MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Massachusetts State Equity Plan 2015-2019

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Section 1: Introduction

Background

The strong public school system in Massachusetts today is the product of the Commonwealth's centuries-old belief in public schools. Since the first public school opened in Boston in 1635 until this very day, Massachusetts has been recognized as a national leader in public education. Indeed, Massachusetts consistently ranks as a top-performing state in both national and international performance assessments.

Massachusetts achieved this position by targeting its efforts and resources. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has set high standards and expectations for all students in the Commonwealth, and holds all accountable to those standards and expectations. However, while ESE may celebrate successes, we are aware of ongoing proficiency gaps and inequities. These give us a constant impetus to do better in **eliminating all gaps and inequities** on behalf of our nearly one million students.

Our goal is to ensure that all students have the requisite knowledge, skills, and experiences to successfully navigate an economically viable career pathway in a 21st century economy. Put more simply, we aim to prepare all students for success in the world that awaits them after high school.

We know that to attain this goal, our students must have access to teachers and administrators who will have a significant positive impact on their growth and development. Research consistently shows us what parents and educators themselves have long known: Teachers and principals are the most important in-school factor to determining a student's future trajectory.[1] Our most vulnerable students—low-income and minority students, as well as English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) — must have access to the teachers and administrators who can provide them with the best opportunities for success.

To that end, presented here, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) completed a revised Equity Plan to identify equity gaps in our students' learning experiences and to determine strategies to eliminate those gaps. Rather than standing in isolation, these strategies intentionally overlap with one another in a coordinated system that drives continuous improvement for educators and students alike.

[1] Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. *Teachers, schools, and academic achievement*. Working paper. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1998.; Branch, G. F., Hanushek, E.A. and Rivkin, S.G. *Estimating Principal Effectiveness*. Working Paper #32. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, 2009.

Theory of Action

Our theory of action to address the equity gaps in Massachusetts is based on the core belief that excellent teachers and leaders are critical to improving student achievement:

- Whereas the **teacher** is the single most important school-based factor in determining whether students sink or soar;
- Whereas the **principal** is critically important in setting up the culture and structures within which teachers will find success, leading to improved outcomes for students;
- Whereas the **superintendent** is critically important in setting up the systems and structures within which educators will find success, leading to improved outcomes for students;
- Therefore **all** students should have equitable access to excellent educators. In order to attain equitable access, we must pay particular attention to access for low income and minority students.

Our State

Massachusetts Public School System
ESE serves nearly one million students in over 400 public school districts and almost 2,000 schools.[2] Across the state, 39 percent of students are from low income families and about 35 percent of students are children of color.

Accountability System
Massachusetts' school and district accountability system measures each school's and district's progress toward the goal of reducing proficiency gaps by half between the 2010-2011 and 2016-2017 school years. The system classifies schools into one of five accountability and assistance levels. Schools making sufficient progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps are classified into Level 1, while the state's lowest performing schools are classified into Levels 4 and 5. With the exception of Level 5 districts, districts are classified based on the level of their lowest performing school.

The state's 2010 Act Relative to the Achievement Gap provides tools, rules and supports for the state to aggressively engage with schools and districts in Levels 4 and 5. The Framework for Accountability and Assistance provides a coherent structure for linking the state's accountability and assistance activities with districts, based on their level of need. The framework also provides school and district leaders with common indicators and tools for diagnosing problems and identifying appropriate interventions.

[2] This number includes students in charter schools, which count as independent districts.

ESE helps Level 4 schools and districts to take advantage of the autonomies afforded them in order to improve educator effectiveness. In Level 5 schools and districts, ESE creates a turnaround plan that incorporates the statutory autonomies and is intended to maximize the rapid academic achievement of students. ESE has also worked with Level 4 and 5 districts to capitalize on their increased autonomy in hiring.

For example, this increased hiring autonomy includes the ability to dismiss a teacher with professional teaching status for good cause rather than just cause. A review of that decision is available through an expedited arbitration process, in which the arbitrator is required to consider components of the school's turnaround plan.[3]

ESE develops annual district and school accountability reports and report cards, published on ESE's website. Accountability data show significantly more low income students and students of color in our lower performing schools.

Students by subgroup and school accountability level						
	Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**MA All**
# of schools	**425**	**857**	**293**	**36**	**4**	**1615**
% of schools	**26%**	**53%**	**18%**	**2%**	**<1%**	**100%**
White	71%	75%	38%	15%	8%	64%
Students of Color	29%	25%	62%	85%	92%	36%
Low Income	27%	29%	71%	86%	89%	38%
ELL	5%	5%	17%	23%	37%	8%
SWD	15%	15%	18%	21%	19%	16%

Shading indicates over-representation as compared to state rates.
Source: MA ESE School and District Accountability Data, 2014

Supporting Training for Educators on ELLs and Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)
ESE is focused on providing educators with the knowledge and skills to serve specific populations of students in need, particularly English Language Learners and students in Sheltered English Immersion. ELLs are the state's fastest-growing group of students, and, as a group, experience the largest proficiency gap when compared to their native English speaking peers. We are engaged in a statewide initiative, Rethinking Equity and Teaching English Language Learners, to support educators in serving these students (more details on this initiative are included on page 35).

[3] For more information, see lines 243-257 of M. G.L. Ch. 69, Section 1J: *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap Process for "Underperforming" Schools*

Massachusetts's Core Priorities and Strategies for Closing Equity Gaps
Massachusetts's goal is **to prepare all students for success after high school** through five core priorities:

1. Strengthening curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Promoting educator development
3. Turning around the lowest performing districts and schools
4. Using technology and data to support teaching and learning
5. Attending to the social/emotional/health needs of students and families

These core priorities support the elimination of proficiency gaps. These priorities also support an equitable access agenda. The goal is to ensure that all students in the Commonwealth – especially low income and minority students – have access to robust curricula, effective educators, and transparent and useful data to drive continuous improvement.

Previous Equity Plan
For the past decade, equitable access has been framed from the perspective of teachers – indeed, in the recent past, the goal was referred to as the "equitable distribution" of teachers, suggesting strategies that would move teachers from one school or district to another. Many of these strategies have not worked well; teachers do not want to be "distributed" like pieces on a chessboard, and the preponderant focus on using monetary incentives alone to drive workforce distribution has not proven to entice teachers to move from one school or district to another.[4]

Massachusetts's most recent Equity Plan, created in 2006 and revised in 2011, focused almost exclusively on the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers. The plan emphasized the percentage of teachers rated as highly qualified (see the definition of High Qualified Teacher on page 13), and the distribution of such teachers.

Current Focus: 2015 Equity Plan
Where in the past we focused almost exclusively on the distribution of teachers, now we are focused on students' learning experiences – particularly their assignment to excellent educators. In this revised equity plan, ESE approaches the prevalence of and access to excellent educators from several entry points. ESE understands that teacher quality initiatives should be undertaken at various stages of the career continuum, including educator preparation, licensure and development. In alignment with the availability of new data elements, we are moving toward including measures of educator impact on students. As in the past, we include multiple measures of educator quality to ensure that all students, but particularly those with the greatest need, have equitable access to excellent educators. Other new data elements underscore ESE's focus on student experiences with teachers, and provide actionable data on individuals or

[4] Glazerman, S., A. Protik, B. Teh, J. Bruch, J. Max. *Transfer Incentives for High Performing Teachers: Final Results from a Multisite Experiment* (NCEE 2014-4003). National Center on Education and the Economy, 2013.

groups of students. ESE is also leveraging the new Educator Evaluation system to improve teacher quality and capacity to serve the diverse needs of students.

ESE's Role

ESE's role regarding equitable access is to:

1. Clearly define and communicate the measures of excellent educators and the meaning of equitable access;
2. Examine and make available the data on equitable access;
3. Identify and share with districts the research and best practices in eliminating equity gaps;
4. Implement state-level policies and strategies to support districts in this work;
5. Monitor, assess and report on progress in closing equity gaps;
6. Use our position as a state agency to communicate the importance of providing students – especially those with the greatest need – with access to the educators who will serve them best. This communication aims to catalyze action and reinforce the importance of equitable access.

Approach

In response to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's announcement of the Excellent Educators for All Initiative and the accompanying FAQ guidance, ESE took immediate action. Our initial approach included identifying our Equitable Access Team within the agency, connecting with departments and units across ESE, conducting data assessments, and identifying available external supports.

Equitable Access Team

Although ESE's equitable access work falls within the scope of our Center for Educator Effectiveness, it is not the focus of just one unit. For that reason, we created a cross-departmental core team:

- Educator Effectiveness: design, plan and create the Equity Plan in conjunction with: the rest of the team, other offices across the agency, research, and stakeholder input
- Data Analysis and Reporting: provide necessary data support, including reports and data analyses
- Planning, Research, and Delivery Systems: support the project management of the Equity Plan development, facilitate intra-agency communication as needed, and develop a plan for ongoing monitoring of strategies and goals

Internal Conversations and Inventory

The Equitable Access core team communicated with and aligned ESE offices in service of the equitable access work, inventoried the work already happening at the agency around equitable access, and cultivated the relationships needed to develop and implement our Equity Plan, including:

- Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, and Senior Leadership

- Individual Departments: Office of District and School Turnaround; Office of College and Career Readiness; Office of Special Education Planning & Policy; Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement; District and School Assistance Centers; Office of Tiered System of Supports; and Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign
- Specific Systems and Platforms: Edwin Analytics, School and District Accountability System, ESEA Flexibility Waiver

Data Analysis

Our data assessment began with the USED release of our MA Educator Equity Profiles and progressed as follows:

- Using the MA Educator Equity Profile released by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) in November 2014, our data team ran a preliminary analysis of the same data points using our most recent ESE-certified data (2013-2014 data collection) to determine similarities and note any differences.
- We identified potential additional sources of data that could be used to examine equity gaps in Massachusetts.
- We reviewed the most current state and national research and reports to determine what equity gaps Massachusetts has already uncovered and what strategies are underway to address those gaps.
- Stakeholder input continued to inform the research and data we pursued in developing the Equity Plan.

External Support

We have immersed ourselves in resource documents, webinars, conferences, and more from a variety of organizations, including the Center on Great Teachers & Leaders (GTL), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the Equitable Access Support Network. ESE also solicited help from the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), who has served as our main technical assistance provider. Through regular biweekly meetings and as-needed engagements, supports from the NCC included:

- Updates around equitable access and the federal guidance for the Equity Plan
- A review of ESE documents such as stakeholder contact lists, equity plan drafts, and talking points and presentations for stakeholder engagement sessions
- Serving as note-takers at stakeholder focus groups and creating summary and synthesis documents of key takeaways and themes

Section 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Massachusetts recognizes and values the input of our numerous stakeholders. To engage stakeholders, ESE developed a robust stakeholder engagement plan:

Purpose

Our goals are: 1) to invest stakeholders in our commitment to give all students, and especially low income and minority students, equitable access to excellent educators; and 2) to solicit feedback to inform the development and implementation of the equity plan.

Approach

Stakeholder engagement for the Equity Plan coincided with stakeholder engagement for the ESEA flexibility waiver. Thus, we conducted stakeholder engagement for ESEA flexibility in tandem with developing the Equity Plan. Further, we engaged stakeholders throughout the process of developing the plan: after the Equity Profile was released from USED; during the development process, to analyze root causes; and in review of Equity Plan drafts.

The following three-stage stakeholder engagement plan details the objectives of stakeholder meetings and what was carried out. Please see the Stakeholder Engagement Summary and Synthesis (Appendix A) for additional information.

1. Initial Stakeholder Engagement: December-Early January

- Objective: to communicate with stakeholders about ESE's equitable access work
- "Heads-up" approach: talking points included FYIs about what equitable access means, the Equity Plan, the USED Equity Profile data, and three to five questions for stakeholder input
- Content:
  - Time on the agenda at already scheduled meetings (five-30 minutes)
  - One-page quick reference guide
- Stakeholders Included: LEAs/superintendents, teachers, principals, and community organizations
  Please see Appendix B for a complete list of stakeholder groups.

