

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement from Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality,
on the Dangers of NYC Education Department's New Teacher Placement Plan**

The New York City Education Department recently announced plans to reduce the pool of paid teachers who do not have a classroom position by now assigning these teachers to vacancies without giving either the teacher or the principal any choice in the decision. In response, NCTQ President Kate Walsh released this statement:

This forced hiring policy is an enormous step backward for New York. These hiring decisions inevitably will hurt schools' efforts to develop their own culture, lead to irreconcilable differences among teachers and their principals, and ultimately hurt student achievement.

To make sure teachers end up in classrooms where they are likely to be successful, districts should ensure that decisions about transfers are made at the school level and all staffing decisions are based on teacher performance and expertise. This is known as mutual consent hiring. In districts where mutual consent is in place, both the teacher and the principal agree to the placement of a new teacher or transfer of an existing teacher to the principal's school. This way, principals have the freedom to assemble their own team of teachers who can uphold the school's philosophy and follow the principal's leadership style. For their part, teachers can select a school that matches how they teach and shares their values.

We recently lauded New York City as one of only eight Great Districts for Great Teachers nationwide, partially based on the current mutual consent policy in which both principals and school level committees cooperatively hire the school's teachers. NCTQ's Teacher Contract Database, which analyzes teacher contracts in the nation's largest one hundred school districts plus the largest district in each state, highlights New York City as one of only sixteen districts that has a mutual consent policy. We also noted the district's success at teacher leadership and cooperation.

However, forced hiring jeopardizes the city's achievements, reverting back to the days when teachers were seen as interchangeable widgets, to be slotted into any openings. Like anyone else, teachers will work better when they choose where they want to work. And, inevitably, principals will favor the teachers they get to choose, leaving those forced upon the school to become, at best, merely tolerated until the principal can find a way of removing them.

There are certainly other solutions to the problem of paying teachers in the reserve pool to do nothing. For instance, other districts have limited the amount of time a teacher can collect a paycheck without a school assignment.

But forcing an unwilling teacher on a school that does not want her only compounds the problem by bringing students into this uneasy relationship.

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To schedule an interview with Ms. Walsh, please contact Eric Duncan on (202) 393-0020 ext. 130.

About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.