, approximately 10,000 Irreplaceables in the nation's 50 largest school districts left their districts, or left teaching entirely.[11] Principals have the power to convince many of these teachers to stay longer, but they often don't even try.

Just as the schools we studied made little effort to retain their Irreplaceables, they made almost no effort to urge low-performing teachers to leave and actually encouraged many to stay—even those who, after years of experience, are still not performing as well as the average first-year teacher.[12] As a result, we estimate that nearly 1 in every 10 classrooms in the districts we studied is led by an experienced but low-performing teacher.[13]

The neglect of Irreplaceables and tolerance for poor performance are two symptoms of an even larger problem, one that undermines the teaching profession itself: a near-total indifference to which teachers stay and which ones leave, no matter how well or poorly they perform. Schools retain their best and least-effective teachers at strikingly similar rates *(Figure 6)*.

Taken together, these findings reveal the extent to which teacher retention has been misunderstood and misrepresented for decades. The real teacher retention crisis is not simply the failure to retain enough teachers; it is the failure to retain the *right* teachers.

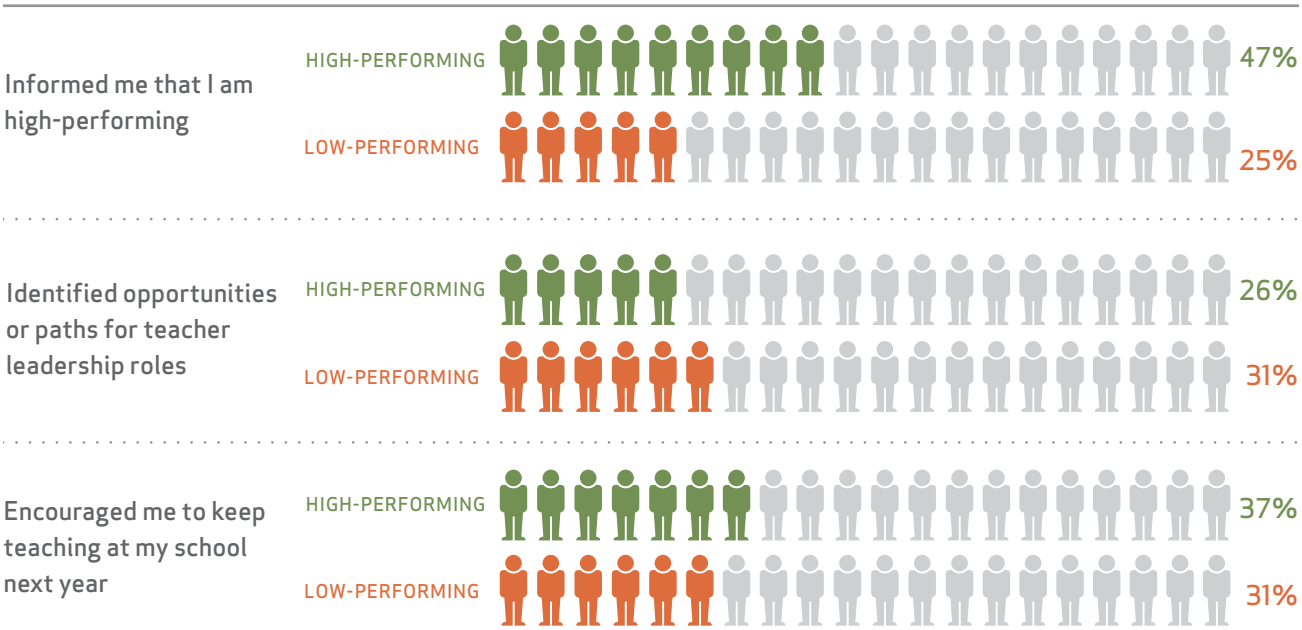
FIGURE4 | **LIKELIHOOD OF REPLACING A HIGH PERFORMER WITH A TEACHER OF SIMILAR QUALITY**

When a great teacher leaves a school, the school is almost guaranteed to hire a less effective replacement.

Estimates based on teachers with value-added or growth data; Low performing schools include schools in the lowest quintile of proficiency by school level; Percentage of high-performing potential replacements in all schools—District A: 12%; District B: 17%; District C: 15%; District D: 15%; Low-performing schools—District A: 12% ; District B: 10%; District C: 3%; District D: 9%. Source: District data from SY 2008-09 and SY 2009-10.

FIGURE 5 | TEACHERS REPORTING RECOGNITION AT SCHOOL

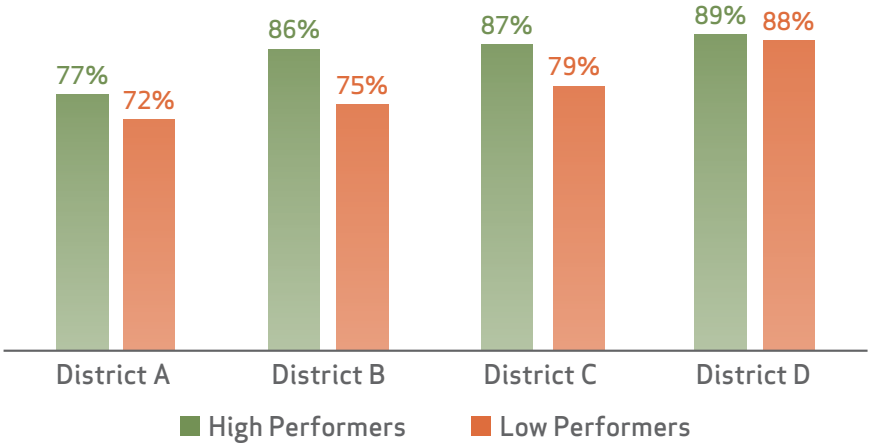
"Last year, someone from my school leadership team..."



Principals use retention strategies at similar rates for high and low performers.

Source: District B data and survey data. Trends confirmed across districts.

FIGURE 6 | SCHOOL RETENTION RATES BY TEACHER PERFORMANCE, 2009-10



Most schools retain Irreplaceables and low performers at strikingly similar rates.

School retention defined as teachers remaining at their school from one year to the next. Source: District data from SY 2009-10 through SY 2010-11.

THE SOLUTION: SMART RETENTION

The solution is to *improve* retention, not to blindly increase it.

The typical prescription for teacher retention problems involves improving working conditions and raising salaries. As we will show, both are part of the solution to the real retention crisis in our schools. But doing these things and nothing more would boost retention of the weakest and strongest teachers alike, exacerbating problems posed by the lack of performance standards in today's teaching profession.

The solution is to *improve* retention, not to blindly increase it. Schools must retain more Irreplaceables while simultaneously raising expectations for teachers and retaining fewer of those who consistently perform poorly. This smarter approach to teacher retention could improve the quality of teaching at almost any school right away, and it has the potential to boost student learning substantially.[14] We believe it represents the best way—and possibly the only way—for low-performing schools nationwide to break their cycles of failure, and for the teaching profession to achieve the elite status it deserves.

Lamenting the low prestige of the teaching profession without addressing the low standards that perpetuate it will not solve the real retention crisis, nor will focusing on greater accountability for teachers without regard for the exceptionally challenging circumstances in which they work. These approaches have been repeated and debated for decades, enduring right along with the problem.

We believe the time has come for a more serious strategy. Teachers and education leaders at all levels need to embrace the more difficult, more complex work of demanding respect *and* rigor: better working conditions for teachers along with the higher performance standards worthy of the teaching profession.

The alternative is to continue standing by as Sarah and thousands of Irreplaceables like her leave the schools that need them most, even as many more low-performing teachers remain, dimming the life chances of students nationwide and eroding the reputation of the teaching profession.

"I love teaching at my school because the leadership is supportive. However, it also supports poor teaching."

– Irreplaceable Teacher

OUR MISUNDERSTANDING OF TEACHER TURNOVER

A full understanding of teacher retention requires more than a single number. We need to ask whether schools are keeping more of their best teachers than their worst.

OUR MISUNDERSTANDING OF TEACHER TURNOVER

Teacher turnover is one of the most discussed and least understood topics in education. Too often, public debate about it is startlingly simplistic and obscures the true issue. The problem begins with the way teacher retention is reported—almost always as a single number, the higher the better. However, an overall retention rate by itself tells us little, because it says nothing about which teachers are leaving and which ones are staying.

Consider one of the most influential reports about teacher retention: *No Dream Denied* (2003) from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF).[15] Its authors pointed to high teacher turnover as a primary cause of poor school performance, noting that half of all new teachers leave the profession by their fifth year. The report called for an all-out effort to reduce new teacher attrition by 50 percent in three years.

No Dream Denied made a valuable contribution to the field by drawing attention to the number of early-career teachers who leave the profession. But it also made the assumption that any increase in teacher retention would be productive, no matter how well the teachers being retained actually performed. According to this logic, schools should work hard to keep ineffective teachers in the name of maximizing the overall retention rate.

This single-minded focus on raising overall teacher retention rates regardless of performance is as strong today as it was a decade ago—and just as incorrect. Such a simplistic view of retention reinforces the "widget effect," the widespread and flawed assumption that one teacher is about as good as any other.[16] It distorts the lessons of research and defies common sense.

Everyone agrees that the loss of an incredible teacher is deplorable. But what if an *ineffective* teacher leaves the classroom and is replaced by someone more talented?

Our research shows that schools have a three in four chance of replacing a low-performing teacher with a new hire who will be more effective right away—and who is likely to improve over time, benefitting hundreds or even thousands of students over the course of his or her career.[17] This is true even in subjects like science, which can be difficult to staff *(Figure 7)*. In these cases, selective teacher attrition would likely yield a positive result for students.

It's true that excessive turnover can disrupt any workplace, and a recent study showed that very low teacher retention rates can negatively affect student achievement.[18] But to improve schools—especially struggling schools—education leaders need to ask a more complicated question than simply whether teacher retention rates are high. They need to ask whether schools are keeping more of their best teachers than their worst.

The loss of an incredible teacher is deplorable. But what if an *ineffective* teacher leaves and is replaced by someone more talented?

FIGURE 7 | **LIKELIHOOD OF IMPROVING INSTRUCTION BY REPLACING A LOW-PERFORMING SCIENCE TEACHER IN DISTRICT C**

When ineffective teachers leave, they are likely to be replaced by higher performing teachers—even in difficult-to-staff subjects.

Estimates based on teachers with value-added or growth data. Source: District C data from SY 2009-10.
Hard-to-staff subject trend confirmed across districts.

TWO DOMINANT FALLACIES ABOUT TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Two deeply rooted fallacies about teacher performance help explain why the misunderstanding of teacher retention persists.

First is the conviction that most low-performing teachers will improve to an acceptable level in the future. If struggling teachers can generally be expected to improve, there is less reason to treat them differently than Irreplaceables when it comes to retention. Principals could simply focus on retaining and developing all teachers.

Second is the assumption that new teachers will almost always be less effective than experienced teachers. If principals believe that a new teacher is unlikely to achieve better outcomes than a struggling but seasoned teacher, they will understandably be hesitant to invest time and energy in replacing one with the other.

Both assumptions encourage a simplistic and hands-off approach to teacher retention. But both assumptions are wrong.

Our analysis shows that, unfortunately, struggling teachers rarely improve—even when principals prioritize development. More than 70 percent of the principals we surveyed told us that "teacher development" was one of their top priorities—roughly twice the number that listed "retention" as a top priority.[19] Yet even three years later, the average experienced low performer in our study remained less effective than the average first-year teacher *(Figure 8)*.[20]

Contrary to the conventional wisdom that this lack of success causes poorly performing teachers to "self-select out," few leave on their own. About 75 percent of low performers remain at the same school from one year to the next.[21] Half say they plan to remain a teacher for at least another decade.[22]

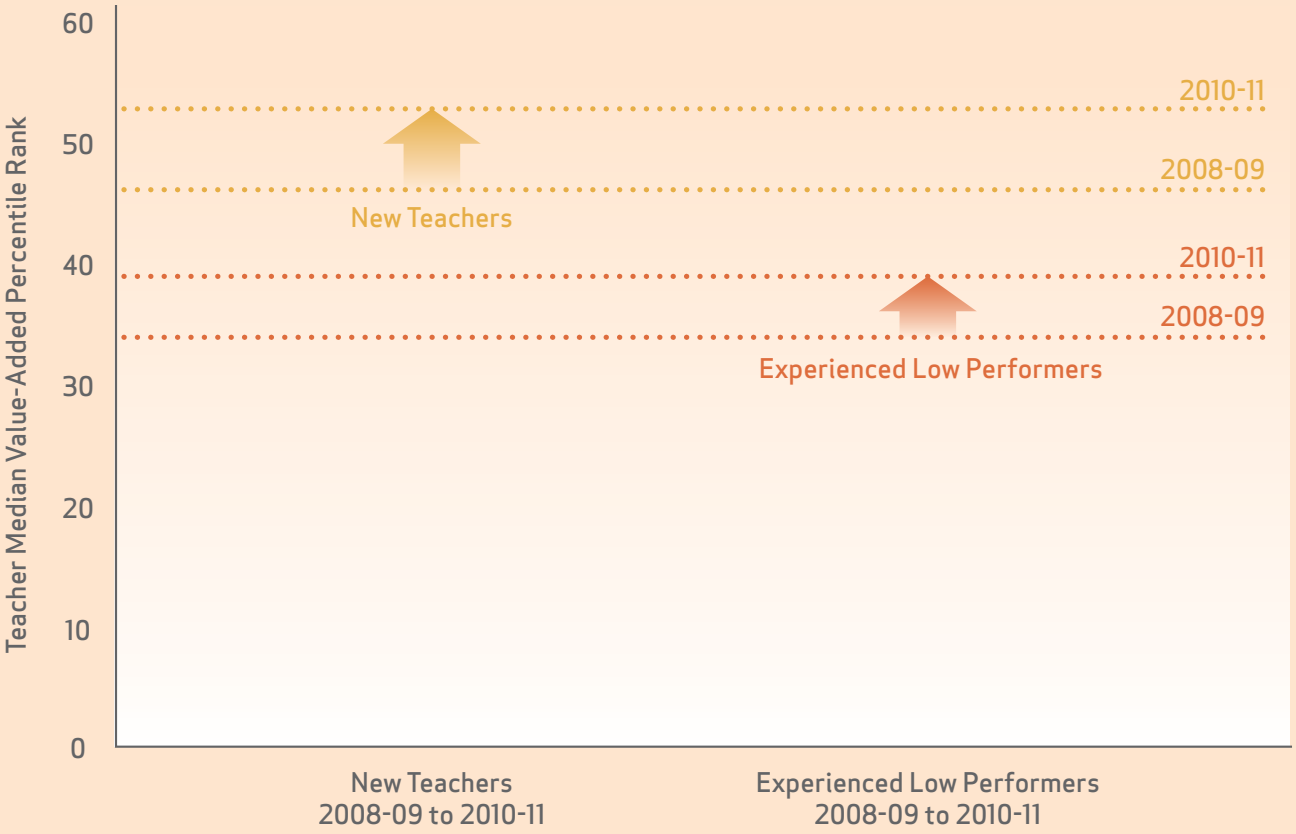
In most cases, even a brand-new teacher will be stronger. Three out of four times, new teachers perform better *in their first year* than the low-performing teachers they replace, and they are more likely to improve over time.[23] Even an average new teacher is likely to be a step up.

None of this means abandoning development as a strategy. In fact, the new emphasis on stronger teacher evaluation systems holds great promise for improving teacher development as well, because helping teachers improve is one of the main goals of any evaluation system. But schools could improve the quality of education they offer their students right away (and in the long term, too) through smarter retention, even as they work to improve teacher development.

