

Idaho Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Section 1. Introduction

The Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) the enclosed plan, developed to improve equitable access to excellent educators in Idaho. This plan responds to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs, augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. Idaho'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 the SEA will take to ensure economically disadvantaged and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, and the measures 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.

This plan details elements of Idaho's approach to achieving the objective of improving access to excellent educators for minority and students from economically disadvantaged families. Idaho is committed to improving student outcomes across the state by expanding access to excellent educators for *all* students. This plan represents a first step in a comprehensive approach to strengthening and maintaining educator preparation and effectiveness across the state, with an emphasis on districts and schools demonstrating the greatest need.

To create this plan, a team of leaders at ISDE, led by the Educator Effectiveness Coordinator, Certification and Professional Standards Coordinator, and Title IIA Coordinator, have begun the following steps:

1. Develop and begin implementing a long-term strategy for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators
2. Review data provided by ED and Idaho's educational statewide longitudinal data system to identify equity gaps
3. Conduct root-cause analyses based on data and feedback from stakeholders, to pinpoint the underlying causes of equity gaps and identify and target strategies accordingly
4. Set measurable targets and create a plan for measuring and reporting progress and continuously improving this plan

Review of State-Level Policies, Initiatives, and Currently Available Data

ISDE reviewed current Idaho policies and initiatives implemented in recent years, as well as a review of relevant and available data. This review was conducted by the internal ISDE Equity Team which includes members from multiple divisions. Items reviewed include:

- Existing state policy and practice for improving educator recruitment, retention, development, and support
- Policies and initiatives focused on Idaho's institutions of higher education (IHEs) and other educator preparation providers
- Current licensure standards and requirements

- Idaho’s efforts to develop and implement an evaluation system for teachers, pupil personnel certificate holders, and principals. Teacher and principal summative ratings were employed as an element that may be included in the system and can be used as performance metrics to measure equity gaps.
- Available data identified as relevant to the development and implementation of our state’s equitable access plan including the data profile prepared by ED – This includes the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data submitted by Idaho school districts; *EDFacts* data that we provided to ED on classes taught by highly qualified teachers; state data, including basic information such as demographic and comparable wage data on teacher salaries. To build on these data elements, additional relevant data were reviewed from the state’s longitudinal data system—such as teacher and principal turnover rates, and certification and educator years of experience.

Section 2. Stakeholder Engagement

A successful state plan will depend on the long-term involvement and ownership of all stakeholders. The ISDE will involve stakeholders and continue to do so through a statewide *Educator Equity Task Force*. The task force will participate in the long-term implementation and ongoing monitoring of this plan. To ensure a shared theory of action, ISDE will include stakeholder input. Appendix A is a list of stakeholders and Appendix B is a timeline for stakeholder engagement.

The stakeholders will be invited to participate in the engagement process through meetings and webinars as a part of the Educator Equity Task Force. Stakeholder will be contacted through email and phone calls to solicit participation. In order to keep stakeholders and the public informed, the Equitable Access to Excellent Educator webpage will be utilized.

The purpose of the webinars is for stakeholders to:

- Review data and serve as advisors in interpretation of data and root causes behind equity gaps using the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders resource titled *Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>). Due to varying levels of familiarity with data among stakeholder groups, a member of the state team with expertise in data analysis will be on hand at each of these meetings.
- Identify and prioritize root causes of inequities in access to excellent educators
- Review and provide feedback on the draft plan

Stakeholder feedback will heavily influence Idaho’s plan. Participants are encouraged to engage more widely with colleagues and communicate further insights gained. These communications will be added to the compilation of stakeholder input. To ensure the conversations are productive and solutions-oriented, discussion protocols are wise structured, per the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders discussion-group protocol in *Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>). All webinars will be posted on the ISDE website.

