



TO: Higher Education Committee
P-12 Education Committee

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SUBJECT: New York State's Updated Equity Plan

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SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Staff will review updates to New York State's equity plan. This plan, required of all state educational agencies (SEAs) that receive Title I, Part A funds, must be submitted to the United States Education Department (USED) by June 1, 2015.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For information and required by federal statute.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before a joint meeting of the Higher Education Committee and P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the April 2015 meeting.

Background Information

Background and History

The Department has long been dedicated to high quality education and student access to great teachers and principals. To coordinate an intricate system of public, independent, and proprietary colleges and universities, the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the higher education community, develops and adopts the Statewide Plan for Higher Education every eight years, setting system goals and objectives. In

2005, the Board adopted the Statewide Plan for Higher Education, 2004-2012 (<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/swp/>), which identified a commitment to an adequate supply of qualified teachers, school leaders, and other school professionals as one of 13 key priorities for the higher education systems in New York State.

In 2006, USED determined that, although most states had made significant progress towards the No Child Left Behind requirement of having all classes in core academic subjects taught by a highly qualified teacher by the end of the 2005-06 school year, none was likely to meet the goal. As a result, USED requested that states submit a plan detailing the actions the SEA and the state's local educational agencies (LEA) would take to ensure that, during the 2006-07 school year and beyond, all teachers of core academic subjects would be highly qualified, and that poor and minority children would be taught at the same rates as other children by highly qualified and experienced teachers.

In response to the USED's 2006 request, and complementing the foundation laid by the Statewide Plan for Higher Education, the Department submitted a state equity plan in July 2006 (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/index.html>) under ESEA section 1111(b)(8)(C). In pursuit of the goals laid out by USED and New York's Statewide Plan for Higher Education, the Department determined the level of educational opportunity using pupil-teacher ratio, median teacher salary, annual teacher turnover rates, percent of teachers teaching out of certification area, percent of educators with a master's degree plus 30 hours or a doctorate degree, median years of experience, and teachers' highly qualified (HQT) status.

In 2010, as part of the Department's federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant (Subsection D(3) at <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/application/criteriapriorities.pdf>), New York committed to the equitable distribution of teachers and principals so that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools would have equitable access to teachers and principals who received Highly Effective ratings (and would not be served by teachers and principals who received Ineffective ratings at higher rates than other students). The State also set out to increase the number and percentage of effective teachers teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, including science, technology, engineering and math (STEM fields), special education, and teacher of English language learners.

While the goals in the Department's 2006 equity plan were consistent with the goals set forth under the 2010 RTTT application, in that both set out to ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals across the State, the Department's RTTT award required an update to our performance metrics to include new research findings about teacher effects on student achievement outcomes.

In this new framework, educator performance and impact on student learning joined existing indicators, such as experience, certification, and degrees obtained, in one comprehensive approach to educator talent management, including teaching and principal leadership standards and evaluation metrics, preparation and recruitment, continuous development and retention, and extending the reach of top talent.

United States Department of Education Equity Plan and Data Update

Secretary Duncan announced in July 2014 that USED would ask each SEA to submit an updated plan describing 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,” as required by section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

These plans build upon previous plans filed by states and, per USED guidance and following the USED definitions outlined below, the Department’s Equity Plan must, at a minimum, calculate equity gaps between the rates at which:

1. Economically disadvantaged students are taught by “inexperienced,” “out-of-field,” or “unqualified” teachers compared to the rates at which other children are taught by these teachers; and
2. Minority students are taught by “inexperienced,” “out-of-field” or “unqualified” teachers compared to the rates at which other children are taught by these teachers.

Drawing on data from the 2011-12 school year, obtained using existing federal sources, USED published "Educator Equity Profiles" for every state and District of Columbia Public Schools. State-specific Educator Equity Profiles can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/1w9QtCL>. New York State’s profile indicates that teachers in the State’s highest poverty quartile and highest minority quartile schools¹ are more likely to be uncertified, inexperienced, considered not highly qualified, at the low end of the salary scale, and absent 10 or more days during the school year.

According to the USED published equity profile, the average teacher in a highest poverty quartile school in New York earns \$66,138 a year, compared to \$87,161 for the average teacher in the lowest poverty quartile schools. (These numbers are adjusted to account for regional differences in the cost of living.) Information in the New York profile also suggests that students in high poverty schools are nearly three times more likely to have a first-year teacher, 22 times more likely to have an unlicensed teacher, and 11 times more likely to have a teacher who is not highly qualified.

