



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

December 13, 2019

Patrick Rooney  
Deputy Director  
Office of State Support  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave. S.W., Rm 3W200, LBJ  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Dear Mr. Rooney:

In its August 1, 2019 approval of [Pennsylvania's amended Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Consolidated State Plan](#), the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requested additional information on Pennsylvania's efforts to ensure that low income and minority students attending Title I schools are equitably served by effective educators. This letter responds with: 1) the first year of building level effectiveness reporting based on the commonwealth's USDE-approved measurement approach as outlined in our May 31, 2019 amendment request; and 2) additional information on Pennsylvania's efforts to increase the supply of highly effective educators, especially for historically underserved students. While ESSA-required equity reporting involves measures of educator effectiveness, educator experience, and educator certification, this communication focuses specifically on the effectiveness measure in response to USDE's request.

## Overview

Consistent with commitments in the Department's January 2018 approved Consolidated State Plan, Pennsylvania convened regional stakeholder forums during the spring of 2018 to gather input on potential metrics to meet ESSA's educator effectiveness reporting requirements. Additionally, the Department commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to pair stakeholder feedback with relevant policy analysis and research. [AIR prepared a report](#) that summarized the findings of the stakeholder sessions and identified five broad measures that were consistently cited by stakeholder participants as possible and desirable elements in operationalizing a definition of an effective—or, conversely, an ineffective—teacher:

1. Student Growth
2. Observation of Professional Practice
3. Learning Environment
4. Professional Development
5. College and Career Readiness/On Track Measures

The Department then evaluated each of these elements in the context of three additional filters:

1. Can the measurement be responsibly implemented with existing or future data collections (*i.e.*, is the measure quantifiable)?
2. Is the measurement applicable to all educators, regardless of certification area and teaching assignment?

- Is the measurement supported by relevant research (*i.e.*, is the measurement associated with Pennsylvania's goals around equity and student outcomes)?

Based on these considerations, Pennsylvania identified four data elements to inform building-level educator effectiveness reports. These elements align with recommendations from the Department's stakeholder engagement, tie to existing and well-validated reporting instruments approved by the Department, and reflect rigorous research (Gallagher, 2004; Kimball, White, Milanowski, & Borman, 2004; Milanowski, 2004). The elements include a locally selected student growth measure and three pieces of evidence drawn from professional observations related to classroom environment, student instruction, and professional responsibility.

These measures comprise the majority of the data elements undergirding the state's educator evaluation system and the entirety of the data elements applicable to all educators, regardless of teaching assignment; however, aggregate, building-level data on rates of effective and ineffective educators are separate and distinct from the educator-level evaluation determinations derived under state law.

### Educator Effectiveness Reporting

Educator effectiveness data for purposes of building level equity reporting for school year 2017-18 are summarized below.

<b>Educator Effectiveness by Low-Income Quartile (School-Level)</b>					
Low-Income Quartile	Count: Ineffective	Count: Effective	Total Educator Count	Percent: Ineffective	Percent: Effective
[Low Pct. Low-Income] 1	362	14945	15307	2.4%	97.6%
2	473	13807	14280	3.3%	96.7%
3	921	14129	15050	6.1%	93.9%
[High Pct. Low-Income] 4	3472	12505	15977	21.7%	78.3%
Total	5228	55386	60614	8.6%	91.4%

<b>Educator Effectiveness by Non-White Quartile (School-Level)</b>					
Non-White Quartile	Count: Ineffective	Count: Effective	Total Educator Count	Percent: Ineffective	Percent: Effective
[Low Pct. Non-White] 1	419	11702	12121	3.5%	96.5%
2	399	14735	15134	2.6%	97.4%
3	1175	16498	17673	6.6%	93.4%
[High Pct. Non-White] 4	3235	12451	15686	20.6%	79.4%
Total	5228	55386	60614	8.6%	91.4%

For this initial year of reporting, Title I schools across all quartiles—both for students in poverty and non-white students—reported that large majorities of educators were considered effective for purposes

of ESSA’s building level equity reporting. Pennsylvania also recognizes that this initial report is suggestive of significant gaps among quartiles, with the highest poverty and most diverse Title I schools reporting ineffective rates in excess of 20 percent.

**Timeline for Future Reporting**

Pennsylvania will report effectiveness data for the 2018-19 school year by February 28, 2020, and believes this second year of reporting—the first year of reporting to reflect USDE’s approval of the state’s measurement approach—can inform more definitive assessments of the rates at which historically underserved students are served by educators who are considered effective or ineffective for ESSA reporting purposes. Effectiveness data will be reported alongside data on the provision of experienced and in-field educators to ensure comprehensive evaluation of educator equity initiatives. The Department will continue to offer technical assistance and training to support local education agencies (LEAs) in making timely and accurate reports for all three components of educator equity reporting. Public reporting as required under Section 1111(g)(1)(b) will occur via the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s publicly accessible website and in reports to the relevant standing committee of the State Board of Education.

