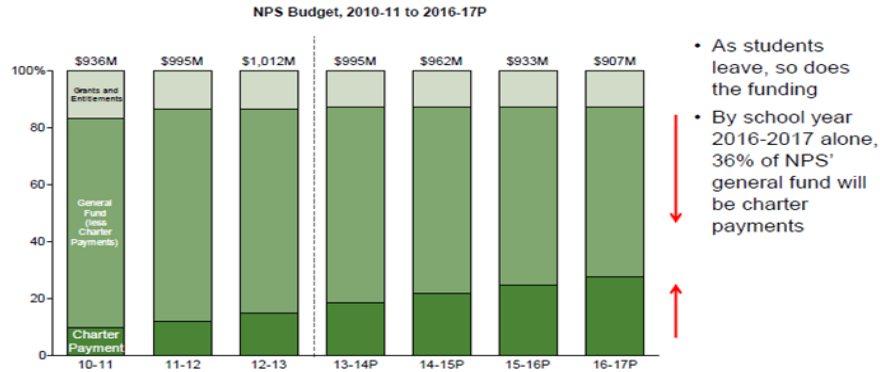# Overview of the Equivalency Request:
**Protecting our best teachers during a fiscal crisis**

Newark Public Schools (NPS) cannot avoid teacher layoffs any longer. Nobody wants to layoff teachers, but declining enrollment and a shrinking budget have made this unavoidable. Families are "voting with their feet" in search of excellence. When they choose non-NPS options, money follows the student, causing budget strain. Enrollment in NPS has been declining consistently since 2008, and as a result, NPS has lost nearly $200 million in funding.

NPS Budget, 2010-11 to 2016-17P

- As students leave, so does the funding
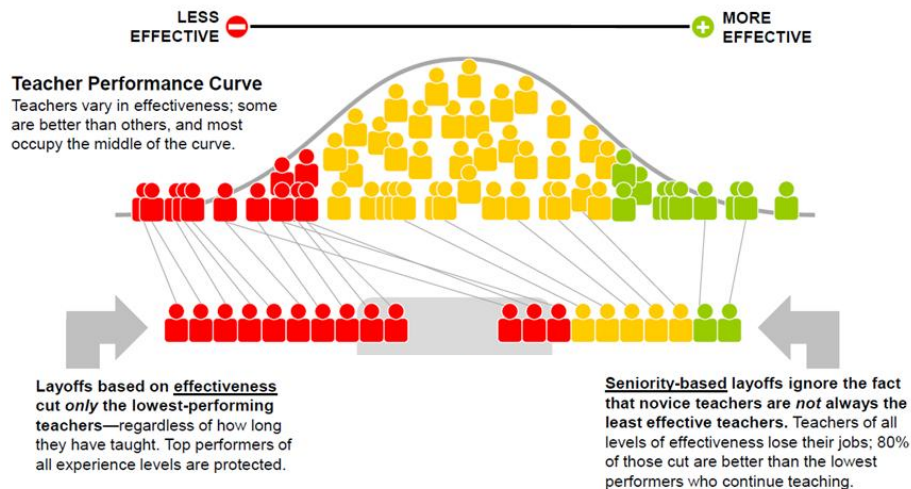- By school year 2016-2017 alone, 36% of NPS' general fund will be charter payments

Enrollment is projected to continue to fall, meaning we must close a $100 million budget gap in the next three years. Because teacher salaries and benefits make up more than 40% of the district's operating budget, NPS cannot afford to employ the same number of teachers. We expect that we will need to eliminate about 30% of our teaching positions over the next three years.

We know that when it comes to raising student achievement, <u>nothing matters more than the quality of the teacher.</u> Time and again, research has shown that effective teachers are the most powerful school-based factor in students' academic success.[i] Great teaching can accelerate student success in the immediate—producing an additional year's worth of learning compared to a ineffective teacher[ii]—and also in the long-term.[iii] We also know that a teacher's level of experience can contribute to quality – but that improvements in teacher effectiveness typically level off after a teacher's first three years in the classroom. [iv] Further, we know good teachers are invaluable and their job satisfaction, morale, and longevity go down when they have to teach alongside ineffective teachers.[v]
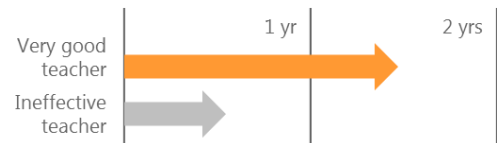
Quality-blind layoffs would force NPS to lay off teachers without any regard for teacher quality, making a bad situation even worse. As we are faced with the reality of teacher layoffs, we have two choices – quality-blind layoffs based on years of service and performance-based layoffs that consider quality alongside years of service. Quality-blind layoffs almost always result in worse teachers staying and better teachers leaving.[vi]



Teacher Performance Curve
Teachers vary in effectiveness; some are better than others, and most occupy the middle of the curve.

