

SOUTH DAKOTA EDUCATOR EQUITY PLAN 2015

Introduction

The following plan for improving access to great teachers and leaders in South Dakota was drafted in response to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs, and additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. South Dakota's plan complies with the requirements in Sections 1111 (b) and (e) to create and update a state equity plan that ensures that disadvantaged and underperforming subgroups of students are not taught at higher rates by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

Given the governance structure of South Dakota and the focus on local control, paired with the belief that our districts are best equipped to make decisions that are in the best interest of their local students, you will not see requirements herein that LEAs engage in prescribed practices. Nor will you see plans for narrow and impractical redistribution of educators from low-need to high-need districts and classrooms. Further, the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) does not have the capacity within our small state agency to provide incentives beyond minimal technical assistance to LEAs, so you will not see prescriptions for funding or other incentives included in this plan. What you will see within this plan is a comprehensive approach to strengthening programs that support teacher and principal effectiveness across the state, with an emphasis on the supports needed in our schools and classrooms with the greatest needs. South Dakota is committed to improving outcomes across the state for **all students** by expanding access to excellent teachers and leaders across the board. This equity plan will serve as a planning tool as South Dakota continues to seek ways to bring highly qualified, highly effective teachers to all students across our state.

South Dakota has access to only that data which we currently collect, and SD DOE has no plans or intentions to require additional data collection to meet requirements of this initiative. In addition, teacher and principal effectiveness data are protected by state statute and cannot be collected at the individual level.

In South Dakota, as in other states, there are areas in which it is harder to attract and retain high quality teachers; however, there are some unique differences that prevent South Dakota from adopting a "one size fits all" plan to address the gaps. The following is based on South Dakota's data and current efforts to address equity gaps, and serves as a planning tool for future work to ensure all students have access to quality teachers and educational opportunities.

Even before this work was requested of the SEA, South Dakota had begun the important work of developing a long-term strategy for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators, and had started the process of refining its data analysis process to better identify equity gaps. Moving forward, SD DOE will continue to make progress in this area by conducting more comprehensive and in-depth reviews of data, engaging stakeholders in regular "equity walks", conducting root cause analyses to identify the challenges and appropriate strategies, leveraging existing high impact strategies, and by regularly monitoring and reporting on progress.

Key Policies and Data Sources

To ensure the SEA began the process of updating the equity plan in an informed manner, SD DOE performed a scan of current policies, initiatives, and data sources that can inform the equity work. Because South Dakota is a local control state, there are limited data points available related to recruitment, retention, development and support activities at the LEA level. Instead, the SEA focused on the policies, initiatives, and data sources which it currently oversees. Of particular interest are the state Personnel Record Form (PRF) and Certification databases, and the work that is currently occurring to capture these in the state longitudinal database.

The Personnel Record Form (PRF), is a dynamic database system through which districts report staffing information to the state. Districts upload data in the fall and update and clean up data the following June to reflect changes that may have occurred during the school year. This system is tied to the certification database and can identify if a teacher, administrator, or school service specialist is both qualified and state certified to teach the courses they are assigned. If a teacher is not qualified, the system notifies districts that a Plan of Intent (POI) must be completed. A district is not able to sign off on the database until all POIs have been submitted.

The system is used to calculate the current highly qualified status (HQT) of core content teachers. School districts have the ability to monitor their teachers HQT and certification throughout the year in the effort to achieve 100% of core (or other) courses being taught by highly qualified teachers through an online web-based system. This information, as well as information from the state certification system is pulled into the "Teacher 411" system, an online system available via SD DOE's website that allows districts, teachers, and members of the general public to view both the qualifications and highly qualified status of any certified teacher in the state regardless of their employment status.

The longitudinal database the state has been developing, called SD-STARS, currently houses information from the state's student database and testing systems, and is in the infancy of embedding staffing data into the system. Because the student and staffing systems still largely work separately, easy comparisons of teacher to achievement, school characteristics, student demographics, or financial data are not readily available and data must be cleaned manually in order to allow for in-depth data analyses to inform the equity work. As the state works to expand and refine the SD-STARS system over the next 5 years, this analysis will become easier. Additionally, it is important to note that South Dakota state statute protects both student and teacher data in a manner that is above and beyond the requirements of FERPA. These privacy laws prohibit the collection or use of individual educator evaluation data and limit the data the state can collect related to students.

In addition to looking at internal data systems as a source of information, the SEA also examined the information available related to the state's Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and the Educational Service Agencies (ESAs). While the state has a good collaboration with its Board of Regents (BOR) and regularly hosts meetings in which SEA and IHE staff are present, there does not exist a K-20 data connection in the state with the ability to monitor both the pipeline of students entering the university system and the ability to track teachers from preparation programs back to the classroom. To address these limitations, the SEA regularly collaborates with the BOR to share high level summary data, and is partnering with the BOR to analyze the teacher preparation pipeline in the state.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder groups, in particular the Commission on Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Professional Learning Community for Teachers (PLC), were directly involved in the creation of Stage I of the SD Equity Plan via data walks and root cause analysis, both of which were used to inform the theory of action.

Commission on Teaching and Learning

The CTL was first convened in January of 2013, after a state law calling for a statewide evaluation system for teachers and principals and phasing out continuing contract status for teachers was overturned via a referred vote. The CTL includes teachers, administrators, and education stakeholders from across the state and draws its membership from the ranks of educational professional organizations, higher education, and the state Department of Education. The CTL was tasked with building upon previously completed work and providing districts with recommended procedures that meet both ESEA flexibility and state requirements to encourage meaningful evaluation and professional growth for teachers and principals. The work of the CTL has increased collaboration between the SEA and the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA) and has resulted in additional support for the state's evaluation model through an NEA grant.