Stakeholder input will be ongoing and include additional meetings and feedback loops through the support of a statewide Educator Equity Coalition (composed of stakeholder groups), which will oversee the long-term commitment to implementing the strategies in this plan. Each component of Idaho’s *Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators* will be developed through this collaborative process. Stakeholder groups will be engaged to add substantive knowledge from varying perspectives to engage in ongoing data reviews, root-cause-analyses, and monitoring and modification of strategies. A few specific examples of ongoing engagement plans include the following:

- Biannual half-day meetings (January and June each year) for the Educator Equity Coalition members to review the updated plan and progress toward achieving equitable access
- Between meetings, coalition members will engage with additional stakeholders, using structured resources that encourage in-depth conversation and to bring the insights back to inform the ongoing modification of the Idaho equitable access plan.
- Minority group leaders will be connected to state data experts to think collaboratively about which analyses of that year’s data will be helpful in thinking through root causes of current equity gaps—in particular, related to their constituent groups. Giving these group leaders a chance to dig deeply into current and future data related to the youth for which they are advocating will help provide insight to the team.

Section 3. Equity Gap Exploration and Analysis

To ensure Idaho’s equitable access work is data-driven, multiple data sources have been identified. Stakeholder groups’ perspectives will shed greater light on the data and help to develop further understanding of the root causes for equity gaps and strategies, including unintended consequences or potential implementation challenges.

Idaho has been concerned with providing equitable access to excellent educators for several years, and efforts to date demonstrate marginal outcomes. According to 2013-2014 Ed Facts data, as reported by Idaho school districts, more than 96.6 percent of the teachers of core academic subjects in Idaho fully meet the federal definition of “highly qualified teacher” (HQT) and local conditions and limitations account for the remaining 3.4 percent.¹

Idaho recognizes that HQT is not the only indicator of effectiveness and several opportunities exist to achieving equitable access goals. Data from the Idaho’s System of Educational Excellence (ISEE) (our state longitudinal data system for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on public school students, teachers, administrators, and other staff) indicate that schools with high concentrations of minority students and students from economically disadvantaged families have a greater percent of inexperienced, unqualified, and out of field teachers than schools with low concentrations of such students.

Idaho’s educator evaluation policy was recently implemented (2014-2015), and the data collected does not inform equity gaps at this time. Evaluation data will continue to be analyzed and may identify similar or additional gaps in educator effectiveness.

At this time significant gaps have not been identified in the data reviewed and as a result ISDE has sent the data out to Northwest Comprehensive Center at Education Northwest (NWCC) for further analysis. ISDE will be digging deeper into the data regarding out-of-field teacher placements due to districts self-reporting that they cannot staff hard-to-fill positions; particularly special education, math, and science teachers.

Another identified area for further review is rural schools/districts versus non-rural. Once stakeholder input and the results from NWCC have been received, additional areas to consider may be identified and included in this section.

¹ For example, a school in one of Idaho’s rural, remote areas might be unable to recruit a fully certified special education teacher and instead hires someone with an elementary certification; or, in another school, a teacher leaves during the school year and the district is unable to fill the slot on short notice with someone who meets all of the HQT criteria.

Idaho's Vision

Every student in Idaho will have access to effective educators. Idaho will place the highest priority on:

- ensuring high-quality educator preparation;
- recruiting and retaining highly effective educators;
- continuous growth of educators' professional practice.

Definitions and Metrics

Idaho's 2006 educator equity plan focused primarily on HQT status. In contrast, the current plan focuses instead on ensuring that all classrooms are taught by excellent teachers, who in turn are supported by excellent leaders. Recognizing that there are multiple important dimensions of educator effectiveness (e.g., qualifications, expertise, performance, and effectiveness in improving student academic achievement and social-emotional wellbeing), Idaho has defined *excellent educators* as follows:

- An *excellent teacher* is fully prepared to teach in his or her assigned content area, is able to demonstrate strong instructional practices and significant contributions to growth in student learning (on tests and in terms of social-emotional indicators), and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession both within and outside of the classroom.
- An *excellent school leader* is fully prepared to lead instructionally and administratively, is able to demonstrate strong leadership practices and significant contributions to growth in student learning (on student tests and in terms of social-emotional indicators), and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession both within and outside of the school building.

