



Iowa's State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

**Iowa Department of Education
June 1, 2015**

The Iowa Department of Education is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education the following plan that has been developed to address the long-term needs for improving equitable access to great teachers and leaders in Iowa. This plan responds to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs, as augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. Iowa's plan complies with (1) the requirement in Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that each state's Title I, Part A plan include information on the specific steps that the SEA will take to ensure that poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, and the measures that the agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the agency with respect to such steps; and (2) the requirement in ESEA Section 1111(e)(2) that a state's plan be revised by the SEA if necessary. Given the importance of strong leadership, our plan also includes the specific steps that we will take to ensure that all students are attending schools led by highly qualified and effective principals.

This plan details our approach to achieving our objective of improving access to excellent educators for our state's most disadvantaged youth. However, Iowa is committed to

improving student outcomes across the state by expanding access to excellent teaching and leading for *all* students. As such, the plan is not just about increasing the effectiveness of educators in high-need districts, schools, and classrooms, but rather a comprehensive approach to strengthening and maintaining teacher and principal effectiveness across the state, with an emphasis on our schools and classrooms with the greatest need.

Section 1. Introduction and Overview

At the core of education in Iowa is the interaction between the student and teacher around content. To ensure that all Iowa children experience high levels of success and develop the capacity to continually grow and learn as successful citizens requires an effective teacher in every classroom surrounded by strong leadership with a clear and narrow focus on increasing learning for all students. Concentrating on the instructional core and ensuring all educators have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to create excellence and equity in Iowa's educational system is the foundation of our state's plan for ensuring equitable access to excellent educators.

Iowa is proud of the progress we have made to ensure that students in our high poverty/high minority schools are taught by highly qualified teachers with the same preparation and licensing credentials that we see in our low poverty/low minority schools. However, even though our data show that highly qualified teachers are equitably distributed among all of our schools, there continues to be significant achievement gaps between our minority students, our students of poverty, our English language learners, and our students with disabilities as compared to the rest of our students. Since educator qualifications do not

seem to explain these differences among subgroups in achievement, we are challenged to consider other factors that may explain observed differences in student learning outcomes. The research on the factors that most directly impact student learning pushed us to consider the impact of educator “effectiveness” as opposed to educator “qualifications” on our student learning outcomes. Ensuring that all educators have the opportunity to learn and grow professionally and continuously improve their instructional effectiveness appears to be a key next step to achieve our goal of excellence and equity in our educational system.

Slavin’s quote below summarizes this perspective quite well:

Every child can learn. Every school can ensure the success of every child.

Statements to this effect appear in goals statements, commission reports, and school district offices. They are posted in school buildings and appear as mottoes on school stationery. But does our education system behave as if they are true?

If we truly believed that every child could learn under the proper circumstances, we would be relentless in the search of those circumstances. We would use well-validated instructional methods and materials known to be capable of ensuring the success of nearly all children if used with intelligence, flexibility, and fidelity. We would involve teachers in constant, collaborative professional development activities to continually improve their abilities to reach every child. We would frequently assess children’s performance to be sure that all students are on a path that leads to success, and to be able to respond immediately if children are not making adequate progress. If children were falling behind despite excellent instruction, we would try different instructional approaches, and . . . other intensive assistance. We would involve parents in support of their children’s school success; . . .

If we truly believed that all schools could ensure the success of all children, then the failure of even a single child would be cause for great alarm and immediate, forceful intervention.

Source: “Every Child, Every School, Success for All.” Robert Slavin, Nancy Madden, Lawrence Dolan, & Barbara Wasik. (1996). Thousand Oaks, CA; Corwin Press.

From the beginning of the work on our Equity Plan, we realized that Iowa’s commitment to ensuring educational excellence and equity for all Iowa students requires that we disaggregate data by various sub-groups of students in order to understand the needs of all of our students. However, a guiding principle that provided focus and direction for developing our plan and determining actions was an understanding of the importance of being student centered and providing immediate intervention for any individual child as soon as they need it as the research based approach for closing gaps. In other words, even though we will continuously disaggregate data by subgroups to determine gaps and monitor progress, we will intervene at the individual child level, not the sub-group level.

To create this statewide equity plan, the Bureau of Educator Quality within the Iowa Department of Education (DE), a cross bureau internal work team within the DE, and an external stakeholder advisory group were led by the Deputy Director of the Department (also the Director of the Division of Learning and Results) and followed an action plan developed by the Bureau of Educator Quality. This action was intended to guide the work as we collaborated to review our current status, identify needs, define strategies, and develop plans for implementation of actions to ensure equitable access to highly effective teachers and leaders for all Iowa students.

Initial Action Plan for Developing the State Plan:

Action Plan for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Table 1: Work Team & Advisory Group – Recommendations from Educator Quality Bureau

Internal Work Team	External Vetting/Advisory Group
Charge: Regular/ongoing meetings as needed until plan is developed. Monthly or quarterly meetings during implementation and monitoring.	Charge: Meet in November, January, March, & May during plan development. Annual or bi-annual meetings during implementation and monitoring.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study data • Determine goals • Develop plan • Monitor implementation of plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data • Review goals and provide feedback • Review plan and provide feedback • Review plan implementation and provide suggestions and feedback
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equity Consultant from School Improvement Bureau 2. Title I Consultant from School Improvement Bureau 3. Title II Consultant from Educator Quality Bureau 4. Title III Consultant from Educator Quality Bureau 5. Educator Prep Consultant from Educator Quality Bureau 6. Representative from the Early Childhood Team 7. Representative from the Special Education Team 8. Representative from the BOEE 9. Representative from the Civil Rights office 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representative(s) from diverse populations within Iowa (e.g. Latino Leadership Team) 2. Local district teacher(s), administrator(s), school board member(s), parents 3. Representative(s) from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission 4. Representative(s) from Institutes of Higher Education with educator preparation programs 5. Representative from ISEA 6. Representative from SAI 7. Representative from IASB 8. Local district teacher(s), administrator(s), school board member(s) 9. Parents representing diversity in Iowa (including low SES families) 10. State legislator 11. Council on Educator Development – use them as a key vetting group during one of their meetings. (Covers most areas previously listed)
<p>Supported by the Educator Quality Bureau:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create back-up tools for use during plan development, implementation and monitoring • Identify and summarize resources to support plan development <p>Other supporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE attorneys as reviewers • BIAS for data support 	

Table 2: Initial Action Plan:

Major Activities	Responsible Parties	Time Frame	
		Start	Frequency
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene work team and advisory group <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Convene internal work team <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1. Schedule meetings Jan – May 1.1.2. Assign tasks related to major activities 1.2. Identify and recruit members for advisory group - invite to first meeting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Management Team 1.2 Work Team 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Feb 1.2 Feb 	Work Team - As needed Advisory Team - Feb., March, May
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Scan of state data and initiatives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Review current equity plan and results of implementation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. What was accomplished 2.1.2. What wasn't accomplished 2.1.3. What needs to continue 2.2. Gather and review state profile and other data as appropriate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work Team & Advisory Team Support from EQ team and Bureau of IAS team 2.4 Work Team 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dec - Feb 2.4. Feb. 	Multiple meetings as needed