The truth about these two widespread misconceptions raises an important question: When a teacher is not performing as well as a brand-new teacher and shows no signs of improving, what should happen next? Replacing a teacher who struggles to help students learn can be an uncomfortable decision, but the alternative is far riskier. Doing nothing —the choice most principals make—usually guarantees that a low-performing teacher will teach dozens or even hundreds more children, and never improve.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, poorly performing teachers rarely "self-select out."

FIGURE 8 | PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OF NEW TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCED LOW PERFORMERS OVER THREE YEARS



Low performers rarely improve significantly.
Even three years later, most perform worse than the average first-year teacher.

Median percentile ranks by population scores; Populations defined in SY 2007-08. Source: District C data from SY 2007-08 through SY 2010-11. Trends confirmed across districts.

"The teaching profession is viewed as a job anyone could do. We don't have high enough respect for ourselves and our own talents."

—Irreplaceable Teacher

EXPLORING THE REAL TEACHER RETENTION CRISIS

Most schools take an approach to teacher retention that neglects Irreplaceables and allows unsuccessful teachers to stay indefinitely. Principals have tools to retain their best teachers and counsel out their lowest performers, but they rarely use them.

More than 75 percent of Irreplaceables said they would have stayed at their current school if their main issue for leaving were addressed.

EXPLORING THE REAL TEACHER RETENTION CRISIS

The nation's urban school districts are losing their most and least successful teachers at strikingly similar rates. In the four districts we studied, 6 to 17 percent of Irreplaceables left their district at the end of each school year, compared with 6 to 21 percent of low performers.[24] Instead of improving the quality of instruction they offer their students by increasing the proportion of great teachers and decreasing the proportion of struggling teachers, our schools are running in place. This is the real teacher retention crisis.

Based on these trends, we estimate that approximately 10,000 Irreplaceables leave the 50 largest school districts across the country each year. Many of these teachers are just starting their careers: In one typical district we studied, nearly one-third of all Irreplaceables left within two years, and almost half left within five years *(Figure 9)*.

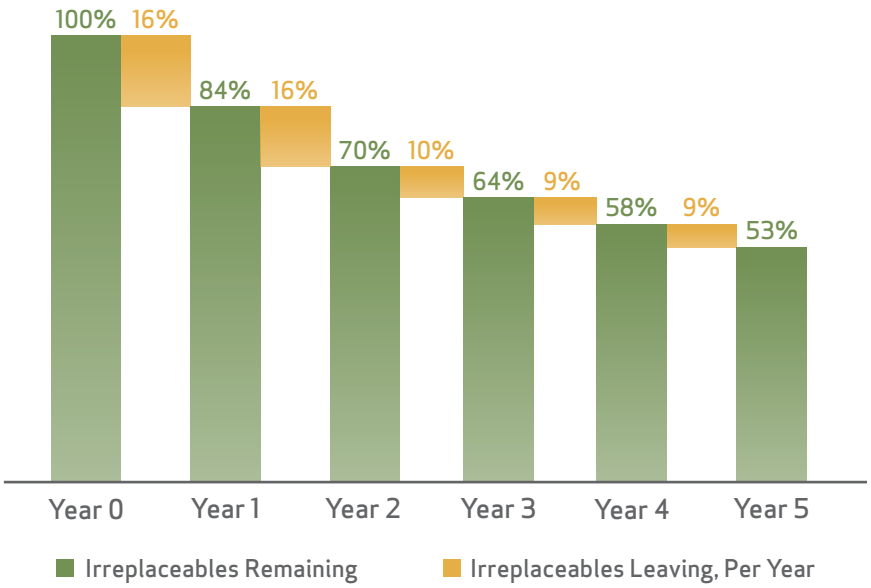
At the same time, close to 100,000 low performers stay, helping to create a situation where 40 percent of teachers with more than seven years of experience were not even as effective as an average brand-new teacher.[25] Millions of students learn from less effective teachers as a result, and struggling schools become locked in a cycle of failure that prevents them from ever having enough effective teachers to help their students succeed.

It's not inevitable. Our findings suggest that Irreplaceables usually leave for reasons that their school could have controlled. Less than 30 percent of those who planned to leave in the next three years said they were doing so primarily for personal reasons.[26] More than half said they planned either to continue teaching at a nearby school or continue working in K-12 education.[27] And more than 75 percent said they would have stayed at their school if their main issue for leaving were addressed.[28]

This situation would be unfathomable in almost any other profession where individual performance matters. Imagine if star quarterbacks routinely left pro-football teams and those teams made no effort to convince them to stay, only to backfill their places with less capable players, leading to prolonged losing streaks. Fans would be enraged, and the coach and general manager would almost certainly be shown the door. Yet a similar scene plays out every year in schools across the country, where the stakes for students and their families are much higher than points on a scoreboard.

Schools clearly cannot expect to retain all of their best teachers and *none* of their lowest performers. But they should be able to keep a much higher percentage of Irreplaceables than low performers. Yet this is not happening in most schools today. Why not?

FIGURE 9 | HIGH-PERFORMING TEACHER ATTRITION AND CUMULATIVE RETENTION IN DISTRICT D, IN FIRST FIVE YEARS OF CAREER



We lose too many Irreplaceables, especially early in their careers.

Single-year district attrition estimates based on years of seniority; cumulative district attrition estimates calculated following the methodology of Ingersoll (2003). Source: District D data from SY 2009-10 through SY 2010-11. Cumulative attrition trend confirmed across districts.

THE CAUSES

These destructive retention patterns occur mainly because leaders at all levels let them happen. Principals don't try particularly hard to keep their Irreplaceables, nor do they make a special effort to counsel out or dismiss low-performing teachers—even though those teachers rarely improve. Instead, they seem content to keep whichever teachers are willing to stay and lose whichever teachers decide to leave, regardless of skill.

And why should they act any differently? District administrators generally do not prioritize or hold principals accountable for smarter retention decisions. And as has been well documented by TNTP and others, an array of policies—from compensation systems that pay the least effective teachers more than the most effective, to layoff rules that make it illegal to keep Irreplaceables during tough economic times—stand ready to undermine efforts to build stronger instructional teams.

In short, the real retention crisis is fueled by an unspoken consensus that schools are not obligated to be strategic about the teachers they keep. The primary retention strategy in most schools is not having a strategy at all.

On the following pages, we discuss the primary causes and consequences of the crisis.

"Positive, effective communication between teachers and administration is lacking. Performance feedback is missing. For example, my principal never once visited my classroom during the entire school year to see how effective I really am with my students."

-Irreplaceable Teacher

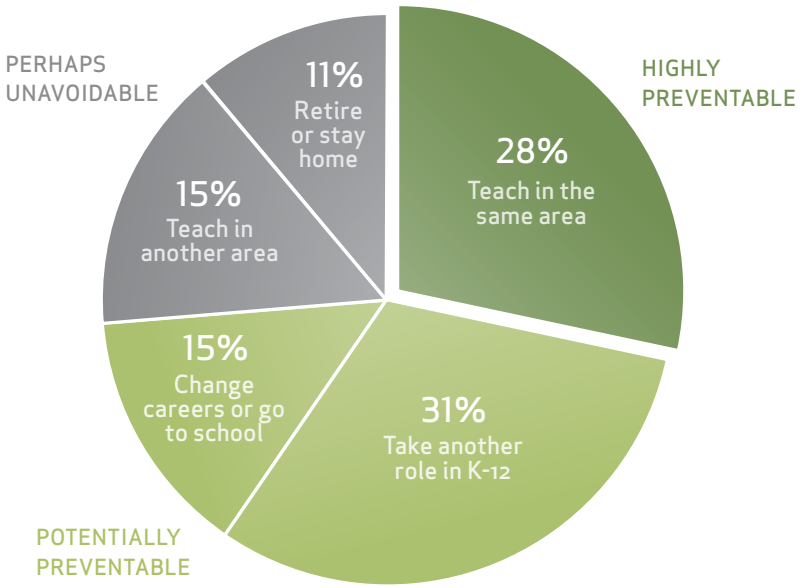
CAUSE 1:

Principals make far too little effort to retain Irreplaceables or remove low-performing teachers.

Conventional wisdom says that most teacher attrition is beyond the control of schools, especially those in poor communities. The assumption is that teachers leave because of major life events—starting a family, for example—or due to working conditions that school leaders cannot address on their own, such as low pay or inadequate preparation.

Many of these factors play a role and need to be addressed. But on balance, we found that the conventional wisdom is wrong. Less than 30 percent of Irreplaceables who plan to leave their school do so for personal reasons beyond their school's control, and principals hold significant sway over the decisions of the other 70 percent.[29] (*Figure 10* illustrates the future plans of Irreplaceables who intend to leave in one district we studied. Here and throughout the report, results we present from individual districts are representative of results from other districts we studied unless otherwise noted.)

FIGURE 10 | NEXT STEPS FOR HIGH PERFORMERS LEAVING THEIR SCHOOL IN DISTRICT A, 2010-11



3 in 4 high-performing teachers with plans to leave their schools say they would stay if their top reason for leaving improved.

Population includes high performers only.
Source: District A data and survey data. Trends confirmed across districts.

FIGURE 11 | **LOW-COST RETENTION STRATEGIES FOR IRREPLACEABLES**

FEEDBACK & DEVELOPMENT
1. Provided me with regular, positive feedback
2. Helped me identify areas of development
3. Gave me critical feedback about my performance informally

RECOGNITION
4. Recognized my accomplishments publicly
5. Informed me that I am high-performing

RESPONSIBILITY & ADVANCEMENT
6. Identified opportunities or paths for teacher leader roles
7. Put me in charge of something important

RESOURCES
8. Provided me with access to additional resources for my classroom

Top teachers who experience two or more of these retention strategies plan to keep teaching at their schools for nearly twice as long (2-6 more years).

Low-cost retention strategies defined as those that influence planned school retention of Irreplaceables. Source: District and survey data.

We identified eight strategies that helped boost teacher retention at the schools we studied *(Figure 11)*. These are strategies most school leaders could start implementing tomorrow, without any changes in policies, contracts or laws, and at little or no cost. They work regardless of the working conditions or academic success of a school.[30]

Irreplaceables who experienced two (or more) of these strategies planned to remain at their schools up to *six years longer* than those who didn't.[31] Even so, one-third to half of the Irreplaceables we surveyed said they had actually experienced *fewer* than two of these retention strategies.[32] About a quarter said they had experienced none at all.[33]

It is difficult to overstate the disconnect between the contributions of these teachers and the treatment they receive. These teachers consistently help students achieve life-changing results, yet most of them never receive positive feedback or public recognition from their school.[34] Two-thirds of Irreplaceables told us that nobody even bothered to encourage them to return for another year.[35]

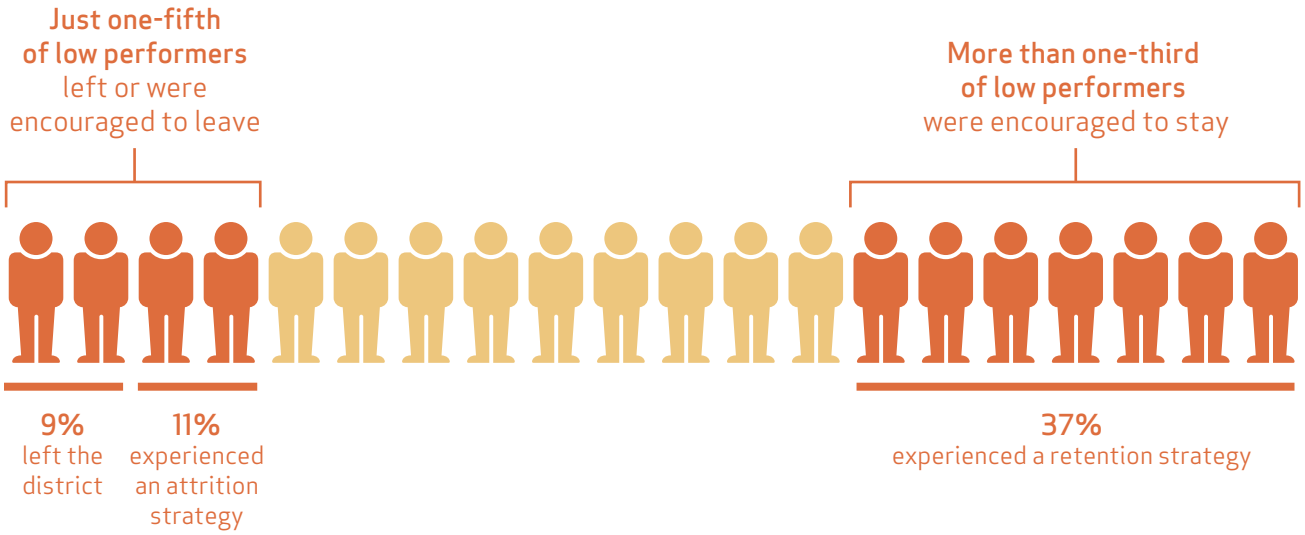
This negligent approach to retention extends to low-performing teachers, too. Principals rarely counsel these teachers out, pursue formal dismissal, or even tell them that they are low performing, despite the fact that they rarely improve. In fact, two out of three low-performing teachers believe they are above-average or even exceptional at their jobs.[36]

Our research indicates that principals are capable of ushering low performers out simply by being candid with them about their performance and fit in the school. In one district, teachers whose principals encouraged them to leave—by informing them they are low performing, explicitly suggesting that they leave, or giving them a low performance evaluation rating—were nearly three times more likely to plan to leave.[37] Yet just one-fifth of current low performers in that district left or told us they had experienced an attrition strategy in the last year *(Figure 12)*.

On the rare occasions when principals take a more active role in teacher retention, they tend to take a blanket approach that encourages as many low performers to stay as Irreplaceables. Low-performing teachers experienced seven of the eight retention strategies we identified about as often as Irreplaceables.[38] They were even as likely to be offered teacher leadership roles.[39]

With such an indiscriminate approach to retention, principals miss countless opportunities to improve the quality of teaching in their schools. They could hold on to more Irreplaceables simply by trying to do so. More low-performing teachers would leave if principals stopped encouraging them to stay and started nudging them in the opposite direction. A little effort could make a big difference—but most principals are hardly trying.

FIGURE 12 | **ATTRITION ENCOURAGEMENT AMONG LOW-PERFORMING TEACHERS IN DISTRICT D, 2010-11**



When teachers were encouraged to leave, they were almost three times as likely to plan to leave at the end of the year as those who were not.

Population includes low performers only. Low performer population who responded to retention strategies question was assumed to be representative of all low performers. Source: District D data and survey data.

CAUSE 2:
Poor school cultures and working conditions drive away great teachers.

The strategies listed in *Figure 11* can help any school retain more Irreplaceables, but creating a professional environment where the best teachers are excited to work makes a big difference.

In the course of our research, we found similar cultures at schools that retained high percentages of their Irreplaceables. In particular, principals at these schools were more likely to clearly communicate high expectations to teachers and ensure that teachers feel supported, and less likely to tolerate ineffective teaching.[40] In short, these principals were able to create strong instructional cultures—where teachers work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, where school leaders take action with teachers who perform poorly, and where great teaching is the top priority *(Figure 13)*.

