



# Educator Equity in Kentucky's ESSA State Plan<sup>1</sup>

## Strengths

### Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Although Kentucky did not include a definition of inexperienced teacher in its ESSA state plan, it included a definition for this term in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in the state's ESSA state plan). Kentucky's strong definition of inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than a year of experience is supported by research that demonstrates that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.<sup>2</sup>

### Inclusion of Additional Data

Kentucky's ESSA state plan includes educator equity gap calculations for students with disabilities and English learners, as well as for some of the statutory subgroups. By calculating and reporting the rates at which students with disabilities or English learners are taught by teachers with certain characteristics, Kentucky illuminates additional educator equity gaps, which is an important first step toward eliminating those educator equity gaps.

## Opportunities

### Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Although Kentucky did not include a definition for ineffective teacher in its ESSA state plan, it included a definition for this term in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Kentucky's ESSA state plan). However, as a result of recent legislation (Kentucky Senate Bill 1), Kentucky's teacher evaluation system no longer includes objective measures of student growth.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Kentucky should amend its ineffective teacher definition for the purposes of measuring educator equity under the ESSA such that it explicitly includes objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.<sup>4</sup>

Although Kentucky includes data on the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by out-of-field and inexperienced teachers in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Kentucky's ESSA state plan), the state did not include data on the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by ineffective teachers in either its ESSA state plan or its 2015 Educator Equity Plan. Without these data, Kentucky can neither demonstrate that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective teachers, nor can it ensure that where such educator equity gaps exist, it is targeting its resources to ensure that they do not persist. Kentucky should work with its districts to develop and implement a plan to collect, calculate, and report these data, which it indicates that it plans to begin following the 2017-2018 school year.

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/kyconsolidatedstateplan.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 <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/16RS/SB1.htm>

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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## Timelines and Interim Targets

Kentucky does not include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps in its ESSA state plan. Although Kentucky incorporates a timeline for eliminating its existing educator equity gaps in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Kentucky's ESSA state plan), all of the dates referenced in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan have since passed. Kentucky indicated that it will amend its Equity Plan to better reflect the requirements of the ESSA and Kentucky Senate Bill 1 by including updated timelines and interim targets so that Kentucky and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating educator equity gaps.

## State Response

Kentucky was helpful in providing facts necessary for this analysis.