



Educator Equity in Nebraska's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Inclusion of Additional Data

Nebraska's ESSA state plan includes educator equity gap calculations for additional student subgroups. By calculating and reporting the rates at which certain subgroups of students are taught in rural schools or by teachers with different rates of tenure and turnover, among other characteristics, Nebraska illuminates additional educator equity gaps, which is an important first step in eliminating such educator equity gaps.

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Nebraska's definition of ineffective teacher is connected to its state evaluation system, which does not clearly require that districts include objective measures of student learning and growth as a measure for teacher effectiveness.² Because Nebraska's ineffective teacher definition does not clearly include an objective measure of student growth, Nebraska should amend its definition to require that every definition of ineffective teacher explicitly includes objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.³

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

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Nebraska defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than three full years of experience. Nebraska 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 the first two years of teaching.⁴

Timelines and Interim Targets

Although Nebraska's 2017-2026 Strategic Plan (which is included in Nebraska's ESSA state plan) has many timelines that help clarify the state's process for implementing strategies designed to eliminate existing educator equity gaps, Nebraska does not include interim targets for eliminating identified educator equity gaps in its Strategic Plan or in its broader ESSA state plan. Nebraska should amend its ESSA state plan to include interim targets so that the state and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

State Response

Nebraska declined to comment on the factual accuracy of this analysis.

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

² For NCTQ's analysis of the role of student growth in Nebraska's teacher evaluation system, see <https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Nebraska-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., 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.