Principals who fail to build this kind of culture find it much more difficult to retain their best teachers. In the districts we studied, turnover rates among Irreplaceables were 50 percent higher in schools with weak instructional cultures than in those with strong cultures.[41]

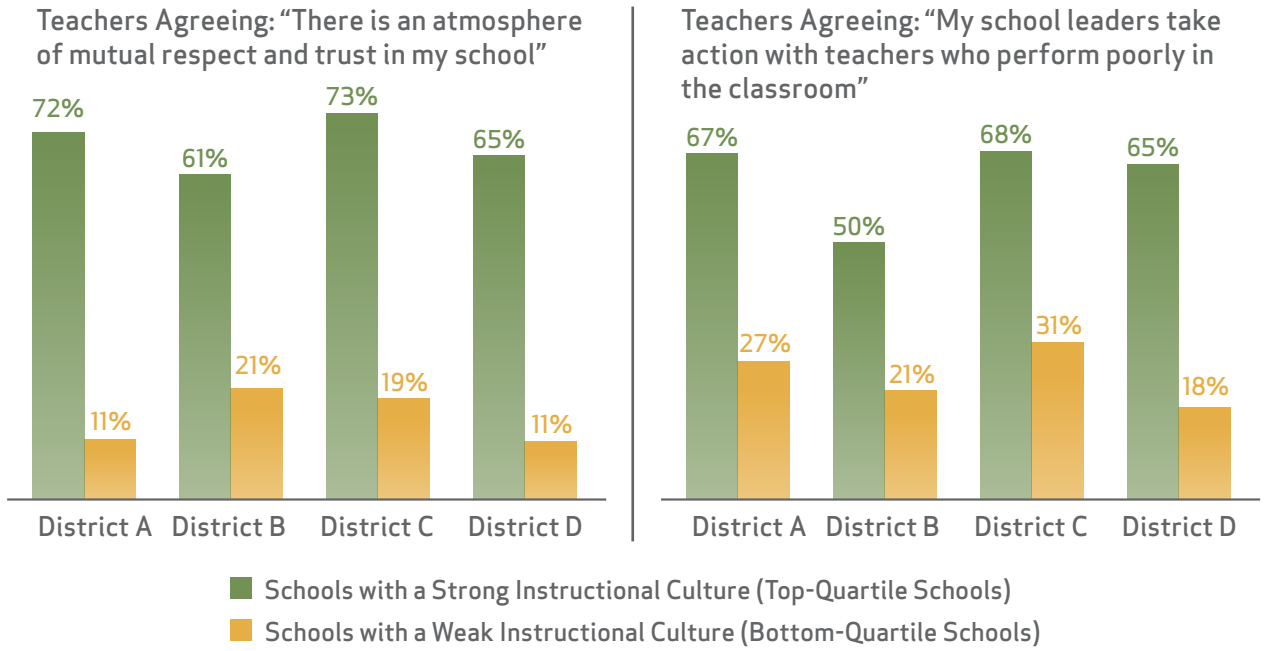
Culture and working conditions are especially large problems at struggling schools.[42] Teachers at low-achieving schools are much less satisfied with working conditions than their colleagues at high-achieving schools. Only 32 to 45 percent of teachers at low-achieving schools said that their school was "a good place to teach and learn," compared with 70 to 82 percent of teachers at high-achieving schools *(Figure 14)*.

Teachers at low-achieving schools are also less satisfied with parent involvement, student conduct, school safety and school location.[43] They are less satisfied with the quality of their school leaders and colleagues.[44] Not surprisingly, teachers at these schools generally plan to stay about two and a half fewer years than teachers at high-proficiency schools.[45]

Although the primary responsibility for building and nurturing school culture rests with individual principals, district leaders play an important role too. For example, they can survey teachers and students regularly to ensure that principals have regular, actionable information about the gaps in their schools' culture and working conditions.

Retaining as many Irreplaceables as possible requires a shared commitment from school and district leaders to address working conditions that can drive great teachers away.

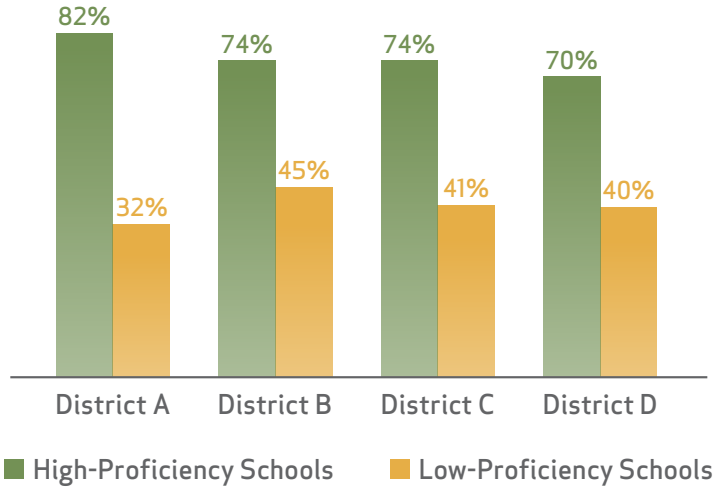
FIGURE 13 | TEACHERS AGREEING WITH STATEMENTS ON THEIR SCHOOL'S CULTURE



Turnover rates among Irreplaceables were 50 percent higher in schools with weak instructional cultures.

Instructional culture identified by a campus index created from teacher responses to the following three survey questions: "My school is committed to improving my instructional practice," "Teachers at my school share a common vision of what effective teaching looks like," and "The expectations for effective teaching are clearly defined at my school." Only includes schools meeting a minimum survey response rate. Source: District and survey data.

FIGURE 14 | TEACHERS AGREEING: "MY SCHOOL IS A GOOD PLACE TO TEACH AND LEARN"



Culture and working conditions are especially large problems at struggling schools.

Responses compared for teachers at schools in highest school-level math proficiency quintile and teachers at schools in lowest school-level math proficiency quintile. Source: District and survey data.

CAUSE 3:
Policies give principals and district leaders few incentives to change their ways.

If principals can improve their schools just by making smarter retention decisions, why don't they?

In most districts, managing teacher retention is simply not considered a priority for principals.[46] None of the districts we studied recruit, train or evaluate principals based on their willingness and ability to make smart decisions about teacher retention based on performance.[47] Most don't even track separate retention rates for Irreplaceables and low performers.

It's unrealistic to hope principals will do something they weren't hired, aren't required, and receive little support to do. Indeed, only 35 percent of principals agree that district policies support their efforts to keep effective teachers.[48] About the same number believe they have the necessary flexibility to ensure that their most effective teachers are retained.[49]

The few principals who focus on smart retention decisions despite these conditions encounter outdated policies—well-documented by TNTP and others—that stymie their efforts and encourage indifference to teacher performance.[50]

Should we be surprised that school and district leaders aren't eager to bang their heads against this wall? A passive, indiscriminate approach to teacher retention is a rational response to policies that encourage exactly that.

Removing the policy roadblocks to smart retention strategies will not, by itself, solve the retention crisis. In fact, we found that most principals continue their hands-off approach to retention even after policy barriers disappear.[51] But as long as the policy landscape promotes negligent retention, and until district leaders require principals to make retention a priority, we can't expect to see much progress.

"Removal of ineffective teachers is a difficult and mostly unsuccessful process."

-Principal

POLICY BARRIERS TO SMART RETENTION

Principals in most districts face a number of policy barriers that discourage or even prevent them from making smarter retention decisions.

Meaningless evaluation systems

As we documented in our 2009 study, *The Widget Effect*, teacher evaluation systems in many districts rate nearly all teachers "good" or "great" and provide little insight into any individual teacher's success in the classroom, making it difficult to identify Irreplaceables or low-performing teachers in the first place.[52] Since then, several states and districts have built better, more rigorous evaluation systems, and many others have promised to do so. But at this point, the principal of a typical urban school still can't count on the formal evaluation process to be of much help.

Lockstep compensation systems

Principals can do many things to persuade Irreplaceables to stay, but they can rarely try one of the most obvious tactics: offering a raise. That's because most school districts use a single predefined salary schedule that is hard-wired to undervalue great teaching. These systems award raises based solely on seniority and degrees, without regard to performance[53]—meaning that the only way many Irreplaceables can earn a substantial raise is by leaving. Many do just that. In two of the districts we studied, Irreplaceables were more than twice as likely as low performers to cite dissatisfaction with compensation as a reason for leaving.[54]

In the districts we studied, compensation systems were especially demeaning to teachers who excel early in their careers, yet often earn far less than many of their low-performing colleagues.[55] In all, about 55 percent of Irreplaceables in the districts we studied earn lower salaries than the average ineffective teacher.[56] Teachers in this situation must wait 20 years or more to reach the top of the salary scale, while they watch low-performing colleagues get rewarded year after year.[57]

Lack of career pathways

For most Irreplaceables, a promotion is as unlikely as a raise, unless they leave the classroom. Fewer than 30 percent of Irreplaceables told us that their schools had identified opportunities for them to serve as teacher leaders, because such positions were offered just as often to lower-performing teachers or didn't exist at all.[58] In most districts, the only way up the career ladder is to become an administrator—which comes with a higher salary, but fewer opportunities to teach students.

Not surprisingly, in two districts we studied, Irreplaceables were also more likely than low performers to cite dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities as a reason for leaving.[59]

Quality-blind layoff rules

Principals who convince their Irreplaceables to stay might be forced to fire them anyway if layoffs become necessary, since most districts rely on quality-blind rules to decide which teachers to keep during layoffs. Under these policies, schools must base layoff decisions on seniority alone, meaning that Irreplaceables can be laid off even as their lower-performing colleagues remain. Quality-blind rules lead to more layoffs overall, erode instructional quality and hurt schools in high-need communities the most, yet they persist in most states and districts across the country. Many states have codified quality-blind rules in legislation, actually making it *illegal* for schools to keep early-career Irreplaceables during tough economic times. There's no clearer example of a policy that treats Irreplaceables as expendable.[60]

Forced placement staffing policies

Staffing rules in many districts make principals think twice about replacing any low-performing teacher. That's because many districts still allow teachers to be force-placed into open positions in schools, a process that disrespects teachers and has a chilling effect on principals' efforts to build strong instructional teams.[61] If you knew that your attempts to hire, develop and retain high-performing teachers could be undone at any moment, why would you bother? And why take the risk that the teacher force-placed into the vacancy left by a low performer could be even less effective, or a bad match for the school?

Onerous dismissal rules

As a practical matter, it is tremendously difficult for most principals to formally dismiss a tenured teacher for poor performance. The onerous dismissal rules in place in most school districts have been well-documented; they require mountains of paperwork, months of hearings and hundreds of hours of a principal's time to dismiss a single teacher—with no guarantee that the district will back the request or that the teacher will actually be fired even if the principal diligently follows every step of the process.[62]

About 55 percent of Irreplaceables earn lower salaries than the average *ineffective* teacher.

CONSEQUENCES

Negligent retention has immediate and devastating effects on individual students who are deprived of potentially life-changing teachers. It also hurts entire schools—especially low-performing schools, which have little hope of improving until they start making smarter retention decisions. Decades of research have proven that no school factor has a greater impact on student achievement than the effectiveness of the teacher at the front of each classroom.[63] Sustainable improvement will be possible only when struggling schools keep more of their best teachers and fewer of their lowest performers.

But the consequences extend far beyond students and schools. The neglect of Irreplaceables is just one glaring symptom of a wider problem: a profession that has become one of low performance standards and the lack of respect that accompanies them.

CONSEQUENCE 1:
School Turnaround Is Nearly Impossible.

Current retention patterns lock our lowest-achieving schools into a cycle of failure, because they have proportionally fewer Irreplaceables and more low-performing teachers to begin with. In the four districts we studied, schools with the lowest student proficiency rates had half as many Irreplaceables and one and a half times the share of low-performing teachers as high-proficiency schools.[64]

Consider a cluster of 10 low-achieving schools in the districts we studied. Only 12 percent of these schools' teachers were Irreplaceables, while 19 percent were low performers.[65] At schools with average student proficiency levels, the pattern is reversed: 18 percent of teachers are Irreplaceables and 14 percent are low performers.[66]

To build even an *average* faculty, these 10 schools would collectively need to counsel out one-third of their low performers and keep nearly all their Irreplaceables every year, for four years in a row. But right now, the schools keep all their teachers at roughly the same rates (losing about 14 percent of all teachers annually). The quality of instruction will remain well below average unless principals and district leaders focus on keeping more Irreplaceables and fewer low performers *(Figure 15)*.

Put simply, most struggling schools won't ever have as many high-performing teachers as other schools—and are unlikely to improve significantly—without making smart retention a top priority. Negligent retention creates permanent inequity.

Most struggling schools won't ever have as many high-performing teachers as other schools without making smart retention a top priority.

FIGURE 15 | SIMULATED TEACHER RETENTION PATTERNS IN 10 LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, EACH WITH 20 TEACHERS

NEGLIGENT RETENTION		200 Teachers Start Year 1	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	200 Teachers End Year 4 *Includes New Hires*
14% Low Performers Leave	Low Performers	38	5 leave	5 leave	5 leave	5 leave	34
14% High Performers Leave	High Performers	24	3 leave	4 leave	4 leave	4 leave	25
SMART RETENTION							
33% Low Performers Leave	Low Performers	38	13 leave	10 leave	7 leave	7 leave	17
4% High Performers Leave	High Performers	24	1 leaves	1 leaves	1 leaves	1 leaves	36

By changing which teachers leave, low-performing schools can reach an average teacher composition in a few years.

Number of total teachers is 200. Starting composition is 24 high performers, 138 mid performers, and 38 low performers. Ending composition for negligent retention is 25 high performers, 141 mid performers, and 34 low performers. Ending composition for smart retention is 36 high performers, 147 mid performers, and 17 low performers. Analysis only includes schools with a minimum of 7 teachers with value-added or growth data in each year. Composition data based on an average of 3 years; attrition and pipeline data based on an average of 2 years. Models using the teacher composition at low- and mid-proficiency schools, defined by school-level math proficiency quintile. Model does not assume any fluctuation in teacher populations at schools and assumes population of teachers with performance data reflects the effectiveness of all teachers at these schools. Overall attrition and incoming pipeline rate held steady each year. Source: District D data from SY 2007-08 through SY 2009-10.

CASE STUDY: A CULTURE OF HIGH PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Few schools currently practice smart teacher retention, but we found several that show it is possible. For example, the majority of schools in one high-performing charter management organization we studied achieved smart teacher retention patterns.[67] Together, these schools retained 75 percent of high performers and no more than 35 percent of low-performing teachers.[68]

These schools set high expectations for teachers. Compared with teachers we surveyed in the four other urban districts that we studied, teachers at these schools were much more likely to report that evaluation ratings carried positive and negative consequences, and that school leaders took action with low-performing teachers.[69] **More than 70 percent of the teachers at these schools told us that their school did not tolerate poor performance, compared to only 38 to 47 percent in the urban districts we studied.**[70]

In particular, these schools set a clear expectation that low-performing teachers could not remain on the job unless they improved quickly. Principals told us that they expected low-performing teachers to become effective within one school year, whereas other principals we surveyed often told us that teachers should have two or three years to improve—or longer.[71]

Yet this focus on high standards did not make teachers unhappy. **In fact, almost 90 percent of teachers at these schools said they were satisfied with their work environment, compared to 55 to 62 percent of teachers in the urban districts we studied.**[72]

CONSEQUENCE 2:
The Teaching Profession Is Degraded.

Beyond the academic consequences, the hands-off approach to retention degrades the teaching profession. It sends the dangerous message that great teachers are expendable, and it devalues real achievement. In the districts we studied, for example, nearly identical percentages of Irreplaceables and low-performing teachers told us their school had recognized their accomplishments publicly.[73] Praise handed out without regard to performance loses much of its meaning, and might even ring hollow to truly outstanding teachers.