2. Targeted Stakeholder Engagement: Late January-March

- Objective: to elicit feedback from stakeholders to inform the development of the Equity Plan
- Targeted approach: focused on specific aspects of the equity plan with different stakeholders, including discussion around particular equity gaps, possible root causes, and potential strategies or current best practices

- Content:
  - Time on the agenda at an already scheduled meeting (45-90 minutes).
  - Group activity with our Principal and Teacher Advisory Cabinets to develop fishbone diagrams[5] (60-90 minutes) focused on equity gaps, possible underlying causes, potential strategies, and data sources to monitor progress.
- Focus groups (30-60 minutes) targeted to specific stakeholder groups
- Stakeholders Included: LEAs/superintendents, teachers, teachers' representatives, principals, pupil services personnel, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, business organizations, and Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

3. Follow-up Stakeholder Engagement: April-May

- Objective: to elicit feedback from targeted stakeholders on the Equity Plan draft
- Strategic approach: After GTL/CCSSO feedback and peer reviewing, we sought feedback from specific stakeholders on targeted sections of the plan.
- Activities:
  - Specific sections of the draft sent to stakeholders for feedback
  - Entire draft sent to stakeholders for feedback
- Stakeholders Included: Urban Superintendents Network; Principal Advisory Cabinet; Northeast Comprehensive Center; Kahris McLaughlin, who will connect ESE to parent and civil rights groups

Intra-agency Collaboration: ESEA Flexibility Waiver Team

Early on in the process we met with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Team and decided to coordinate stakeholder engagement efforts. As this was the third iteration of stakeholder engagement for the ESEA flexibility waiver, many contacts and meeting structures were already in place. Together we mapped out which groups to contact, which meetings we wanted to attend, and our plans for communicating with stakeholder groups.

Summary and Synthesis

Feedback from the stakeholder engagement mentioned above was valuable in identifying equity gaps and exploring several root causes (reflected in Section 4: Identified Equity Gaps and Section 5: Root Cause Analysis). Stakeholder feedback also demonstrated the cyclical nature of some causes and gaps. For example, school climate and culture can affect educator retention/turnover rates. In countering this attrition, hiring practices can lead to gaps in teacher experience, preparation and effectiveness, which in turn exacerbate inequities in school climate.

Section 5: Strategies to Eliminate Equity Gaps includes several of the stakeholders' suggested strategies, represented in both new and pre-existing approaches. Many promising stakeholder

[5] Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. Equitable Access Toolkit. Resource 7.1: Fishbone Diagram. American Institutes for Research, 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide.

suggestions are more appropriate for district- and school-level action. For a more detailed summary and synthesis of stakeholder feedback, see Appendix A.

Continued Stakeholder Engagement
Implementation of the equity plan will integrate ongoing consultation with stakeholders, and ESE will publish an annual report. Please see Section 6: Monitoring, Ongoing Support and Public Reporting of Progress for more information

Section 3: Definitions

The following are definitions of terms for use in this plan:

Absenteeism: The total number and percentage of full time equivalency (FTE) teachers, in each district and aggregated across the state, that were absent 10 days or more during the regular school year when the teacher would otherwise be expected to be teaching students in an assigned class. Absences include days taken for sick leave and for personal leave. Personal leave includes voluntary absences for reasons other than sick leave. Absences do not include administratively-approved leave for professional development, field trips, or other off-campus activities with students. *Please note: ESE educator attendance data will be available in Fall 2015 based on the 2014-2015 school year.*

Economically Disadvantaged Students:

- Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, termed "low income students": enrolled students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch
- In 2015-2016 school year and beyond: "economically disadvantaged students" are enrolled students participating in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and eligible MassHealth programs (Medicaid).

Educator: Any person employed by a school or school district in a position requiring a license (603 CMR 7.02), including teachers and administrators (603 CMR 35.02).

Educator Preparation: All steps involved in the ways in which prospective teachers and administrators can be prepared for a career in education. This includes Institutes of Higher Education and other Educator Preparation Programs, multiple pathways to the profession, and licensure.

English Language Learners are children who:

1. have indicated a language other than English on the Home Language Survey; AND
2. are less than proficient on an English language proficiency assessment; AND
3. are unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English

Evaluation ratings: The Massachusetts Evaluation Framework includes a Summative Performance Rating and Student Impact Rating for each educator. These two independent but linked ratings focus on the critical intersection of practice and impact, while creating a more complete picture of educator performance. The roll-out for implementation of the Evaluation Framework is now complete and all districts are evaluating all educators, including teachers and administrators. According to the implementation timeline, at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, every educator will have a Summative Performance Rating based on the 2014-2015 school year (and some may have a rating from a previous evaluation cycle).[6] Every educator will have a Student Impact Rating after the 2015-2016 school year, as the rating is based on trends over a minimum of at least two years. The first year of data collection for the trends and patterns to determine the Student Impact Rating is underway as of 2014-2015. Ratings are as follows:

- Summative Performance Rating: At the end of the five-step evaluation cycle, each educator is assigned a Summative Performance Rating. This rating assesses an educator's practice against four statewide Standards of Effective Teaching or Administrator Leadership Practice, as well as an educator's progress toward attainment of his/her professional practice and student learning goals. In the Summative Performance Rating, the evaluator classifies the teacher or administrator's "professional practice" into one of four performance levels: Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory.
- Student Impact Rating: Each educator is also assigned a Student Impact Rating, which is separate but complementary to the Summative Performance Rating. In order to determine the Student Impact Rating, the evaluator applies his/her professional judgment and analyzes trends and patterns of student learning, growth, and achievement presented by the Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), where available, and common measures to determine whether the educator's impact on student learning is High, Moderate, or Low. Student growth percentiles are another measure of educator impact on student growth.

Excellent Educators: Excellent Educators are successful on a variety of measures, with no one-size-fits-all formula for qualifying as "excellent." The one cut-off ESE recognizes is that excellent educators receive a Proficient or Exemplary Summative Performance Rating on the Educator Evaluation Framework. The combination of other characteristics to consider includes: teacher

[6] Districts with Level 4 schools adopted and implemented new educator evaluation systems in Level 4 schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Race to the Top (RTTT) districts and RTTT charter schools adopted and implemented new educator evaluation systems during the 2012-2013 school year with at least 50 percent of their educators. All remaining school districts covered under the new regulations implemented new educator evaluation systems during the 2013-2014 school year with at least 50 percent of their educators.

performance, impact on students, years of experience, and highly qualified status. This does not mean that an educator must have each characteristic, such as many years of experience, in order to be considered "excellent" when taking a holistic view of educator quality. ESE recognizes that a single measure is not what can or should define an Excellent Educator, and that by taking a broader view of educator quality, we can better see the picture of student access to Excellent Educators across the state.

High Poverty: The highest poverty schools are those schools within the highest quartile in the state for enrollment of low income students. This quartile includes schools in which 65.9 percent or more of enrolled students are students in poverty. The data source for this definition changed during the 2014-2015 school year (see above, "Economically Disadvantaged Students").

High Needs Students: An unduplicated count of all students in a school or district belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs (FLEP)[7], or low income students. Students may be included in more than one category.

High minority schools: The highest minority schools are those schools within the highest quartile in the state for enrollment of students of color. This quartile includes schools in which 56 percent or more of enrolled students are students of color.

Highly Qualified Teacher: A teacher who has demonstrated content knowledge in one of the core academic subjects, is fully licensed, and holds a bachelor's degree.

Ineffective Educator: An educator who has been rated as Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory on the Summative Performance Rating of the Educator Evaluation Framework. The corollary is also true: Educators who have been rated as Exemplary or Proficient, and who also succeed on other measures, are considered Excellent.

Inexperienced Educator: Beginning educators, defined as teachers and administrators in their first year of practice.

Minority: Students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or two or more races. The term "students of color" is used interchangeably with the term "minority" within the Equity Plan.

[7] FLEP students are to be monitored for two consecutive years after students are removed from Limited English Proficient (LEP) status and no longer require English as a Second Language (ESL) support. In some cases, when concerns are present during FLEP monitoring, the student may be reclassified as LEP and re-qualify for ESL services.

Out-of Field:

- Out-of-Field Teacher: a core academic teacher[8] who is not Highly Qualified for the subject/s he or she teaches for more than 20 percent of his or her schedule[9]
- Out-of-field Administrator: an administrator who does not hold the specific license for the role he or she performs for more than 20 percent of his or her schedule

Quartiles: ESE has used quartiles to identify certain equity gaps, comparing the top and bottom quartiles (one-quarter of a designated group). Unless otherwise stated, this group is statewide. For the purposes of this plan, ESE has specifically used the following:

- HPQ versus LPQ: high-poverty quartile versus low-poverty quartile
- HMQ versus LMQ: high-minority quartile versus low-minority quartile

Unqualified Educator: An educator who does not hold a valid Massachusetts license.

Unprepared Educator: A teacher who only holds a Preliminary License, meaning the educator has a Bachelor's degree and has demonstrated subject knowledge but has not completed an educator preparation program.

Waiver: Also referred to as a "hardship waiver," a waiver is an exemption accorded during the time period of any one school year. The waiver excuses the school district from the requirement to employ licensed or certified personnel in accordance with Massachusetts state regulations.

This waiver is granted to a district by the Commissioner upon the request of a superintendent, with demonstration to the Commissioner that the district has made a good faith effort to hire licensed or certified personnel and has been unable to find a licensed or certified candidate qualified for the position. Persons employed under waivers must demonstrate that they meet minimum requirements as established by ESE and are making continuous progress toward meeting the licensure or certification requirements in the field in which they are employed.

[8] MA ESE. *Title II-A: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals*. Retrieved from: http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/title-iia/hq/hq_faq.html?section=subjects.

[9] MA regulations allow for a person holding a license to be employed for a maximum of 20 percent of his/her time in a role and/or at a grade level for which she/he does not hold a license.

Section 4: Identified Equity Gaps

To realize ESE's goal of all students achieving the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to succeed in 21st century careers, our students must have equitable access to excellent educators. To support this goal, we first identified Massachusetts's equitable access gaps.

We began with our available data, discussions with stakeholders, and state and national research. We have identified equity gaps for both teachers and administrators in three key areas:

Using Quartiles

Unless otherwise indicated, equity gaps have been identified by comparing the top and bottom quartiles (one-quarter of a designated group) as follows:

- **HPQ versus LPQ:** high poverty quartile versus low poverty quartile
- **HMQ versus LMQ:** high minority quartile versus low minority quartile

Equity Gap 1: Educator Experience	Equity Gap 2: Educator Preparation	Equity Gap 3: Educator Effectiveness
•Inexperienced Educators	•Unqualified Educators •Out-of-Field Educators •Unprepared Educators	•Ineffective Educators

Unless otherwise noted, all data used to identify equity gaps are from the Educator Personnel Information System (EPIMS) 2013-2014 Data Collection. EPIMS collects work assignment and demographic data on individual public school educators, and allows ESE to collect data on highly qualified teacher status, in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act.

To better understand the root causes of the identified equity gaps, we conducted stakeholder engagement (see Appendix B: Groups Included in Stakeholder Engagement), internal analyses, and initial research. This section discusses root causes along with data for each equity gap. Naturally, root causes often overlap among equity gaps, given the connected and even cyclical nature of these causes and effects. For example, stakeholders consistently cited factors stemming from the leadership effectiveness gap – such as poor hiring and scheduling practices – as causes of the teacher effectiveness gap.

Equity Gap 1: Educator Experience

"Experience makes a difference—especially at the beginning of a teacher's career," explains The New Teacher Project (TNTP).[10] Although research is inconclusive on when teachers reach the height of their effectiveness, the bulk of the research demonstrates that inexperienced teachers, especially teachers in their first year, are at their lowest point of effectiveness.[11]

In Massachusetts, the impact of first year teachers is lower: the average Student Growth Percentiles associated with first-year math and English Language Arts teachers is lower than the average for teachers overall. There is a significant difference between the first year teachers and all teachers in SGP; however, the difference is small, and perhaps not as noteworthy as other data on equity gaps. Furthermore, the teachers for whom we have SGPs represent about 14 percent of total educators in the Commonwealth. These data represent something to which we should attend, but with some caution.

Average Median SGP for All and Inexperienced Teachers (percentages)		
	Teachers of math	Teachers of English Language Arts
All MA	51.5	50.7
First year	48.4	47.8

Inexperienced Teachers: first year of practice

Within Massachusetts, students of color and students from low income families are disproportionately taught by inexperienced teachers. Our data analysis reveals that nearly two times (10.2 percent) as many first year teachers teach in the highest minority schools as compared to schools with the fewest students of color (5.2 percent). The teachers in the lowest poverty schools are almost six percent first year teachers, compared to ten percent in the highest poverty schools. Furthermore, about nine percent of students with disabilities (SWDs) and about 11 percent of English Language Learners (ELLs) are taught by first year teachers, compared to seven percent of students overall.[12]

[10] *Teacher Experience: What Does the Research Say?* The New Teacher Project (TNTP), 2012.

