



Educator Equity in Alabama's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Alabama's strong definition of inexperienced teacher as an educator with less than two years of teaching experience is well supported by research that demonstrates that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.²

Promising Strategies

Alabama intends to implement multiple promising, potentially high-impact strategies designed to eliminate its potential equity gaps, including: 1) encouraging collaboration between districts and institutions of higher education around teacher preparation in order to identify areas of need and create high-quality student internships; and 2) creating incentives to recruit academically successful teacher candidates to high-need areas and Title I schools.

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Alabama defines an ineffective teacher as a teacher who is not able to demonstrate strong instructional practices, produce significant growth in student learning, or demonstrate professionalism and dedication to the field of teaching. Because Alabama's ineffective teacher definition does not necessarily include objective measures of student growth, Alabama should amend its definition of ineffective teacher such that it explicitly includes objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.³ Alabama indicated that it is currently in its third year of developing its evaluation system, which will inform the state's interpretation of an ineffective teacher.

Although Alabama's ESSA state plan includes data regarding out-of-field and inexperienced teachers, the state's ESSA state plan does not include data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective teachers. Alabama should amend its plan to include these data, as calculating and reporting these rates is a critically important first step in eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

Timelines and Interim Targets

Alabama should amend its plan to include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps so that the state and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating any existing gaps.

State Response

Alabama affirmed the accuracy of and provided helpful facts that enhanced this analysis.

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/alconsolidatedstateplan.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., 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.