The fact that indiscriminate retention policies allow many low performers to remain on the job has not gone unnoticed by anyone, including teachers. Fewer than half of the teachers we surveyed believed that their schools had a low tolerance for ineffective teaching.[74]

Teaching is an extremely difficult job, and teaching in a high-need school is even tougher. Anyone who signs up for such demanding work deserves enormous respect. But our analysis and decades of research have shown that good intentions cannot substitute for good performance. Most of the low-performing teachers we studied report working quite hard—but they are not helping their students learn as much as they need to learn.

Telling someone that their best is not good enough is never easy, but a willingness to do it is the hallmark of a true professional. Teachers deserve to be valued for their skill, not their intentions. Tolerating poor performance keeps ineffective teachers in the classroom indefinitely and sends a devastating message to outstanding teachers. Most importantly, it hurts the reputation of the entire profession, allowing it to be defined by mediocrity rather than excellence.

"Poor teachers are not called out on their lack of preparation, which greatly affects everyone else."

-Irreplaceable Teacher

Because leaders at every level helped create the real retention crisis, they all have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to help solve it.

TIME TO END A SAD TRADITION OF NEGLECT

Everyone who leads or sets policy for schools has helped create the real retention crisis. The unfortunate truth is that Irreplaceables have had no champion protecting their interests.

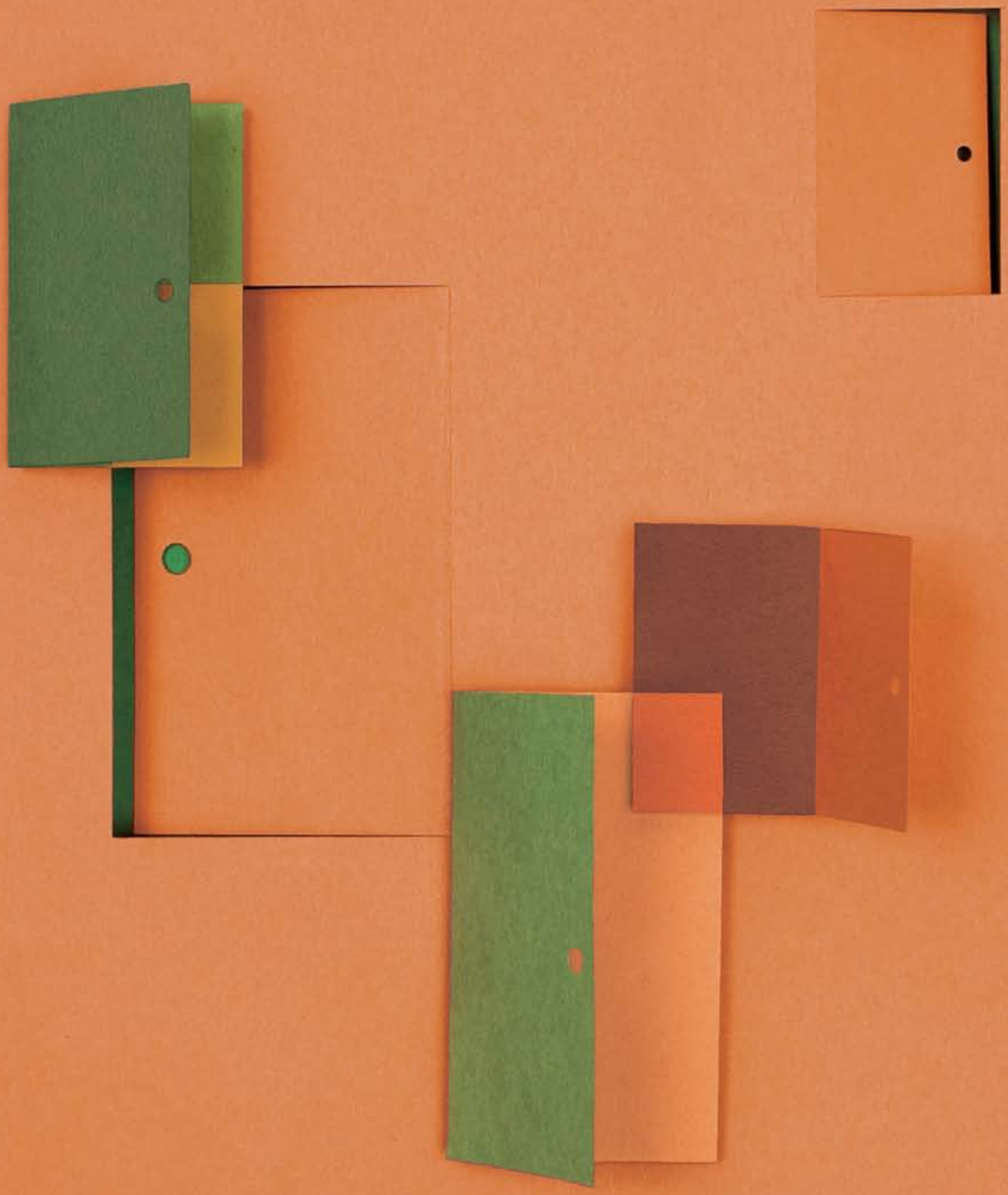
Teachers' unions often lead the charge for better working conditions and pay. But they also tend to support policies that encourage or require principals to keep teachers regardless of their success in the classroom—perhaps understandably, because a union's charge is to protect the jobs of *all* its members, not just the jobs of its most skilled members. The price of such policies is the diminishment of the profession.

It takes two parties to agree to a contract and many votes to pass a law, so superintendents, school boards and legislators share the responsibility when they accept and fail to challenge these counterproductive policies.

Furthermore, district leaders often do little to address the poor working conditions and management practices that drive great teachers from the classroom. Principals are not trained or expected to create school cultures that attract the best teachers, or to take even simple steps to improve retention patterns within the current policy environment. And as we've seen, they rarely make such an effort on their own.

Teachers themselves bear the least responsibility for this crisis. It is not a great teacher's responsibility to remain at a school that fails to value great teaching. Nor is it the fault of any teacher that education leaders have set the bar for acceptable performance far too low, for far too long. The surprise is that so many strong teachers have been willing to remain in schools that appear completely indifferent to their contributions, and that they have not demanded change.

It is time to adopt a new strategy on teacher retention. Because leaders at every level helped create the real retention crisis, they all have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to help solve it.



"If we set high expectations that everyone would follow then I would love to remain at my job."

–Irreplaceable Teacher

RECOMMENDATIONS: SMART RETENTION

Solving the real teacher retention crisis requires a new approach that revolves around smart retention: keeping more Irreplaceables and fewer low-performing teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: SMART RETENTION

In 3 out of the 4 districts we studied, retention rates were higher at schools where teachers reported a low tolerance for poor performance.

Schools that practice smart retention improve the quality of their instructional teams. They increase their concentration of top teachers and decrease their concentration of low performers, often without raising their overall turnover rate. These changes have the potential to boost student learning dramatically, yet only around 1 in 10 of the schools we studied practiced smart retention for three years in a row.[75]

How can we break the destructive retention trends that have held urban schools back for decades?

As we have shown, it starts with simple steps that any principal can take right away. Principals need to use evaluation results and other performance information to make smarter, more deliberate decisions about the teachers they hire, develop and retain—and they need to see this as one of the most important parts of their job. District leaders need to support principals in making those choices and hold them accountable for making the right ones.

But principals alone cannot solve the more fundamental problem that created the crisis in the first place: an industry that has become largely indifferent to performance. Addressing this problem requires a concerted effort at all levels to rebuild the teaching profession around its top practitioners. That means setting clearer standards for good teaching and dismantling policies that disregard classroom performance. It also means acknowledging and responding to some hard truths: that some people may never become effective teachers, no matter how hard they try, and that decades of indifference have allowed too many low-performing teachers to remain in the profession despite a lack of success.

Neither the teaching profession nor our schools can move forward without these changes. Some will protest that the opposite is true—that higher standards will drive teachers away, and that removing any teachers will alienate all teachers. In fact, our past research suggests that it's actually the failure to recognize great teaching and enforce high expectations that weakens a school's instructional culture.[76] In three out of the four districts we studied, retention rates were higher at schools where teachers reported a low tolerance for poor performance.[77] And Irreplaceables who believe their colleagues are mostly effective told us they would remain at their schools longer.[78]

We believe the lesson is clear: Good teachers don't leave demanding schools that hold them to high expectations; they leave schools that aren't serious about good teaching. Below, we detail the two keys to solving the real teacher retention crisis:

1. Make retention of Irreplaceables a top priority
2. Strengthen the teaching profession through higher expectations

1

MAKE RETENTION OF IRREPLACEABLES A TOP PRIORITY

"They could have gotten me to stay. If they could have put me in charge of paraprofessional development, or given me some sort of leadership opportunity so I could feel I was impacting my school beyond my classroom, that would have been a big deal for me."

-Irreplaceable Teacher

A combination of better strategies, better leadership and better policies will help keep the best teachers in the classroom longer.

Set clear, public retention targets for Irreplaceables

Districts must stem the tide of Irreplaceables who leave their schools, especially those who leave early in their careers. In general, districts should aim to keep more than 90 percent of their Irreplaceables every year, but more importantly, they should **raise the retention rate of Irreplaceables in their first five years to at least 75 percent (an increase of about 50 percent).**

Districts should publicly report retention results by school, and principals and district leaders should be held accountable for the results. In particular, they should set aggressive goals for smart retention in low-performing turnaround schools, to help these schools reach at least the district average in teacher effectiveness within three to four years.

Overhaul principal hiring, support and evaluation to focus on instructional leadership

Smart retention will not occur at scale unless principals have the ability to build strong instructional teams and the cultures that can help maintain them. This means setting and enforcing high expectations for teachers—and encouraging *every* Irreplaceable to stay every year. Districts should make these leadership skills an integral part of the hiring, development and evaluation system for principals.

For example, districts should hire principals who have a strong vision for instruction and can get their teachers to buy in. Development for principals should focus on the specific steps they can take to retain more Irreplaceables and create cultures that foster smart retention patterns. **Retention of Irreplaceables and counseling-out of low performers should be a top priority for principals and a significant component of a principal's evaluation.**

Monitor school working conditions and address concerns that drive away Irreplaceables

Principals and district leaders should give teachers frequent opportunities to share feedback about working conditions, and they should use the results to improve teachers' day-to-day experiences. This is especially important in low-performing schools where Irreplaceables tend to be less satisfied with their work environment, often because of school safety problems, low parent engagement and issues with student conduct.

The exact solutions will depend on the school—one school may need additional security personnel,while another might need additional training for administrators on providing feedback to teachers. But district leaders should be prepared to provide additional support and resources to help schools address particularly difficult challenges.

Pay Irreplaceables what they're worth, and create career pathways that extend their reach

State and district leaders should phase out quality-blind pay structures in favor of more flexible compensation systems that offer greater earnings potential for high-performing teachers early in their careers. As a rule of thumb, **we recommend that Irreplaceables be able to make a six-figure salary by the end of their sixth year of teaching** (or the market equivalent in lower cost-of-living areas). To fund these raises, states and districts will need to reduce or phase out automatic salary increases for factors that have no proven connection to a teacher's success in the classroom, such as additional college course credits or advanced degrees. They will also need to reduce or phase out automatic increases for seniority. These transitions will be difficult, but districts cannot afford to award raises for ineffectiveness and still pay top teachers the salaries they deserve.

Districts should also create a variety of career paths that help Irreplaceables expand their influence in their schools. Throughout their careers, top teachers should have opportunities to reach more students—for example, by taking on additional students or classes in exchange for a raise. They should also have opportunities to support their colleagues by taking on school-based instructional leadership positions.[79]

Irreplaceables are clearly interested in these kinds of career advancement opportunities, which still allow them to spend a significant amount of time in the classroom. For example, our analysis suggests that nearly **70 percent of Irreplaceables would take on an additional five students in exchange for a $7,500 raise.**[80] Career opportunities could be especially powerful recruitment and retention tools for low-performing schools; in one district, **the percentage of teachers who would choose to work in a low-performing school doubled when the school offered teacher leader roles.**[81]

Protect Irreplaceables during layoffs

States and districts should replace quality-blind layoffs with rules that consider performance more than seniority, so that Irreplaceables are protected during layoffs.[82]

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEANINGFUL EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Smart retention hinges on the ability of school and district leaders to accurately identify Irreplaceables and low-performing teachers. States and school districts need to replace outdated teacher evaluation systems that rate nearly all teachers "satisfactory" and give them little useful feedback on their performance.

Research has shown that combining value-added data with the results of classroom observations and student surveys provides a more complete and accurate picture of a teacher's success.[83] Although using value-added data was the most practical way to conduct the research for this report, we strongly believe that teacher evaluations in the real world should use a "multiple measures" approach.[84]

However, school and district leaders don't need to wait for better evaluations to start focusing on smart retention. While working to build new evaluation systems, they can use existing information to better understand their teachers' performance.

For example, the Houston Independent School District developed a "staff review" process while it worked to build a comprehensive new evaluation system. As part of the process, principals gave each teacher an informal performance rating based on the results of standardized tests, classroom observations and all other available performance information.[85] Research shows that principals can make these kinds of judgments accurately, especially when it comes to the highest and lowest performers.[86]

The process helped the district support smarter retention decisions by requiring principals to discuss the retention of every high- and low-performing teacher with their managers. Principals needed to explain everything they had done to retain their Irreplaceables. If they were not working to dismiss or counsel out a low-performing teacher, they needed to make a compelling case for giving that teacher another year to improve.

Teachers who cannot teach as well as a first-year teacher should be considered ineffective—unless they *are* first-year teachers.

2 STRENGTHEN THE TEACHING PROFESSION THROUGH HIGHER EXPECTATIONS

"If we set high expectations that everyone would follow, then I would love to remain at my present job."

-Irreplaceable Teacher

Retaining more Irreplaceables alone will not solve the real retention crisis or the problem of chronically low student achievement. School and district leaders must also address the other side of the retention crisis: the indifference to performance that has allowed so many ineffective teachers to remain in the classroom for years or even decades, weakening the entire teaching profession in the process. Reversing this trend requires a commitment by principals to make uncomfortable decisions and a commitment by district leaders and policymakers to support those decisions.

Set a new standard for effectiveness and dismiss or counsel out teachers who consistently perform below it

Our analysis shows that schools routinely retain experienced teachers who are less effective than even novice teachers. It is time to aim higher.

Teachers who cannot teach as well as the average first-year teacher should be considered ineffective—unless they *are* first-year teachers. Those who fail to improve rapidly—within one year—should not remain in the classroom, and principals should be held accountable for making sure they don't.

While this standard may seem ambitious, anything less would allow low-performing teachers to remain indefinitely. We believe it is impossible to justify that outcome given the dire consequences for schools and students.

Districts and schools can start by enforcing higher standards for early-career teachers: by hiring more selectively and awarding tenure (and the essentially irrevocable employment protection that comes with it) only to teachers who have helped their students learn year in and year out.

But principals must also have the courage—and the support from district leaders—to apply rigorous expectations to ineffective experienced teachers, even if it takes longer to remove them. We project that the typical urban district could remove most of its experienced but low-performing teachers within five years by practicing smart retention.[87]

It's worth noting again that principals and district leaders must make these difficult and long-deferred decisions while still treating low-performing teachers respectfully. The vast majority of these teachers are doing a hard job to the best of their abilities; they are simply unable to meet the high expectations that should have been in place long ago.

As uncomfortable as it might be to dismiss or counsel out a large number of experienced low performers, it's something that districts should only have to do once on a large scale if coupled with more rigorous standards for hiring and tenure. After that, a continued focus on smart retention should prevent large numbers of ineffective teachers from becoming career teachers in the first place.

