Using Data to Identify Opportunity Gaps

Introduction

Since the adoption of No Child Left Behind, states have been collecting a variety of data elements on student demographics and the impact of teachers and schools on student learning. In numerous states that have explored these data through the lens of equitable distribution of teachers, the data have consistently shown that low-income students and students of color are disproportionately served by ineffective, inexperienced, and/or out-of-field teachers. [1]

The education community partnered with the civil rights community to address this inequity for students. This partnership resulted in the U.S. Department of Education to require states to submit plans for *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators*. These equity plans were further strengthened by being required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The plans require states to submit data on the gaps of access to effective educators with different groups of students. The plans also require states to provide information on how they will address these gaps in the future.

To address these equity gaps, states will need the power of analytics to quickly visualize where gaps exist and identify where educators and policymakers need to focus their efforts. This document serves as an initial exploration of what data will need to be provided to district and school administrators to add to their understanding of teaching and schooling effectiveness, and ultimately assist in informing planning and decision-making under their purview.

Excellent Educators for All Initiative

Access to Effective Educators

Civil Rights Community

Education Stakeholders

Every Student Succeeds Act

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[1] Heather G. Peske and Kati Haycock, "Teaching Inequality: How Poor and Minority Students are Shortchanged on Teacher Quality" (Washington: The Education Trust, 2006) available at http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED494820.pdf

A Decision Guide: Data Requirements and Options

As states consider how to use data to identify gaps when developing plans, data systems, and solution designs, a variety of decisions will need to be made. There are many different ways to define equity gaps, access gaps, or opportunity gaps. State Departments of Education will need to identify what data are available and of interest for this type of reporting and research. Below is a discussion guide divided by topical area for states to use in making these decisions.

Area of Consideration	Questions to Consider
Stakeholder Engagement	What policymakers need to be engaged for decision making?
	Are there current policies/laws in place that need to be addressed to support this work?
	What entities and/or individuals will provide the data? (SEA vs. LEAs)
	Is the data currently available from these individuals?
	Are there capacity issues for additional collection?
	Who will use the data?
	What training needs to be provided for users to get the most out of the data?
	Is there an appetite for this type of reporting? If not, how can we create it?
Data Definitions	How is my state defining equity gaps?
	How is my state defining teacher characteristics? (Inexperienced, Ineffective, and Out-of-Field)
	How is my state defining student characteristics? (Low-Income, Students of Color, and Highly-Mobile)
Policy & Reporting	What policy levers do states have to ensure that districts look at and use this data to make changes?
	What role does public reporting and transparency have in this? Is my state including gap information in school report cards?
	Does my state have a data system in place to allow for secure access to gap data that gets down to the teacher or student level with role based permissions?

As states grapple with these questions, they can learn from their peers in other states that are developing similar systems. Educators and policymakers desire to analyze the equitable access issue from a variety of different angles using data elements related to school-level, teacher-level and student-level characteristics. This information can be paired with geographic information to provide "geospatial" comparisons across schools, districts, and regions of a state. The table on the following page outlines options for different dimensions of data elements that could be included.

Sample of Possible Data Elements to Include

Student Characteristics	Teacher Characteristics	Principal & School Characteristics	Comparison Groups

Low Income Designations
• Free & Reduced Price Lunch, Title I
• Income of $23,000 or less annually for a family of 4
• Economically Disadvantaged
• TANF/SNAP, Homeless, or Migrant
 	
Students of Color
• Race and Ethnicity
• Identified as Non-Majority
 	
New ESSA Subgroup Requirements
• Homeless
• Foster Youth
• Military Connected
 	
Other
• Achievement Level
• English Language Learner
• Special Education
• Per Pupil Expenditure
• CTE Concentrator
• Gifted
	Inexperienced
	• Number of Years (Less than 1 to Less than 4)
	• Type of License or Certificate: Interim, Temp, Emergency, or Provisional
	
	Ineffective
	• Non Highly Qualified
	• No Certification, No License, or Long-Term Sub, No NBCT
	• Ineffective on VAM or Evaluation System
	
	Out of Field
	• No Certification or License in Subject
	• Non Highly Qualified
	• No Content Endorsement
	• Teaching w/Waiver
	
	Other
	• Turnover
	• Mobility
	• Salary
	• Absences
	• Demographics
	• Degree Type
	• Induction
	• Type of Preparation Program- Fellowship, Residency, Non-Traditional, etc.
		Principal
		• Years of Experience:
		  • as a Principal
		  • as an Assistant Principal
		  • as a Teacher
		• Certification Type
		• Degree Type
		• Race/Ethnicity
		• Salary
		• Evaluation
		• Type of Preparation Program- Fellowship, Residency, Non-Traditional, etc.
		• Professional Development
		• Mentorship
		
		School
		• Urban, Suburban, Rural
		• School Size
		• Elementary, Middle, Intermediate, High
		• Calendar Type: Year Round, Traditional
		• Average Class Size
		• Title I, % Economically Disadvantaged
		• School Growth/VAM
		• Number of Teachers
		• # of Suspensions, Expulsions
		• Working Conditions Survey
		• Summer Programs
		• College Attainment & Persistence Rates
			Classifications
			• Quartiles
			• Quintiles
			• Categorical
			• Percentages such as top/bottom 5%
			• Other
			
			Geospatial Gap Analysis
			• Statewide- Across Districts
			• Regional- Across Districts or Schools
			• Districtwide- Across Schools
			• Schoolwide- Across Classrooms