Due to the challenges associated with accurately and consistently capturing the above qualities statewide, in selecting metrics to capture educator effectiveness ISDE has elected to lean on comprehensiveness over simplicity. Rather than select a single metric, ISDE will consider equitable access in terms of the following characteristics of excellent educators as well as teaching and learning conditions:

- **Teacher and Principal Evaluation Ratings.** These ratings capture most of the qualities noted above for effective educators. Educators rated *ineffective* as well as those rated *effective* will be reported in order to tell a complete story about access to excellent teachers and leaders in Idaho. Our approach is to go through a validation process to ensure fidelity of implementation, fairness and accuracy. When we judge that the evidence demonstrates the evaluation system is valid and reliable, we will transition to using that data for Idaho equitable access planning.
- **Inexperienced Teacher.** A teacher in his/her first year of practice
- **Unqualified Teacher.** A teacher lacking at least a bachelor's degree, clear/renewable licensure, highly qualified teaching status, and/or working under an emergency license
- **Teacher and Principal Turnover.** Teacher and principal turnover rates reported at the school and district levels will serve as another indicator of equitable access. Recognizing that some turnover is acceptable, one of the goals for future data collection is to disaggregate turnover data to depict only those leaving the profession or moving to another district. When the educator evaluation system demonstrates validity and reliability, data will be disaggregated to differentiate between turnover of effective and ineffective educators.
- **Teacher and Principal Experience.** The prevalence of teachers and principals with one or less years of experience, two to three years of experience, four to five years of experience, six to nine years of experience and 10 or more years of experience will serve as indicators of equitable access.

- **Out-of-Field Teaching.** A teacher who is not appropriately certificated or endorsed for the area in which he/she is teaching
- **Teacher and Principal Absenteeism.** Schools and districts that consistently have high teacher and principal absenteeism on average over a three-year period will serve as another indicator of students' access to effective teachers and leaders; particularly, schools and districts with average absenteeism of more than 10 days per school year.
- **Teacher Salaries.** Data on salaries offered by Idaho's LEAs may have important implications for their ability to recruit and retain enough excellent teachers for all students

To identify equity gaps, Idaho defines "low-income" or poor students as those coming from economically disadvantaged families as outlined by the federal child nutrition program. "Minority students" are defined as those identified as a member of a minority race or ethnicity (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander/Alaskan Native). Idaho recognizes that educator effectiveness for students who are English language learners, homeless or in foster care, in isolated rural schools, tribal areas, or in the migrant agricultural stream is critically important. The action steps laid out in this plan will benefit *all* students.

Exploration of the Data

Data Sources. For this analysis, a variety of data sources were employed. Idaho's state longitudinal data system includes data from district-level human resources and attendance systems.

Several preliminary analyses were conducted. First, equity gaps for numerous metrics where schools are the unit of analysis for students who come from economically disadvantaged families and minority students were analyzed. Next, the three statutory teacher metrics (i.e., inexperienced, unqualified, and out-of-field assignments) across schools in the state, across districts in the state, and finally schools within districts in the state were considered.

Several trends are evident in Idaho's data. There is little difference between the percent of teachers in their first year of teaching in the highest and lowest quartile, with 5.5% of teachers being in their first year in high poverty schools versus 4.2% in low poverty schools as shown in Idaho's Educator Equity Profile from 2011-2012 as received by ED. Additionally, there was only a 1% difference in the number of teachers teaching courses outside of their area of certification between rural and non-rural schools, with the statewide rate being only 2.9%.

Likewise, teacher pay in the quartile with the highest percentage of minority students is \$73.00 less than the teacher pay in the quartile with the lowest percentage of minority students. With the difference in average pay between most districts being around \$1,000.00 dollars, it is clear that teacher pay variation within Idaho is not significant. This small difference is not enough for teachers to uproot family and careers to move to higher paying districts within Idaho. With surrounding states paying on average between \$10,000 and \$15,000 thousand dollars more than in Idaho, the state loses many teachers to Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. It is clear that Idaho has a global problem in teacher pay and retention as it sits near the bottom of the U.S. in teacher compensation. Fortunately, a bill to increase teacher pay significantly over the next five years passed the Idaho Legislature in 2015. This bill will make Idaho salaries more competitive with surrounding states, with one goal of increasing teacher retention and recruitment.

An area of concern is the average years of service of teachers compared to percentage of students from economically disadvantaged families and minority students. In both of these comparisons shown in Chart 1 [Teacher Average Years of Service and Students from Economically Disadvantaged Families] and

Chart 2 [Teacher Average Years of Service and Minority Students], there is a clear and similar pattern of a decreasing years of service when the percentage of minority students and students from economically disadvantaged families increases. The data indicates a disadvantage for students from economically disadvantaged families and minority students as they are taught at higher rates by teachers with less experience. However, more data analysis and studies are necessary to provide evidence for the claim that this metric represents a significant barrier amongst these two groups of students. Stakeholder input and ongoing analysis from NWCC will continue to inform the direction and conclusions of this analysis.