Make it easier to counsel out low performers by creating alternatives to formal dismissal

In companies and organizations across the country, employees who struggle in their jobs are typically given several avenues to leave without officially being fired. Principals shouldn't always have to resort to burdensome formal dismissal processes; as we have shown, receiving candid feedback can be enough to convince low performers to leave voluntarily. Districts should create more options to help principals counsel out low performers. Examples might include:

- **Training and support from district staff** on how to have honest conversations with teachers about their poor performance and encourage them to resign voluntarily.
- **Outplacement assistance** for low-performing new teachers so they can smoothly transition to another role or even another line of work.
- **Lump sum buy-outs** and retirement incentives for experienced low-performing teachers.
- **Salary freezes** for low-performing teachers who decline buyouts and retirement incentives.
- **Reassignment of poor performers** away from regular classroom assignments to substitute pools.

When all else fails, though, it is crucial that district leaders give principals the training and legal support they need to navigate the formal dismissal process.

Remove the policy barriers to higher expectations

It's unfair to expect principals to have high expectations for their teachers while tolerating outdated policies that undermine those expectations. State and district leaders should reform the two biggest policy roadblocks to higher expectations:

- **Staffing restrictions:** All districts should adopt mutual consent staffing policies that give principals the final say in hiring decisions and prevent teachers from being forced into jobs that they do not want. This ensures that when principals put in the effort to counsel out a low-performing teacher, they will be able to hire a new teacher who has the potential to be more effective rather than rolling the dice with a teacher force-placed by human resources.

- **Dismissal rules:** Schools need fair but efficient dismissal policies that enable them to remove low performers without facing the prospect of an indefinite, quasi-judicial process of hearings and appeals. Teachers should be able to contest their dismissal, but the hearing timeline should be limited to one day. During the hearing, arbitrators should be limited to deciding whether the dismissal process was followed and the judgments of school administrators were made in good faith, rather than substituting their judgment of teacher competence for that of school and district leaders.

ENDING THE REAL RETENTION CRISIS—A FIVE-YEAR ROADMAP FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

YEAR 1
Implement "staff review" process and design/pilot better teacher evaluations
Clarify expectations for classroom performance (e.g., that all teachers must perform at least as well as the average first-year teacher)
Help principals make more rigorous tenure decisions
Create system to track teacher retention by performance
Train principals on low-cost retention strategies for top teachers
Retrain and, if necessary, replace principals' managers to focus on coaching and improve instructional leadership and smart teacher retention
Survey teachers at low-performing schools to assess gaps in instructional culture and working conditions
YEAR 2
Implement new formal teacher evaluation systems that provide accurate assessments rooted in student outcomes (if none currently exist)
Implement more rigorous hiring criteria for new teachers, including demonstrated classroom skills
Revise principal selection, development and evaluation criteria and processes to focus on instructional leadership and smart teacher retention
Set district- and school-level targets for increasing retention of top-performing teachers and reducing retention of low-performing teachers, and ensure that those targets will help turnaround schools reach the same teacher composition as average schools within three years
YEARS 3-5
Continue monitoring teacher retention targets at both district and school levels and provide ongoing support to principals, with a focus on low-performing schools
Design, negotiate (where applicable) and implement new teacher compensation system and career pathways
Negotiate (where applicable) and implement reforms to staffing, layoff and dismissal rules

SMART RETENTION AS THE BEST TURNAROUND STRATEGY FOR STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

Focusing on smart retention can help schools quickly and dramatically improve the quality of teaching they provide to their students, which is the key to boosting student learning. It may represent a struggling school's best chance to improve; indeed, we have shown that low-achieving schools have little hope of reaching even average performance without keeping more Irreplaceables and fewer low-performing teachers over the course of several years.

Yet few schools have actually tried this promising strategy for improvement. Across the four districts we studied, only about 30 percent of schools had achieved smart retention rates for a single year, and only about 10 percent had sustained these rates for three years in a row.[88]

We believe that federal and state policymakers should make smart retention the primary turnaround strategy for struggling schools. **A one-time overhaul of the teaching staff at these schools—one of the major federal turnaround strategies today—is not enough to ensure long-term improvement.** Struggling schools need a sustained focus on smart retention to get better results for their students.

Using retention as the primary tool for school improvement could deliver substantial results at a low cost within just a few years.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

The technical appendix provides additional details on the scope of this report and the performance measures used to identify high- and low-performing teachers, as well as details regarding conjoint methodology.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report explores the experiences of the nation's most successful teachers. The results are based on data collected from four urban school districts and one charter management organization (CMO). These educational authorities employ more than 90,000 teachers in more than 2,100 schools in any given year. The four districts provided TNTP with district-specific teacher performance data; the charter management organization provided internal evaluation data on teacher performance. TNTP used these data to identify approximately the top and bottom 20 percent of teachers based on value-added analysis or growth data.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS BY DISTRICT		
District	FRPL*	African-American and Hispanic Students
District A	53%	58%
District B	72%	73%
District C	79%	88%
District D	75%	69%
District E (CMO)	80%	95%

*Students who receive free and reduced-price school lunch

DATA SOURCES

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the report. The two primary sources of data were teacher performance data provided by the districts and confidential teacher and school leader surveys administered by TNTP in the 2010-11 or 2011-12 school years. Performance data were linked to individual teacher survey responses in order to better understand the perspective of the most successful teachers in each district. In most cases, district performance data from the previous year were used to analyze survey data.[89] When analyzing results based on school type or school characteristics, a minimum school response rate of 20 to 30 percent was required, depending on the district.

District	Teacher Survey Response Totals	School Leader Survey Response Totals
District A	3,776	216
District B	1,293	108
District C	4,831	434
District D	11,978	936
District E (CMO)	174	23

In addition to surveys and performance data, each school district included teacher and administrator roster/demographic information, as well as school-level demographic and achievement information. These sources were used to calculate annual district and school retention rates across multiple years.

Qualitative data sources included open-response survey questions, interviews, focus groups and research of district policies and practices.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Value-added and growth data were used to identify approximately the top and bottom 20 percent of teachers in tested grades and subjects for teachers.[90] We used each district's specific performance measure to identify high- and low-performing teachers. Therefore, models vary for each district, given differences in size, scale and evaluation. In the charter management organization, value-added or growth measures were not available, so the CMO's performance evaluations were used to identify its highest- and lowest-performing teachers.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE BY DISTRICT					
	District A	District B	District C	District D	District E (CMO)
Performance Measure	Value-added data	Growth data	Value-added data	Value-added data	Evaluation data
Number of years	Composite of latest three years of value-added scores	Single-year growth score	Single-year value-added score	Single-year value-added score	Single-year evaluation score
Subjects	Math, reading, language and science	Math, reading and writing	Math, reading, language, history and science	Math and ELA	All subjects
Grades	Grades 3-10	Grades 4-10	Grades 3-8	Grades 4-8	Grades 6-12
High-performing*	21%	20%	20%	18%	10%
Low-performing*	24%	21%	19%	16%	10%

*Percentages based on SY 2009-10 performance measure for teachers in given grades and subjects above (excluding District E, where percentages were based on SY 2010-11 performance measures)

DISTRICT A

District A provided a value-added score based on a multilevel, mixed-effect linear regression. Value-added measures were available for those teaching language, math, reading and science in grades 3 through 10. The value-added score is a composite of the latest three years of value-added scores. In addition to the value-added estimate, the district provided confidence intervals representing the range of scores that a teacher's "true" score falls into with 95 percent certainty.

High-Performing Teachers: Teachers with at least one lower bound confidence interval greater than the population mean value-added score and no value-added score below the population mean value-added score.

Low-Performing Teachers: Teachers with at least one upper bound confidence interval less than the population mean value-added score and no lower bound confidence interval greater than the population mean value-added score.

Under the above performance measure, 21 percent of District A teachers with value-added data were classified as high-performing, and 24 percent as low-performing.

DISTRICT B

District B uses a growth model and provided us with student growth scores for math, reading and writing in grades 4 through 10. We calculated teacher-level growth percentiles for each subject by taking all student growth percentiles assigned to a teacher, ordering them from lowest to highest, and identifying the middle score, which is the median teacher growth percentile. The median teacher growth percentile represents the "typical" growth of their students.

High-Performing Teachers: One or more median growth percentile scores above the 65th percentile and no median growth score below the 35th percentile.

Low-Performing Teachers: One or more median growth percentile scores below the 35th percentile and no median growth score above the 65th percentile.

Under the above performance measure, 20 percent of District B teachers with growth data were classified as high-performing, and 21 percent as low-performing.

DISTRICT C

District C provided a single-year value-added score calculated for each teacher within tested grades and subjects. Value-added measures were available for those teaching language, math, and reading in grades 3 through 8, and for those teaching science and history in grades 4 through 8.

Each score is expressed as a difference from the average district gain. The score allows teachers' gains to be rank ordered. It is calculated by subtracting the district's average gain from the teacher's average gain and dividing that score by the teacher's standard error. For appraisal purposes, the district reserves the highest and lowest evaluation scores for teachers with scores equal to or above +2 and equal to or below −2. Scores between -1 and +1 are considered statistically no different than 0.

For our analysis, we designated high- and low-performing cutoff scores at equal to or above +2 and equal to or below -2. Because about 65% of teachers had more than one value-added score, we placed teachers in the following categories:

High-Performing Teachers: At least one score greater than or equal to +2, and all scores greater than or equal to -1.

Low-Performing Teachers: At least one score less than or equal to -2, and all scores less than or equal to +1.

Under the above performance measure, 20 percent of District C teachers with value-added data were classified as high-performing, and 19 percent as low-performing.

DISTRICT D

District D provided single-year value-added scores for core ELA and math teachers teaching students in grades 4 through 8. Prior-year ELA and math scores, student demographics and classroom characteristics were included in the calculations. The district calculated value-added percentiles by grade, subject and teacher experience group for all teachers in tested grades and subjects. The district also provided lower-bound and upper-bound percentiles for each teacher, identifying the parameters of the 95 percent confidence interval.

For our analysis, we designated high- and low-performing cutoff scores in the following way, utilizing the 95 percent confidence intervals of the value-added data:

High-Performing Teachers: At least one lower bound confidence interval greater than the 50th percentile and all value-added percentiles greater than or equal to the 50th percentile.

Low-Performing Teachers: At least one upper bound confidence interval lower than the 50th percentile and all value-added percentiles lower than or equal to the 50th percentile.

Under the above performance measures, 18 percent of District D teachers with value-added data were classified as high-performing, and 16 percent as low-performing.

DISTRICT E (CMO)

District E, a charter management organization, does not use value-added or growth measures to assess its teachers. However, it does have a differentiated evaluation system, where teachers are rated on a five-point scale. For our analysis, we designated high- and low-performing teachers as follows:

High-Performing Teachers: Rating in the top two performance categories.

Low-Performing Teachers: Rating in the lowest performance category.

Under the above performance measures, 10 percent of District E teachers were classified as high-performing, and 10 percent as low-performing.

CONJOINT ANALYSIS

We employed market research methodology called adaptive conjoint analysis (ACA) to examine teacher preferences for school attributes in several districts.[91] We showed teachers pairs of potential school environments in which key attributes of the working environment were varied. Teachers chose their preferred option of the pairs presented, based on their desire to teach at a school with the described attributes. Along with other conclusions, the results of this analysis allowed us to estimate how many Irreplaceables would "choose" to teach at a low-performing school if other conditions were to change.

In our analysis, we tested attributes related to quality of school leadership, base compensation, performance bonuses, class size, career ladders, retirement and school type. The majority of our analysis utilizes first-choice simulation methodology, which uses statistical modeling to report the proportion of teachers who prefer each of the choices in the scenarios tested. Modeling was performed with the assumption that the random sample tested is representative of the larger population of teachers in our districts.

NOTES

[1] Individual teacher and school names have been changed. All available district data provided in the following notes.

[2] For the definition of high performers in each district, see the Technical Appendix.

[3] Kane, T.J., & Staiger, D.O. (2012). *Gathering feedback for teaching: Combining high-quality observations with student surveys and achievement gains.* Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

[4] Months of learning estimates calculated following the methodology of Hahnel, C. & Jackson, O. (2012). *Learning denied: The case for equitable access to effective teaching in California's largest school district.* Oakland, CA: The Education Trust-West. Source: District VA/growth data and grade distribution information, SY 2009-10 and 2010-11.

[5] Chetty, R., Friedman, J.N., & Rockoff, J.E. (2011). *The long-term impacts of teachers: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood* (Working Paper 17699). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

[6] Figure shows the percentage of secondary school students in a class agreeing with a statement about their teacher. The orange bars display student responses for teachers with the lowest student achievement gains (i.e., those in the bottom 20%) and the green bars for teachers with the highest student achievement gains (i.e., those in the top 20%). Data was collected using the Tripod student survey and includes responses from the students of 508 teachers in grades 6 through 8 in six urban districts. Results based on yet unpublished analysis for TNTP by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, a partnership of teachers, academics, and education organizations investigating better ways to identify and develop effective teaching. Funding for the MET project comes from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For more information see www.metproject.org.

[7] Median values reported for background and workload. Q: "Effective teachers can lead most of their students to achieve at high levels, despite challenges they may face" and "I understand how effective I am at achieving positive student outcomes relative to other teachers in my district." Percent of each group selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Additional months of student learning estimates calculated following the methodology of Hahnel & Jackson (2012). Characteristics of Irreplaceables compared to low performers and all teachers with VA/growth data confirmed across districts. Source: District D data and survey data.

[8] Q: "Effective teachers can lead most of their students to achieve at high levels, despite challenges they may face." Percent of high and low performers selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Differences were statistically significant with $p < .05$ in District A; $p < .10$ in District D. Districts: A: high 59%, low 47%; B: high 58%, low 56%; C: high 68%, low 57%; D: high 53%, low 44%. Q: "I understand how effective I am at achieving positive student outcomes relative to other teachers in my district." Percent of high and low performers selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Differences statistically significant with $p < .05$ in Districts A, C, D. Districts: A: high 64%, low 51%; B: high 60%, low 48%; C: high 79%, low 58%; D: high 69%, low 48%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[9] Median hours of high, mid, and low performers. Districts: A: high 50, mid 50, low 50; B: high 60, mid 55, low 55; C: high 48, mid 48, low 45; D: high 50, mid 50, low 50. Source: Teacher survey data.

[10] Percent of high performers selecting zero or one of influential retention strategies. Districts: B: 32%; C: 45%; D: 46%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[11] Estimate based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and teachers with VA/growth data. Source: District data, SY 2007-11 and NCES.

[12] Percent of low performers selecting at least one of the following attrition strategies: "Suggested that I leave teaching (encouraged me to consider other careers)," "Suggested that I consider other schools," "Gave me a poor evaluation rating," "Assigned me less desirable responsibilities," "Told me that I was not a fit for my school." Districts: B: 17%; D: 11%. Percent of low performers with four or more years of experience selecting "Encouraged me to continue teaching at my school next year." Districts: B: 26%; C: 28%, D: 19%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[13] Estimates based on teachers with VA/growth data; Assumption that VA/growth teacher performance distribution reflects general teacher population within each district. Percent of all teachers who are low performers with at least four years of experience: Districts: A: 13%; B: 13%; C: 12%; D: 11%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10.

[14] Schools that exit more low performers than high performers increase the proportion of high performers and decrease the proportion of low performers they have the following year, building more effective teaching teams over time. Correlations between change in school-level concentration of high performers and positive difference between attrition of low performers and that of high performers significant in all districts ($p <.05$ in Districts A, B, C, $p<.10$ in District D). Districts: A: .159; B: .415; C: .275; D: .084. Source: District data.

