

Pennsylvania’s State Plan for Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators for All Students

Executive Summary

Background. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requires each state to submit a state plan¹ by June 1, 2015. In guidance provided by the USDE, “a state’s plan must describe the steps it will take to ensure that “*poor and minority children* are not taught at higher rates than other children by **inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers** and the measures that it will use to evaluate and publicly report on its progress with respect to such steps.” (emphasis added)

Each state’s plan is to include the following six (6) requirements:

1. Describe and document stakeholder engagement
2. Analyze data to identify “equity gaps”
3. Explain the likely causes of the equity gaps
4. Identify strategies to eliminate equity gaps
5. Describe measures to evaluate progress in eliminating equity gaps
6. Describe how the state will publicly report on its progress

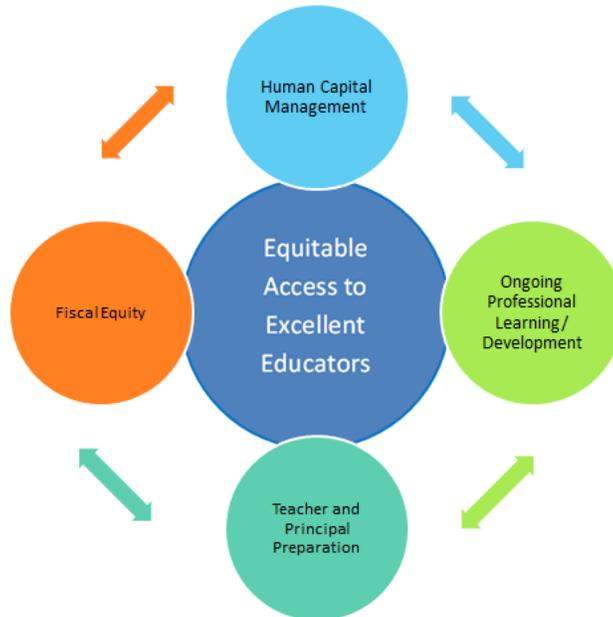
An agency external to the USDE provided technical assistance, coaching, and feedback. To develop Pennsylvania’s plan, staff used written guidance from USDE, a sample educator equity plan template, a sample plan prepared by Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, American Institutes for Research, and Council of Chief State School Officers; and ideas that were obtained during a conference devoted to preparing state equity plans.

At a minimum a state’s equitable access plan was to address the statutory requirements related to “poor and minority students” being taught by “inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers” and to define these terms, along with other key terms associated with the state plan.

