



Educator Equity in Alaska's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Alaska's strong definition of an inexperienced teacher as a teacher who is in the first year of practice and has no previous experience leading classroom instruction other than student teaching or a similar preparation experience is supported by research demonstrating that teachers experience the greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.²

Opportunities

Ineffective Teacher Definition and Data

Alaska's definition of an ineffective teacher is two-fold and includes: 1) any teacher who was on a plan of improvement under its teacher evaluation system, or was notified that his or her continued employment in the district was contingent on the implementation of a plan of improvement and then resigned, or 2) a tenured teacher who was receiving district support or a plan of professional growth under its evaluation system. However, because Alaska's ineffective teacher definition is based on its evaluation system, which does not include objective measures of student growth³, Alaska should amend its definition of an ineffective teacher to include objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically important component of measuring teacher quality.⁴

Although Alaska's ESSA state plan includes data regarding out-of-field and inexperienced teachers, Alaska's ESSA state plan does not currently include data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective teachers. Instead, Alaska's ESSA state plan indicates that it currently collects the data necessary to calculate the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by ineffective teachers at the district level, and that it intends to collect these data, at the earliest, in 2018 at the school level. During the 2017-2018 school year, Alaska should amend its ESSA state plan to include data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective teachers at the district level; during the 2018-2019 school year, Alaska should amend its ESSA state plan to include these data at the school level. Calculating and reporting these rates is a critically important first step in eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

Timelines and Interim Targets

Although Alaska's ESSA state plan includes some ordinal phases and steps by which to eliminate its identified equity gaps, the phases do not contain specific dates or interim targets for eliminating existing educator equity gaps. Alaska should amend its ESSA state plan to include timelines and interim targets, so that Alaska and its stakeholders are able to ensure adequate accountability for eliminating educator equity gaps.

State Response

Alaska affirmed the factual accuracy of this analysis.

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/akconsolidatedstateplan.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 For NCTQ's analysis of the role of student growth in Alaska's teacher evaluation system, see <https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Alaska-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.