[15] Hunt, J.B., & Carroll, T.G. (2003). *No dream denied: A pledge to America's children.* Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

[16] Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., & Keeling, D. (2009). *The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness.* New York, NY: TNTP.

[17] Estimates based on first-year teachers with VA/growth data. Districts: A: high 12%, mid 62%, low 26%; B: high 16%, mid 58%, low 26%; C: high 15%, mid 62%, low 23%; D: high 15%, mid 67%, low 18%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10. For improvement over time see: Hanushek, E., Kain, J., & Rivkin, S. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement." Econometrica, 73(2), 417-458. Boyd, J., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Rockoff, J., & Wyckoff, J. (2007). *The narrowing gap in New York City teacher qualifications and its implications for student achievement in high-poverty schools* (Working Paper 10). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

[18]Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2012). *How teacher turnover harms student achievement* (Working Paper 70). Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

[19]Percent of school leaders ranking "Developing teachers and improving instructional practice through evaluation / coaching / professional development" or "Retaining the most effective teachers" as a top five priority at their school. Districts: A: developing 76%, retaining 45%; B: developing 84%, retaining 38%; C: developing 71%, retaining 47%; D: developing 77%, retaining 20%. Source: School leader survey data.

[20]Median percentile ranks by population scores. Districts: B: Low-performing veteran cohort population defined in SY 2008-09; veteran low performers median value-added percentile rank in SY 2009-10: 30, SY 2010-11: 34; new teachers median performance 49 to 51, SY 2009-11; C: Low-performing veteran cohort population defined in SY 2007-08; veteran low performers median value-added percentile rank in SY 2008-09: 34, SY 2009-10: 34, SY 2010-11: 39; new teachers median performance 43 to 46, SY 2008-11. Source: District data.

[21]Attrition includes district leavers as well as internal transfers. Low performers school-based retention: Districts: A: 72%; B: 75%; C: 79%; D: 88%. Source: District data.

[22]Q: "What is your best estimate for how many more years you plan to remain a teacher in any school (whether in this or another district or system)?" Percent of low performers selecting at least 10 years. Districts: A: 48%; B: 62%; C: 55%; D: 52%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[23]Estimates based on first-year teachers with VA/growth data. Districts: A: high 12%, mid 62%, low 26%; B: high 16%, mid 58%, low 26%; C: high 15%, mid 62%, low 23%; D: high 15%, mid 67%, low 18%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10. For improvement over time see: Hanushek et al. (2005) and Boyd et al. (2007).

[24]Attrition rate of high and low performer district leavers. Districts: A: high 17%, low 21%; B: high 12%, low 19%; C: high 8%, low 16%; D: high 6%, low 6%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10.

[25]Low performer estimate based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and teachers with VA/growth data. Source: District data, SY 2007-08 through 2010-11 and NCES. Estimates based on teachers with VA/growth data in Districts A and C and number of teachers with seven or greater years of district experience. Percent of teachers with seven or more years of experience with average VA/growth score lower than average VA/growth score of first-year teachers. Districts: A: 57%; C: 39%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10.

[26]Q: "My primary reason for pursuing other opportunities is…" (Asked of those planning to leave current school in next three years.) Percent of high performers selecting "Personal reasons not related to the school." Districts: A: 24%; B: 20%; C: 29%; D: 22%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[27]Q: "Which of the following best describes your plans for the 2-3 years after you stop teaching at your current school?" (Asked of those planning to leave current school in next three years.) Percent of high performers. Districts: A: teach same area 28%, another role in K-12 31%; C: teach same area 34%, another role in K-12 33%; D: teach same area 30%, another role in K-12 29%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[28]Q: "If the following factor at your current school were to change for the better, would you continue teaching at your school?" (Factor is the teacher's top-ranked reason for leaving as identified in previous question.) Percent of high performers selecting "Yes." Districts: A: 76%; B: 86%; C: 90%; D: 79%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[29]Q: "My primary reason for pursuing other opportunities is…" (Asked of those planning to leave current school in next three years.) Percent of high performers selecting "Personal reasons not related to the school." Districts: A: 24%; B: 20%; C: 29%; D: 22%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[30]Number of retention strategies received was a significant predictor of longer planned retention for all teachers after controlling for seniority, school proficiency and instructional culture in Districts C and D. In District B, trend was not significant.

[31]Mean year values for high performers who reported receiving zero or one of listed strategies compared to those who reported receiving two or more. Differences statistically significant with $p < .05$ in Districts C and D; difference statistically significant with $p < .10$ in District B. Districts: B: zero or one 3.6, two or more 7.7; C: zero or one 4.8, two or more 7.1; D: zero or one 4.6, two or more 10.8 years. Source: Teacher survey data.

[32]Percent of high performers selecting zero or one of listed strategies. Districts: B: 32%; C: 45%; D: 46%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[33]Percent of high performers selecting zero of listed strategies. Districts: B: 21%; C: 26%; D: 24%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[34]Percent of high performers selecting each of the following: "Provided me with regular, positive feedback," "Recognized my accomplishments publicly." Districts: B: positive 40%, recognized 32%; C: positive 48%, recognized 39%; D: positive 31%, recognized 21%.Source: Teacher survey data.

[35]Q: Percent of high performers selecting "Encouraged me to continue teaching at my school next year." Districts: B: 37%; C: 33%; D: 23%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[36]Q: "How would you rate your own ability to produce positive academic outcomes for your students relative to other teachers in your district?" Percent of low performers selecting "Better than average" or "Exceptional." Districts: B: 77%; D: 65%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[37]Percent of teachers planning to stay zero additional years at current school who did or did not select at least one attrition strategy. Districts: D: selecting none - 7% planned leave end of year; selecting at least one - 19% planned leave end of year. Source: Teacher survey data.

[38] Q: "Last year / In the last year, someone from my school leadership team has…" Percent of high and low performers selecting each of the following: "Provided me with regular, positive feedback", "Helped me identify areas of development", "Gave me critical feedback about my performance informally" (not available option in District C), "Recognized my accomplishments publically", "Informed me that I am high performing", "Identified opportunities or paths for teacher leader roles", "Put me in charge of something important" (not available option in District C), "Provided me with access to additional resources for my classroom" (not available option in District C). Differences for "Informed me that I am high performing" were statistically significant with $p < .05$ in Districts B, C, and D; difference for "Critical feedback" was statistically significant with $p <.10$ in District B. Districts: B: high performers "Positive feedback" 40%, "Recognized accomplishments" 32%, "Put me in charge" 26%, "Informed am high performing" 47%, "Identify areas of development," 42%, "Additional resources" 32%, "Teacher leader roles" 26%, "Critical feedback" 42%; low performers "Positive feedback" 31%, "Recognized accomplishments" 31%, "Put me in charge" 25%, "Informed am high performing" 25%, "Identify areas of development," 36%, "Additional resources" 31%, "Teacher leader roles" 31%, "Critical feedback" 22%; C: high performers "Positive feedback" 48%, "Recognized accomplishments" 39%, "Informed am high performing" 61%, "Identify areas of development," 24%, "Teacher leader roles" 17%; low performers "Positive feedback" 40%, "Recognized accomplishments" 34%, "Informed am high performing" 34%, "Identify areas of development," 40%, "Teacher leader roles" 23%; D: high performers "Positive feedback" 31%, "Recognized accomplishments" 21%, "Put me in charge" 28%, "Informed am high performing" 40%, "Identify areas of development," 25%, "Additional resources" 34%, "Teacher leader roles" 13%, "Critical feedback" 28%; low performers "Positive feedback" 25%, "Recognized accomplishments" 18%, "Put me in charge" 25%, "Informed am high performing" 17%, "Identify areas of development," 27%, "Additional resources" 29%, "Teacher leader roles" 16%, "Critical feedback" 25%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[39] Percent of high performers compared to low performers selecting the following: "Identified opportunities or paths for teacher leader roles." Districts: B: high 26%, low 31%; C: high 17%, low 23%; D: high 13%, low 16%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[40] Q: "School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to teachers regarding achieving positive student outcomes," "School leaders consistently support teachers," "Ineffective teaching is not tolerated at my school." Percent of teachers at schools with highest retention of effective teachers compared to those at schools with lowest selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Differences significant with $p <.05$ in Districts A, C, D for expectations and support and in Districts A and C for ineffective; values identical for expectations in District B; trend in same direction but not significant for support in District B and ineffective in District D. Districts: A: highest – expectations 73%, support 43%, ineffective 49%; lowest – expectations 64%, support 25%, ineffective 34%; B: highest – expectations 76%, support 48%, ineffective 44%; lowest – expectations 76%, support 39%, ineffective 41%; C: highest – expectations 79%, support 56%, ineffective 52%; lowest – expectations 59%, support 29%, ineffective 44%; D: highest – expectations 70%, support 42%, ineffective 44%; lowest – expectations 64%, support 35%, ineffective 42%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[41] We assessed instructional culture using our Instructional Culture Insight survey. For more information about Insight and instructional culture, see: TNTP (2012). *Greenhouse schools: How schools can build cultures where teachers and students thrive.* New York, NY: TNTP. School attrition of Irreplaceables at schools with strong and weak culture in Districts: A: strong 20%, weak 31%; C: strong 16%, weak 30%. Source: District and teacher survey data.

[42] Data on schools represent all teachers, instead of high performers, for sufficient N. Perceptions of culture and working conditions similar between high performers and all teachers.

[43] Q: "Level of parent engagement," "Student conduct," "Safety," "School location." Percent of teachers at schools in highest school-level math proficiency quintile compared to teachers at schools in lowest selecting "satisfied" or "very satisfied." All differences significant with $p <.05$ in all districts. Districts: A: highest – parent 82%, conduct 76%, safety 90%, location 85%; lowest – parent 4%, conduct 10%, safety 37%, location 47%; B: highest – parent 60%, conduct 53%, safety 85%, location 83%; lowest – parent 9%, conduct 33%, safety 59%, location 59%; C: highest – parent 50%, conduct 55%, safety 75%, location 84%; lowest – parent 13%, conduct 19%, safety 43%, location 55%; D: highest – parent 50%, conduct 60%, safety 84%, location 78%; lowest – parent 12%, conduct 17%, safety 39%, location 51%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[44] Q: "Quality of teachers at school," "Quality of school leadership." Percent of teachers at highest proficiency schools compared to those at lowest selecting "satisfied" or "very satisfied." Districts: A: highest – teachers 85%, leadership 64%; lowest – teachers 48%, leadership 33%; B: highest – teachers 77%, leadership 54%; lowest – teachers 54%, leadership 36%; C: highest – teachers 76%, leadership 58%; lowest – teachers 54%, leadership 38%; D: highest – teachers 81%, leadership 48%; lowest – teachers 56%, leadership 34%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[45] Q: "What is your best estimate for how many more years you plan to remain a teacher in your current school?" Mean year values compared for teachers at highest proficiency schools and teachers at lowest proficiency schools. Differences were statistically significant with $p < .05$ in all districts. Districts: A: highest 7.6, lowest 3.7; B: highest 8.5, lowest 5.8; C: highest 7.8, lowest 5.5; D: highest 9.1, lowest 6.5. Source: Teacher survey data and school performance data.

[46] Percent of school leaders ranking "Retaining the most effective teachers" or "Dismissing ineffective teachers" as a top five priority at their school. Districts: A: retaining 45%, dismissing 23%; B: retaining 38%, dismissing 23%; C: retaining 47%, dismissing 31%; D: retaining 20%, dismissing 12%. Source: School leader survey data.

[47] District qualitative research. Also reviewed school leadership standards published by Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED).

[48] Q: "District policies support my ability to retain my most effective teachers." Percent of school leaders selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Districts: A: 30%; C: 38%. Source: School leader survey data.

[49] Q: "I have the necessary flexibility/autonomy to ensure my most effective teachers are retained." Percent of school leaders selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Districts: A: 26%; B: 30%; C: 40%; D: 34%. Source: School leader survey data.

[50] Levin, J., & Quinn, M. (2003). *Missed opportunities: How we keep high-quality teachers out of urban classrooms.* New York, NY: TNTP. Levin, J., Mulhern, J., & Schunck, J. (2005). *Unintended consequences: The case for reforming the staffing rules in urban teachers union contracts.* New York, NY: TNTP. Weisberg et al. (2009). TNTP (2011). *The case against quality-blind layoffs: Why layoff policies that ignore teacher quality need to end now.* New York, NY: TNTP.

[51] District C has removed several policy barriers, but low performers receive a similar number of retention strategies as high performers. Percent of high and low performers receiving number of retention strategies in District C. Zero strategies: high 26%, low 31%; one strategy: high 19%, low: 21%, two strategies: high 19%, low 19%; three strategies: high 17%, low 13%; four strategies: high 13%, low: 8%; five strategies: high 6%, low 8%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[52] Weisberg et al. (2009).

[53] Total US spending on Master's Degree compensation for teachers was $14B in 2007-08. Forthcoming publication, Marguerite Roza. Districts spend approximately $1,004 per student on raises based on teachers' seniority and college credit. See: Roza, M. (2007). *Frozen assets: Rethinking teacher contracts could free billions for school reform.* Washington, DC: Education Sector.

[54] Q: "Please rank three of the most significant factors in your decision to stop teaching at your school" (asked of those planning to leave their current school in the next three years; excludes those selecting "personal reasons" as primary reason for leaving). Percent of high and low performers assigning a rank of 1, 2 or 3 to "Compensation." Differences significant with $p < .05$ in District C and D. Districts: A: high 42%, low 32%; C: high 19%, low 6%; D: high 22%, low 8%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[55] Percent of high performers with less than four years' experience: Districts: A: 46%; B: 43%; C: 36%; D: 37%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10.

[56] Percent of high performers earning a lower base salary than the average low performer: Districts: A: 54%; B: 45%; C: 69%; D: 57%. Source: District data, SY 2010-11 (District C) and SY 2009-10 (Districts A, B and D).

[57] Number of years to reach the top of the salary scale. Districts: A: 34; B: 13; C: 31; D: 22. Source: SY 2011-12 salary schedules; retrieved from district websites on 4/26/12.

[58] Percent of high and low performers selecting "Identified opportunities or paths for teacher leader roles." Districts: B: high 26%, low 31%; C: high 17%, low 23%; D: high 13%, low 16%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[59] Q: "Please rank three of the most significant factors in your decision to stop teaching at your school" (asked of those planning to leave their current school in next three years; excludes those selecting "personal reasons" as primary reason for leaving). Percent of high and low performers assigning a rank of 1, 2 or 3 to "Opportunities for career advancement." Differences significant with $p < .05$ in District C, $p < .10$ in District A. Districts: A: high 24%, low 14%; C: high 31%, low 13%; D: high 22%, low 23%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[60] For a summary of recent research about the effects of quality-blind layoffs, see: TNTP (2011).

[61] Levin et al. (2005).

[62] Onerous dismissal processes in urban school districts have been well documented. For examples from two districts, see Beth Barrett, "LAUSD's Dance of the Lemons," LA Weekly, February 11, 2010, and Steven Brill, "The Rubber Room," The New Yorker, August 31, 2009.

[63] Rivkin et al. (2005). Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and student achievement in the Chicago public high schools. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 25(1), 95-135. Jordan, H., Mendro, R., & Weerasinghe, D. (1997). *The effects of teachers on longitudinal student achievement.* Dallas, TX: Dallas Public Schools. Hanushek, E. (2002). Teacher quality. In L. T. Izumi and W. M. Evers (Eds.), *Teacher quality* (pp. 1–12). Stanford, CA: Hoover Press.