The CTL continues to help the SEA monitor progress toward the implementation of statewide evaluation systems, and remains a key stakeholder group the SEA engages regularly. Currently the CTL is conducting a comprehensive review of South Dakota's educator certification system. At its June 2015 meeting, the CTL spent time reviewing the state's Educator Equity Profile and conducting some root cause analysis. Recommendations from this group are being used to craft this equity plan.

The group examined equity gaps as evidenced in the state Educator Equity Profile, and identified further data metrics for the SEA to look at as the Equity Plan is expanded. The group also identified several root causes of equity gaps as related to the statewide narrative regarding teacher shortages, and recommended that the SEA ensure that Stage II of the

Equity Plan take into account the work and recommendations the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Teachers and Students and the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council, both of which were created during the 2015 Legislature and are expected to bring forth legislation during the 2016 session.

Professional Learning Community for Teachers

SD DOE's Professional Learning Community for Teachers (PLC) was created during the summer of 2014. The goal of the PLC is to foster collaborative dialogue and learning among a community of experts across the state, who aspire to improve the educational achievement and attainment of students through strong leadership and teaching. The membership is by invitation and includes 29 past and present South Dakota and Regional Teachers of the Year, South Dakota Milken Award winners and/or Nationally Board Certified Teachers, representing the state's most dedicated and motivated educators. The PLC met by conference call monthly from September 2014 through May 2015 with a face-to-face meeting in June of 2015. Topical discussions centered on current educational trends, concerns facing South Dakota educators, and brainstorming causes and possible solutions to equity issues within the state.

The recommendations of the PLC mirrored those of the CTL, with the PLC recommending further metrics be examined to develop a broader understanding of the access students in rural, remote and reservation areas have to high quality teachers and leaders. The group also recommended additional lenses through which the SEA may choose to define the terms required in the state Equity Plan.

Other Engagement

Beyond these conversations, the SEA regularly engages key stakeholder groups and will continue to do so as Stage II of the SD Equity Plan is implemented. Stakeholders provide not only a key mechanism for feedback, but valuable data about what is happening in the field. SD DOE believes it is important to solicit input and feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis and has made stakeholder engagement a key element of any work we do. In addition to engaging stakeholders in the development and implementation of the equity plan, SD DOE will continue to engage the PLC and CTL as well as the following key stakeholder groups as the equity plan is implemented.

Secretary's Advisory Council

The Secretary's Advisory Council is a group of key education stakeholders from across the state convened to advise the Department of Education, and specifically the Secretary of Education, on pressing educational issues. The group is comprised of school administrators and teachers, as well as representatives from higher education, private and tribal schools, and South Dakota's education associations. The informal group meets on an as needed basis and offers input on a variety of topics including the flexibility waiver. The group includes: Four superintendents and three principals from small, medium, and large districts in varying geographical locations across the state; the state Teacher of the Year; curriculum, special education and assessment directors from seven districts of varying sizes and geographical locations across the state; a representative from a Tribal/BIE school; a representative from a private school; a representative from the Board of Regents; a representative from a technical institute; and representation from three educational associations across the state.

Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council provides a connection among South Dakota families, communities and the SD DOE. The council's role is to provide input and perspective to the SD DOE regarding K-12 education efforts at the state level. The council is not statutorily authorized or empowered; it is advisory in nature. The council provides a vehicle to build strong family, local and state partnerships.

The membership of the Parent Advisory Council encompasses parent-representatives from across geographic regions and from small, medium, and large school districts. It also includes several legislators and parent association representatives.

Committee of Practitioners

While the ESEA only requires the state Committee of Practitioners (COP) meet twice annually, SD DOE regularly reaches out to the committee to discuss accountability and intervention related work the department is undertaking. Evidence of their involvement in an advisory capacity can be clearly seen in the state's ESEA flexibility renewal application.

Indian Education Advisory Council

The Indian Education Advisory Council was formed to address the achievement gap between Native and non-Native students in South Dakota. The council is advisory in form and function. It has representation from the following entities: all tribes in South Dakota, South Dakota Board of Education, Bureau of Indian Education, Tribal Education Departments, South Dakota Education Association, South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations, South Dakota Board of Regents, and school districts that possess a significant American Indian population and/or reside in the proximity of a significant tribal population.

The mission of the South Dakota Indian Education Advisory Council is to promote the highest quality of education for all American Indian children in South Dakota that is based in cultural relevancy and produces positive educational outcomes.

Collaboration with Professional Organizations

SD DOE has a long history of collaboration and partnership with professional organizations across the state to help provide input into policy decisions and to help roll out implementation of initiatives. Of note, the department regularly works with the School Administrators of South Dakota (SASD) and their participant groups, the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA), and with the Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD). The SEA has also worked to develop strong working relationships with the state PTA, with state and local Chambers of Commerce, and with other key groups across the state to ensure that input from relevant community and family stakeholders is solicited.

Legislative Work

The close of the 2015 legislative session brought with it two working groups of note that will be key pieces of the state puzzle for addressing equity: the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Teachers and Students, and the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council.

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force <http://blueribbon.sd.gov/> (Active July 13, 2015)

This task force was established in response to concerns raised by a statewide narrative of teacher shortages. This panel has been tasked with reevaluating the current funding formula, collecting and analyzing data, engaging with stakeholders, and seeking public input. Specifically, the Governor has asked the task force to:

- Develop a deeper understanding of where teacher shortages are occurring and what can be done to address them.
- Examine the reasons why 12 states can spend less per student than South Dakota, but pay teachers more.
- Examine why, even as we hear growing concerns about teacher salaries, many schools' reserve funds are increasing.

The task force is expected to identify options to meaningfully fund education in South Dakota in a way that provides all students with access to quality educators.

