



Educator Equity in Mississippi's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Ineffective Teacher Definition

Mississippi's definition of an ineffective teacher is based on its teacher evaluation system, which will include in the 2018-2019 school year, among other measures, objective measures of student learning and growth, which research demonstrates are a critically-important component of measuring teacher quality.²

Inclusion of Additional Data

Mississippi's ESSA state plan includes educator equity gap calculations for students based on teachers' attributes, including gender, race, and ethnicity, 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 by more or less diverse educators compared with schools with lower instances of poverty or fewer students of minority status, Mississippi illuminates additional educator equity gaps.³ With these additional data as well as the inclusion of ineffective rates in future data reporting, Mississippi can begin to take important steps toward eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

Opportunities

Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Mississippi defines an inexperienced teacher as a licensed teacher who has been employed for three years or less. Mississippi 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

Ineffective Teacher Data

Although Mississippi's 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Mississippi's ESSA state plan) includes data regarding out-of-field and inexperienced teachers, neither Mississippi's ESSA state plan nor its 2015 Educator Equity Plan includes data demonstrating whether low-income and minority students are taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective teachers. Further, the data Mississippi provided in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan is from the 2014-2015 school year and should be updated to reflect the current status of educator equity within Mississippi. Mississippi indicates that it plans to carefully monitor its effectiveness data to ensure that low-income and minority students are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective teachers. Mississippi should move forward with its work to calculate, report, and monitor these data, as doing so is a critically important first step in eliminating any existing educator equity gaps.

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

2 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.

3 See, e.g., Egalite, A. J., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. A. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 45, 44-52; Goldhaber, D., & Hansen, M. (2010). Race, gender, and teacher testing: How informative a tool is teacher licensure testing? *American Educational Research Journal*, 47; Dee, T. S. (2004). Teachers, race, and student achievement in a randomized experiment. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1), 195-210.

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.



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Timelines and Interim Targets

Although Mississippi includes targets for increasing teacher diversity in the state by 2025, the state does not include timelines and interim targets for eliminating its identified educator equity gaps in its ESSA state plan. Mississippi incorporated a timeline for eliminating its existing educator equity gaps in its 2015 Educator Equity Plan (which is specifically referenced in Mississippi's ESSA state plan), but all of those dates have since passed. Mississippi 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

Mississippi was helpful in providing facts that enhanced this analysis.