



Educator Equity in Rhode Island's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Ineffective Teacher Definition

Rhode Island's strong definition of an ineffective teacher is based on its teacher evaluation system², which includes, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth that research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.³

Inclusion of Additional Data

Rhode Island's ESSA state plan specifically refers to its 2015 Educator Equity Plan, which includes educator equity gap calculations for educators holding emergency certificates and administrators' effectiveness, as well as for some of the statutory subgroups. By calculating and reporting the rates at which schools with high populations of low-income or minority students are taught and led by educators with these characteristics compared with schools with lower instances of poverty or fewer students of minority status, Rhode Island illuminates additional educator equity gaps, which is an important first step toward eliminating those educator equity gaps.

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Data

Although Rhode Island's 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Rhode Island'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, the state does not include rates at which students are taught by ineffective teachers in either its ESSA state plan or its 2015 Educator Equity Plan. Without these data, Rhode Island cannot demonstrate that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective teachers, nor can it guarantee that where such educator equity gaps exist, it is targeting its resources to ensure that they do not persist. Accordingly, Rhode Island should amend its ESSA state plan to include these data.

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Rhode Island defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than three years of teaching experience. Rhode Island 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 Target Transparency

Although Rhode Island includes some timelines in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Rhode Island's ESSA state plan), interim targets for closing these educator equity gaps are not included and most dates have since passed. Rhode Island should amend its ESSA state plan to include interim targets and updated timelines so that the state and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating educator equity gaps.

State Response

Rhode Island affirmed the factual accuracy of this analysis.

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

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