



Fall 2017 ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide

The NCTQ ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide highlights exemplary work to meet the ESSA's educator equity requirements among the 34 state plans we analyzed in fall 2017. This guide is designed to recognize and share strong work, as well as to support all states in developing effective plans to ensure educator equity.

Best practices in the following key areas are outlined below:

1. Definitions,
2. Data,
3. Timelines and interim targets, and
4. Strategies.

When considered alongside local context and need, the commendable work described here can serve as a useful guide for states conducting the critically important work of ensuring that low-income and minority students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

Definitions

INEXPERIENCED TEACHER

Best Practice: States should define an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with two or less years of experience. Research demonstrates that teachers in their first two years of teaching are significantly less effective than experienced teachers, with the gap substantially narrowing by year three.¹

State Exemplars: **Alabama** and **California** define an inexperienced teacher as an educator with less than two years of teaching experience.

INEFFECTIVE TEACHER

Best Practice: States should define an ineffective teacher, or provide guidance to their districts regarding district-developed definitions for this term, to include, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth. Research, as well as our shared understanding of the purpose of education, dictates that such measures are fundamental to evaluating teacher effectiveness.²

State Exemplars: **Missouri** defines an ineffective teacher based on its "Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation," which require, among other measures, objective measures of student growth. **Maryland** defines an ineffective teacher based on its teacher evaluation system, which requires that objective measures of student learning and growth, including student learning objectives and aggregate assessment scores, significantly contribute to teachers' overall evaluation ratings.

1 See, e.g., Boyd, D., et al. (2008). The narrowing gap in New York City teacher qualifications and its implications for student achievement in high-poverty schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 27(4), 793-818; Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Fortner, C. K. (2011). Stayers and Leavers early-career teacher effectiveness and attrition. *Educational Researcher*, 40(6), 271-280; and Papay, J. P., & Kraft, M. A. (2015). Productivity returns to experience in the teacher labor market: Methodological challenges and new evidence on long-term career improvement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 130, 105-119.

2 See, e.g., Kane, T. J., & Cantrell, S. (2013). Ensuring fair and reliable measures of effective teaching: Culminating findings from the MET Project's three-year study. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2633-2679; and Adnot, M., Dee, T., Katz, V., & Wyckoff, J. (2017). Teacher turnover, teacher quality, and student achievement in DCPS. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 39(1), 54-76.



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Data

STUDENT-LEVEL DATA

Best Practice: To ensure that it is accurately reflecting all existing equity gaps, each state should review the level (i.e., school-level or student-level) at which it is calculating and reporting its educator equity gaps. Although ESSA does not explicitly state the level of data disaggregation at which states must calculate and report educator equity gaps, we applaud states that report data at the more granular student level, because student-level data are necessary to illuminate educator equity gaps that exist within schools.³

State Exemplars: **South Carolina** and **Ohio** calculate and report educator equity gaps using, among other data, student-level data.

INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL DATA

Best Practice: To reflect local context and need, states should consider whether there are additional student subgroups that are being disproportionately taught and led by educators with specific characteristics. We commend states that are attending to state-specific student and educator needs by calculating and reporting educator equity gaps for additional student and educator subgroups. Calculating and reporting these data is an important first step in eliminating all existing educator equity gaps.

State Exemplars: **Kentucky** and **New York** calculate and report additional data on student characteristics, including English learners and students with disabilities. **Pennsylvania** calculates and reports data regarding the rates at which different student groups are taught by teachers with different salary and turnover rates in addition to highlighting disparities in funding between districts.

Timelines and Interim Targets

Best Practice: As with any metric to monitor and assess progress on an important goal, states should develop and make publicly available timelines and interim targets for eliminating identified educator equity gaps. Establishing and clearly articulating these metrics will help each state and its stakeholders ensure adequate accountability for eliminating identified educator equity gaps.

State Exemplars: Unfortunately, among the 34 ESSA state plans NCTQ analyzed in fall 2017, we did not identify any states implementing best practices in establishing and publishing timelines and interim targets for eliminating identified educator equity gaps. Each of the 34 ESSA state plans that we reviewed should be amended to include specific timelines and interim targets for eliminating identified educator equity gaps.

Promising Strategies

Best Practice: Where educator equity gaps exist, states should intervene to ensure that they do not persist. A state should ensure that these interventions, or strategies, are designed to target identified equity gaps. Specific strategies can and should correspond with local context and need and are most likely to be successful if they are developed with stakeholder input and evaluated over time.

State Exemplars: **Florida** state law requires districts to assure that students are not assigned to an ineffective teacher for two consecutive years. **Utah** will provide bonuses to teachers that teach in the state's highest poverty schools who earn "highly effective" ratings under Utah's teacher evaluation system. And **Arkansas** will provide the opportunity for its districts to participate in Equity Labs in spring and summer 2018; these Equity Labs are designed to ensure that school districts have protected time to review multiple data sources, identify existing educator equity gaps, and develop action plans to address any such gaps.

³ See, e.g., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2013). Different teachers, different peers: The magnitude of student sorting within schools. *Educational Researcher*, 42(6), 304-316; and Goldhaber, D., Lavery, L., & Theobald, R. (2015). Uneven playing field? Assessing the teacher quality gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students. *Educational Researcher*, 44(5), 293-307.