[64] Teacher composition calculated within school-level proficiency quintiles. Highest-proficiency schools composition of high and low performers: Districts: A: high 24%, low 19%; B: high 24%, low 20%; C: high 27%, low 14%; D: high 24%, low 15%. Lowest-proficiency schools composition of high and low performers: Districts: A: high 16%, low 31%; B: high 16%, low 26%; C: high 10%, low 30%; D: high 10%, low 21%. Source: District data, SY 2009-10.

[65] Example schools based on low-proficiency elementary schools in District D.

[66] Example schools based on mid-proficiency elementary schools in District D.

[67] District E; see Technical Appendix.

[68] For the definition of high performers for District E, see the Technical Appendix. Attrition rate includes transfers and leavers; only includes schools with both high- and low-performing teachers. Source: District E data, SY 2010-11 and SY 2011-12.

[69] Q: "Evaluation ratings carry positive and negative consequences." Percent of teachers selecting "strongly agree" or "agree." Districts: A: 50%; C: 58%; E: 78%. Q: "School leaders take action with teachers who perform poorly in the classroom - either helping them to improve or taking action to dismiss them." Percent of teachers selecting "strongly agree" or "agree." Districts: A: 45%; B: 35%; C 47%; D: 40%; E: 68%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[70] Q: "There is low tolerance for ineffective teaching at my school." Percent of teachers selecting "strongly agree" or "agree." Districts: A: 47%; B: 38%; C: 46%; D 42%; E: 72%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[71] Q: "How long do you think it should take for a first-year teacher who is ineffective to become effective? / for a veteran teacher who is ineffective to become effective?" Percent of school leaders selecting "2 school years," "2.5 school years," "3 school years" or "more than 3 school years." Districts: D: first year 70%, veteran 43%; E: first year 4%, veteran 0%. Source: School leader survey data.

[72] Q: "Overall, my school is a good place to teach and learn." Percent of all teachers selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Districts: A: 55%; B: 62%; C: 58%; D: 56%; E: 89%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[73] Percent of high performers compared to low performers selecting "Recognized my accomplishments publicly." Districts: B: high 32%, low 31%; C: high 39%, low 34%; D: high 21%, low 18%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[74] Q: "There is a low tolerance for ineffective teaching at my school (A, C) / Ineffective teaching is not tolerated at my school (B, D)." Percent of all teachers selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Districts: A: 47%; B: 38%; C: 46%; D: 42%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[75] Percent of schools practicing positive differential retention – losing more low performers than high performers – for three consecutive years -. Districts: A: 7%, B: 12%; C: 5%; D: 4%. Source: District data beginning SY 2007-08 (Districts A, C, D) / SY 2008-09 (District B.)

[76] TNTP (2012).

[77] Q: "Ineffective teaching is not tolerated at my school." Those selecting "agree" or "strongly agree" included in the school-level percentages of agreement. Minimum school-level response rates used in each district. School-level retention rates from SY 2010-11 at high- and low-agreement terciles reported. Differences were statistically significant with $p < .05$ in Districts A and D. Districts: A: high-agreement 72%, low-agreement 62%; B: high-agreement 61%, low-agreement 68%; C high-agreement 84%, low-agreement 81%; D: high-agreement 84%, low-agreement 78%. Source: Teacher survey data and district data.

[78] Q: "What percent of your colleagues are highly effective teachers who produce exceptional gains in student achievement?" Correlations between percent of colleagues perceived to be highly effective teachers and years planned retention of high performers. Correlations were statistically significant with $p < .05$ in Districts C and D; trends in same direction in other districts but not statistically significant. Districts: A: .111; B: .120; C: .179; D: .214. Source: Teacher survey data.

[79] See: Hassel, E., & Hassel, B. (2009). *3X for all: Extending the reach of education's best.* Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Public Impact has posted numerous models schools could use to expand the impact of high-performing teachers to more students and other teachers at www.opportunityculture.org.

[80] Adaptive conjoint analysis performed with first choice simulation; Respondents asked to choose between taking on five more students with a $6,600 (District A) / $7,500 (District C) / $7,600 (District D) salary increase and no additional students or salary with all other attributes held constant. High performers selecting additional students and salary: Districts: A: 70%; C: 69%; D: 70%. Source: Teacher survey data.

[81] Adaptive conjoint analysis performed with first choice simulation. Percent of high performers selecting high need, low performing school over low need, high performing school with no clear leadership path: 22%. Percent of high performers selecting high need, low performing school with "clear path to taking on school leadership roles while continuing to teach" over low need, high performing school with no leadership options: 55%. Source: District D teacher survey data.

[82] TNTP (2010). *A smarter teacher layoff system: How quality-based layoffs can help schools keep great teachers.* New York, NY: TNTP.

[83] TNTP (2012). *MET Made simple: Building research-based teacher evaluations.* New York, NY: TNTP.

[84] For more about our recommendations on designing evaluation systems, see: TNTP (2010). *Teacher evaluation 2.0.* New York, NY: TNTP.

[85] Grier, T. (2011, November 16). A steppingstone to better teacher evaluation. *Education Week*, 31(12), 28-30.

[86] Lefgren, L., & Jacob, B. (2006). When principals rate teachers: The best—and the worst—stand out. *Education Next*, 6(2), 58-64.

[87] Example based on data in District C; attrition rate of low performers assumed to be 30%, attrition rate of high performers to be 4%. Model does not assume any fluctuations in size of teacher populations at schools, assumes population of teachers with performance data reflects the effectiveness of all teachers, assumes two-thirds of low performer leavers are veterans, and assumes that one-third of early-career low performers graduate to become veteran low performers each year. Source: District C data, SY 2009-10.

[88] Percent of schools practicing positive differential retention – losing more low performers than high performers – for one year: Districts: A: 25%; B: 37%; C: 28%; D: 27%. For three consecutive years: Districts: A: 7%; B: 12%; C: 5%; D: 4%. Source: District data beginning SY 2007-08 (Districts A, C, D) / SY 2008-09 (District B.)

[89] Excluding District D, where the most recent performance data available were from SY 2009-10. District D surveys were administered in the fall of SY 2011-12.

[90] District E (CMO) does not collect value-added or growth data. Instead, evaluation data were used to identify the top and bottom 10% of teachers.

[91] Districts A, C, D and E.

ABOUT TNTP

TNTP strives to end the injustice of educational inequality by providing excellent teachers to the students who need them most and by advancing policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom. A national nonprofit organization founded by teachers, TNTP is driven by the knowledge that effective teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other school factor. In response, TNTP develops customized programs and policy interventions that enable education leaders to find, develop and keep great teachers. Since its inception in 1997, TNTP has recruited or trained approximately 49,000 teachers – mainly through its highly selective Teaching Fellows programs – benefiting an estimated 8 million students. TNTP has also released a series of acclaimed studies of the policies and practices that affect the quality of the nation's teacher workforce, including *The Widget Effect* (2009) and *Teacher Evaluation 2.0* (2010). Today TNTP is active in more than 25 cities, including 10 of the nation's 15 largest.

For more information, please visit **www.tntp.org**.

The report, graphics, figures and paper illustrations were designed by Kristin Girvin Redman and Nicole Lahy at Cricket Design Works in Madison, Wisconsin.

The text face is Baskerville Regular, originally designed by John Baskerville in England in the mid-18th century, revived in the early 20th century.

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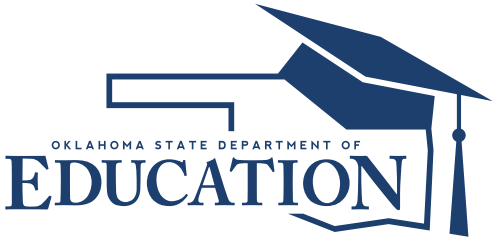
OKLAHOMA EDUCATOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGE TASK FORCE

CONVENED *by the* OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

FINAL REPORT • JANUARY 2014



Educators and researchers agree that Teacher Effectiveness is the single most important school-based factor in student academic achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

In response to Oklahoma's Educator Workforce Shortage, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) convened a task force in 2013 to study the conditions creating the shortage and offer recommendations to policymakers likely to eliminate the shortage. The task force was composed of a variety of stakeholders – legislators; representatives of the business community, higher education, career and technology education, and public education, including both teachers and administrators; and other government officials.

The following recommendations are designed to:

- Support and retain effective educators,
- Encourage continuous professional growth of all educators, and
- Recruit highly capable people into the education profession.

For the purposes of this document, educators include teachers, instructional specialists, administrators, and other school personnel; however, it is duly noted that the most significant and widespread shortages are among classroom teachers.

This initial report of the task force includes an executive summary of strategic recommendations, research and rationale behind the recommendations, budgetary implications, and additional resources and potential next steps as appropriate.

The task force stands ready to augment these recommendations upon completion of the 2014 Educator Supply and Demand Study and each iteration therafter as recommended in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Educators and researchers agree that teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-based factor in student academic achievement. Recent research indicates that the U.S. educational system is in dire need of more educators who are effective in improving student learning. The inability of the system to produce and retain effective educators is causing a crisis in the classrooms of many children.

In the report, *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*, TNTP (formerly The New Teacher Project) analyzes the conditions that often cause teacher shortages in urban school settings, including policies that discourage great teachers from doing what they do best, administrators who do not support great teachers, and structures that do not capitalize on the commodity of effective teachers to mentor new and ineffective teachers (http://tntp.org/irreplaceables).

Oklahoma's urban school districts are not alone in the educator workforce shortage they face. School districts across the state have found it difficult to hire and retain effective teachers, even in traditionally easy–to-staff positions and geographic locations.

The charge of the Oklahoma Educator Workforce Shortage Task Force was to establish strategic recommendations that would provide for an effective teacher in every child's classroom. In order to meet that goal, the task force identified concerns and organized recommendations into strategic themes to address those concerns.

Priority Concerns

- Persistent classroom vacancies in many school districts, particularly in traditionally hard-to-staff grades, subjects, and geographic regions
- Lack of personal and professional support for practicing educators
- Limited opportunities for advancement, challenge, and professional growth

Strategic Themes to Address Concerns

- Attracting high-quality individuals into the education profession
- Developing and retaining current workforce
- Compensation

CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The strategies recommended in this document are designed to provide a coherent model of career development for educators as represented in the figure.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations identified in this document are considered to be top priorities by a significant number of task force members. These recommendations are often interrelated, so they are presented in terms of strategic themes to address the concerns of the educator shortage. Research, rationale, and implications of the recommendations are provided in the next section of this document.

Attracting High Quality Individuals into the Education Profession

• Replicate the Educator Supply and Demand Study regularly, perhaps every 3-5 years. Use the results to identify areas of shortage and apply the recommendations made within this document to the areas of most critical need where it does not make sense to apply the recommendations more broadly.

• Develop a paid internship with significant mentorship and support for teacher candidates from traditional and alternative routes while completing their program and/or certification requirements. This could include replacing the traditional student-teaching experience with a multi-semester internship emphasizing co-teaching and other supports.

• Provide flexibility to the Oklahoma State Board of Education to certify traditionally prepared teacher candidates through alternative pathways on a case-by-case basis when unusual circumstances arise.

• Allow districts to develop local policies that provide opportunities for retired educators to return to the education profession without loss of retirement benefits.

Developing and Retaining Current Workforce

• Reinstate the Teacher Residency Program, or offer a modified form of support, mentorship, and coaching for new teachers (including alternatively certified teachers) and those with professional growth needs. Consider current research on mentorship when making modifications to the Teacher Residency Program. See paid internship recommendation as one possible component.

• Provide opportunities for teacher career advancement, such as mentor/master teachers, teacher coaches, and instructional leaders, including additional state funds for stipends paid by districts that implement such strategies.

• To retain effective teachers, there must be additional professional development related to implementation of current initiatives and reforms. Without limiting funds provided to districts for discretionary professional development, target additional state funding for professional development to statewide academies and competitive grants. Provide research and best practices to districts in selecting high-quality professional development.

Compensation

• Increase teachers' base salaries as identified on the State Minimum Salary Schedule by at least $2,000, with a plan to continue to increase the base salaries annually until they are competitive with bordering states.

• Identify a sustainable funding stream dedicated to increased salaries and other strategies for addressing shortages.

Upon completion of the 2014 Educator Supply and Demand Study and each iteration thereafter, additional strategic recommendations may be necessary to address priority concerns.

RESEARCH, RATIONALE, AND IMPLICATIONS

ATTRACTING HIGH QUALITY INDIVIDUALS INTO THE EDUCATION PROFESSION

The four recommendations within this category provide a strategic approach to increasing the number of people in the education workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the field.

Replicate the Educator Supply and Demand Study regularly, perhaps every 3-5 years. Use the results to identify areas of shortage and apply the recommendations made within this document to the areas of most critical need where it does not make sense to apply the recommendations more broadly.[1]

The Educator Supply and Demand Study was last completed in Oklahoma in 2001-2002. That report indicated that Oklahoma produced enough teachers but was unable to hire and retain enough of them to fill all vacancies. It also indicated that Oklahoma was likely to experience greater shortages in certain subjects and geographic locations by 2005. This report can be found at http://www.okhighered.org/studies-reports/teach-supply/.

In order to fully understand the current and future conditions of the classroom teacher shortage in Oklahoma, this study needs to be replicated regularly, perhaps every 3-5 years, as was previously the practice. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) has formed a collaborative with the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP), the Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition (OBEC), the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), and the Oklahoma Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE) to support The Educator Supply and Demand Study of 2014, reflecting the production and retention of teachers within the state.

A regular cycle of study replication would allow for an ongoing understanding of the current landscape of producing, hiring, and retaining Oklahoma teachers. Information from the study should inform decisions regarding application of a variety of strategies, including some of the recommendations in this report. For example, if the 2014 study produces a result similar to those from the 2002 study — namely, that hiring and retention, rather than production, are the primary concerns — recommendations for solving the shortage should lie more in areas of compensation and retention than in recruiting. If the 2014 study indicates that production is not sufficient to meet the current or projected need, however, then additional recommendations around recruitment may be warranted..

Develop a paid internship with significant mentorship and support for teacher candidates from traditional and alternative routes while completing their program and/or certification requirements. This could include replacing the traditional student-teaching experience with a multi-semester internship emphasizing co-teaching and other supports.

This recommendation is closely connected to recommendations in the category of Developing and Retaining Current Workforce, in that it draws on research that highlights the need for mentoring relationships early in and throughout one's career.

Currently, Oklahoma identifies student teachers as individuals who are participating in a "nonsalaried internship under the supervision of a certified teacher" (70 O.S. § 1-116). Teacher candidates from alternative routes do not have the benefit of a student-teaching experience, and teacher candidates from traditional routes often cite shortness of the experience as its primary downfall. In order to increase the amount of time student teachers receive in the classroom, many university teacher-preparation programs have begun offering full-year student-teaching opportunities. Financially, most student teachers cannot afford to avail themselves of this incredible, multi-semester opportunity due to the requirement that they not be compensated for their time in the public school setting.

Several teacher preparation programs have begun to implement co-teaching approaches to the student-teaching field experience. Co-teaching, as defined for student-teaching field experiences, presents the student teacher and mentoring teacher as collaborative professionals. St. Cloud State University has been researching best practices in co-teaching since

receiving The Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership Grant in 2003. The Academy for Co-Teaching and Collaboration provides research and best practices on co-teaching, available at http://www.stcloudstate.edu/soe/coteaching/.

A multi-semester paid internship that focuses on co-teaching approaches could capitalize on best practices in mentorship, field experience, and classroom collaboration for those newest to the profession.