[11] Harris, D.N. and Sass, T.R. *Teacher Training, Teacher Quality, and Student Achievement.* CALDER Working Paper 3, 2007.; Kane, T., Rockoff, J., and Staiger, D. "What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness?" NBER Working Paper 12155, 2006.; Rice, J.K. The impact of teacher experience: Examining the evidence and policy implications. Calder Brief 11. Washington, DC: National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER), Urban Institute, August 2010.

[12] *Status of the Massachusetts Educator Workforce: Focus on First-Year Teachers.* Massachusetts ESE, 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2013-12EducatorReport.pdf.

Percentage of Inexperienced Teachers				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
7.0	10.4	5.8	10.2	5.2

Inexperienced Principals: first year in a principalship
ESE's data also shows inequity in access to experienced principals. Our data shows that Massachusetts's high poverty and high minority schools have more first year principals.

Percent of inexperienced principals				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
12.8	18.9	8.8	18.8	9.4

Principals' average years of experience				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
4.4	4.1	5.0	4.1	4.7

Root Causes of Equity Gap 1: Educator Experience

We saw significant overlap in the root causes of the educator experience and educator effectiveness gaps. The factors leading to a disproportionate number of inexperienced educators in high-need schools also tend to lead to higher numbers of ineffective teachers.

- Hiring Practices – When and how schools and districts hire is critical, especially for high-need urban schools, as great teacher candidates don't wait around long.[13] In Massachusetts, 60 percent of preparation program completers are employed in a public school (and 47 percent employed as teachers) within one year of program completion – on average, to a school only 21 miles away from the Educator Preparation Program.[14] If a district begins to hire for vacancies later than other nearby districts, or offers a lower salary and/or fewer professional opportunities, the likelihood of hiring experienced educators significantly decreases. Furthermore, late hiring practices lead to higher turnover[15], generating more openings that are in turn filled by poor hiring practices.

- Scheduling Decisions – In Massachusetts, first year teachers are more likely to be assigned students who are academically behind when compared with students assigned to more-experienced teachers.[16] Research has also found that schools

[13] Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Wyckoff, J. *Teacher Sorting and the Plight of Urban Schools: A Descriptive Analysis*. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 2002. 24(1): 37-62.
[14] MA ESE, 2013.
[15] Jones, N.D., Maier, A., Grogan, E. *The extent of late-hiring and its relationship with teacher turnover: Evidence from Michigan.* Paper presented at 2011 SREE Conference, Washington, DC.
[16] MA ESE, 2013.

disproportionately assign students with challenging behavior to new teachers.[17] This data supports the assumption that one of the root causes of the experience gap – indeed, a root cause of inequitable access– is that first year teachers are routinely assigned to teach students who are at greater risk.

- Retention Strategies/Turnover Patterns – High poverty and high minority schools in Massachusetts experience higher educator turnover rates (see tables on page 25). When high-need schools experience high turnover rates, even more teachers are hired under the aforementioned ineffective hiring practices, yielding a greater gap in access to experienced teachers.

Equity Gap 2: Educator Preparation

An essential part of an educator's career path is the pre-service preparation for a specific role. When discussing educator preparation, we refer to all the elements involved in preparing an educator for his or her role. ESE's data uses three main indicators of educator preparation: extent of a candidate's pre-service preparation; attainment of the required Massachusetts license; and summative performance ratings on the Educator Evaluation Framework.

In Massachusetts, we view it as a strength of our system that all educator preparation programs fall under ESE's regulations, review, and accountability systems. This includes programs based in Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and those sponsored by nonprofits or districts. We support alternative preparation programs such as the Boston Teacher Residency or the Match Teacher Residency, as well as the programs embedded within IHEs.

Unqualified Teachers: unlicensed teachers

Massachusetts requires that educators – including teachers, support personnel, and administrators – hold a Massachusetts license for their specific role. Teachers demonstrate subject matter knowledge and skills, usually via the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Educators must also continue to complete professional development on an ongoing basis to maintain licensure. As a state, 97.6 percent of all teachers are appropriately licensed. There are instances when teachers are granted waivers from licensure. These are issued rarely. However, students in high poverty and high minority schools are about five times more likely than their peers in low poverty and low minority schools to be taught by unqualified teachers.

Percent of Unqualified Teachers				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
2.4	5.1	1.2	5.3	0.9

[17] Coggshall, J.G., Potemski, A. *Technical assistance response: Issues related to educator equity.* (Personal communication, May 21, 2015). Washington, DC: GTL Center at American Institutes for Research.

Out-of-Field Teachers: teachers who are not "highly qualified"
As a state, Massachusetts has made great strides toward the goal of highly qualified teachers (HQTs) teaching 100 percent of classes, and reached 95.5 percent in the 2013-2014 school year. However, only one percent of classes in low poverty and low minority schools are taught by teachers who are not highly qualified for that class, compared to nine percent in high poverty and high minority schools. Urban schools and schools with large ELL populations are particularly likely to have classes taught by non-HQTs.

Teachers teaching core subject areas for more than 20 percent of their schedule must hold the appropriate Massachusetts teaching license for the subject area(s) they are teaching. A teacher who is highly qualified in one subject area may teach 20 percent of classes in another subject and still be within the bounds of licensure regulations.

Note: The data below includes: 1) classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified in any subject, and 2) classes taught by teachers who are considered highly qualified for other subject(s), but not this specific class (even if the teacher is still within the bounds of the "20 percent" licensure regulation).

Percentage of Classes Taught by Out-of-Field (Non-HQT) Teachers							
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ	HEQ (High ELL Quartile)	LEQ (Low ELL Quartile)	Urban Schools
4.5	9.0	1.3	9.0	1.1	9.5	2.2	9.8

Out-of-Field Administrators: administrators without a specific license for a role
Students in high poverty and high minority schools are also more likely to have an administrator who does not have the specific license for his/her specific role. The specific licenses for administrators include: principal/assistant principal, school business administrator, special education administrator, superintendent/assistant superintendent, and supervisor/director. As with teachers, administrators are still in compliance with regulations if they spend no more than 20 percent of their time working in a role outside their specific licensure area. Also as with teachers, high poverty and minority schools have more administrators without a specific administrator license.

Percent of Administrators without a Specific License for a Specific Role				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
7.1	8.8	2.9	10.2	2.3

Unprepared Teachers: teachers without preparation for their specific role
Teacher preparation is critical to success.[18] ESE allows for multiple pathways to enter the field of teaching. If an educator has a Bachelor's degree and has demonstrated content knowledge – but has not completed an educator preparation program – he or she is eligible for a Preliminary License. Our data shows us that there are roughly twice as many teachers with a preliminary license in high poverty and high minority schools as there are in low poverty and low minority schools.

Percent of Teachers with Preliminary License (only a preliminary license and no other license)				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
4.5	6.6	3.0	6.1	3.7

Root Causes of Equity Gap 2: Educator Preparation

Varied quality of educator preparation is an underlying cause of our state's equity gap. The analysis below is not exhaustive, but highlights the main areas where educator preparation needs to be strengthened or is ineffective altogether:

- Inadequate Preparation – When Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) adequately prepare students for the realities of 21st century classrooms, educators are less likely to leave a school or district. Stakeholders reported that a lack of preparation and support for serving diverse students – including ELLs, students of different cultures, and those with social-emotional needs – contributed to educator turnover. They told us that more effective EPPs with field experience in high-need settings are needed. According to these stakeholders, new teacher attrition is due in part to a lack of preparedness for the realities of the classroom.[19] Preparation is just as critical for administrators. Research and stakeholders articulated how teacher and leader preparation are inextricably linked, as inexperienced and inadequately prepared administrators result in poor overall working conditions, leading to increased teacher turnover.[20]

- Inadequate Pipeline – EPPs must look strategically at the issue of supply and demand. We heard repeatedly from school and district stakeholders about persistently hard-to-fill teaching positions, such as special education, ESL, and STEM. In 2013-2014, almost 70 percent of waivers granted to districts were to teach students with moderate/severe

[18] Redmon, R.J. *Impact of Teacher Preparation upon Teacher Efficacy*. Online Submission. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum (14th, Cleveland, Ohio, October 5, 2007).
[19] Levine, A. *Educating School Teachers*. The Education Schools Project, 2006. Retrieved from http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf
[20] Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S. & Mazzeo, C. *The Schools Teachers Leave: Teacher Mobility in Chicago Public Schools*. Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2009.; *The Equity Equation: Teachers Advise on Massachusetts' Equity Plan*. Teach Plus, 2014 (draft emailed on March 25, 2015).

disabilities. This begs the question of what districts and EPPs are doing to respond to this inadequate supply. Stakeholders also brought up shifts in student enrollment and demographics, which change districts' supply needs.[21] In 2013-2014 ESE issued 778 waivers to 145 districts. These waivers allowed the districts to hire unlicensed candidates for teaching and administrative positions. Thus, more than one-third of all districts employed educators who were not licensed for their specific role. ESE is currently rethinking the licensure system; stakeholders stressed the need for such a process. Late hiring practices also make it difficult for schools to fill positions in areas of licensure shortage, such as SPED.

The educator pipeline also continues to yield teachers who are not demographically representative of Massachusetts students. Exposure to teachers of one's own race has been found to be beneficial for students of color, and experiences with diverse teachers are beneficial to all student groups.[22] Statewide, only seven percent of teachers are people of color, compared to 35 percent of students. For schools to be able to hire a diverse staff, EPPs must attract a more representative pool of teacher candidates.

Comparison of Student and Teacher Demographics							
	White	Hispanic	African American	Asian	Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	Native American	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
Students	64%	18%	9%	6%	3%	<1%	<1%
Teachers	93%	3%	3%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Source: Student Enrollment-SIMS 2014-2015; Staffing Data-EPIMS 2013-2014

- Fiscal Feasibility of Preparation – Stakeholders discussed the cost of attending educator preparation programs as a possible obstacle. Specifically, there was a sense that there is more financial support to help people become teachers than to help people become administrators – a hurdle which prevents teachers from pursuing administration.

- Need for Training to Meet Diverse Student Needs – Stakeholders frequently reported a lack of training for the needs of ELLs, SWDs, students with social-emotional issues, and students who are academically behind. This yields educators who are particularly underprepared to work in high-need schools, exacerbating the gap in adequate preparation.

[21] Owens, A. *Anticipating Change in the Massachusetts Teacher Workforce*. *Communities & Banking,* Winter 2011: 13-15. Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

[22] Boser, U. *Teacher diversity revisited: A new state-by-state analysis*. Center for American Progress, 2014. Egalite, E.J., Kisida, B., Winters, M.A. *Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race/ethnicity teacher assignment on student achievement.* Program on Education Policy and Governance Working Paper Series 14 (07), 2014.

Equity Gap 3: Educator Effectiveness

Educators should be regularly evaluated to get meaningful feedback, to promote continuous growth and development, to better ensure that their strengths are recognized and enhanced and that their weaknesses are identified and supported to ensure future success. In 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations for the evaluation of Massachusetts educators. The Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework is designed to:

- Promote growth and development amongst leaders and teachers
- Place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement
- Recognize excellence in teaching and leading
- Set a high bar for professional teaching status
- Shorten timelines for improvement

MA Educator Evaluation Framework
To assist districts and schools, ESE developed a comprehensive Model System for Educator Evaluation. The Model System is aligned with the state's educator evaluation regulations, and the Model System's rubrics meet the expected level of rigor (see 603 CMR 35:06).

School committees and school districts can adopt or adapt the Model System, or revise their own evaluation system to align with the regulations.

Ineffective Educator: teacher or administrator rated Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory
Since the inception of the Educator Evaluation Framework, educators have been awarded a "Summative Performance Rating" as one dimension of performance. The Summative Performance rating combines measures of practice along with the evaluator's professional judgment to make a rating determination. Data from 2013-2014, the most recent year for which these data are available statewide, tells us that significantly more educators in high poverty and high minority schools are rated as ineffective.

