



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

## Strengths

### Ineffective Teacher Definition

Wyoming's strong definition of 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 a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.<sup>3</sup>

## Opportunities

### Ineffective, Inexperienced, and Out-of-Field Teacher Data

Wyoming's ESSA state plan does not include data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers. Some data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by out-of-field and inexperienced teachers are publicly available at: <https://edu.wyoming.gov/data/>; however, data on ineffective teachers are not collected and publicly reported.

To ensure maximum transparency and accessibility for the full range of stakeholders involved in the ESSA state plan development and implementation process, as well as to help ensure that Wyoming is calculating and reporting all required data under ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), Wyoming should amend its ESSA state plan to include these data and, in the case of ineffective teacher data, to include the timeline for calculating and reporting these data. Calculating and reporting these rates is a critically important first step in eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

In addition, Wyoming's ESSA state plan indicates that for the purposes of calculating whether disproportionalities exist in the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by out-of-field or inexperienced teachers, it considers any rates in excess of 5 percent to constitute an equity gap. Wyoming should consider whether this threshold is appropriately rigorous, as it would enable up to 5 percent of low-income and minority students in Wyoming to be taught indefinitely by out-of-field or inexperienced teachers without Wyoming formally designating an educator equity gap and, therefore, without Wyoming necessarily taking any action to eliminate this disproportionality.

### Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Wyoming defines an inexperienced teacher as a teacher with less than three years of teaching experience. Wyoming 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.<sup>4</sup>

### Timelines and Interim Targets

Wyoming does not include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps in its ESSA state plan. Wyoming 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 educator equity gaps.

## State Response

Wyoming affirmed the factual accuracy of this analysis.

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

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