Chart 1

Teacher Average Years of Service and Students from Economically Disadvantaged Families

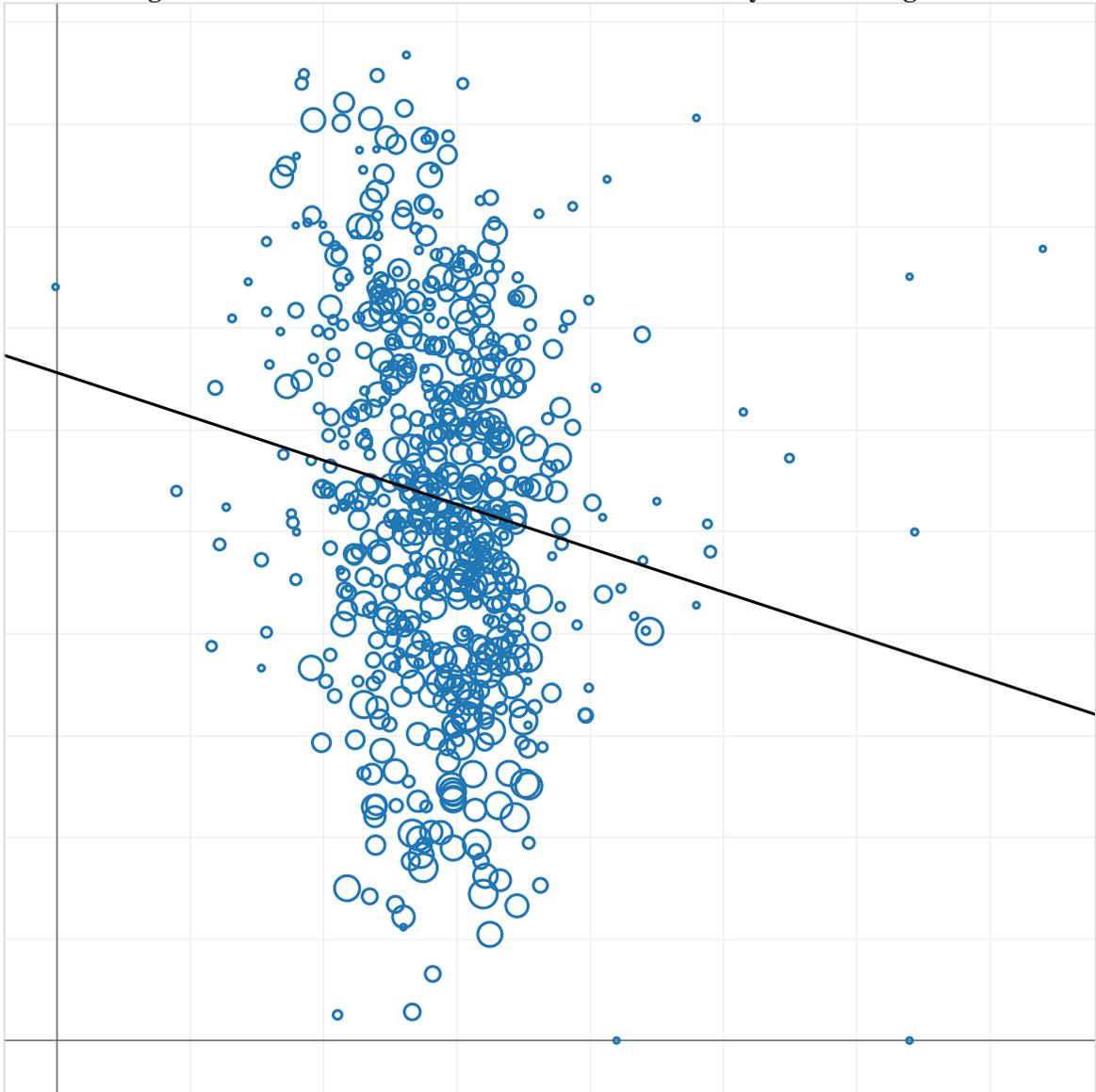
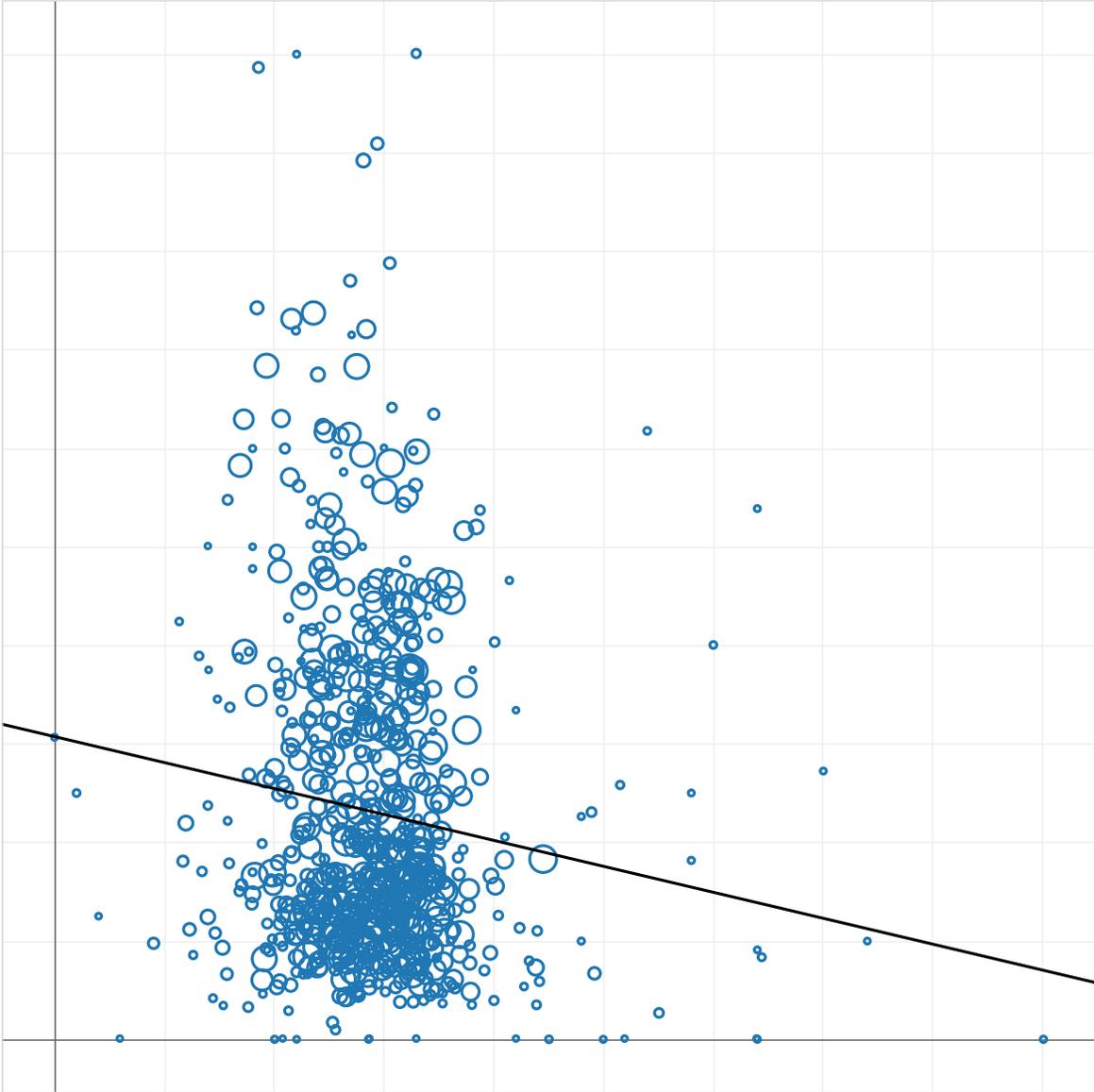


Chart 2

Teacher Average Years of Service and Minority Students



Root Cause Analysis

As the plan is further developed, the ISDE will consider the following questions with stakeholder input:

- How does Idaho plan to discuss root causes for all identified gaps?
- How logical and thorough is the explanation for the root causes of equity gap(s)?
- What processes were used to determine root causes?
- Does the root cause analysis show that Idaho considered a broad range of potential causes using stakeholder feedback, student achievement, educator effectiveness data, or other data?
- Does the plan show any evidence of an evolution of original thinking around root causes? (i.e., have root causes shifted due to feedback from stakeholders or data analysis?)