Percentage of Educators Rated Ineffective (Needs Improvement/Unsatisfactory)				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
5.3	9.7	2.9	9.1	3.4

The second dimension of performance in the Educator Evaluation Framework, the Student Impact Rating, is not available for all districts until after the 2015-2016 school year. However, for the purposes of analyzing equity gaps in educator impact, we examined existing Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs). Using the SGP measure, the data show a higher median SGP in mathematics for teachers in low poverty minority schools, as well as a higher median SGP in English Language Arts in lower poverty schools. As noted previously in this document, these differences in growth

are small. The data represent only a piece of the picture of inequitable access, and should be considered with caution. Additionally, these differences may be traced back to the higher percentage of first year teachers in the high poverty and high minority schools, and to the data we presented earlier that shows that inexperienced teachers produce slightly lower SGP on average, compared to more experienced teachers.

Average Median SGP for Teachers Teaching Mathematics (percentages)				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
51.5	49.7	55.5	49.8	51.7
Average Median SGP for Teachers Teaching English Language Arts (percentages)				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
50.7	49.4	54.3	50.2	50.0

Evaluation data provides a closer look at specific areas of inequity. As shown in the following standard level educator evaluation data, teachers in high poverty and high minority schools are less prepared to assess and improve their teaching – a key component of effectiveness. This falls under the Massachusetts Standard of Effective Teaching IV: Professional Culture, or "the capacity to reflect on and improve [their] own practice, using informal means as well as meetings with teams and work groups to gather information, analyze data, examine issues, set meaningful goals, and develop new approaches in order to improve teaching and learning."

Percent of Teachers Rated Ineffective in Standard IV: Professional Culture (Needs Improvement/Unsatisfactory)				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
4.5	6.6	3.0	6.1	3.7

Root Causes of Equity Gap 3: Educator Effectiveness

Stakeholders and national research both noted the relationship between leader effectiveness gaps and teacher effectiveness gaps. A variety of stakeholders stressed that leaders often lack understanding of the "real needs" of schools and districts. This was a concern, as they noted that district and school leaders' policies directly influence school culture and climate.

- Hiring Practices – Poor hiring practices lead to gaps in teacher effectiveness. School leaders note that by the time high-need urban districts are hiring, the most effective teacher candidates have been hired elsewhere.

- Scheduling Decisions —Stakeholders explained that in scheduling decisions, educators' interests are often given higher preference than student considerations. Scheduling decisions can support teacher retention (e.g., creating an environment which is stimulating and supportive for an educator). When determining staff and student schedules, the first priority must be providing equitable access for students to impactful educators.

- Inadequate Training for Diverse Student Needs – Teachers who are not adequately trained to meet the needs of ELLs, SWDs, students with social-emotional issues, and students who are academically behind, are less effective at teaching and managing behavior. This leads to an adverse school climate, and often to higher teacher turnover. This also puts added stress on specialists such as ESL and special education teachers, and on school leaders who are attempting to support unprepared teachers.23

- Climate and Culture – Effective organizations, including schools, should make building a productive culture part of a planned strategic effort.[24] This helps to retain and attract effective teachers, and to create an environment more conducive to teaching and learning.[25] Stakeholders consistently stressed the importance of schools' and districts' climate and culture. Behavior management, student needs, and leadership quality can all influence school climate. The Massachusetts 2012 Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL Massachusetts) found that teachers who were planning on staying in the classroom at their current school – or "Stayers" – were 2.5 times more likely to report a school atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, compared to teachers who planned to continue teaching, but at a different school – or "Movers." About 72 percent of Stayers reported school leaders who make a sustained effort to address teachers' concerns about their leadership, compared to 35 percent of Movers. In fact, Stayers were more positive than Movers about every teaching condition measured by TELL Massachusetts, including time, professional development, managing student conduct, and community support and involvement.

- Retention Strategies/Turnover Patterns – The aforementioned root causes also contribute to teacher turnover and attrition. To retain effective teachers, schools and districts should use intentional retention strategies. Massachusetts has about a 15 percent teacher turnover rate. This rate increases to almost 20 percent for urban districts, which include most of the state's high poverty and high minority schools. Struggling schools tend to experience more adverse school climate and culture, which

[23] Fitzpatrick, R. *Recruiting & Retaining Effective Special Education Teachers*. Presentation at the Effective Teachers for All Students: Northeast States Working Session, Framingham, MA, March 2, 2015.
[24] Fisher, D., Frey, N. and Pumpian, I., *How to Create a Culture of Achievement in Your School And Classroom.* ASCD, 2012.
[25] Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009, as cited in Coggshall & Potemski, 2015.

leads to turnover. A TNTP study found that highly effective teachers are 50 percent more likely to leave schools with weak instructional cultures.[26]

Teacher Turnover Rates				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
15.3	22.5	12.5	21.6	12.0

The quality of school leadership can directly influence teacher turnover. Thus, leaders influence the distribution of quality teachers not only in hiring and assignment decisions, but throughout the school year.[27] Stakeholders cited principal turnover as a factor in teacher turnover. A recent report by the School Leaders Network stresses that as a result of national administrator "churn" – the continuous cycle of leaders leaving schools –principal retention efforts must be emphasized as much as principal pipeline development efforts. Nationally, 25 percent of principals will leave their schools each year and 50 percent of new principals quit in their third year. [28] In Massachusetts, high poverty and high minority schools are more likely to experience principal turnover in a given year. As mentioned earlier, schools with high principal turnover have a difficult time holding onto effective teachers, and must more frequently face the adverse hiring and scheduling processes that in turn yield less-effective teacher assignments.

Principal Turnover Rates				
MA All	HPQ	LPQ	HMQ	LMQ
19.2	24.3	16.1	21.9	16.6

- Fiscal Issues: A cross section of stakeholders, including urban, suburban and rural districts, raised concerns about adequate funding as a contributing factor to inequities in educator effectiveness. The concerns were vague and ranged from insufficient funds for enhanced professional development to the expectation of districts meeting additional priorities without significantly increased state or federal funding. These concerns were mentioned in conjunction with other ideas and have not been adequately discussed or researched. When hypothesizing on possible underlying cause of equity gaps, stakeholders mentioned:
    - The effect of shifting demographics on a district's tax base
    - Ineffective town/district budget process
    - The economy in general
    - Lack of competitive salaries
    - Lack of adequate funding for competing priorities
    - State Aid Program, Chapter 70

[26] *The irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools*. TNTP, 2012.
[27] Clifford, M., Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Fetters, J. *The ripple effect: A synthesis of research on principal influence to inform performance evaluation design*. Naperville, IL: American Institutes for Research, 2012.
[28] *Churn: The High Cost of Principal Turnover*. School Leaders Network, 2014.

Without additional exploration, ESE cannot truly identify what the fiscal issues are. However, we are including this as a root cause of our equity gaps because most stakeholders mentioned "cost" or "budget issues" at some point in our discussions.

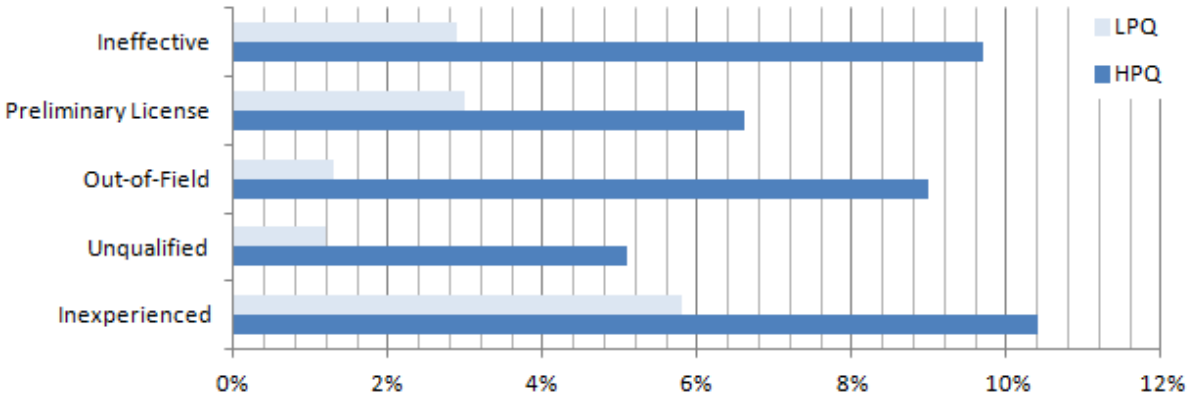
Overview and analysis of equity gap data

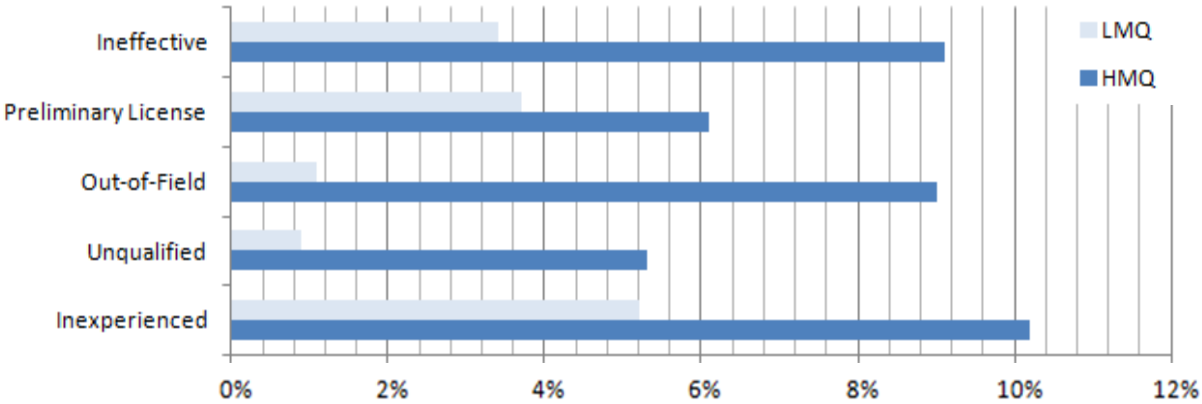
The following table and graphs summarize the differences in access between low and high poverty and minority schools. In comparing and considering equity gap data, we observe that experience, research and stakeholder input all suggest that many low income, high minority schools have teachers who fit into most or all of the categories below. As the economist R. Hamilton Lankford said, "Schools that have low-quality teachers as measured by one attribute are more likely to have low-quality teachers based on all other measures."[29]

Size of gaps		
	Comparing HPQs to LPQs	**Comparing HMQs to LMQs**
Inexperienced teachers	76% more inexperienced teachers	96% more inexperienced teachers
Teachers without a license	4.3 times as many unlicensed teachers	5.9 times as many unlicensed teachers
Classes taught by non-HQTs (out of field)	6.9 times as many classes	8.2 times as many classes
Teachers with a preliminary license	2.2 times as many teachers with a preliminary license	65% more teachers with a preliminary license
Educators rated ineffective	3.3 times as many ineffective educators	2.7 times as many ineffective educators
Average median SGP for teachers teaching mathematics	8% lower	4% lower
Average median SGP for teachers teaching ELA	9% lower	<1% higher

[29] *'If I can't learn from you…': Ensuring a highly qualified teacher for every classroom.* Quality Counts 2003. *Education Week: 22* (17).

Proportions of teachers in high and low poverty and minority schools





In the table and graphs above, we tend to see similarly-sized gaps between high and low income schools, and high and low minority schools. Quantitatively, the largest gaps are in the percentage of classes taught by non-HQTs, the percentage of unlicensed teachers, and the percentage of teachers with ineffective evaluation ratings. While we should look at a number of factors in considering teacher quality, the last data point deals directly with teacher performance, and therefore is of particular concern.

The data on non-HQTs includes teachers who are unlicensed, as well as teachers who have a license but are teaching outside of their field. Among Massachusetts classes taught by non-HQTs in 2012-2013, 40 percent of elementary and 35 percent of secondary classes were taught by licensed general education teachers who had not demonstrated subject knowledge for the subject(s) they were teaching.[30] The HQT-taught class gap between HPQs and LPQs is larger in secondary school, where content knowledge is more important.[31] The gap in HQT-taught classes

[30] *A Summary of Highly Qualified Teacher Data for School Year 2012-13*. US ED, August 2014.
[31] Ibid.

persists when we compare High and Low ELL Quartile schools (9.5 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively). Compared to the state as a whole, urban schools have more than twice the proportion of non-HQT classes (9.8 percent, compared to 4.2 percent statewide).