**Initiatives to Advance Educator Supply and Equity**

Efforts to improve the consistency, utility, and validity of educator equity reporting are paired with an ambitious policy and programmatic agenda that aims to grow and diversify Pennsylvania’s education workforce. These initiatives recognize a steadily accruing evidence base around the importance of educator diversity for all students and especially students of color, the value of intensive clinical residency programs for improving educator and school leader preparation and retention, and the imperative for increased attention to the social and emotional wellness of both students and educators.

A summary of Pennsylvania’s initiatives to advance educator equity are detailed below.

Initiative	Focus
Strengthening K-12 and postsecondary partnerships	To foster conditions under which school improvement efforts can yield sustained improvements in student outcomes, the Department is partnering with LEAs to support their efforts to increase equitable access to effective educators. These partnerships support assessment of human capital needs in a diverse array of LEAs and schools, evaluation of the root causes of those needs, and implementation of evidence-based strategies to address these root causes.
Investing in innovative models	Over the past two years, Pennsylvania has awarded more than \$3 million in grants to 12 universities to support <a href="#">innovative teacher and school leader preparation programs</a> designed to expand, diversify, and strengthen the commonwealth’s educator workforce. Clinical residency programs must be developed in partnership with at least one LEA that serves high rates of historically underserved students or demonstrates chronic, multiple teacher shortages in key certification areas including special education and teaching English as a second language. To date, partnerships involve large urban school systems, charter school networks, and rural communities.

Initiative	Focus
	<p>In addition, the Department is partnering with the School District of Philadelphia and six institutions of higher education to implement a city-wide grow-your-own educator preparation program. Aspiring to Educate (A2E) includes discrete pathways for current SDP students interested in careers in education, as well as opportunities for adult and non-traditional aspiring educators. A2E aims to deepen clinical experiences for emerging educators; provide candidates with the knowledge, tools, and supports to be culturally responsive educators; and alleviate financial burdens associated with educator preparation.</p>
<p>Revising state-level educator preparation program standards</p>	<p>Pennsylvania’s State Board of Education is revising, for the first time since 2007, the body of state regulations (Chapter 49) that govern educator preparation program standards. Draft proposed regulations balance important flexibilities for LEAs with a commitment to rigorous standards for aspiring educators and preparing institutions alike; strengthen preservice experiences; and seek to hold preparation programs more accountable for improving the diversity and cultural responsiveness of the state’s education profession.</p>
<p>Providing Equity-Focused Educator Professional Development</p>	<p>The Department is providing targeted professional education (Act 48) and PA Inspired Leadership (PIL) courses to better ensure equitable instructional practices for all students. These courses include an explicit focus on topics such as culturally responsive practices and the impact of implicit bias in the classroom. In addition, through Chapter 49 reforms, increased requirements have been proposed for both LEA-level new educator Induction Plans and Professional Development Act 48 Plans. These plans would strengthen educator effectiveness surrounding culturally responsive instructional practices.</p>
<p>Supporting School Leaders</p>	<p>In recognition of the connection between school leadership and educator retention and effectiveness, the Department has trained more than 200 district superintendents and charter school chief school administrators through the Secretary’s Superintendents’ Academy, an intensive two-year professional development cohort program. The Academy provides leaders in high-poverty LEAs with the opportunity to engage in collaborative, research-based, executive-level leadership professional development.</p>
<p>Increasing School Improvement Supports</p>	<p>Pennsylvania schools designated for the most intensive category of school improvement (Comprehensive Support and Improvement) are provided intensive technical and financial support by the Department and partnering education agencies. This support includes a thorough needs assessment review and root cause analysis, strategies to address human capital needs, development of improvement plans inclusive of evidence-based strategies, and integration of quarterly monitoring practices. Meanwhile, a new comprehensive planning portal provides all schools with access to an evidence-based systemic improvement process through an online system.</p>

## Conclusion

Pennsylvania's approach to educator equity reporting draws on a consensus view—both in the academic literature and among the state's education stakeholders—of the conditions and competencies that matter for improved student outcomes; recognizes that educator performance increases steadily during the first years of teaching; and lays the groundwork for more comprehensive reporting on properly-certified, in-field educators. The first year of reporting for the effectiveness strand of equity reporting is suggestive of gaps between high- and lower-need schools. These data will be paired with school year 2018-19 data to establish a baseline for future reporting; to inform evaluation of the Department's policy and programmatic initiatives with respect to educator supply, equity, retention, and advancement; and to help Pennsylvania identify and steadily close gaps in the provision of effective, experienced, and properly-credential educators.

Pennsylvania thanks USDE for its partnership in ESSA implementation as the state finalized its measurement approach for educator effectiveness reporting.

Sincerely,



Noe Ortega  
Deputy Secretary

cc: Pedro Rivera, Secretary of Education  
Karen Molchanow, Executive Director, State Board of Education  
Adam Schott, Special Advisor to the Secretary of Education  
Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education  
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