The state has partnered with experts at the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE) to help answer these questions with hard data, not anecdotes or opinion surveys. Initial members were appointed in March to represent the legislative and executive branches. The first phase of the Blue Ribbon Task Force's work was focused on seeking input from the public and from key stakeholder groups. Between March and June, listening sessions with the public and with individual groups were conducted to collect and synthesize feedback that resulted in stakeholder members (including teachers, parents, and administrators) of the task force being appointed.

During July and August 2015, the full task force is meeting to analyze and consider data. Between September and October of 2015, the group will make recommendations, research and recommend policy changes for the state, and will issue a final report as a task force. The goal of the task force is to recommend reforms by late fall, in time for consideration by the 2016 Legislature.

Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council - <http://indianeducation.sd.gov/NASAAC.aspx> (Active July 13, 2015)

The Native American student subgroup is the largest racial-ethnic subgroup in the state of South Dakota, and is historically the lowest achieving. Many of the state's schools with a high percentage of Native American students are on or near reservations, and are found in some of the most poverty stricken counties in the nation. Graduation rate and achievement rate gaps in these areas have resulted in South Dakota having some of the highest average achievement gaps in the nation when comparing the lowest performing 5% of schools to the rest of the state.

To help address these concerns, the Governor has established the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council, which consists of a variety of stakeholders including tribal leaders and representatives from the Indian Education Advisory Council, the South Dakota Departments of Education and Tribal Relations, and education groups.

The council will work to identify strategies for improving achievement and graduation rates among South Dakota's Native American students and report its findings to the Legislature and the Governor by Dec. 1, 2015. The Bush Foundation is funding the council's work. The Bush Foundation is based in St. Paul, Minnesota, and serves the 23 Native nations and the states of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Equity Gaps

As defined in this first stage of the Equity Plan, an "Inexperienced Teacher" is one identified in the State Educator Equity Profile (See Appendix A) who is in the first year of teaching. The profile definition states:

First year teachers: The number of FTE classroom teachers in their first year of teaching. The number of year(s) of teaching experience includes the current year but does not include any student teaching or other similar preparation experiences. Experience includes teaching in any school, subject, or grade; it does not have to be in the school, subject, or grade that the teacher is presently teaching.

As defined in this first stage of the Equity Plan, an "Unqualified Teacher" is one identified in the State Educator Equity Profile (See Appendix A) as a teacher without certification or licensure. The profile definition states:

Teachers without certification or licensure: The total number of FTE teachers minus the total number of FTE teachers meeting all applicable state teacher certification requirements for a standard certificate (i.e., has a regular/standard certificate/license/endorsement issued by the state). A beginning teacher who has met the standard teacher education requirements is considered to meet state requirements even if he or she has not completed a state-required probationary period. A teacher with an emergency, temporary, or provisional credential is not considered to meet state requirements. State requirements are determined by the state.

As defined in this first stage of the Equity Plan, an “Out-of-Field Teacher” is one identified in the State Educator Equity Profile (See Appendix A) as a teacher who is teaching a course for which (s)he is not highly qualified. The profile definition states:

Classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified: In general, a "highly qualified teacher" is one who is: (1) fully certified or licensed by the State, (2) holds at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution, and (3) demonstrates competence in each core academic subject area in which the teacher teaches. Classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified are core academic classes taught by teachers who do not meet all of these criteria. Core academic classes are: English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

As defined in this first stage of the Equity Plan, a “Poor Student” is one identified in the State Educator Equity Profile (See Appendix A) as a student who is eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The profile definition states:

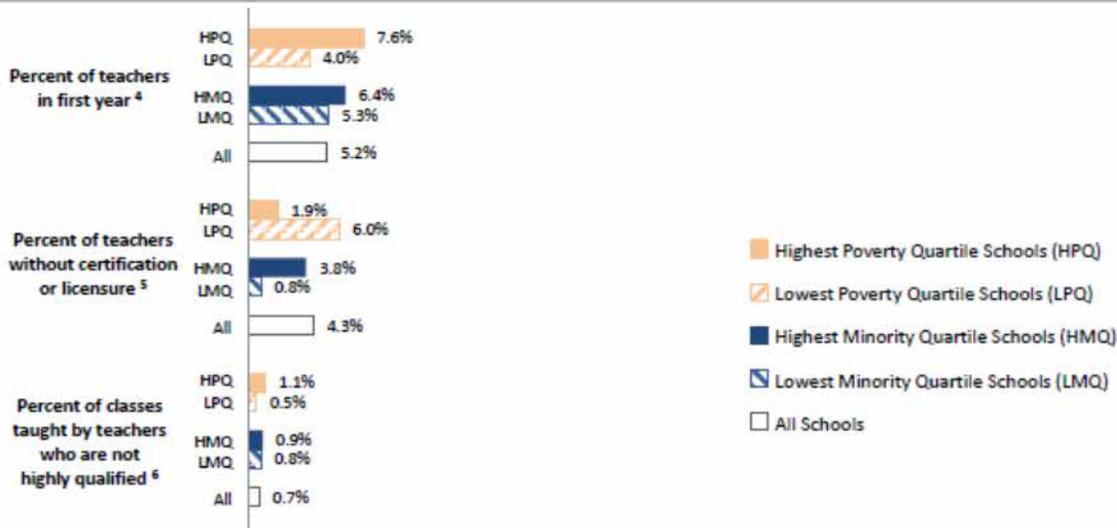
Highest and lowest poverty schools: "**Poverty**" is defined using the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The highest poverty schools are those in the highest quartile in a state. In South Dakota, the schools in the highest poverty quartile have more than 55 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The lowest poverty schools are those in the lowest poverty quartile in the state; in South Dakota, these schools have less than 23 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

As defined in this first stage of the Equity Plan, a “Minority Student” is one identified in the State Educator Equity Profile (See Appendix A) as a minority student. The profile definition states:

Highest and lowest minority schools: "**Minority**" is defined for purposes of this profile as all students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Two or More Races. The highest minority schools are those in the highest quartile in a state. In South Dakota, the schools in the highest minority quartile have more than 22 percent minority students. The lowest minority schools are those in the lowest quartile in a state; in South Dakota, these schools have less than 4 percent minority students.