New York State’s updated equity plan – “New York State’s Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to the Most Effective Educators, 2015” – serves to outline strategies for how the State will continue to work with LEAs to ensure every student has equitable access to the most effective educators. Consistent with ESEA sections 1111(a)(1), 1111(b)(8)(c), and 9304(a)(3)(B), a State plan must:

- Identify and calculate equity gaps (minimum analyses described above)
- Explain the likely cause(s) of the identified equity gaps (root-cause analysis)
- Describe the strategies the SEA will implement to eliminate identified equity gaps

¹ 836 (72%) of New York State’s 1,162 highest poverty quartile schools and 947 (81%) of the 1,162 highest minority quartile schools are in NYC.

- Describe how the SEA will monitor, evaluate, and report progress towards eliminating the identified equity gaps
- Describe the steps the SEA took to consult with stakeholders

The Department is required to submit a final updated equity plan to USED by June 1, 2015.

Strategies to Improve Equitable Access in New York State

The Department believes that improving teaching and learning and increasing equitable access can be achieved by improving LEAs' talent management systems. The \$83 million Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) competitive grant program was intended to help applicants integrate evaluations into a coherent system of support for educators throughout their careers. Through collaboration between labor and management, LEAs participating in the STLE grant program developed or enhanced a comprehensive systems approach to continuously meet the needs of schools and students and ensure more equitable access to the most effective educators.

Root Cause Analysis

The establishment of STLE provided the Department and LEAs with significant opportunities to engage in conversation about educational equity with stakeholders such as teachers, principals, superintendents, boards of education, local legislators, parents, and students. Just as importantly, STLE enabled stakeholders to engage with one another around the urgent issue of increasing student access to the most effective educators through events such as regular peer-to-peer professional learning communities and the July 2014 Engage-Envision-Elevate: From Initiatives to Systems Convening (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/engage-envision-elevate-initiatives-systems>).

Through the collaborative sharing of lessons learned through the STLE program and research, the Department has determined that the following five common talent management struggles contribute significantly to equitable access:

1. Preparation
2. Hiring and recruitment
3. Professional development and growth
4. Selective retention
5. Extending the reach of top talent to the most high-need students

Although the Department believes the challenges described here are reflective of broad "root causes" for the statewide equity gaps, it is still important for each LEA to examine their unique equity issues and potential root causes. In talking with superintendents, principals, and teachers involved in STLE, the Department was able to see that equity gaps that appear similar across contexts may in fact stem from different root causes in various LEAs. For example, one district struggling with inequitable access for low-performing students may find that inequities stem from a pool of low quality applicants, whereas a second district may find that they have a large pool of high

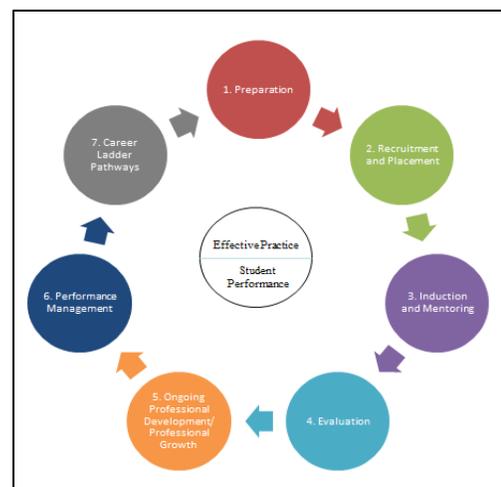
quality applicants but tend to lose top talent early in their careers to neighboring districts who offer more leadership opportunities for teachers.

Strategies to Eliminate Identified Equity Gaps

The Department believes the overall quality of teaching and learning can be raised through the implementation of comprehensive systems of talent management, including sound implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation system. Such systems develop programs that focus on various elements of a strategically planned Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) Continuum, including preparation, recruitment and placement, induction and mentoring, evaluation, ongoing professional development/professional growth, performance management, and career ladders. In doing so, these systems can address common talent management challenges that serve as barriers to student achievement and equal education opportunity.

The TLE Continuum

1. **Preparation:** – Collaboration or formal partnership between LEAs and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) or other eligible partners.
2. **Recruitment and Placement** – Activities to attract the most effective educators to LEAs and the schools that need them.
3. **Induction and Mentoring** – Individualized support for new and early career educators to advance their professional practice and improve their ability to produce positive student outcomes.
4. **Evaluation** – Activities and programs to support the continued enhancement of LEAs' evaluation systems.
5. **Professional Development/Growth** – Differentiated ongoing support for teacher and principal effectiveness based on evidence of educator practice and student learning.
6. **Performance Management** – Use of evaluation data in development, compensation, and employment decisions.
7. **Career Ladder Pathways** – Opportunities for career advancement for educators identified as Effective or Highly Effective.



