



Educator Equity in Montana's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Although Montana does not include a definition of inexperienced teacher in its ESSA state plan, the state defines the term in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Montana's ESSA state plan). Montana's strong definition of inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than a year of experience is supported by research demonstrating that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.²

Commitment to Student-Level Data

Montana indicates that it will calculate and report educator equity gaps using student-level data no later than fall 2018. Student-level data is necessary to illuminate within-school equity gaps that school-level data necessarily obscures.³

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Definition

Montana's ESSA state plan does not provide a definition of an ineffective teacher; however, the state indicates that it intends to define this term no later than fall 2018. As Montana develops its definition of ineffective teacher, it should include, or require its districts to include, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.⁴

Ineffective, Out-of-Field, and Inexperienced Teacher Data

Montana does not provide data demonstrating the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers compared with other students in either its ESSA state plan or its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Montana's ESSA state plan); however, Montana indicates that these data will be reported by the fall 2018. Without these data, Montana cannot demonstrate that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, nor can it guarantee that where such educator equity gaps exist, it is targeting its resources to ensure that they do not persist.

Timelines and Interim Targets

Montana does not include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps in its ESSA state plan. Although Montana includes some timelines in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (referenced specifically in Montana's ESSA state plan), many of those dates have since passed. Montana indicates that it will update the timelines and targets in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan no later than fall of 2018. By amending its ESSA state plan to include updated timelines and interim targets, Montana and its stakeholders will be able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating educator equity gaps.

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/mtconsolidatedstateplan.pdf>

2 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.

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.

4 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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State Response

Montana was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.