South Dakota has made strong efforts since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) focused on teacher quality. In 2003, when the state first began collecting data on highly qualified teachers, only 88.7% of core courses were taught by highly qualified teachers. In 2014, this percentage had increased to 98.97%. The gap between the percentage of core content classes being taught by non-highly qualified teachers teaching in the highest poverty quartiles and lowest poverty quartiles decreased from about 3% in 2003 to 0.6% in 2012. The difference between the highest and lowest minority schools as reported in the Educator Equity Profile prepared by US ED was only 0.1% in 2012.

Educator and Classroom Characteristics



The majority of schools identified in both the high poverty and high minority quartiles are schools that are either on one of South Dakota’s Indian reservations or are schools that serve a large percentage of Native American students. The remaining identified districts are districts in which there exist large migrant English Language Learner populations. As South Dakota moves forward towards an expanded equity plan, the needs of these specific student populations will need to be addressed.

District	Number of State's highest poverty schools	Total number of schools	Percent of teachers in first year in State's highest poverty schools	Percent of teachers without certification or licensure in State's highest poverty schools	Percent of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified in State's highest poverty schools
Sioux Falls	23	50	8.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Todd County	11	12	12.4	0.6 ✓	0.0 ✓
Shannon County	8	8	—	—	0.0 ✓
Rapid City Area	7	28	7.9	10.4	0.0 ✓
Eagle Butte	6	6	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	3.0
Huron	6	10	6.4	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Andes Central	4	4	5.0	0.0 ✓	6.4
White River	4	4	6.4	2.1	3.8
Bennett County	3	3	10.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Burke	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Dupree	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
McIntosh	3	3	4.1	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
McLaughlin	3	3	—	—	2.8
Oelrichs	3	3	15.7	0.0 ✓	1.6
South Central	3	3	12.3	0.0 ✓	1.7
Locale³					
City	30	73	8.3	4.4 ✓	0.0 ✓
Suburb	0	2	+	+	+
Town	12	100	6.1	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Rural	132	527	7.3	0.4 ✓	1.6
For comparison					
State average for lowest poverty schools			4.0	6.0	0.5

District	Number of State's highest minority schools	Total number of schools	Percent of teachers in first year in State's highest minority schools	Percent of teachers without certification or licensure in State's highest minority schools	Percent of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified in State's highest minority schools
Sioux Falls	33	50	8.0	2.1	1.0
Rapid City Area	15	28	6.4	14.6	0.4 ✓
Todd County	11	12	12.4	0.6 ✓	0.0 ✓
Shannon County	8	8	—	—	0.0 ✓
Huron	8	10	2.8	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Eagle Butte	6	6	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	3.0
Mobridge-Pollock	4	4	7.8	0.0 ✓	0.7 ✓
Sisseton	4	4	5.1	1.0	0.0 ✓
Wagner	4	4	5.4	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
White River	4	4	6.4	2.1	3.8
Kadoka Area	4	5	5.1 ✓	2.6	0.0 ✓
Bennett County	3	3	10.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Chamberlain	3	3	4.8 ✓	3.2	0.9
Dupree	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
McIntosh	3	3	4.1 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓
Locale³					
City	47	73	7.0	7.7	0.8 ✓
Suburb	0	2	+	+	+
Town	28	100	3.1 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.3 ✓
Rural	99	527	7.3	0.8 ✓	1.2
For comparison					
State average for lowest minority schools			5.3	0.8	0.8

One key mechanism that was used to help increase equitable access to highly qualified teachers was the phase out of the HOUSSE plan in the 2007 school year. Currently, all new and incoming core content teachers are required to validate their content knowledge through an appropriate Praxis II test, which has helped to align state certification requirements with highly qualified requirements.

Root causes

SD DOE engaged stakeholder groups in discussions around why inequities still exist and examined the data to see where they were the greatest in the state, five common potential root causes rose to the surface: 1) The supply of new teachers; 2) Remote, rural locations; 3) Poverty; 4) Cultural differences, especially on the Indian Reservations; 5) Areas where multiple subjects must be taught by the same teacher. The groups felt these factors are often compounded together. For example, many of the schools on South Dakota's Indian Reservations are in some of the poorest places in the United States, are remote rural locations, and may hire teachers who are unfamiliar with the cultural landscape in which their students live.