STLE LEAs have been able to better address student achievement outcomes and increase the quality, quantity, and diversity of their teacher and principal workforce through the comprehensive use of the TLE Continuum components, rather than viewing each as an individual initiative. Extensive site visits, regular reporting, and status update calls have allowed the Department to better understand the ways in which STLE grantees have designed career ladder pathways that provide career advancement opportunities and support efforts across multiple elements of the TLE Continuum while recognizing and rewarding excellence. This work has been noted favorably in interviews, focus group discussions, and written reflections by educators serving in such

roles through STLE. (Watch this video to see how educators across New York State define teacher leadership: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/what-is-a-teacher-leader>).

The Board received an update about the STLE program in January 2014² and heard from panels of grantees in November 2014³ and March 2015⁴. Panelists shared examples of comprehensive systems approaches to talent management practices and lessons learned through the STLE grant which form the foundation of strategies found in New York's updated equity plan. The Board was able to see how teacher and principal leadership in career ladder pathways, connected with the evaluation system and analysis of student learning, has the power and potential to address the educational inequities across the State and to close achievement gaps. (For resources around the development of career ladder pathways visit the "Improving Practice" landing pages at: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/improving-practice> and <https://www.engageny.org/resource/initiatives-systems-developing-sustainable-career-pathways-and-leadership-roles>).

Using the TLE Continuum as a framework, input from diverse stakeholders, and the foundation laid by New York State's RTTT commitments, the Department will continue to support all LEAs, beyond the original STLE grantees, in the enhanced utilization of evaluation results to design and implement comprehensive talent management systems. This work revolves around three key components:

Key Component 1 (Educator Preparation): The Department will continue to support and monitor improvements to access and entry into the profession, such as the redesign of teacher and principal preparation programs through performance-based assessments, clinically grounded instruction, and innovative new educator certification pathways.

Key Component 2 (Educator Evaluation): With the foundation laid by Education Law §3012-c, the Department will continue to provide support and monitoring to LEAs as they implement enhanced teacher and principal evaluation systems that meaningfully differentiate the effectiveness of educators and inform employment decisions.

Key Component 3 (The TLE Continuum): The Department will provide resources and support to LEAs utilizing evaluation results in the design and implementation of robust career ladder pathways as part of their comprehensive and strategic use of the TLE Continuum.

² January 2014 Board Item: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/January2014/114p12hed1.pdf>; January 2014 presentation: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/January2014/P12HESTLE2.pdf>

³ November 2014 Board Item: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/November2014/1114p12hed2.pdf>; November 2014 presentation: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/November2014/HESTLE.pdf>

⁴ March 2015 Board Item: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2015Meetings/March/315p12hed1.pdf>; March 2015 presentation: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2015Meetings/March/TIPsPIPs.pdf>

The Department believes that the combination of strong preparation, meaningful teacher and principal evaluation systems, professional development, and career ladder pathways, as part of a comprehensive talent management system, are important parts of district-wide strategies to increase student achievement and equitable access. To support this work, the Department will disseminate Career Ladder Pathway Profiles that are being developed in conjunction with local LEAs. These profiles will highlight how various STLE grant recipients are working to address their diverse student achievement and talent management needs through the strategic use of comprehensive talent management systems and career ladder pathways. The Department is working to ensure that the profiles reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of our State and provide a powerful roadmap for schools and LEAs in developing our most important asset in K-12 education: teachers and principals.

Technical Assistance, Support, and Monitoring Efforts

The Department will provide focused guidance and support to LEAs as they continue to implement and refine their teacher and principal evaluation plans and as they begin to design and put in place systemic talent management strategies that ensure all students have equitable access to the most effective teachers and principals.

Educator Preparation: The Department has taken numerous steps to increase the quality of new teachers and principals such as creating new and more rigorous teacher and principal certification exams, piloting clinically rich teacher preparation programs that are deeply embedded in classroom practice with extended teaching residencies/internships in return for candidates' commitment to serve in a high-need school where there is a shortage of well-prepared teachers, and publicizing preparation program statistics to hold programs accountable for their candidates' success on certification exams.

The Department will also continue to expand upon the teacher and principal preparation program profiles that include demographics, certification exam performance, placement, and employment rates for teacher and principal graduates. Furthermore, the Department will work to provide feedback to preparation program providers about the impact of their candidates on teaching and learning.

Educator Evaluation: New York's recent teacher and principal evaluation legislation can support and help ensure equity in the classroom. Education Law §3012-c(1) requires that teacher and principal evaluations be a significant factor in decisions relating to promotion, retention, tenure, and differentiated support and professional development, and Education Law §3020-a provides LEAs with an expedited removal process. LEAs can use this leverage to ensure that those educators who are rated Developing or Ineffective are provided with the assistance they need to improve and make certain that each student has increased access to the most effective teachers and principals.

