



ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide

NCTQ's *ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide* highlights exemplary work to meet the ESSA's educator equity requirements from the 17 state plans we analyzed in spring 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 fewer 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: **D.C.** proposes to define an inexperienced teacher as a teacher in the first year of teaching or an ineffective teacher in the second year of teaching. **Colorado** defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with zero to two years of 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: **New Mexico** defines an ineffective teacher as a teacher earning an ineffective rating on the NMTEACH evaluation system and/or one that earns student growth ratings in the bottom decile. **Louisiana** defines an ineffective teacher as any teacher who received a transitional student growth rating, calculated by using a value-added model, of *ineffective* or *effective: emerging*.

- 1 See, e.g., Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Rockoff, J., & Wyckoff, J. (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., and 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.



ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide

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:** **Tennessee** currently calculates and reports educator equity gaps using, among other data, student-level data. **Connecticut** includes a detailed plan and timeline to calculate, pilot and report educator equity gaps using student-level data by the 2019-2020 school year.

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:** **Massachusetts** calculates and reports additional data on student characteristics, such as English learners and students with disabilities, as well as teacher characteristics, such as professional teacher status, long-term substitutes and teachers who are absent 10 or more days. **Vermont** calculates and reports the rates at which low-income and minority students are led by principals and superintendents with differing turnover and compensation rates.

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:** **New Jersey** has established clear timelines and interim targets for eliminating identified educator equity gaps. These are well aligned with the data New Jersey presents regarding its existing educator equity gaps, as well as with the strategies the state will implement to eliminate those gaps. **New Mexico** has established clear and ambitious timelines and interim targets for entirely eliminating its identified equity gaps by August 2020.

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:** **Delaware** will publicly release annual Educator Equity Data Reports that it is developing with stakeholder input to track state, district and school-level progress toward reducing educator equity gaps. **Nevada** will implement its Victory and Zoom school incentives to recruit and retain teachers in schools that are high poverty and have a high proportion of English learners, respectively. The target of these initiatives is the insufficient district recruitment, hiring and retention practices that Nevada and its stakeholders have identified as a likely cause of the state's most significant educator equity 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.