



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

## Strengths

### Ineffective Teacher Definition

North Dakota's strong definition of an ineffective teacher is based on its teacher evaluation system<sup>2</sup>, which includes, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth that research demonstrates are critically important to measuring teacher quality.<sup>3</sup>

### Commitment to Student-Level Data

North Dakota's plan includes simulated data indicating that North Dakota is preparing to calculate and report educator equity gaps using student-level data. Student-level data is necessary to illuminate within-school equity gaps that school-level data necessarily obscure.<sup>4</sup> North Dakota also indicates that it intends to use these data not only to determine whether low-income and minority students are disproportionately taught by ineffective teachers, but also to target support and professional development to its highest-need schools.

## Opportunities

### Inexperienced Teacher Definition

North Dakota defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with three or fewer years of teaching experience. North Dakota should amend this definition to define an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with two or fewer years of experience, as research demonstrates that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in their first two years of teaching.<sup>5</sup>

### Timeline and Interim Target Transparency

Although North Dakota's 2015 State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (Educator Equity Plan) — which is incorporated in its ESSA state plan as an attachment — includes timelines for implementing its strategies and eliminating its identified equity gaps, many of these timelines have passed. North Dakota indicated that its Educator Equity Plan is designed to be a working document that will necessarily change as it is implemented. The state provided NCTQ with an updated timeline for this work, which was informed by its State Equity Initiative Planning Committee. North Dakota's commitment to making iterative improvements to its educator equity work, and to keeping some stakeholders engaged in these improvements, is commendable. However, North Dakota should also amend its ESSA state plan to include its updated timelines and interim targets so that all of the state's stakeholders are aware of any adjustments the state is making and are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating educator equity gaps.

## State Response

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

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/ndcsa2017.pdf>

2 For NCTQ's analysis of the role of student growth in North Dakota's teacher evaluation system, see <http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/NorthDakota-snapshot>.

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.

4 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.

5 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.