Section 5: Strategies to Eliminate Equity Gaps

Specific Strategies to Eliminate Equity Gaps in Educator Access

To eliminate equity gaps, we need to design and implement strategies that tackle these gaps at three levels: district, school, and classroom. These strategies must bring data to bear at each of these three levels, set ambitious goals for closing equity gaps, and support educators at each level in disrupting the status quo and producing measurable results. Further, we will implement strategies along the career continuum at the pre-service and in-service stages to build a robust pipeline of strong educators and to support continued growth once they reach the classroom. Thus, the strategies address the equity gaps in preparation, experience and effectiveness.

Strategy 1: Improve Educator Impact through Educator Preparation (locus of impact: Pipeline and Classroom)
Strategy 2: Improve Educator Effectiveness by Supporting Effective Implementation of the Educator Evaluation Framework (locus of impact: District)
Strategy 3: Focus on the Student Learning Experience (locus of impact: School)
Strategy 4: Educator Evaluation Guidebook for Inclusive Practice (locus of impact: Classroom)

Strategy 1: Improve Educator Impact through Educator Preparation (locus of impact: Pipeline and Classroom)

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION GAP; INADEQUATE PREPARATION; NEED FOR TRAINING TO MEET DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS

Educator Preparation provides the foothold for beginning educators to maximize their impact on student learning. In the 2014-2015 academic year, ESE has significantly shifted the expectations for program review and accountability, resulting in a review process based on data and driven by evidence. To this end, ESE will continue the following actions to build a robust pipeline and improve educator impact:

- Support preparation programs in implementing updated Guidelines for Professional Standards for Teachers, now fully aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. The guidelines are used in the design of teacher preparation programs, and will include greater emphasis on diverse learners.
- Rollout a revised Educator Preparation Program Approval Process, including Guidelines for Program Approval that emphasize program outcomes.

- Develop Educator Preparation Profiles, public reports linking data from educator preparation to student growth, district of employment, and other outcomes of program completers. Currently in the first year of development, Educator Preparation Profiles are public reports linking data from educator preparation to student MTEL scores, district of employment, and other indicators of program completers. Information linking EPPs to completers' educator evaluation ratings will be available within the next school year. An annual report will outline trends in profile data, including the diversity of the teacher candidate pool from individual EPPs. Educator Preparation Profiles hold EPPs accountable for teacher performance and emphasize the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs. The profiles help prospective education students to compare programs. They also inform school and LEA leaders about the outcomes of the programs generating teacher candidates so that they can seek well-prepared teachers
- Administer and analyze several new surveys that contribute to an overall picture of educator preparation programs and inexperienced teachers' effectiveness: Candidates Survey, Supervising Practitioners Survey, Hiring Employer Survey (one year out), and Program Completer Survey (one year out).
- Require performance assessments for teacher and leader candidates. These include the Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL), to be fully implemented in 2015-2016 as a requirement for licensure, and a statewide Teacher Performance Assessment, a requirement for program completion, to be developed and field tested in 2015-2016. The assessments hold EPPs accountable for teacher performance, and also emphasize the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs.

Strategy 2: Improve Educator Effectiveness by Supporting Effective Implementation of the Educator Evaluation Framework (locus of impact: District)

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS GAP; HIRING PRACTICES; EDUCATOR ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES

In June 2011, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved new state regulations on educator evaluation (603 CMR 35.00) to provide every school committee with the tools to hold all educators accountable for their performance and enable them to help all students perform at high levels. The regulations require that school committees establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators based on the state's new principles of evaluation (see ESE Regulations and Board Memos).

ESE continues to support districts in the implementation of the Educator Evaluation System, including through Title II, Part A. In the 2015-2016 academic year, ESE will implement an Education Evaluation Dashboard that tracks the effectiveness of districts' Evaluation Framework implementation. District leaders can use the dashboard to determine the alignment, consistency and differentiation of their educator effectiveness ratings. The

dashboard can inform decisions about how to implement the Evaluation Framework, train evaluators, and use evaluation data.

Only by identifying effective educators can schools and districts then assess equitable access, and make informed decisions about hiring, assignment and training based on effectiveness. Our theory of action as it relates to the equity plan is that if we improve educator effectiveness for all educators in the Commonwealth, then low income students and students of color will have more ready access to excellent educators. Since 2011, the Department has been focused on supporting the effective implementation of the Educator Evaluation Framework and has targeted agency-wide staff resources in this effort. For example, the Department developed and released a Model System which districts could choose to implement, including Model Contract Language, student and staff feedback instruments, Quick Reference Guides, and Implementation Briefs for districts to use to support implementation.

Strategy 3: Focus on the Student Learning Experience (locus of impact: School)

Student Learning Experience Report

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; HIRING PRACTICES; EDUCATOR ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES

Beginning this spring, Massachusetts's Equitable Access Plan focuses on the student and his/her learning experience, including access (or lack of access) to excellent educators. The idea is that rather than moving teachers around, we focus on *students* and on purposefully assigning them to educators. This would ensure that students are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced, unqualified, chronically absent, or out-of-field teachers. This allows leaders to focus on an entry point where they have strong leverage: student assignment to teachers. We need to dig into the heart of equity gaps and eliminate them at the school level. We strongly believe this report can influence how students are assigned to teachers.

Many schools now assign students randomly or for convenience (e.g., Mr. Noble keeps loud boys in their seats, so we'll assign him many of them; Mr. Waterman is a seasoned veteran, so we'll indulge him by assigning him "easier" students). To change the culture of student assignment to teachers, we need data. We need this data to be easily accessible at the school and district level, where administrators and guidance counselors are regularly considering and constructing student rosters for classes.

To improve equitable access, ESE built a new report to encourage informed student assignment: the Student Learning Experience Report, to be released in Summer 2015. Schools and districts can do a deep dive into their data to determine where and why their specific equity gaps exist, and what decisions they might make as a

result. The report demonstrates individual students' learning experiences for the past three to five years. At the student level, the report displays the proportion of experiences a student has had with teachers who have: high absenteeism (data available in the 2015-2016 school year), highly qualified status, an ineffective rating in their evaluation (Needs Improvement/unsatisfactory), fewer than three years of experience, and professional teaching status.

This strategy provides succinct data to help school and district educators to improve scheduling decisions. They can use the data to **identify and avoid gaps for students in access to experienced, prepared, and effective teachers**.

Student Learning Experience Report: School-level view

Average student experiences with core subject teachers over five years, for each school in a district

	General		Teacher Information					Highly Qualified	
				Years in MA					
	# Students	Avg Years with Classroom Data	# Tchr Exp	% <1	% 1-2	% 3+	% Long Term Subs	# Tchr Exp	% HQ
State (All Students)	**771,355**	**4**	**22,921,596**	**5%**	**9%**	**85%**	**1%**	**16,509,311**	**97%**
District (All Students)	**4,502**	**3**	**66,360**	**12%**	**19%**	**69%**	**0%**	**50,372**	**99%**
School 1	1,388	3	32,732	16%	21%	64%	0%	32,535	99%
School 2	535	4	3,753	9%	20%	71%	1%	3,737	99%
School 3	353	3	1,302	8%	13%	80%	0	1,302	100%
School 4	510	4	3,690	6%	23%	71%	0%	3,674	99%
School 5	423	3	1,745	13%	15%	71%	0%	1,745	99%
School 6	414	3	1,703	3%	11%	86%	0	1,703	96%
School 7	472	3	3,938	9%	21%	69%	0%	3,921	100%
School 8	405	3	1,755	4%	11%	85%	0	1,755	99%

	Professional Teacher Status		Educator Evaluation	Overall		Standard 1		Standard 2		Standard 3		Standard 4	
	# Tchr Exp	% PTS	# Tchr Exp	% E/P	% NI/U	% E/P	% NI/U	% E/P	% NI/U	% E/P	% NI/U	% E/P	% NI/U
State (All Students)	**10,008,810**	**77%**	**8,442,695**	**93%**	**7%**	**95%**	**5%**	**95%**	**5%**	**94%**	**5%**	**95%**	**4%**
District (All Students)	**36,893**	**60%**	**32,213**	**80%**	**20%**	**86%**	**14%**	**85%**	**15%**	**81%**	**19%**	**94%**	**6%**
School 1	18,792	55%	15,848	76%	24%	82%	18%	82%	18%	85%	15%	92%	8%
School 2	2,137	57%	1,965	95%	5%	96%	4%	97%	3%	66%	34%	99%	1%
School 3	797	67%	673	88%	12%	92%	8%	95%	5%	75%	25%	95%	5%
School 4	2,020	62%	1,859	83%	17%	91%	9%	88%	12%	91%	9%	96%	4%
School 5	1,052	61%	923	77%	23%	77%	23%	80%	20%	78%	22%	95%	5%
School 6	976	75%	724	94%	6%	97%	3%	95%	5%	97%	3%	98%	2%
School 7	2,451	59%	2,251	65%	35%	86%	14%	73%	27%	55%	45%	90%	10%
School 8	1,012	61%	878	90%	10%	90%	10%	98%	2%	88%	12%	98%	2%

The Student Learning Experience report answers questions like these:

1. Student View: Which students have been disproportionately assigned to inexperienced teachers, teachers who have been rated Needs Improvement/Unsatisfactory, or teachers with high rates of absenteeism over the last five years?
2. School View: Do other schools in the district have comparable statistics in terms of providing equitable access?
3. District View: How does my district's data compare to the state average? How does the data compare for different student subgroups?

The report includes a number of filters:

1. Level: district, school, individual
2. Student characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, ELL, FLEP (Formerly Limited English Proficiency), SWD, grade level, EWIS risk level.
3. Years: The report allows examination of each student's experience as far back as three, four or five years.

Equitable Access Professional Learning Network Pilot

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; HIRING AND EDUCATOR ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES; ADDITIONAL ROOT CAUSES TO BE DECIDED

ESE plans to use the Student Learning Experience report to drive change at the school and classroom level. To accomplish this, we will support districts in using the Student Learning Experience Report. Beginning in the fall of 2015, ESE will pilot an Equitable Access Professional Learning Network with several (up to eight) districts to focus on the strategies outlined in the Equity Plan and to collaborate on using the Student Learning Experience Report. The PLN will 1) provide a network for participating districts/schools, and 2) include direct access to and input from the state as well as participating districts/schools. As part of the programming for this PLN, ESE will convene the districts to: introduce the report; use it together; maintain ongoing communication to identify and understand districts' equity gaps; determine the underlying causes of the equity gaps; and develop the best local strategies to eliminate gaps. As a result of the pilot, ESE will develop resources including promising/emerging practices, identify challenges, develop strategies to overcome inequities, and revise the Student Learning Experience Report as necessary.

Strategy 4: Develop and Implement the Educator Evaluation Guidebook for Inclusive Practice (locus of impact: Classroom)

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; NEED FOR TRAINING TO MEET DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS; CLIMATE AND CULTURE; RETENTION STRATEGIES

We know from data and research that Massachusetts needs to focus on ensuring that students with disabilities have access to quality teachers. In response to recommendations from the Hehir review of Massachusetts special education, the *Educator Evaluation Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* aims to align best practices in inclusive instruction and positive behavior support with core aspects of the Educator Evaluation Framework. ESE convened teams of educators, as well as national experts in Universal Design for Learning and positive behavior supports, to develop the guidebook and the implementation strategy. We envision a set of tools that enrich all aspects of Educator Evaluation (observations, goal-setting, student/staff feedback, artifacts of practice, and more) with evidence-based best practices for supporting diverse learners, especially students with disabilities. The guidebook promotes the principles of Universal Design for Learning and positive behavior supports through integration with key components of the Educator Evaluation Framework. This addresses the stakeholder feedback that lack of a positive behavior support system drives teacher ineffectiveness, poor school climate, and high turnover.

The guidebook uses Educator Evaluation as a lever to support more effective, inclusive education. The guidance and tools can be useful for educator evaluators (including superintendents evaluating principals and an annotated superintendent rubric), and for educators seeking to improve their inclusive practice and align with the evaluation framework. The guidebook includes a master schedule review tool that allows leaders to review how equitably they are assigning students to quality teachers, and to improve inclusion of SWDs in general education classrooms. Students with disabilities who are placed in general education classrooms are more likely to experience teachers who are highly qualified in content areas than students who are placed in separate classrooms.

A field test with stakeholders at the classroom, school and district level will evaluate the guidebook's effectiveness in the 2015-2016 school year. Additionally, select Massachusetts Educational Collaboratives and members of the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association will receive training on the resource. Full-scale dissemination strategies will go into effect in 2016-2017 through technical assistance sessions with participating districts, select Educational Collaboratives, Massachusetts Focus Academy courses, and alignment with Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports initiatives. For more information, see Section 6: Monitoring, Ongoing Support, and Public Reporting of Progress.