Section 4. Strategies for Eliminating Equity Gaps

ISDE recognizes that ensuring students' equitable access to excellent teachers and leaders is a complicated endeavor. Idaho's Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators will be built on a theory of action developed through meetings with stakeholders, and aligns to Idaho's Vision.

Idaho's Vision

Every student in Idaho will have access to effective educators. Idaho will place the highest priority on:

- ensuring high quality educator preparation;
- recruiting and retaining highly effective educators;
- continuous growth of educators' professional practice.

In preparing for developing strategies to eliminate equity gaps that will be identified with stakeholder input, the ISDE internal educator equity team has identified various strategies that are currently being implemented in Idaho as well as other states.

Current Strategies – Once the strategies have been finalized by stakeholder input, a detailed explanation will be provided.

- Career Ladder – five year phase-in for increased teacher salary
- Regional Career Fairs – collaborative effort between ISDE, the Idaho Professional Standards Commission, IHEs, and districts.
- Alternative routes to certification
- Incentive awards for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certified Teachers
- ISDE-delivered professional development
- Institutions of Higher Education Coalition – all teacher preparation programs network to ensure best practices
- Troops for Teachers
- Leadership bonus for teachers
- Statewide Teaching Standards used in Evaluation – which is included within the preparation programs and within the districts. This provides consistency between the universities and what teachers will be held accountable for once they enter the profession.
- Statewide Principal Standards used in Evaluation

Idaho will research and explore new strategies and have identified several which are listed below. As stakeholder input is gathered, additional strategies may be included.

New Strategy Possibilities

- Focused efforts on supporting rural school districts
- State-funded loan forgiveness
- Industry experience informing pay scale placement (ie. professional technical educators)
- Scholarships
- Signing bonuses
- Special Education Para-professional to Teacher support
- Secondary English Language Development course with Idaho Digital Learning Academy
- Increase internal ISDE collaboration

Once the strategies have been identified, they will be prioritized based on the potential impact on identified equity gaps. In addition, an implementation timeline will be created with benchmark measures related to decreasing equity gaps. Table A will be completed for each strategy identified.

Once the equity gaps have been identified, the “Strategy” section will be further developed, addressing the following questions with stakeholder input:

- Did Idaho describe the strategies it will implement to eliminate the identified equity gaps with respect to poor and minority students?
- Does Idaho identify strategies it will implement to eliminate any other identified equity gaps?
- To what extent are the proposed strategies measurable and reasonable? How strong and clear is the rationale for why these strategies will be effective in addressing the root causes? Are any root causes not addressed with strategies?
- Does Idaho assign ownership and allocate resources to the strategies it will enact and the strategies it will need to support LEAs or others in taking on? If so, how? Does the plan provide an explanation of how outcomes will be communicated, and encourage, support, and monitor LEA-driven strategies?
- Does the plan include a timeline for implementing the strategies? Is the timeline ambitious yet reasonable?

Table A

Strategy 1:
<i>Root-Cause Analysis Findings</i>
<i>Relevant Metrics</i>
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▪
▪
<i>Stakeholder Feedback</i>
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▪
▪
<i>Human Capital Management Substrategies</i>
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▪
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<i>Performance Objectives</i>
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▪
▪

Section 5. Ongoing Monitoring

ISDE firmly believes that effective strategies and supports improve access to excellent educators for all students. One goal in establishing this plan is to examine data to determine equity issues and refine data-sharing mechanisms with districts to allow for a variety of strategies and supports. The most important role the state can play in ongoing monitoring is one of data transparency and continuation of existing support structures.

ISDE is restructuring data collection elements for student information systems, teacher information systems and teacher certification.