Provide flexibility to the Oklahoma State Board of Education to certify traditionally prepared teacher candidates through alternative pathways on a case-by-case basis when unusual and/or extreme circumstances arise.[2]

On rare occasions, teacher candidates complete all or nearly all of the requirements for traditional certification, but due to unusual and/or extreme circumstances are unable to be certified through the traditional route. Because these individuals have a bachelor's degree in education, rather than in a subject-specific content area, they are unable to become certified through alternative pathways (70 O.S. § 6-122.3).

For example, the OSDE was recently notified by a school district that they would like to hire an individual who completed a program of teacher preparation in Oklahoma but did not complete his student-teaching experience. Instead, the young man left Oklahoma to play professional sports. Upon retiring from professional sports, he returned to Oklahoma and wanted to teach. Because he did not complete student teaching, he could not be recommended for traditional certification. Because his bachelor's degree was in educational studies, he could not be recommended for alternative certification. Although this young man was deemed the best candidate by the school district based on his undergraduate degree and life experiences, the Oklahoma State Board of Education had no authority to grant him a certificate— despite his having passed all certification exams.

Allow districts to develop local policies that provide opportunities for retired educators to return to the education profession without loss of retirement benefits.

In the first three years following retirement, state law (70 O.S. §17-116.10) prohibits retired educators from earning more than $15,000 (if less than 62 years of age) or $30,000 (if at least 62 years of age) or ½ of the previous annual salary, whichever is lesser. It also prohibits them from being reemployed within the first 60 days of retirement. The task force believes that retired educators are an untapped resource for potential employees due to these limitations.

States that have allowed retired educators to re-enter the workforce while maintaining their retirement benefits have found these educators to be a positive solution for meeting shortages in specific areas of need. For example, in Indiana, retired educators are allowed to return to teaching without loss of benefits after 30 days under certain conditions (http://www.in.gov/inprs/files/TRFMemberHandbook.pdf). As a result of Indiana's plan, districts have been able to keep quality employees with valuable experience while saving money, since the plan does not require districts to contribute to the retirement system on behalf of retired educators. Moreover,the retired educators are often willing to work for a lower salary since they are also receiving retirement benefits.

To maintain the effectiveness of the Oklahoma Teacher Retirement System, specific rules and regulations around implementation likely will need to be developed; however, districts should be encouraged to use retired educators returning to the profession in creative ways (e.g., full-time subs, mentors, mentor principals/superintendents) in addition to traditional positions or the positions that they vacated.

DEVELOPING AND RETAINING CURRENT WORKFORCE

The three recommendations within this category provide a strategic approach to improving the effectiveness of people in the education workforce. By providing teachers with the tools and supports needed

to be successful, the State will encourage the current workforce to remain in the profession.

Reinstate the Teacher Residency Program, or offer a modified form of support, mentorship, and coaching for new teachers (including alternatively certified teachers) and those with professional growth needs. Consider current research on mentorship when making modifications to the Teacher Residency Program. See paid internship recommendation as one possible component.

The Oklahoma Teacher Residency Program, which is no longer required for certification, provided a mentor teacher, administrator, and university faculty member to support new teachers. Without funding to continue Residency Committees, most districts and universities have been unable to offer new teachers the same level of support. Mentoring networks have been established in the state in order to continue as many supportive services as possible. Although many districts have implemented a variety of induction strategies, very few can provide the type of mentorship encouraged by research. Without appropriate levels of support and coaching in the first years of teaching, many new teachers feel unsuccessful and choose to leave the profession.

Recent research indicates that systematic mentorship relationships are needed for at least the first two or three years of a teacher's career in order to have significant effects on student achievement and teacher retention. The New Teacher Center partnered with The National Association of State Boards of Education to create a discussion guide that examines the role of teacher induction programs in developing effective teachers and reducing teacher turnover. It provides current research related to teacher induction, elements of comprehensive teacherinduction programs, examples of state-level action, and a guiding framework for policymakers to participate in meaningful conversations about new teacher mentorship and development (http://www.newteachercenter.org/products-and-resources/policy-briefs/nasbe-discussion-guide-teacher-induction-improving-state-system).

Provide opportunities for teacher career advancement, such as mentor/master teachers, teacher coaches, and instructional leaders, including additional state funds for stipends paid by districts that implement such strategies.

Related to the previous recommendation, this recommendation focuses on career advancement opportunities for effective educators who mentor and coach new and struggling teachers. Many great teachers create vacancies when they leave the classroomfor positions in administration that offer professional advancement and chances for increased salary. Given an opportunity to advance their career without leaving the classroom and reducing their direct impact on classroom instruction, many teachers would choose not to take the route of becoming an administrator.

Additionally, many mentorship and coaching activities are conducted outside of the traditional school schedule. Very few districts can afford to offer stipends for work done outside of the traditional school schedule or to provide release time for mentoring and coaching during the school day. Both strategies require financial support for full implementation and sustainability.

A plethora of structures exist that partner the opportunity for career advancement through mentorship and coaching with the need for teacher induction and support. One such structure is TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement, managed and supported by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (http://tapsystem.org/). In the TAP framework, effective educators are given opportunities to take on mentoring responsibilities while maintaining full classroom responsibilities or to serve as full-time mentors and coaches of other teachers.

To retain effective teachers, there must be additional professional development related to implementation of current initiatives and reforms. Without limiting funds provided to districts for discretionary professional development, target additional state funding for professional development to statewide academies and competitive grants. Provide research and best practices to districts in selecting high-quality professional development.[3]

Teachers who feel successful and supported are most likely to remain in the profession. Teachers who leave often cite lack of administrative support or burden in implementation of new programs as reasons for their departure. Providing high-quality professional development can re-energize and re-equip.

Current funding for professional development is limited but incredibly valuable. The structures in the law ensure that these funds are targeted toward activities that will improve student learning while providing flexibility to districts for professional learning experiences most needed by their staff (70 O.S. § 6-192 through 6-194).

This recommendation focuses on providing additional professional development through continuous learning academies and competitive grants for development of innovative approaches to professional growth. Optional professional learning opportunities might come in a variety of delivery methods, including online learning, social networking and peer mentorship, advanced coursework, weekend academies in leadership development, and much more. The options are limitless for providing additional support to effective and developing teachers as they adapt to changing classroom characteristics and professional demands.

Standards for high-quality professional development have been provided by Learning Forward, an association devoted exclusively to advancing professional learning for the ultimate goal of student success (http://learningforward.org/standards/).

COMPENSATION

The two recommendations within this category provide a strategic approach to retaining the current workforce through compensation that recognizes and rewards the contributions of educators to the State.

Increase teachers' base salaries as identified on the State Minimum Salary Schedule by at least $2,000, with a plan to continue to increase the base salaries annually until they are competitive with bordering states.[4]

Education majors who choose other professions upon graduation and students who choose non-education majors often explain that potential salary is a major factor in determining their career pathway. Even stronger evidence exists for the number of education majors and certified teachers who leave Oklahoma to pursue teaching careers elsewhere. This is most common among teachers who live in "border districts" where the drive or move into another state is not prohibitive.

In order to encourage more people to enter and stay in the teaching profession in Oklahoma, the State Minimum Salary Schedule needs to be more competitive. At a minimum, base salaries should increase by $2,000, with a plan to continue to increase annually until salaries are competitive with bordering states.

	Minimum First Year Teacher's Salary (According to State Statute or Rule)	**Average Starting Teacher's Salary** (As reported by National Education Association)	**Average Teacher's Salary** (As reported by National Education Association)
Oklahoma	$31,600	$31,600	$44,343
Missouri	$25,000	$29,857	$45,321
Arkansas	$29,244	$32,478	$46,500
Kansas	N/A	$32,964	$46,598
New Mexico	$30,000	$32,092	$46,888
Texas	$27,320	$34,234	$48,638
Colorado	N/A	$32,095	$49,228

Identify a sustainable funding stream dedicated to increased salaries and other strategies for addressing shortages.[5]

In order to develop a long-term, statewide solution to the Educator Workforce Shortage, a dedicated funding stream needs to be identified. Using one-time funds and short-term funding streams may create a temporary solution that cannot be sustained and might ultimately spur more devastating shortages in years to come. While the bulk of the dedicated funding stream would likely be applied toward increasing salaries, other recommendations also have financial implications. The OSDE has estimated that the nine recommendations of the task force fall into four categories of expense: No Cost, Minimal Cost, Moderate Cost, and Substantial Cost.

Attracting High Quality Individuals into the Education Profession	Replicate the Educator Supply and Demand Study regularly, perhaps every 3-5 years. Use the results to identify areas of shortage and apply the recommendations made within this document to the areas of most critical need where it does not make sense to apply the recommendations more broadly.	**Minimal Cost**
	Develop a paid internship with significant mentorship and support for teacher candidates from traditional and alternative routes while completing their program and/or certification requirements. This could include replacing the traditional student-teaching experience with a multi-semester internship emphasizing co-teaching and other supports.	**Moderate Cost**
	Provide flexibility to the Oklahoma State Board of Education to certify traditionally prepared teacher candidates through alternative pathways on a case-by-case basis when unusual circumstances arise.	**No Cost**
	Allow districts to develop local policies that provide opportunities for retired educators to return to the education profession without loss of retirement benefits.	**No Cost** (Potential Impact to Teacher Retirement System)
Developing and Retaining Current Workforce	Reinstate the Teacher Residency Program, or offer a modified form of support, mentorship, and coaching for new teachers (including alternatively certified teachers) and those with professional growth needs. Consider current research on mentorship when making modifications to the Teacher Residency Program. See paid internship recommendation as one possible component.	**Moderate Cost**
	Provide opportunities for teacher career advancement, such as mentor/master teachers, teacher coaches, and instructional leaders, including additional state funds for stipends paid by districts that implement such strategies.	**Moderate Cost**
	To retain effective teachers, there must be additional professional development related to implementation of current initiatives and reforms. Without limiting funds provided to districts for discretionary professional development, target additional state funding for professional development to statewide academies and competitive grants. Provide research and best practices to districts in selecting high-quality professional development.	**Moderate Cost**
Compensation	Increase teachers' base salaries as identified on the State Minimum Salary Schedule by at least $2,000, with a plan to continue to increase the base salaries annually until they are competitive with bordering states.	**Substantial Cost**
	Identify a sustainable funding stream dedicated to increased salaries and other strategies for addressing shortages.	**Substantial Cost**

APPENDIX: NOTES, RESOURCES, AND NEXT STEPS

[1] Upon completion of the Supply and Demand Study, analyze results to determine next steps. Possible next steps could include some of the following options:

• Refine P20 data system to determine how many Oklahoma teacher education graduates enter Oklahoma public schools, ascertain professions/geographic locations of teacher education graduates who do not enter Oklahoma public schools, evaluate effectiveness of recruitment programs, and examine effectiveness of preparation and support programs.

• Provide funding for districts to access a nationwide candidate pool for hardest-to-staff areas.

• Develop a statewide job application tool or posting portal.

• Scale existing alternative programs with proven results by recruiting additional individuals and determine whether additional strategies to recruit and attract non-traditional teachers are warranted (e.g., recruiting retirees from other professions, Teacher for America/ Teach for Oklahoma).

• Allow for alternative certification into areas that currently do not exist (e.g., elementary education) if warranted by the study.

[2] In addition to Oklahoma-prepared teacher candidates with unusual and/or extreme circumstances, the OSDE is often approached by individuals who have been certified in other states that do not offer certification areas comparable to what is available in Oklahoma. Examples include such situations as the following: (1) states that issue "Science" certifications at the secondary level, whereas Oklahoma issues certifications based on specific courses, and (2) states that issue "U.S. History and Government" certifications, whereas Oklahoma issues "U.S. History/Oklahoma History/Government/Economics" certification. The OSDE and the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation have committed to examining the steps needed to increase the range of ability to honor certification issued in other states without additional coursework or exams. This may be able to be addressed through rulemaking, policy, and procedure without legislative changes.

[3] In addition to statewide academies and competitive grants, some districts continue to need assistance in developing professional learning plans that maximize the resources available for district discretion. Questions that arose during Task Force discussions included:

• How do district and school leaders know what professional learning opportunities exist and which are most valuable?

• What is the role of district and school leadership in developing a culture of continuous learning and professional growth?

• How can professional development strategies at the local level replicate successful statewide strategies, such as the Math and Science Partnership Grants, C3 Grants, and Oklahoma Data Review Models?

These questions can be addressed through statewide professional learning opportunities, networking possibilities, and competitive grants designed to improve leader effectiveness.They can also be addressed through pilot programs that are shared with all districts following their implementation.

Strategies for delivering professional development include: providing time for teachers to collaborate with their peers, analyze data, and plan; adjusting instructional responsibilities during the school day; providing stipends for time outside of school; and accessing 24/7 on-demand professional development resources.

[4] After raising base salaries for all educators to a competitive level, provide additional state funding for school districts to develop differentiated pay structures. Many states allow individual districts to create their own salary schedules or offer a variety of bonuses and stipends. To accomplish offering anything above the minimum salary schedule, districts would need additional revenue. This could come in the form of grants, pilot programs, or a percentage of funds designated for salary incentives.

Differentiated pay structures would provide district flexibility while encouraging innovative thinking about compensation. Such differentiated pay structures could include bonuses and stipends for a variety of educator

achievements and responsibilities. Examples for district consideration include, but are not limited to, bonuses for increasing student scores on AP exams or bonuses for every student achieving a 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams; stipends for serving as mentor/master teachers, teacher coaches, or teacher leaders; bonuses for attaining professional recognitions; signing bonuses for teachers of shortage subject areas and/or geographic locations; and stipends for hard-to-staff positions and high-challenge schools.

Another option for districts may be to modify the annual step increases so teachers attain comparable salaries to other fields in a timelier manner, for example bigger gains less frequently. In considering this possibility, districts may look to competing industries that start employees low on the salary schedule but allow for very swift advancement in the early years. This may require the State to remove some lines of the minimum salary schedule in order to provide flexibility to districts (e.g., at year 1, by year 3, by year 5…).

[5] In order to fund competitive compensation models and strategies that prevent shortages, many states allow districts to use local tax revenue for teacher salaries. Currently, Oklahoma law does not allow local tax revenue to be spent on salaries. Allowing the use of local taxes for salaries could provide one alternative to a statewide dedicated funding stream.

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

WHO IS YOUR GOAL?

HITTING THE

BULLS-EYE!

- Starts with the interview: School Tour, Expectations, Non-Negotiables, Meet them at the door or outside the school entrance- Use the students
- School Wide Theme that everyone can buy into: Pick a theme, make the whole school about that, have fun with the theme and be CREATIVE!
- School Wide Management System- PBIS, GE, Jim Faye Love & Logic/ Allows teachers to use every instructional minute possible without having to stop and figure out how to manage students.
- Be Present- Get into classrooms and talk with students as much as possible, give immediate feedback, PRAISE THE GOOD ONES, walk through folders, sticky notes on student work and teacher work
- New Teacher PLC- just for Q and A, non-threatening, peer oriented, and friendly
- PAR PROGRAM- OKCPS
- Teacher Surveys- Honest, open,anonymous, ask the right questions and expect to make changes that are asked of the admin team
- Leadership Opportunities: Interview AP candidates for teachers, ALT, Change Team, "What are you good at doing?" survey with multiple talents, strengths, hobbies, such as gardening, computers, drama, dance, poetry etc...
- Off Campus Get Togethers: Plan off campus bbq, movie night, bowling, game night, 5k or fun run/walk, book club, Holiday meals- Work with Hospitality Team to coordinate fun low cost activities! Friends want to work with friends so we need to provide opportunities for friendships to develop.
- Be transparent- Share your mistakes, laugh, smile, create opportunities to share the good- Leadership is walking along side your staff and sharing life, that's what keeps people going in any situation or work place.