Additional Equity Gap Strategies Aligned to Core Priorities

As noted in the introduction, ESE's five core priorities align with best practices and strategies for closing equity gaps. Those core priorities are:

1. Strengthening curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Promoting educator development
3. Turning around the lowest performing districts and schools
4. Using technology and data to support teaching and learning

5. Attending to the social/emotional/health needs of students and families

The following section details some of the developments and programs that are aligned with these priorities and that further the work of closing equity gaps.

Current developments and innovations that address equity gaps

In addition to the four key strategies described above, other recent initiatives and adaptations in ESE's work directly address equity gaps and/or their root causes.

Title II, Part A of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS

ESE CORE PRIORITY: PROMOTING EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

ESE will increase the focus of its monitoring of Title IIA on components affecting equitable access. Nationally, the bulk of Title IIA funding – up to 75 percent – is spent on professional development and class-size reduction, with little data as to how impactful these activities are in improving educator effectiveness.[32] We see this trend in Massachusetts, documented in an analysis of Title IIA applications facilitated by SRI International, and we are developing a new approach to Title IIA, including:

- Revised IIA application process, including a comprehensive Needs Assessment section to clearly identify how and why districts determined their needs. Districts must include an explanation of how their proposed activities will help maintain the equitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers. Additionally, districts that have not met the 100 percent highly qualified teacher target must indicate in their applications how they will use funds to make all core content teachers highly qualified.
- Modified IIA protocols, including additional technical support for districts and an improved process for monitoring areas such as educator evaluation.
- ESE using district data in Title IIA applications to inform how we can support districts in pursuing equitable access.

Low Income Education Access Project: Appropriate Special Education Identification and Placement of Low Income Students

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION GAP

ESE CORE PRIORITY: USING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

As a follow-up to the Hehir Reports on Special Education in Massachusetts, the Special Education Planning and Policy Group identified 15 districts to be part of the Low Income Education Access Project (LEAP). About half of the districts over-identify low income students as having disabilities, and about half of the districts place SWDs in substantially separate settings at particularly high rates. SPED teachers in substantially separate settings are often unprepared to teach content areas. The Hehir Reports found that SPED teachers in secondary substantially

[32] McKay, S. I*mproving Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015. Retrieved from: http://cdn.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Title-II-expert-conveing-summary_2-6_formatted.pdf.

separate classrooms are not typically licensed in the content areas that they teach – meaning that SWDs in such classrooms have limited access to classes taught by a highly qualified teacher. Over-identification of SPED students also requires the hiring of additional SPED teachers, exacerbating shortages in low income areas.[33] ESE is collaborating with these districts to identify, prioritize and develop tools and resources to address these issues. LEAP districts will pilot the tools and resources, and finalized versions will then be made available statewide. Ultimately, ESE's goal is to share strategies to analyze and reflect on identification and placement data and practices.

Diversity Initiative – develop cultural proficiency and hiring practices

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS GAP; INADEQUATE PIPELINE; NEED FOR TRAINING TO MEET DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS

ESE CORE PRIORITIES: STRENGTHENING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT; PROMOTING EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT; ATTENDING TO THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

In 2013 ESE launched a Diversity Initiative proposal and convened a group of experts, known as the Massachusetts Advocates for Diversity in Education Task Force (MADE), to advise the Department on how to support districts to more effectively recruit and retain a diverse workforce and to improve all educators' effectiveness by developing cultural proficiency. The resources developed through this initiative are shared online on an ongoing basis. ESE has secured a cultural proficiency provider who will develop, publish and make available replicable materials in the form of guides, manuals, ready-to-use toolkits, and vignettes. The tools will be designed to support districts in: hiring and retention of diverse educators; successful transition of diverse students between and within schools; and development of culturally proficiency.

Ongoing work that addresses equity gaps

As noted in the introduction, several of ESE's ongoing programs and policies also support the elimination of equity gaps and their root causes. Rather than simply list all ongoing work related to equity gaps, this section focuses on some of the resources, tools and supports available to districts and schools in their work to address inequitable access.

Rethinking Equity and Teaching English Language Learners (RETELL)

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; NEED FOR TRAINING TO MEET DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS

ESE CORE PRIORITIES: STRENGTHENING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT; PROMOTING EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

In order to strengthen instruction and better support the academic achievement of ELLs, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations in June 2012. These include a requirement that all incumbent core academic teachers of ELLs earn a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement by July 1, 2016. A corresponding SEI Administrator Endorsement is required for leaders supervising teachers of ELLs. Administrator and core academic teacher candidates must obtain SEI endorsement to earn an Initial License.

[33] Fitzpatrick, 2015.

The new regulations are at the center of ESE's Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) initiative to transform the teaching and learning of ELLs across the Commonwealth.

Level 5 Receivership

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS GAP; HIRING AND EDUCATOR ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES; CLIMATE AND CULTURE; RETENTION STRATEGIES

ESE CORE PRIORITY: TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST PERFORMING DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

Chronically underperforming or Level 5 status is the most serious category in the Massachusetts school and district accountability system, representing receivership. Districts are eligible to be placed in Level 5 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education based on: a district review; the report of an appointed accountability monitor; a follow-up review report; quantitative indicators set out in state regulations; or the failure of a Level 4 district to meet the ESE-approved benchmarks or goals in its improvement plan in a timely manner. A district with low performance is designated as Level 5 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education because of significant concerns about the capacity of the district to make the changes necessary to raise student achievement to acceptable performance levels. The Commissioner may place an underperforming school in Level 5 status at the expiration of its turnaround plan if the school has failed to improve as required by the goals, benchmarks, or timetable of its plan; or if district conditions make it unlikely that the school will make significant improvement without a Level 5 designation.

In 2011, the school district of Lawrence was the first to be placed into receivership. At the May 2015 meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), the Board voted to place the district of Holyoke in state receivership. Lawrence and Holyoke's student populations are 92 percent low income and 85 percent low income, respectively. Both are home to large Latino communities – 92 percent of students in Lawrence and 79 percent in Holyoke. In both districts, about 30 percent of students are ELLs.

Under Level 5 status, Lawrence and individual Level 5 schools have had increased support and opportunities .The authorities and flexibilities of a Level 5 designation at the district or school level empower a receiver to work with the Commissioner to initiate an ambitious and accelerated reform agenda, so that students receive the quality of education that we expect for all students in the Commonwealth. Many of these authorities pertain to the use of time and the deployment and compensation of staff.

Under receivership flexibilities, several practices that the Level 5 schools and district have implemented also align with best practices for equitable access. Nationally, these practices have been found to improve job satisfaction, school climate, and attracting and retaining excellent educators[34]:

[34] Quality Counts, 2003. Teach Plus, 2014. TNTP, 2012.

- Hiring staff for the school or district based on which candidates are the best fit for the positions, regardless of historical district bidding, bumping, and seniority practices
- Development of new educator compensation systems based on educator performance and including differentiated roles and a career ladder
- Creation of teacher leadership opportunities, such as teacher leader cabinets or school-based leadership roles
- Creation of new types of positions in support of the school's academic program, such as a STEM Director or Dean of School Culture
- Implementation of new calendars at the school and district levels, including more time devoted before and during the school year for professional development, common planning time, and professional learning communities

Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS AND PREPARATION GAPS; NEED FOR TRAINING FOR DIVERSE STUDENT NEEDS; CLIMATE AND CULTURE; RETENTION STRATEGIES; ADDITIONAL ROOT CAUSES AS DETERMINED BY LOCAL NEED

ESE CORE PRIORITIES: PROMOTING EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT; TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST PERFORMING DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS; ATTENDING TO THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

MTSS is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. It was developed to help guide the establishment of a system that provides high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. It also aims specifically to develop targeted interventions/supports for students who experience academic and/or behavioral difficulties and students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught. The following academies are among the support offerings from the Office of Tiered System of Supports.

- **Massachusetts FOCUS Academy** (MFA) is a blended online and in-person professional development system composed of free, rigorous graduate college courses that provide educators with the skills, knowledge and instructional strategies to improve outcomes for all students. The participant application process prioritizes personnel from schools with a demonstrated need matching the course content. A section of each course is offered through DSACs, serving Level 3 and 4 schools. Most courses are designed to improve instruction and use tiered systems of support, to better teach SWDs and all students in inclusive classrooms. This better prepares teachers to address diverse student needs, and facilitates inclusion of SWDs in general education classrooms rather than in substantially separate classrooms – which in turn provides SWDs with more access to highly qualified teachers at the secondary level. The academy is designed to increase teacher retention, as teachers who feel effective are more likely to stay. FOCUS academy offers a math content course designed to support educators on waivers in passing the MTEL, helping address the gap in non-highly-qualified teachers.

Two examples of MTSS's specific in-district, job-embedded opportunities for educators, providing teams to work with struggling schools for multiple years:

- **Universal Design for Learning Academy** is a multi-year-professional development opportunity that provides a blended learning approach to the implementation of UDL at the classroom, school, and district level. The academy includes face-to-face, online and job-embedded components. The goal of the UDL Academy is to build capacity at the school and district levels, in order to impact real change in educator practices and to support high achievement for all learners. The UDL Academy will promote the structures, processes, resources, and collaboration needed for implementation of UDL.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Academy** is a multi-year professional development opportunity designed to train school and district teams in development and implementation of school and district-wide systems of behavioral supports and interventions. The academy includes face-to-face and job embedded components. Based on the extensive research supporting the policies, practices and procedures of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Framework[35], these trainings will teach the structures, processes, resources, and collaboration needed for implementation of PBIS. In a white paper on Massachusetts's equity plan, Teach Plus found that developing such a behavioral support system contributes to a more positive and supportive school climate and culture, which in turn helps to improve teacher effectiveness and to attract and retain effective educators.[36]

District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs)

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS GAP; ROOT CAUSES AS DETERMINED BY LOCAL NEED

ESE CORE PRIORITY: TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST PERFORMING DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

ESE has established six regional DSACs to help districts and their schools to strategically use professional development and targeted assistance to improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. In collaboration with partner organizations, DSACs use a regional approach that leverages the knowledge, skills, and expertise of local educators to address shared needs through an emphasis on expanding district and school capacity for sustained improvement. DSACs serve all districts except Commissioner's Districts, but give first priority for assistance to Level 3 and 4 districts. Level 1 and 2 districts may participate in regional networks and, to the extent permitted by DSAC resources, other regional DSAC activities.

Model Curriculum Units (MCUs)

ADDRESSES: EFFECTIVENESS GAP

ESE CORE PRIORITY: STRENGTHENING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

As part of its Race to the Top Grant, ESE has partnered with teams of teachers to create more than 100 MCUs. The MCUs use Understanding by Design, and align Massachusetts's curriculum frameworks with the Common Core State Standards, to demonstrate the shifts from the

[35] Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. *Evaluation Studies*. Retrieved from: http://www.pbis.org/research/primary/evaluation-studies.

[36] Allensworth, Ponisciak & Mazzeo, 2009; Teach Plus, 2014.

frameworks to CCSS. This resource is designed to build educator capacity in instruction, thus increasing the overall effectiveness of teachers.

Edwin Analytics

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; HIRING AND EDUCATOR ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES

ESE CORE PRIORITY: USING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Edwin project, funded in part by Race to The Top and Longitudinal Data System (LDS) federal grants, is a multiyear initiative to increasingly provide educators with functionality that meets specific needs identified by state and district stakeholders. Edwin Analytics is a reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized districts and state-level users access to new information, reports, and perspectives.

Edwin Analytics integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education, and offers programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. For example, a district leader can develop a better picture of equitable access by generating a report showing the proportion of teachers who have different levels of teaching experience, and can compare this data across all schools in the district.

STEM Content Professional Development

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVENESS GAPS; INADEQUATE PIPELINE

ESE CORE PRIORITY: PROMOTING EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

ESE's professional development for STEM teachers gives priority to teachers who are locally identified as teaching out-of-field, and/or teaching in a new subject area. For example, of more than 3,200 participants in the Massachusetts Math and Science Partnership PD program, only 57 percent of science teachers and 47 percent of math teachers (excluding SPED teachers) held licenses in their subject/s. This helps address shortages of STEM teachers and the issue of non-HQTs, who have not demonstrated sufficient content knowledge in the subject/s they teach.

