



Educator Equity in Arkansas' ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Promising Strategies

Arkansas intends to implement promising, potentially high-impact strategies designed to eliminate its existing educator equity gaps, including: 1) providing technical assistance to up to ten Title I schools to support the implementation of the Opportunity Culture Model, which provides teachers with leadership opportunities without leaving the classroom; 2) using Equity Labs in spring and summer 2018 to provide the opportunity for school districts to have protected time to review multiple data sources, identify the equity gaps, and develop action plans to address the gaps; and 3) creating a Workforce Stability Index to better provide districts with data aggregated at the school level.

Opportunities

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Arkansas defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than three years of experience. Arkansas should amend this definition to limit it to a teacher with two years or less of experience, as research demonstrates that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in their first two years of teaching.²

Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Although Arkansas provides a definition of an ineffective teacher in its ESSA state plan, the state's definition does not necessarily include as a specific measure, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth that research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.³

Although Arkansas's 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Arkansas's ESSA state plan) includes data on the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by out-of-field and inexperienced teachers, Arkansas does not provide the rates at which students are taught by ineffective teachers in either its ESSA state plan or its 2015 Educator Equity Plan. Arkansas does indicate that its districts will do so using a Workforce Stability Index (WSI) and the School Report Card. Despite Arkansas's clear indication that these data are forthcoming, it does not provide a timeline under which its districts will be required to calculate and report these data. Without these data, Arkansas can neither demonstrate that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates by ineffective teachers than other students, nor can it ensure that where such educator equity gaps exist, it is targeting its resources to ensure that they do not persist. Arkansas should work with its districts to develop and implement a rigorous plan and timeline to collect, calculate, and report these data.

Timelines and Interim Targets

Although Arkansas's ESSA state plan includes some ordinal phases and steps it intends to take to eliminate its identified educator equity gaps, these phases do not include dates or interim targets. Arkansas should amend its ESSA state plan to include timelines complete with dates, as well as interim targets, so that the state and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating existing educator equity gaps.

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



Educator Equity in Arkansas' ESSA State Plan

State Response

Arkansas provided facts necessary for this analysis.