Department support and guidance around the evaluation system is provided through many processes, including, but not limited to, LEAs' submission of evaluation data, public disclosure of APPR data, analysis of APPR results, implementation of the APPR enhanced monitoring cycle, and the pilot use of the New York State-adapted

Quality Framework (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-adapted-quality-framework>). Through use of the Quality Framework, LEAs are able to reflect on APPR implementation at the local level, gauging system strength and determining priorities for improvement in support of improved teaching and learning.

The TLE Continuum: The Department will support and guide LEAs to use evaluation results to design and implement a comprehensive talent management strategy that addresses multiple components of the TLE Continuum, including robust career ladder pathways. The Department will provide technical assistance and support to LEAs through the potential provision of district-level equity reports, continued investments in the professional development of teachers and principals, and the ongoing facilitation of peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

The Department will continue to engage with experts and practitioners to develop and improve its work around educational equity and talent management. In October 2014, the Department assembled an STLE Advisory Board, comprised of superintendents from LEAs that represent the geographic and demographic diversity of New York State. STLE Advisory Board members have been asked to collaborate with and present to other stakeholder groups on the development of career ladder pathways, submit concrete tools, resources, and models for inclusion in the Department's guidance, provide feedback and input on draft materials, and potentially serve as model LEAs for New York State educators.

In addition, parties such as the School and District Accountability Think Tank and the New York State Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) have actively contributed to Department work around accountability and the metrics used by the Department. The Department conducts regular meetings with New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS), School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS), the Empire State School Administrators Association (ESSAA), the Conference of Big 5 School Districts and the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) to discuss initiatives and gain perspective on teaching and learning implementation efforts across the State. Furthermore, the Department shares and receives feedback on critical reform efforts, including the evaluation system and issues of educational equity through regular meetings with the 37 BOCES District Superintendents.

Potential Funding Sources

Acknowledging the powerful impact of the STLE program and its potential for increasing equitable access, the Department encourages LEAs to examine current budgetary expenditures and funding sources to support the type of work piloted under the STLE program. In addition, many LEAs will want to consider the re-direction of current or future State or Federal funds to support talent management strategies that can lead to more equitable access to effective educators. Many of the funding sources outlined below include goals that closely align with such strategies.

Federal Funds:

1. Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs (ESEA Title I, Part A)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html>)
2. Improving Teacher Quality Grants (ESEA Title II, Part A)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqt.html>)
3. English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (ESEA Title III, Part A)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg40.html>)
4. School Improvement Grants (SIG) (ESEA, Title I)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>)
5. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, Part B)
(<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>)

Competitive Programs:

1. Federal competitive grant programs:
 - a) Teacher/Leader Quality Partnerships (TLQP)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/tqpartnership/index.html>)
 - b) Transition to Teaching (TTT)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/transitionteach/index.html>)
 - c) School Leadership Program
(<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/leadership/index.html>)
2. New York State competitive grant programs:
 - a) Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC)
(<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/reteachers/toc.html>)
 - b) Teachers of Tomorrow (TOT)
(<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/reteachers/tot.html>)

Importance of Full Participation

Students' full participation in New York State assessments is vital to ensuring they receive a high caliber education regardless of characteristics such as their race, ethnicity, special education status, or other factors. Annual testing is crucial; it allows us to better identify student strengths and needs and better support the growth of classroom teachers. Information gathered through State assessments helps to illustrate how students are progressing academically. While these assessments are not used as a sole determination in any type of program placement, they are one of many valuable measures. Performance on a single assessment does not tell the whole story about what a student knows and can do or how effective an educator's practice may be, but full participation in State assessments is one important way to determine the overall progress of our schools.

In addition, full participation allows families to have the information necessary to be advocates for their children. Information provided to families based on their student's performance on State assessments can help them better understand and

advocate for their student's needs. Education Law §3012-c allows all parents/guardians access to the final quality rating and composite effectiveness score for each of their child's teachers and for the principal of the school building to which the student is assigned for the current school year. If a student does not participate in State assessments, his or her family will not have critical information about the student's performance toward college and career readiness.

Finally, a lack of full participation in New York State assessments hinders the State's ability to collect complete data about students and educators, and subsequently could impact the analysis of equity issues. Incomplete assessment data may lead to a lack of information about the academic performance of individual student groups, including students of color, low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. Underperformance for any group of students must trigger meaningful supports and interventions; this is not possible without data on all students. Information gained from the New York State assessment program allows the Department to continuously refine strategies and policies aimed at ensuring that all students have equitable access to effective teachers and principals.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents direct the Department to continue to engage with advisory and stakeholder groups and ensure LEAs have guidance and support for the development and enhancement of comprehensive talent management systems in STLE and non-STLE districts.