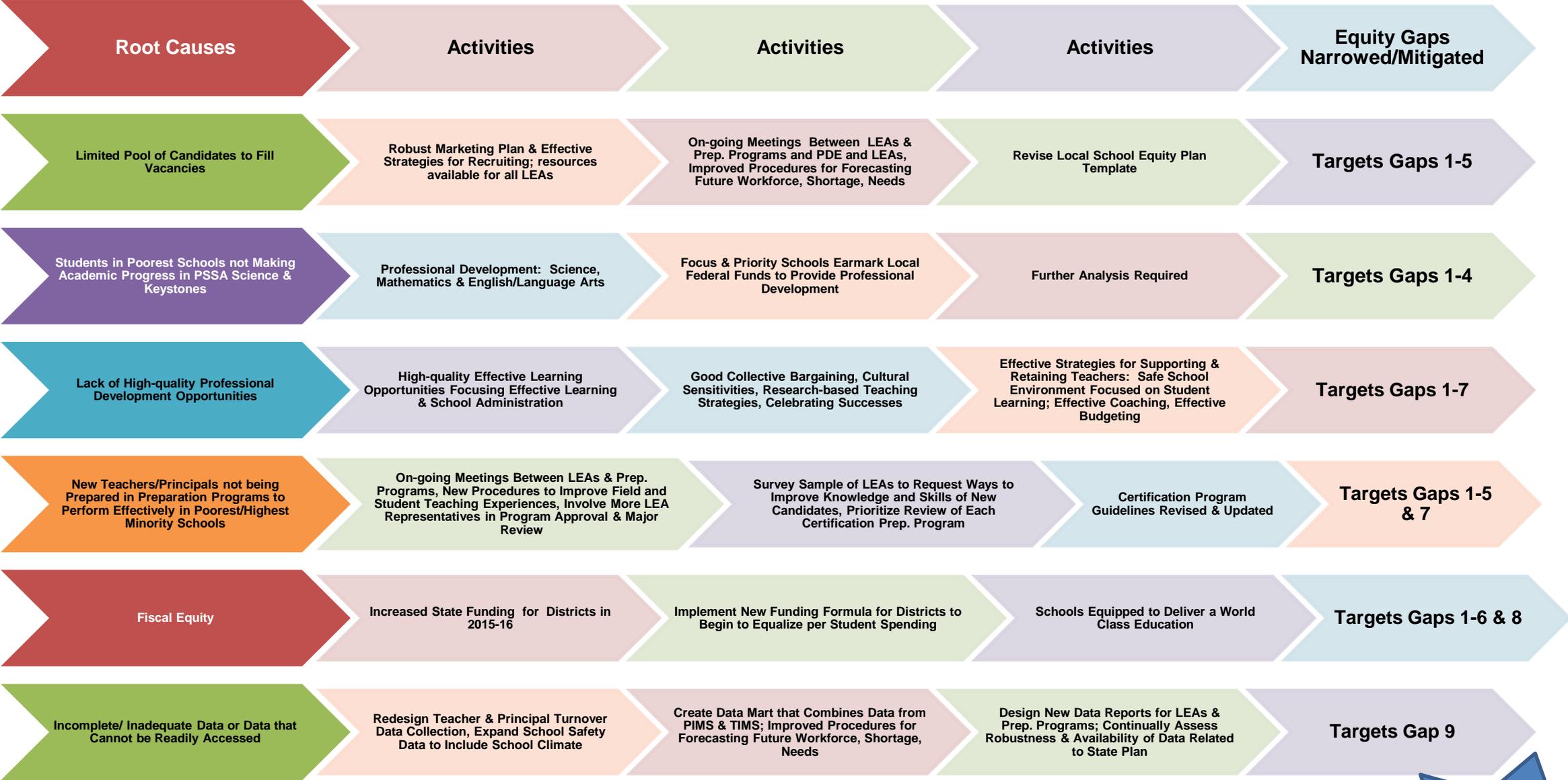
Pennsylvania’s Theory of Action to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators for All Children. Pennsylvania’s theory of action is built around four strategies, starting with strategically improving the management of Pennsylvania’s human capital in our schools—especially in the poorest and highest minority schools--to enable them to recruit, hire, retain and support a pool of highly effective, qualified, fully certified teachers, principals and other school staff. Implementation of all strategies will be monitored to identify which are more effective in mitigating Pennsylvania’s equity gaps; progress will be reported first to Pennsylvania’s equity stakeholders and second to the public; and adjustments will be made if desired results are not achieved.

¹ The plan is required by section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

Pennsylvania's Theory of Action



Activities will focus on eliminating the underlying causes that result in Pennsylvania's eight equity gaps; a ninth gap dedicated to incomplete, inadequate or data that cannot be readily accessed. The schematic below depicts Pennsylvania's equity gaps, root causes, and activities. A complete list of the equity gaps follows.



Equitable Access to Excellent Educators for All Pennsylvania Students



Equity gaps identified as a result of data analysis; the numbers below coincide with the gaps that are targeted by activities designed to overcome each root cause pictured above:

1. Students in Philadelphia School District's poorest and highest minority schools are being taught by unqualified, not highly qualified teachers
2. Students in Pennsylvania's poorest and highest minority charter schools are being taught by unqualified, not highly qualified teachers
3. Seventy-seven (77) percent of all type 01 emergency permits issued in Pennsylvania, excluding all trade/technical subjects, are issued in core academic subjects, affects Pennsylvania's highly qualified/not highly qualified percentages; 303 or nearly 35% of the 872 emergency permits are issued in special education; it is important to note that the subjects of mathematics, English language arts, and the sciences are all included in Pennsylvania's System of Statewide Assessment; students are also required to pass Keystone exams in Algebra I, biology and literature in order to graduate from high school beginning in 2017
4. Qualified principals are not hired by all schools in Pennsylvania; a total of 21 principals in 2013-14 served on 01 emergency permits
5. School nurses (a total of 49 01 emergency permits) and guidance counselors (a total of 19 01 emergency permits) are being hired on a type 01 emergency permit; these individuals are unqualified since they do not hold valid, appropriate Pennsylvania certificates
6. Schools have inconsistent leadership or have high rates of turnover
7. Some teacher preparation programs fail to graduate high quality and well-prepared new teachers for today's classrooms, including the poorest and highest minority schools
8. Inequity of financial resources
9. Incomplete/inadequate data or data not easily accessed in a timely manner