



Educator Equity in Utah's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Although Utah does not explicitly include a definition of inexperienced teacher in its ESSA state plan, the state includes data demonstrating the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by first-year teachers, among other data. Therefore, Utah's ESSA state plan includes data that functionally define inexperienced teacher as a teacher in his or her first year of teaching. This definition is supported by research that demonstrates that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.²

Inclusion of Additional Data

Utah's ESSA state plan includes educator equity gap calculations for students at rural or non-rural schools, district, or charter schools who are taught by teachers with three or less years of experience, as well as for some of the statutory subgroups. By calculating and reporting the rates at which schools with high populations of low-income, rural-dwelling, nontraditional funding, or minority students are taught by teachers with specific characteristics compared with schools with lower instances of poverty or fewer students of minority status, Utah illuminates additional educator equity gaps, which is the first step toward eliminating those educator equity gaps.

Promising Strategies

Utah intends to implement promising, potentially high-impact strategies designed to eliminate its existing educator equity gaps, including providing bonuses to teachers that teach in the state's highest poverty schools if they are deemed highly effective according to Utah's teacher evaluation system.

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Utah does not provide a definition of ineffective teacher in its ESSA state plan. The state should develop a definition of ineffective teacher that requires districts to include, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth, such as those that are included in Utah's educator evaluation system³, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.⁴

Although Utah'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, Utah does not include rates at which students are taught by ineffective teachers in its ESSA state plan. Without these data, Utah can neither demonstrate that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by ineffective teachers, nor can it ensure that where such educator equity gaps exist, it is targeting its resources to ensure that they do not persist. Utah should amend its ESSA state plan to include these data.

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/utconsolidatedstateplan.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 <https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Utah-snapshot>

⁴ 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.



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Timelines and Interim Targets

Utah does not include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps in its ESSA state plan. Utah should amend its ESSA state plan to include timelines and interim targets so that the state and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating existing educator equity gaps.

State Response

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