Layoffs based on <u>effectiveness</u> cut *only* the lowest-performing teachers—regardless of how long they have taught. Top performers of all experience levels are protected.

<u>Seniority-based</u> layoffs ignore the fact that novice teachers are *not* always the least effective teachers. Teachers of all levels of effectiveness lose their jobs; 80% of those cut are better than the lowest performers who continue teaching.
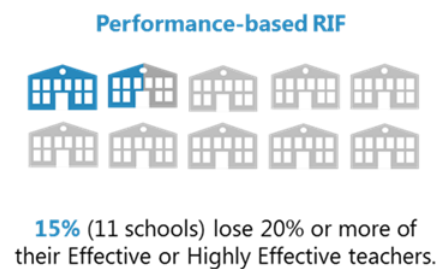
Overview of the Equivalency Request:
Protecting our best teachers during a fiscal crisis

Implementing current, quality-blind layoffs as opposed to proposed, performance-based layoffs would be devastating for teacher quality and student outcomes. NPS would have to cut hundreds more effective and highly effective teachers than it could otherwise retain under a performance-based layoff. This defies common sense, and it's wrong for our students – who deserve the very best teachers we can give them.

- If granted, the equivalency would allow us to determine how many teachers we need by subject area, and then layoff the least effective first in order of seniority; the outcome would be dramatically better for students.
- **Impact on Teachers:** Initial estimates project the following:
  - Current, quality-blind layoff = 75% of teachers laid off are effective or highly effective.
  - Proposed, performance-based layoff = Only 35% of those laid off are effective; no highly effective teachers would be lost.
  - Current, quality-blind layoff = 4% of teachers laid off are ineffective, and 28% of all ineffective teachers in the district are removed.
  - Proposed, performance-based layoff = 14% of teachers laid off are ineffective, and 98% of all ineffective teachers in the district would be removed.

Percent of Ineffective Teachers Removed

| Performance-based | 98% |
| Quality-blind | 28% |
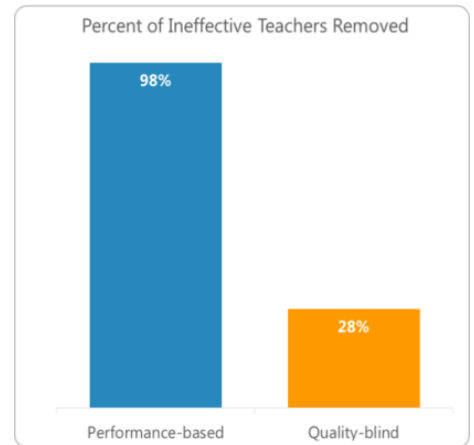
Impact on Schools: A performance-based layoff would allow for a less drastic impact on Newark schools, especially those with the highest concentration of poverty. Current, quality-blind layoffs would cause deeper cuts to some schools than our proposed, performance-based layoff. Under the current system, far more schools would lose at least 20% of their effective and highly effective teachers and the district's highest-poverty schools may lose almost twice as many effective and highly effective teachers.

Quality-Blind RIF

62% (44 schools) lose 20% or more of their Effective or Highly Effective teachers.

Performance-based RIF

15% (11 schools) lose 20% or more of their Effective or Highly Effective teachers.

TEACHNJ allows districts to exit low-performing teachers after two years; this is a useful but inadequate tool to address declining enrollment and the budget crisis.

- Despite the reforms to streamline tenure revocation, the process is lengthy and expensive to address NPS's urgent fiscal issues. Each tenure case costs between $50K and $200K in legal fees—even with the new legislation—for an average of $125K per case. Even if we were not facing enrollment decline, the legal costs of exiting ineffective teachers would be around $20 million.
- Research shows that "mutual consent"—an open market hiring process to stop force placing teachers and allow principals to pick their teams according to quality and fit—is proven to drive student achievement and teacher satisfaction.[vii]
- NPS implemented Talent Match—a best-in-class mutual consent hiring process for the last 3 years.
- Facing a decision to force place or fashion another solution, NPS created a pool of Educators Without Placement Sites (EWPS) for those who were not selected in Talent Match. EWPS teachers still teach but are placed by the district as extra support in schools.
- Despite offering teachers aggressive supports to find the right match (e.g., online application process, hiring fairs, and workshops), many educators have not been hired for permanent positions.