- 1) **The supply of new teachers:** In recent years, there has been a narrative citing a statewide teacher shortage in South Dakota as a pressing need in the state. The 2015 legislative session saw numerous bills introduced attempting to address these concerns either via pay incentives, scholarship opportunities, or policy changes that would allow districts and schools more flexibility in implementing recruitment or retention strategies. It is critical that any equity plan being built must take this narrative into account, and an understanding of the entire state's teaching workforce must build the basis for the examination. The Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force is specifically looking into what can be done to address this issue, and is focusing specifically on the funding structure for education in the state. Much attention is being paid to teacher salaries in the state, as South Dakota consistently ranks at the bottom when compared to other states in the nation.
- 2) **Remote, rural locations:** There is an uneven distribution of students across our state. The Eastern portion of the state is more densely populated, and the Western part of the state has many sparse districts, including a large number that have an area over 500 square miles. These large districts are sparsely populated and have unique challenges in providing housing, transportation, and services to attract teachers. Since 2006, the state has included a sparsity metric in the funding formula to compensate districts for their isolation, where maintaining a small district is done out of necessity and not by choice. Although more densely populated, the Eastern side of the state has many districts centered in smaller, rural communities. Of the state's 151 districts, 109 have fewer than 600 students in their K-12 systems. Many of these districts are isolated and have limited services, as well as lower teaching salaries that contribute to challenges in attracting and retaining high quality teachers. Because of the small nature of these districts, mentoring and induction support are limited. Many new to the profession teachers choose to come to these districts to "gain experience", and leave within a few years to find positions in larger districts that can provide them with more housing and socialization opportunities, and often higher salaries.
- 3) **Poverty:** More than one-third of the state public school population is considered to be economically disadvantaged based on recent free and reduced lunch and Title I figures. The poverty rate on the state's Indian Reservations is as much as four times the state average, and many of the reservations are located in the poorest counties in the nation. Despite the fact that many of these areas offer higher salaries than other places in the state, the living conditions and remote location of many reservation schools make it difficult to attract and retain teachers. South Dakota remains ranked 50th in the nation for teacher salaries, with an average salary of \$40,023, though in some districts the average salary is as low as \$28,125.
- 4) **Cultural differences:** In comparison to other states, South Dakota has a small minority population, and one that looks different from the minority population in many other places. Underrepresented minority students comprise only about 18.9% of the state's student population, with over 60% of all minority students (or about 11.4% of the total student population) belonging to the Native American subgroup. Many of these students live in the lower income school districts across the state. In addition to the large proportion of Native American students in the state public education system, there are a number of Tribal and Bureau of Indian Education schools across the state serving this population. While SD DOE does not have authority over these schools, consistent efforts are made to collaborate where possible to ensure that all South Dakota students are being supported. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the student population to be fluid in many of

these areas, with students transitioning (sometimes several times a year) between Tribal, BIE, and public schools on or near the reservation.

One of the SEA's main goals centers specifically around improving outcomes for the state's Native American students. The vast majority of schools identified as Focus or Priority schools are on or near Indian Reservations, and in 2013 (the most recent year for which achievement data is currently available), 52.84% of this group was below proficiency in reading and 57.74% in mathematics compared to 26.01% (reading) and 26.36% (math) of the all students group. This gap is also seen in graduation rates for this student population. In the 2013-14 year, the four- year graduation rate for all students was 82.74%, while the Native American subgroup saw a graduation rate of only 46.98%.

The challenges faced in some of our persistently lowest achieving schools, coupled with the isolated nature of many of the schools, the transiency of the student population, and a cultural climate on the Indian Reservation that differs significantly from what most of our teachers experience as they attend schooling to prepare them for teaching can lead to difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers.

- 5) **Teaching multiple subjects:** The small, rural nature of many of South Dakota's schools often limits the number of teachers and classrooms a school can support. This means that in many instances, teachers in these areas must have multi-subject certifications and must meet extra requirements to become highly qualified in several subjects. Because they are in rural areas, access to college courses is often limited as they are a significant distance away from universities where they can continue to receive training and professional development to advance professionally. In many instances, this results in teachers being placed on a "Plan of Intent" for one or more subject areas. Teachers in these situations must find ways to complete highly qualified requirements if they hope to keep their jobs. The added stress of teaching (and becoming qualified in) multiple subjects and multiple preparations can make these positions seem less desirable, and many teachers may choose to look for employment in larger districts that can offer positions that do not require such a broad set of certifications.

Framing the Status and Supply of Teachers in South Dakota: Supply, Demand, and Critical Needs Areas

The data provided below is a high level analysis of the status of the teaching profession in the state of South Dakota during the 2014-15 year. It is important to note that of the 151 districts, 78 have only one elementary, middle and high school. The attendance centers are often housed in one building with hallways separating the grade levels. An additional, 40 small districts, have rural elementary attendance centers that are not located in the actual community, and in which several grade spans may be taught in the same classroom setting. Many of these are Hutterite Colony schools. This brings the total to 118 districts that have unique concerns related to remote, rural, small district settings.

As the state delves further into data analysis for Part II of the Equity work, closer examinations of in-district and between-district differences will be examined.

OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2014, South Dakota public schools had 129,772 students enrolled at the K-12 level. This is a 7.2% increase from the 2007-08 year when the 2009 equity plan was constructed. The student population is predicted to grow an additional 7.5% over the course of the next 5 years. Despite this growth, the majority of South Dakota's 151 school districts had fewer than 600 students total at the K-12 level. In 2014, only 40 districts had student populations over 600. The two largest school districts in the state, Rapid City and Sioux Falls, account for over 28% of the public school students in the state.

At this same time, there are 9,362 Full-Time Equivalent teachers in the state. About one-third have degrees past the bachelor's level, and the average years of experience teachers have is 14.4. Statewide, the student to teacher ratio remained at 14:1, which was very consistent with recent year ratios. The difference between average beginning salary and total average salary for public school teachers was about \$10,000.

2013-14 SD Public School Teacher Overview (PreKindergarten to 12th grade)

Certified Teachers	99.74%	Number Plans of Intent:	643
Non-Certified Teachers	0.26%	Percent Plans of Intent Completed:	40.75%
Percent of Teachers with Advanced Degrees:	32.7%	Average District Beginning Salary:	\$30,483
Average Years of Experience:	14.4	Average Salary:	\$40,023
Number Students (K-12 Fall Enrollment):	128,294	Student to Teacher Ratio (K-12):	14.0 : 1

SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest, Plans of Intent from Personnel Record Form (PRF)

South Dakota's universities produced approximately 680 teachers in the 2012-13 year, which is the most recent complete year of data available. In addition to teachers coming from in-state universities, in 2014, 394 individuals from out of state applied for South Dakota teaching certification, and a total of 71 Alternative Teaching Certificates were awarded.