Status of the Massachusetts Educator Workforce Report

ADDRESSES: PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE GAPS; RETENTION STRATEGIES; INADEQUATE PIPELINE

ESE CORE PRIORITY: USING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

ESE develops a Status of the Massachusetts Educator Workforce Report on a biannual basis. The 2013 report focused on first-year teachers. The report aimed to help guide teacher recruitment and retention efforts – especially in hard-to-staff areas – and to improve the support ESE, preparation programs, and school districts provide to first-year teachers. The 2011 report had a broader focus, including educator supply and demand, and equitable distribution of educators in the areas of licensure, experience and retention.

How ESE is addressing equity gaps: Summary of strategies

Preparation Gap: To close the effectiveness gap, ESE supports Educator Preparation Programs in producing well-prepared new teachers. Our strategies include tools and guidance to enhance teacher and principal preparation programs and to better align them to the demands of high need schools. The quality of teacher candidates is especially important for low income and minority students, as we know they are disproportionately assigned to novice teachers.

The new Educator Preparation Profiles, EPP Review Process, and educator performance assessments hold EPPs accountable for the outcomes of their completers, and increase the emphasis on educator preparedness to serve diverse learners. Enhanced data collection on EPP quality also helps educator candidates and employers to identify the programs most likely to produce quality educators.

The Educator Evaluation Guidebook and the RETELL SEI requirement fill knowledge gaps in working with diverse student needs – an area in which EPPs are often lacking, according to stakeholders. This in turn helps keep more SWDs in general education classrooms, where they are much more likely to experience teachers who are licensed in content areas than they would be in separate classrooms. The LEAP initiative also aims to increase inclusion.

Closer monitoring of Title IIA applications helps keep ESE aware of induction and mentoring practices in districts, and this information can help identify districts needing support with this area of educator preparation. Title IIA monitoring also tracks whether and how districts are using funds to make all core content teachers highly qualified.

Experience Gap: The SLE Report, which helps districts and schools to more equitably assign prepared educators, does the same with hiring and scheduling decisions for educators with different levels of experience. Edwin Analytics allows district leaders to view the distribution of teachers at various levels of experience across all schools in the district. Approaches that improve teacher effectiveness are found to also improve school climate and job satisfaction, helping schools to retain experienced educators.

Effectiveness Gap: Approaches to closing the preparation and experience gaps aim to ultimately address the educator effectiveness gap. Strategies to collect and share data – such as the SLE Report, other Edwin Analytics reports, Title IIA applications, and the Educator Evaluation System – allow schools and districts to monitor and respond to equity gaps.

As the strategies and resources above demonstrate, ESE offers various means of improving educators' capacity to teach diverse students, including ELLs, SWDs, students with social-emotional needs, and minority students. For example, the Diversity Initiative aims to increase educator effectiveness through cultural competency, while also supporting the hiring of more

diverse faculties – an approach that has been shown to be effective in educating minority students.

In addition to enhancing educator effectiveness in meeting the needs of diverse learners, the new Educator Evaluation Guidebook aims for evaluations to more accurately reflect the practices of inclusiveness and PBIS. Furthermore, the Equitable Access Professional Learning Network will be building on other strategies to explore best practices and new approaches in addressing the gap.

Finally, DSACs, the Level 5 turnaround work, and other ESE support organizations are available to assist struggling districts in implementing the strategies and resources included in this plan, in order to meet goals for overall teacher effectiveness and equitable access.

Section 6: Monitoring, Ongoing Support and Public Reporting of Progress

Plan for Ongoing Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

ESE will provide information on the content and progress of the Equity Plan through an Annual Report and an Equitable Access section of the ESE website. In addition to disseminating information, our communications plan heavily involves two-way engagement with stakeholders. The following tables describe how ESE plans to inform stakeholders about components of the Equity Plan in the short term, and to publicly share progress and updates in the long term. As the Equity Plan is a living document subject to alterations, ESE intends to continue soliciting and responding to the feedback of diverse stakeholders. ESE will leverage internal department initiatives and external organizations to engage stakeholders.

Plan for stakeholder engagement through internal initiatives	
District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs)	
Description	Six regional DSACs help schools to strategically use PD and targeted assistance, with an emphasis on expanding district and school capacity for sustained improvement. DSACs work primarily with Level 3 and 4 schools.
Reporting/ feedback activities	Educator Development Team staff will attend meetings with Regional Assistance Directors; these regional network meetings will allow us to explain the plan and provide updates. Network teams can then help schools/districts identify components of the plan to use in response to goals identified in annual self-assessments. ESE will gather feedback about the plan and how districts are using its components.
Frequency	Twice annually

Office of District and School Turnaround (ODST)	
Description	ODST supports the Commissioner's Districts (the ten largest urban districts), providing similar services to those of the DSACs. ODST particularly focuses on the lowest-performing schools in these districts. Between ODST and DSACs, ESE reaches all Level 3, 4 and 5 districts.
Reporting/ feedback activities	In Year 1, Educator Development staff will explain the Equity Plan and communications plan at an ODST quarterly meeting, which will include representatives of programs such as SPED and School Improvement Grants. At this meeting, we will also solicit feedback on additional approaches to engaging with high-needs schools and districts. ESE staff will attend a meeting of liaisons, who work directly with districts. ESE will familiarize liaisons with the plan, particularly the Student Learning Experience Report and Educator Evaluation Guidebook. Liaisons can then use annual improvement plans as an entry point to help districts/schools identify strategies and resources in the Equity Plan that align with their current goals. In the following years, the Educator Development Office will use these meetings to provide updates and solicit feedback from districts' and schools' experiences.
Frequency	Twice in Year 1 (one ODST and one liaison meeting), then annually
Diversity Initiative	
Description	The Massachusetts Advocates for Diversity in Education Task Force (MADE) comprises a group of experts who advise ESE on how to support districts to more effectively recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
Reporting/ feedback activities	Educator Development staff will solicit feedback from the Taskforce annually to provide updates and solicit advice and feedback, particularly on the topic of strategies for increasing educator diversity.
Frequency	Twice in Year 1, then annually
Board Advisory Councils	
Description	Among the councils that advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on specific topics, several focus on issues related to the Equitable Access Plan. The individual councils are included among the stakeholder groups listed below, organized by category.
Reporting/ feedback activities	Educator Development staff will work with the councils' liaisons to engage the councils and participate in meetings. In addition to providing feedback, members of the councils can assist in engaging the diverse districts, schools and organizations where they work.
Frequency	See below, organized by stakeholder category

Depending on the stakeholder group, topic, and feedback we are seeking, engagement activities may occur through focus groups, board meetings, general membership meetings, phone conversations, or sharing of tools. For examples of the external stakeholder groups that ESE will likely engage, please see the list of organizations in Appendix B.

Plan for Ongoing Goals and Metrics

	Educator Preparation	Metrics
SY 2016-2017	Implement Teacher Performance Assessment	Statewide pilot of the TPA in every EPP in the state completed by Spring 2016.
SY 2017-2018	After three cycles of Educator Preparation Profiles, analyze outcomes, ID benchmarks & goals going forward Analyze data & set benchmarks for Performance Assessment for Leaders	Benchmarks set
SY 2018-2019	Analyze data & set benchmarks for Teacher Performance Assessment	Benchmarks set
Staff involved:	Educator Preparation Office; External research contract for Ed Prep Profiles	
	Educator Evaluation	**Metrics**
SY 2014-2015	Continue supporting districts in Ed Eval implementation	Alignment, consistency and differentiation of Ed Eval ratings
SY 2014-2015	Begin implementation of Ed Eval Dashboard	Implementation begun in large urban districts
SY 2014-2015	Equitable access website	Establish a landing page and website dedicated to equitable access.
SY 2016-2017	Share equity plan strategies with stakeholders Model Rubric Validation - which indicators and elements are most predictive	Conduct two in-person or virtual convenings (fall and spring) Plan established
SY 2017-2018	Overall monitoring of school and district implementation of Equitable Access	Embed and establish protocols in Title II, Part A subgrantee monitoring
Staff involved:	Office of Educator Effectiveness	

	Student Learning Experience Report and PLN	Metrics
Summer 2015	Launch limited access report in Edwin Analytics Conduct selection process for PLN Strategize programming for the year	List of up to eight participating districts Year 1 strategy complete
Fall 2015	Launch PLN Begin formal engagements with districts Student Learning Experience report updated with new data	Engagement events with districts New iteration of report
Winter 2016	PLN in full implementation - determining causes and strategies Start to determine which resources are needed	
Spring 2016	Resource development (strategies, best practices) Possible revisions to Student Learning Experience Report	
Staff involved:	Office of Educator Effectiveness; superintendents of PLN districts; Northeast Comprehensive Center	
	Educator Evaluation Guidebook for Inclusive Practice	**Metrics**
Summer 2015	Present guidebook to Education Collaboratives & MA Secondary School Administrators' Association Guidebook completed and ready for implementation	Identify 5-10 principals to partner on field test Guidebook posted
SY 2015-2016	15 teachers who created guidebook provide district PD & participate in preliminary implementation Comprehensive field test with 3-5 superintendents, 5-10 principals, 15 teachers; participants provide monthly feedback Begin development of Focus Academy course on the guidebook with Office of Tiered System of Supports Train Ed. Collaboratives on guidebook and tools	Number of PD activities Increase in full-inclusion placements; focus groups; implementation activities Completed course plan PDs offered on guidebook in summer 2016
March-April 2016	Revise tools in response to field test	Revised tools
March-June 2016	Analyze feedback to determine next set of goals and develop implementation strategy	Implementation strategy
SY 2016-2017	Develop and execute dissemination, engagement, and implementation strategy, informed by field test Focus Academy offers course on guidebook	Increase in full-inclusion placements Implementation of course
Staff involved:	Office of Educator Effectiveness, SPED Office, and Office of Tiered System of Supports	

Assessing and reacting to progress
ESE intends to use stakeholder feedback and monitoring of goals and metrics to better understand the progress of the plan's strategies. This information will also inform any decisions about changes to the plan. The Equitable Access Professional Learning Network provides an opportunity to assess the use of the Student Learning Experience Report, as well as the plan's other strategies, before making potential revisions to the plan. The field test of the Educator Evaluation Guidebook will allow ESE to analyze the guidebook's tools and make necessary revisions.

Section 7: Conclusion

Having identified gaps in educator experience, preparation and effectiveness, the 2015 Equitable Access Plan aims to tackle equity gaps and their root causes from multiple entry points. ESE plans to leverage existing initiatives and to use data in order to better position ourselves to build off of best practices and successes. Strategies involve sharing and implementing best practices; developing and supporting the use of actionable data; and providing resources for schools and districts to improve educator effectiveness, hiring practices, inclusion, retention, and school climate, among other areas. These strategies aim to enhance the preparation and effectiveness of educators overall, and those in high-need schools in particular. While strategies touch a variety of policy areas, all work toward greater access to high quality and effective educators – the top in-school factor for student success.

New strategies – specifically the Professional Learning Network, Student Experience Report, and Educator Evaluation Guidebook – can help in refining root cause analysis and identifying new strategies going forward. The 2015 Equity Plan is designed to continue the work of investigating gaps, causes and strategies, and to provide opportunities to share this work with educators and policymakers.