This section of the plan will further be developed by addressing the following questions with stakeholder input:

- Did the SEA describe the measures to be used to evaluate progress toward eliminating the equity gaps for poor and minority students?
- Does Idaho have a plan to regularly monitor implementation of their proposed equity strategies?
- To what extent are the set goals to measure progress ambitious yet reasonable?
- How does Idaho demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement?
- What multiple measures will Idaho use to evaluate progress? Are those measures clearly connected to the original root causes and equity gaps?
- How robust is the process Idaho will use to reassess its strategies if it is not on track toward its goals? With what frequency does Idaho propose to assess progress?
- How does Idaho propose including stakeholders in this process in an authentic and comprehensive way?

Section 6: Public Reporting

The ISDE will create a website specifically for posting the *Plan for Equitable Access to Excellent Educators*. In addition, the website will include opportunities for feedback from stakeholders such as parents, educators, and community groups. As the plan is implemented, ongoing monitoring will be reported to the stakeholder group and posted to the website. Additional methods for public reporting will be determined using stakeholder input.

Appendix A. Idaho List of Stakeholders

Equitable Access Stakeholders (updated 05/21/2015)				
Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization	Region
Bridges	Lynn	Homeless Education Liaison	West Bonner School District	1
Brinegar	Toni	Program Specialist	Idaho Council of Developmental Disabilities	-
Burton	Stan	Executive Director	Idaho Head Start Association	-
Crump	Jim	Teacher, Math	Kootenai Technical Education Campus	1
Enger	Kristi	Director, Secondary Education	Professional Technical Education	All
Fife	Scott	Idaho State Representative of Lewis and Clark	Troops to Teachers	-
Raney	Taylor	Director of Teacher Education	University of Idaho	1-2
Goodman	Will	Technology Director	Mountain home School District	3
Fodor	Julie	Director	CDHD Center on Disabilities and Human Development	1
Gaub	Le	Program Manager	Lewis and Clark Troops to Teachers	-
Gramer	Rod	President	Idaho Business for Education	-
Greenfield	Robin G	Associate Director	University of Idaho	1, 3
Baysinger	Tamara	Charter Schools Program Director	Idaho Public Charter School Commission	All
Wells	Mary Lou	Elementary Principal	Marsing School District	3
Kren	Joe	Superintendent	St. Maries School District	1
Hart	Cliff	President	Idaho Association of Special Education Directors	5
Henry	Esther	Teacher & Chair of Professional Standards Commission	West Jefferson School District	6
Henken	Alison	K-12 Accountability and Projects Program Manager	State Board of Education	-
Johnson	Evelyn	Executive Director	Lee Pesky Center	3
Gonzalez	Margie	Executive Director	Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs	All
Keller	Don	Charter Administrator	Sage International Charter School	3
Lindig	Angela	Director	Idaho Parents Unlimited	3
Mason	Kindel	President	Idaho Council for Exceptional Children	4
Perkes	Emily	President	Idaho PTA Board of Directors	-
Pinkham	D'Lisa	Teacher	Nez Perce Tribal Member, Nez Perce Step Grant	2
Proctor	Becky	President	Idaho Library Association	3
Sabala	Cherri	Idaho State Director/Other Teacher Prep Entities	American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE)	3

Sanchez	Bob	Director of Veterans Services and Multicultural Affairs	Northwest Nazarene University	All
Seamons	Valerie	President	Idaho Association of School Business	4
Warren	Tracey	Parent & Advocate/Community Member		-
Wells	Todd	President	Idaho School Boards Association	4
Winslow	Rob	Executive Director	Idaho Association School Administrators	3

Appendix B. Idaho Stakeholder Engagement Process Timeline

Finalize Potential Stakeholders – May 28, 2015

Stakeholder letter of invitation to be sent the week of June 8, 2015

Stakeholder Webinar – Week of June 22, 2015 and repeat the week of September 14, 2015

Record the webinar

Background information – sent in advance of the webinar with the invite to the webinar

Definition of Key terms – sent early

Issues and Challenges

Process of engagement

Opportunity to ask the critical questions about the process

Send out data after this webinar

Data Webinar/Meeting (1-2 weeks after second Stakeholder Webinar) Discussion about the data and root cause analysis.

Survey

- Complete after the Data Webinar
- Questions about the data regarding whether the data reflects the concerns districts are experiencing.

Based on input, update Stakeholder Engagement Process Timeline