2014 "Other" Certificates

Number of Certificates Awarded to non-SD graduates:	394
Number of Alternative (Non-TFA) Certificates Awarded:	48
Number of Teach for America Teachers:	23

Number of Graduates from South Dakota Teacher Prep-Programs 2012-13 (most recent complete data available)

Board of Regents Universities:	507
Private Universities:	170

SOURCE: SD DOE Certification database, IPEDS reporting, and BOR reports

The FTE numbers for both teachers and administrators has remained fairly consistent over the last four school years. While numbers in both areas dipped slightly with the recession in the 2012 and 2013 school years, 2014 saw numbers rise to near or above 2011 levels.

In instances where a district chooses to have a teacher provide instruction in a course for which he or she does not hold proper certification, the district may elect to put the teacher on a Plan of Intent (POI), which details the steps the teacher will take within the year to become properly certified to teach a particular subject. In the event the teacher needs more than one year to complete the requirements (taking additional college coursework, for example), the plan may be extended for one additional year. The number of POIs issued to public schools in the state increased by about 100 between 2011 and 2014, and is projected to be the highest yet in the 2015 school year. Because teachers may be on POIs for multiple subjects (a science teacher working to become qualified in both Biology and Physics for example), the number of teachers on POIs is significantly lower than the number of POIs.

In 2013-14, 373 teachers were on POIs, and were teaching at least one subject for which they did not meet the requirements to be considered highly qualified. About 41% of the 643 Plans of Intent for non-highly qualified teachers were completed.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 projected
# Plans of Intent	548	525	612	643	758
Not Completed	315	291	366	381	NA
Completed	233	234	246	262	NA
Headcount	315	300	329	373	NA

SOURCE: SD DOE Personnel Record Form (PRF)

The majority of teachers in the state meet all certification requirements for the subjects to which they are assigned and are not on POIs. Teachers of English as a Second Language have consistently had the highest POI rate. The areas of World Languages, Science, PE/Health, and CTE have consistently had 5% or more of their teachers on POIs.

Educator Plans of Intent by Content Area
(Teachers counted once in ALL content areas they are reported)

	2011		2012		2013		2014	
	PLANS OF INTENT (HEAD COUNT)	% OF CATEGORY	PLANS OF INTENT (HEAD COUNT)	% OF CATEGORY	PLANS OF INTENT (HEAD COUNT)	% OF CATEGORY	PLANS OF INTENT (HEAD COUNT)	% OF CATEGORY
Administrators	22	4%	14	3%	13	2%	17	3%
CTE	59	7%	63	2%	76	10%	58	8%
ESL (Non-Core)	10	45%	8	38%	9	39%	8	32%
Fine Arts	5	2%	8	3%	3	1%	9	3%
Language Arts	29	2%	39	2%	37	2%	52	3%
Math	29	3%	28	3%	33	3%	28	2%
Military	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Miscellaneous	5	12%	8	1%	9	1%	3	0%
Music	8	2%	7	1%	9	2%	5	1%
Non-Credit	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
PE-Health	22	4%	24	4%	30	5%	27	5%
Religion	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Science	49	6%	38	5%	40	5%	40	4%
Self-Contained	40	1%	28	1%	46	1%	64	2%
Social Science	31	3%	45	5%	33	4%	46	5%
Special Ed (Non-Core)	27	3%	16	2%	19	2%	20	2%
World Language	8	4%	6	3%	10	5%	15	8%

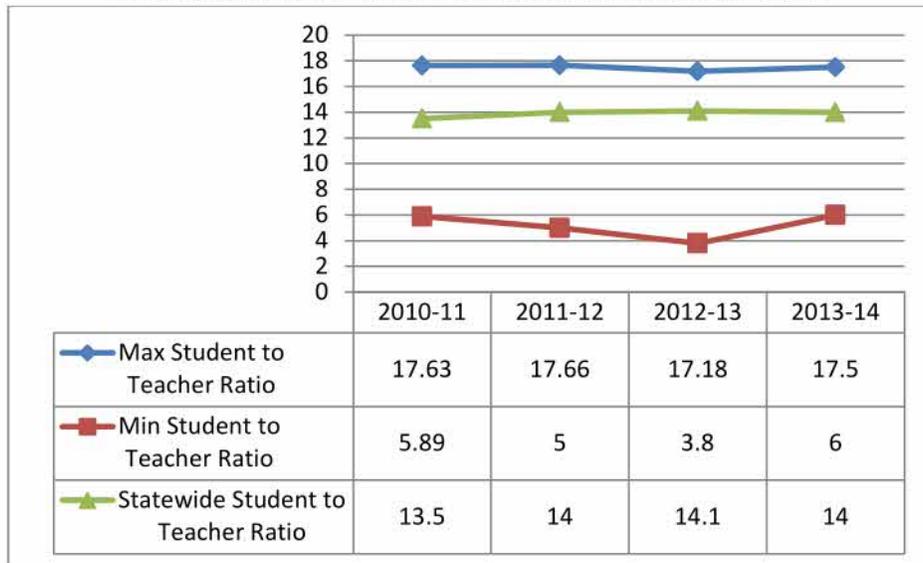
SOURCE: SD DOE Personnel Record Form (PRF)

DISTRICT NORMS

Across the state, there is great variance between districts when it comes to what the norm is for educators. The following charts show the maximum and minimum district averages for some key statistics over the last four years.

Since the 2010-11 school year, the maximum student to teacher ratio in the state has held steady near 17.5 students per teacher, while the minimum has fluctuated between 3.8 and 6 students per teacher. The statewide student to teacher ratio has hovered near 14.0 students per teacher for the last three years. It is important to note that while this ratio reflects “the number of K-12 students per K-12 teacher FTE”, this is not reflective of the average classroom size. Special Education teachers who work exclusively with a small group of students, for example, are included in the FTE count used to generate this ratio as are all teachers at the high school level. The ratio does not include non-district employed teachers, such as those who are teaching classes on-line to students through the Virtual Schools Program or college instructors who are teaching Dual-Credit courses to students.