Appendices

Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagement Summary and Synthesis

Topic	Relationship to root causes	Strategies
Educator preparation and pipeline	• **Preparation:** EPPs unaligned with schools' needs; teachers unprepared for ELLs, SWDs, social-emotional needs • **Pipeline:** - teacher shortages in SPED, special education, and western MA - varied quality of teacher induction - teachers don't represent student demographics	• Support/expand district-EPP partnerships • Train teachers to serve diverse needs of students • Assign practicum/practica in diverse settings • Expand teacher residencies • Provide systemic supports for first five years, including mentoring • Develop programs and procedures to help teachers move beyond preliminary license
Financial issues for educators	• **Fiscal feasibility:** cost of EPPs can be prohibitive, especially for school leadership	• Higher salaries for specialized roles • Tuition reimbursement/loan forgiveness • Grad school incentives • Bonus buy back
Human capital practices	• **Hiring practices:** Late hiring timeline in high-need districts → exacerbates teacher shortages and misplacement • **Scheduling decisions, prep for diverse needs:** new teachers assigned struggling classes • **Changing workforce:** new generation of teachers more mobile	• Move up hiring timeline; involve data and stakeholders in hiring • Require teachers to give advance notice before leaving → more likely to replace with a good fit • Offer teacher leadership opportunities for quality teachers • Review educator data & survey results, especially for specialized roles
Leadership	• **Preparation:** lack of leader expertise in evaluating ELL teachers • **Climate and culture; retention:** poor leadership → adverse culture and collegial relationships; turnover • Administrative tasks take time away from leaders' own professional development	• Provide in-depth training on using evaluation rubric for ELL teachers • Develop strong school improvement plans • Open communication between teachers, leaders and policymakers → better work environment • Continue involving teachers in plan development • Train leaders through webinars

Topic	Relationship to root causes	Strategies
Preparation for diverse student needs	• **Licensure:** non-ESL teachers leading ESL classes → greater inequities for ELLs • Shortage of qualified special education and bilingual evaluators →ELLs misidentified as special need • Lack of cultural competency • Inability to serve ELLs' needs → over-identification as special needs • **Climate and culture:** lack of school-wide social-emotional support systems causes: - over-placement in substantially separate classrooms - teachers lack resources/knowledge to meet diverse student needs - adverse school culture - **teacher turnover**	• Alter licensure policies Stakeholders recommended various strategies to improve PD, both to meet diverse student needs and to make educators more effective overall: • Provide more targeted PD for ESL teachers • Internal learning walks • Use evaluation data to inform PD • Districts and schools promote school-wide social-emotional support systems • Use tiered behavioral and academic interventions
Fiscal issues for LEAs	• Insufficient funding for quality, embedded PD in high-need schools • challenging with tax base • competitive salaries • State Aid Program, Chapter 70 • Ineffective local budget process	• Find alternative PD funding • Leverage in-district staff for PD

Appendix B: Groups Included in Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders invited to participate in engagement meetings	
Category	**Organizations/groups (* indicates that the group participated)**
LEAs and administrators	* Chelsea Public Schools * Fitchburg Public Schools * Greater Lowell Technical High School * MA Association of School Superintendents MA Association of Vocational Administrators * MA Charter Public School Association MA School Personnel Association * Superintendents Advisory Cabinet * The Public Schools of Brookline Title I and IIA Directors Title I Community of Practitioners * Urban District Research and Accountability Leads * Urban Superintendents Network * Woburn Public Schools
School committees/boards	* Board of Elementary and Secondary Education MA Association of School Committees * Proficiency Gap Subcommittee
Teachers' unions	* American Federation of Teachers, MA Boston Teachers Union * MA Teachers Association
Other teacher voice groups and nonprofit organizations	* Teach For America network * Teach Plus * Teachers 21 * Teacher Advisory Cabinet
Principals	MA Elementary School Principals Association MA Secondary School Administrators Association * Principal Advisory Cabinets
Pupil services personnel	Collaborative for Educational Services Federation for Children with Special Needs MA Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages * Millbury Public Schools Director of Pupil Services Urban special education directors
Other staff	* Educational Personnel Advisory Council
Parents	MA Parent-Teacher Association Parent/Professional Advocacy League * Stand for Children
Students	State Student Advisory Board

Category	Organizations/groups
ELL representatives	La Alianza Hispana Latino Education Institute * Haverhill Public Schools ELE District Supervisor * Holliston Public Schools ESL Facilitator MA Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages * Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education * Weymouth Public Schools ELL Director
SWD representatives	Federation for Children with Special Needs * Haverhill Public Schools Special Education Services MA Administrators for Special Education Urban Special Education Directors
Community-based and civil rights organizations	Black Leaders for Excellence in Education Black Ministerial Alliance Boston Foundation Boston NAACP Boston Higher Education Resource Center League of United Latin American Citizens Mothers for Justice and Equality Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts Young Black Women's Society Oiste
Institutes of Higher Education and Educator Preparation Programs	Boston Teacher Residency * Cambridge College * MA Association of Colleges of Teacher Education * MA Department of Higher Education * Springfield College Standing Committee for Professional Education of the Council of Presidents for the State Universities
Business	MA Business Alliance for Education
Other	* Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council * Executive Office of Education Massachusetts Advocates for Diversity in Education committee Collaborative for Educational Services

Appendix C: Calendar of Stakeholder Meetings

December
5th: Urban Superintendents Network

January
7th: Educational Personnel Advisory Council
13th: Superintendents Advisory Cabinet
14th and 15th: Principal Advisory Cabinets
22nd: Teacher Advisory Cabinet
30th: School and District Administrators

February
6th: Administrators/Administrator Representatives
6th: Urban District Research and Accountability Leads
20th: MA Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
23rd: Organizations representing ELLs
24th: Other teacher voice groups and nonprofit organizations
12th: Educator Preparation Programs

March
2nd: Union leaders
4th: Teach Plus
5th: Organizations representing students with disabilities
20th: Standing Committee for Professional Education of the Council of Presidents for the State Universities

Appendix D: One-Page Overview Handout for Stakeholder Engagement

Massachusetts State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Our Vision

To give all students equitable access to excellent educators. ESE's role is to support districts to:

1. Understand what equitable access means
2. Identify and utilize strategies to move districts toward the goal of ensuring that every student in every school has equitable access to excellent educators
3. Implement state-level changes to support districts in this work
4. Monitor the progress towards equity

Equity Plan

- USED posted Educator Equity Profiles on December 19th online at: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/resources.html
- State Equity Plans must be submitted to USED by June 1st
- State Equity Plan requires that states engage stakeholders to share the data and develop the plan

The Equity Plan

State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

- The MA Equity Plan (officially called the MA State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators) is our state's opportunity to clearly identify our equity gaps, engage stakeholders to discuss our equity gaps and talk through our strategies to eliminate these gaps, and to articulate steps for Massachusetts to close our equity gaps.
- As outlined by USED, the plan must include:
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Identification of Equity Gaps
  - Root Cause Analysis of the Identified Equity Gaps
  - Steps to Eliminate Identified Equity Gaps (including strategies, timeline and monitoring – some of these strategies will be on a state level; others on a local level)
  - Measures and Methodology for Evaluating Progress
  - Public Reporting on the Progress
- Equity Gap Requirements
  - USED requires states to calculate equity gaps between the rates which children from low-income families and children of color are taught by "inexperienced," "unqualified," or "out-of-field" teachers compared to the rates at which other children are taught by these teachers.
  - USED encourages states to also look at equity groups for other sub-groups, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. ESE will be including these two sub-groups as part of our Equity Plan.

2011-2012 USED Data utilized for MA Educator Equity Profile

Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

- Data for teachers in their first year, teachers without certification or licensure, teachers who were absent more than 10 days, and adjusted average teacher salary
- This is reported directly from LEAs to the CRDC

EDFacts

- Data for classes taught by highly qualified teachers
- This is reported from ESE to USED

Common Core of Data school universe file

- Data on number of schools, number of districts, total student enrollment, total number of teachers, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, student enrollment by race/ethnicity, and locale
- This is reported from ESE to USED

Requested Feedback

Questions:

1. What do you think is the best way to define "excellent educator"?
2. What would you hypothesize are the underlying causes of our equity gaps?
3. What strategies should we use (or are currently being used) to promote equitable access and eliminate inequalities in access?

For more information: educatordevelopment@doe.mass.edu

Appendix E: Inexperienced Educators Handout for Stakeholder Engagement

THE EQUITY GAP

Low income and minority students in Massachusetts are more likely to have novice teachers than their white, high income peers. We need to address this equity gap.

THE PROBLEM. Students across Massachusetts do not have equitable access to experienced teachers. High minority and high poverty classrooms are more likely than low minority and low poverty classrooms to have teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching, and this gap increases in urban districts. This means the students who need effective, experienced teachers the most aren't getting them. Additionally, a higher percentage of the total teaching force in urban districts is in their first year of practice than the average percentage in districts across the state.

	Percent of first year teachers				
	All	Low-minority quartiles*	High-minority quartiles	Low-poverty quartiles	High-poverty quartiles
State Totals	7.0	5.8	10.4	10.2	5.2
Urban Districts	8.3	--	9.1	--	9.4

(Source: EPIMS 2013-2014 Data Collection.)

*ESE has identified equity gaps by comparing the top and bottom quartiles (one-quarter of a designated group). For purposes of the Equity Plan, ESE has specifically used the following: HPQ vs LPQ: high-poverty quartile versus low-poverty quartile; HMQ vs LMQ: high-minority quartile versus low-minority quartile.

ESE'S MORAL IMPERATIVE.

Excellent teachers and leaders are critical to improving student achievement.

- Whereas the teacher is the single most important school-based factor in determining whether students sink or soar
- Whereas the principal is critically important in setting up a culture and the structures within which teachers will find success, leading to improved outcomes for students
- Whereas the superintendent is critically important in setting up the systems and structures within which educators will find success, leading to improved outcomes for students

Therefore all students should have equitable access to great educators.

This guide is meant to start the conversation about this equity gap and the potential root causes, while acknowledging that access to experienced teachers is just one of many equity gaps in our state.

POTENTIAL CAUSES OF THE EQUITY GAP.

There are likely many reasons that low-income and minority students have less experienced teachers than their high-income, white counterparts. Two potential reasons are increased teacher turnover and poor school leadership.

Teacher Turnover.

Teachers at high poverty schools leave their positions more frequently than those at low poverty schools. The reasons are many, including poor school culture, challenging work environment, long hours, lack of support by school leaders, inaction by school leaders to encourage retention, and low salary. And when principals at high poverty schools are left with many vacant teaching positions, they often do not have enough experienced candidates applying to fill those slots and they ultimately hire novice teachers.

THE EQUITY GAP

	Teacher Turnover Rates				
	All	Low-minority quartiles	High-minority quartiles	Low-poverty quartiles	High-poverty quartiles
State Totals	15.3	12.0	21.6	12.5	22.5
Urban Districts	19.9	11.1	21.1		22.0

(Source: EPIMS 2013-2014 Data Collection.)

Research shows that turnover is especially high among new teachers. Nationally, 40 to 50 percent leave the teaching profession after five years.[1] How else might this high turnover affect the equity gap in our highest need schools?

School Leadership and Culture.

Effective leadership is critical to the success of schools and districts, and school leaders should build cultures where excellent teachers want to work. Teachers want schools with a strong culture: one that fosters great teaching, where staff share a vision of effective teaching, and where leadership is committed to supporting teachers and helping them develop. Unfortunately, high-poverty schools are more likely to have an ineffective administrator than low-poverty schools, creating poor working conditions for teachers in the highest need schools.

	Percent of educators rated "Ineffective" *Educators: teachers/administrators; Ineffective: needs improvement/unsatisfactory*				
	All	Low-minority quartiles	High-minority quartiles	Low-poverty quartiles	High-poverty quartiles
State Totals	5.3	3.4	9.1	2.9	9.7
Urban Districts	8.2	4.8	8.6		9.3

(Source: EPIMS 2013-2014 Data Collection.)

Research has shown that low-performing schools are unlikely to turn around without strong leadership. "There are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader," and leadership is the second most important school-based factor that affects student learning, after classroom instruction.[2] Similarly, studies have shown that the highest-quality principals drove the most lasting improvements.[3]

JOIN THE CONVERSATION. *Email us your thoughts.* EducatorDevelopment@doe.mass.edu

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

- What other data should we use to identify the equity gap?
- What additional information should we include in the underlying causes of the equity gap of first year teachers?
- What strategies or steps could districts implement to shrink the equity gap?
- What strategies or steps could the state implement to shrink the equity gap?
- What data sources outside of what ESE collects from districts should we be looking at?

[1] Haynes, Mariana. (2014). *On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
[2] Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. University of Minnesota and University of Toronto.
[3] Bierley, Chris. (2013). *Building Pathways: How to develop the next generation of transformational school leaders*. Bain & Company.

Appendix F: Root Causes, Equity Gaps, and Strategies

Root Causes		
		Hiring practices
	Inadequate preparation	Assignment practices
Retention/attrition	Inadequate pipeline	Retention/attrition
Hiring practices	Fiscal feasibility	Climate and culture
Assignment practices	Readiness for diverse student needs	Readiness for diverse student needs

EXPERIENCE GAP **PREPARATION GAP** **EFFECTIVENESS GAP**

Strategies		
• Ed Prep review & accountability • Edwin Analytics • SLE Report • PLN pilot • Ed Eval Guide • Title IIA	• SLE Report • PLN pilot • Edwin Analytics	• Ed Eval System • Ed Eval Guide • MCUs • Diversity Initiative • Title IIA • Edwin Analytics • Level 5 • DSACs • SLE Report • PLN pilot • MTSS • RETELL