- Nearly 80% of EWPS teachers have been in the pool for two or three years.
- The EWPS pool is expensive and will grow as we lose students unless NPS goes back to force placing which we know is bad for students, satisfaction of good teachers, and overall staff morale.
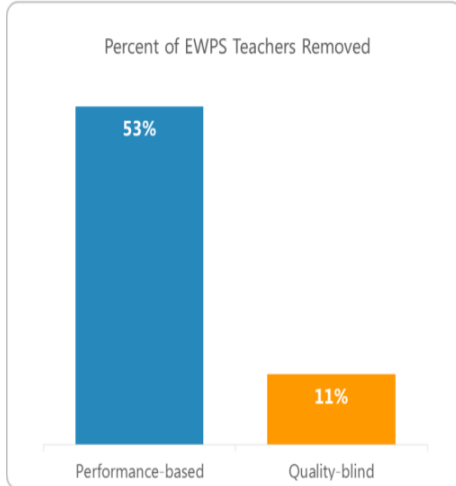
In many ways, mutual consent is working. Educators who tend to be lower quality are not being selected for roles – and are therefore are not in permanent positions.

Percent of EWPS Teachers Removed

53% Performance-based

11% Quality-blind

- EWPS teachers are 6 times more likely to receive an Ineffective rating than teachers with full-time teaching placements.
- Current, quality-blind layoff = only 11% of the EWPS teachers are laid off.
- Proposed, performance-based layoff = 5 times as many (53%) EWPS teachers are laid-off and permanently exit the EWPS list.
- Further, each year with declining enrollment, NPS will incur the same choice—downsize only by years of service or consider quality alongside years of service.

The equivalency is the only way NPS can address its fiscal issues without sacrificing teacher quality. Layoffs based on teacher quality lessen the impact of teacher reductions and allow us to maintain our fierce commitment to quality instruction. If granted, the equivalency allows us to make quality-based layoff decisions, meaning that ineffective teachers would be laid off first. Under this approach, we would be able to keep most of our teachers who have been rated effective and all teachers who have been rated highly effective. This means hundreds more students each year will have an opportunity to learn from a great teacher who can put them on the path to success in college and career.

In short, NPS must address its fiscal crisis while increasing teacher quality. The only way to do this is to be granted an equivalency to right size with quality alongside years of service in order to remain competitive and offer quality schooling options for all Newark families.

[i] WILLIAM SANDERS AND JUNE RIVERS, *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*. UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE VALUE-ADDED RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, Knoxville, TN (1996); Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain & Steven G. Rivkin, (2005). Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement,73(2) Econometrica 417, 443-51; *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*, TNTP (2012); ROBERT GORDON, THOMAS KANE & DOUGLAS STAIGER, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS USING PERFORMANCE ON THE JOB 8 (2006).

[ii] ROBERT J. MARZANO, CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THAT WORKS 1-3 (ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT) (2003) (citing SANDRA P. HORN, WILLIAM L. SANDERS & S. PAUL WRIGHT, *Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation*, 11 JOURNAL OF PERSONNEL EVALUATION IN EDUCATION 57, 63-64 (1997).

[iii] RAJ CHETTY, JOHN N. FRIEDMAN & JONAH E. ROCKOFF, NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, THE LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF TEACHERS: TEACHER VALUE-ADDED AND STUDENT OUTCOMES IN ADULTHOOD 38-42 (2012) (working paper).

[iv] DONALD J. BOYD, HAMILTON LANKFORD, SUSANNA LOEB, JONAH E. ROCKOFF, AND JAMES H. WYCKOFF, *The Narrowing Gap in New York City Teacher Qualifications and Its Implications for Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools*, THE URBAN INSTITUTE AND NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LONGITUDINAL DATA IN EDUCATION RESEARCH (2007) (Working Paper); LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND, TEACHER QUALITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: A REVIEW OF STATE POLICY EVIDENCE (Education Policy Analysis Archives 2000).

[v] THE IRREPLACEABLES: UNDERSTANDING THE REAL RETENTION CRISIS IN AMERICA'S URBAN SCHOOLS 18 TNTP (2012) AND PERSPECTIVES OF IRREPLACEABLE TEACHERS: WHAT AMERICA'S BEST TEACHERS THINK ABOUT TEACHING 10 TNTP (2013).

[vi] Donald Boyd, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb & James Wyckoff, *Teacher Layoffs: An Empirical Illustration of Seniority v. Measures of Effectiveness*, 6 EDUC. FIN. AND POLICY 439, 444-447 (2011); Dan Goldhaber and Roddy Theobold, THE URBAN INSTITUTE AND NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LONGITUDINAL DATA IN EDUCATION RESEARCH, ASSESSING THE DETERMINANTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER LAYOFFS 29 (2010) (working paper).

[vii] C. Kirabo Jackson, Worker Productivity, and Worker Mobility: Direct Evidence From Teachers, Match Quality, (2010).