



Educator Equity in the District of Columbia's ESSA State Plan¹

Strengths

Proposed Ineffective Teacher Definition

Although the District of Columbia (D.C.) does not provide its definition of an ineffective teacher with its ESSA state plan, it commits to publish minimum standards for reporting teacher data that would apply to all of its school districts. As of June 2017, D.C. has proposed a strong definition of an ineffective teacher that is based on its teacher evaluation system², which includes, among multiple measures, objective measures of student learning and growth that research demonstrates are critically important to measuring teacher quality.³

Proposed Inexperienced Teacher Definition

Although D.C. does not provide its definition of an inexperienced teacher within its ESSA state plan, it commits to publish minimum standards for reporting teacher data that would apply to all of its school districts. As of June 2017, D.C. has proposed a strong definition of an inexperienced teacher as a teacher in the first year of teaching or an ineffective teacher in the second year of teaching. This definition is supported by research demonstrating that teachers experience their greatest increase in effectiveness in the first two years of teaching.⁴

Promising Strategies

D.C. intends to implement multiple, promising, potentially high-impact strategies designed to eliminate its potential equity gaps, including: 1) using data to identify teacher staffing needs and to support strategic staffing efforts and 2) providing high-need schools with high-quality, evidence-based professional development.

Opportunities

Educator Equity Gap Data, Timeline and Interim Target Transparency

D.C.'s ESSA state plan does not include data demonstrating the rates at which low-income and minority students are taught by ineffective, inexperienced or out-of-field teachers, nor does it include timelines and interim targets for eliminating existing educator equity gaps; instead, these data are included in D.C.'s 2015 State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (Educator Equity Plan). To increase transparency and to ensure that key stakeholders that are part of the ESSA state plan process have an opportunity to engage with these data, timelines and interim targets, D.C. should amend its state plan to fully incorporate this information.

State Response

D.C. was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis. The state added that the revised ESSA state plan template was significantly shorter than the original ESSA state plan template and that, in the process of adapting its state plan to the new template, D.C. made several modifications. D.C. further provided that although some elements referred to as part of NCTQ's analysis were ultimately not included in D.C.'s final ESSA state plan submission, these elements remain in D.C.'s plans as a state.

1 <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/dccsa2017.pdf>

2 For NCTQ's analysis of the role of student growth in D.C.'s teacher evaluation system, see <http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/DistrictOfColumbia-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., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Rockoff, J., & Wyckoff, J. (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., and 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.