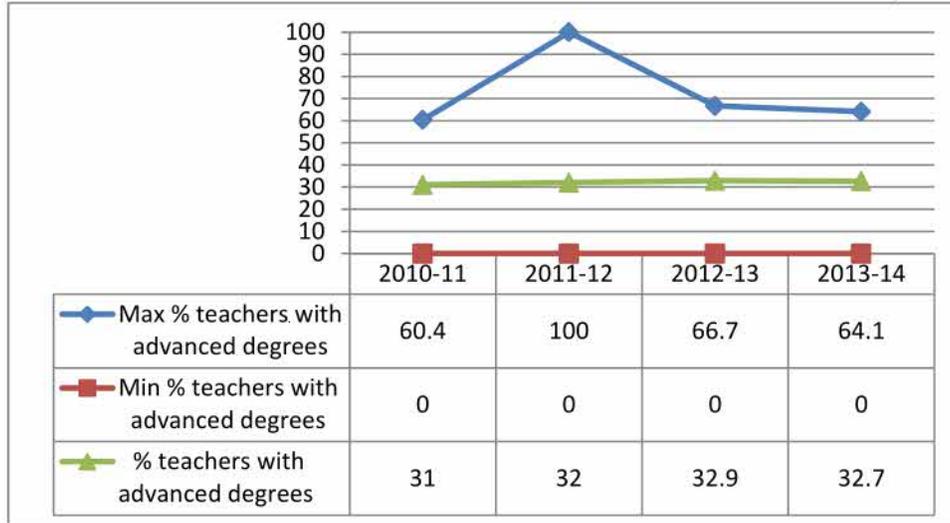
District Maximum and Minimum Student to Teacher Ratios



SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

In any given year, about one-third of teachers across the state have post-bachelor's degrees. The number of teachers by district with post-bachelor's degrees varies from zero to about two-thirds in any given year.

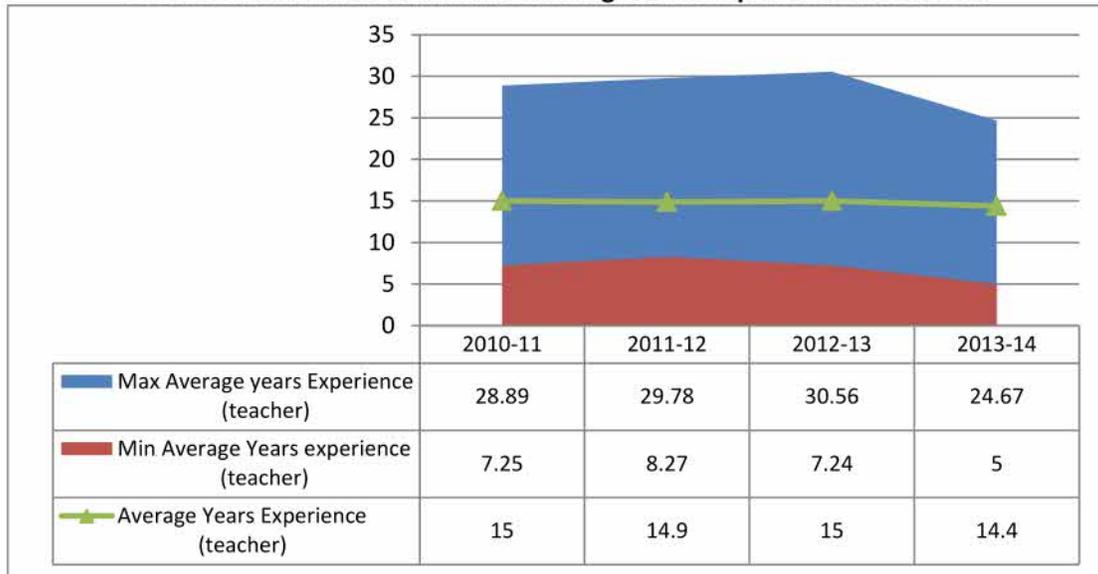
District Maximum and Minimum Percent of Teachers with Advanced Degrees



SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

The average years of experience in the field for teachers across the state has hovered near 15 for the last four years, while the average experience of teachers across districts varies greatly between 5 and 30.

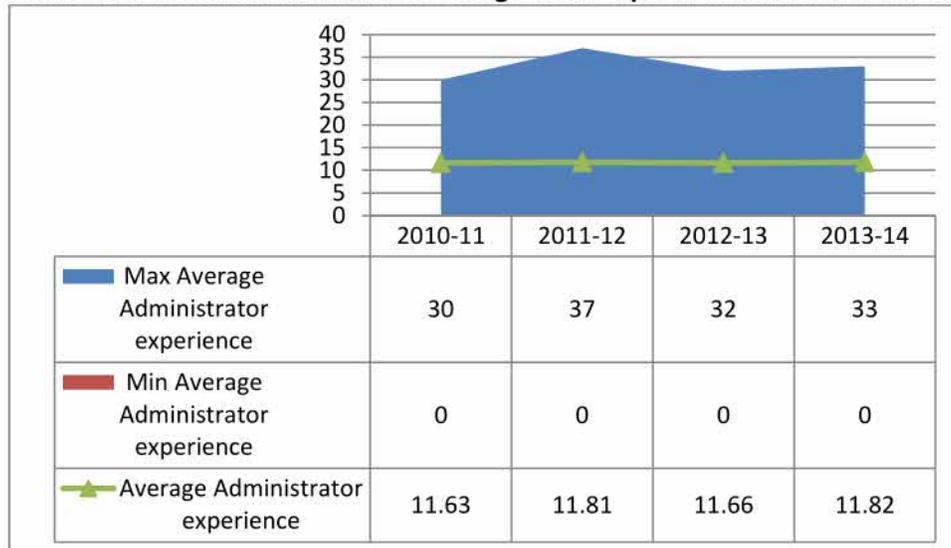
District Maximum and Minimum Average Years Experience of Teachers



SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

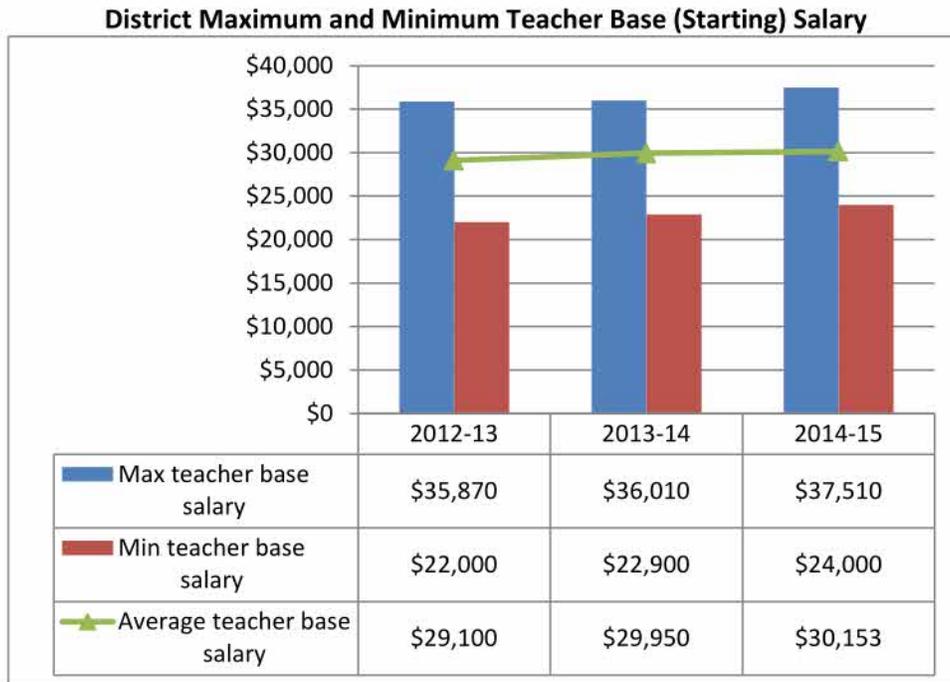
On average, administrators have about 12 years of experience as administrators across the state, which is about three years less than the average amount of experience teachers have in the classroom. The majority of administrators also have experience as a classroom teacher, which is not captured in this number. In every year since the 2010-11 school year, at least one district has had an average experience for administrators of zero, indicating that all administrators were in their first year as a principal or superintendent.

District Maximum and Minimum Average Years Experience of Administrators



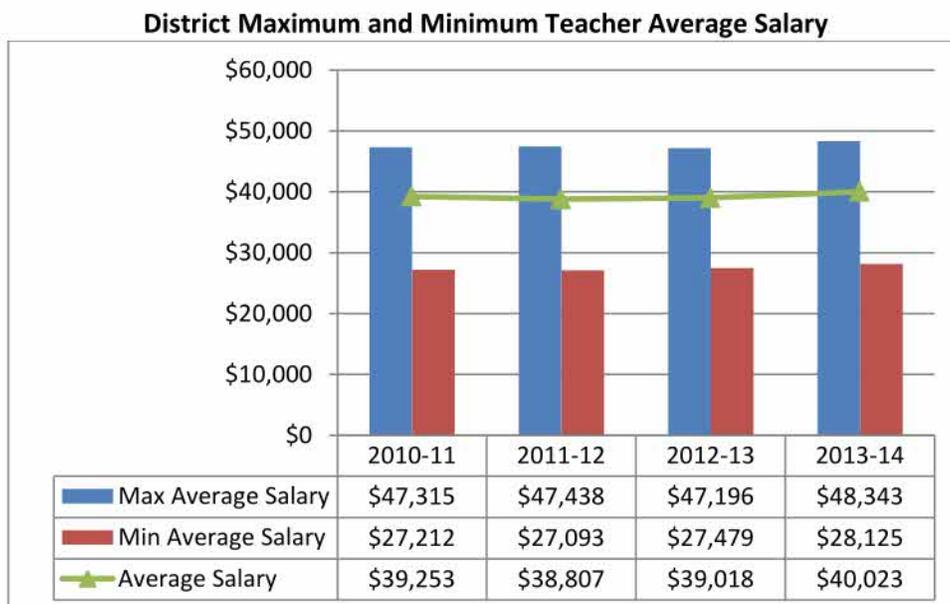
SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

The average beginning salary for teachers across the state has risen over the last few years to \$30,153 in the 2014-15 school year.



SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

Statewide, the average teacher salary has hovered right around \$40,000, dipping slightly during the recession in 2012 and 2013, but returning to surpass 2011 levels in the 2014 year. In any given year, there is about a \$20,000 difference between the district with the lowest average salary and the district with the highest average salary. The difference between average salaries across districts is much wider than the difference between average base salaries across districts.



SOURCE: SD DOE Statistical Digest

SALARY CONTEXT

As South Dakota districts work to recruit teachers to vacant positions and to create new positions to meet their needs, much attention is being paid to educator salaries across the state. The 2012 school year brought with it a decline in average teaching salaries across the board, though most categories of teachers had recovered to pre-2012 levels by the end of the 2014 school year.

Average Salaries

	SY 2011	SY 2012	SY 2013	SY 2014
All Teachers	\$39,253	\$38,807	\$39,018	\$40,023
Pre-Kindergarten	\$35,589	\$35,274	\$36,282	\$36,577
Kindergarten	\$38,095	\$37,910	\$38,124	\$39,055
Elementary	\$39,181	\$38,805	\$38,913	\$39,874
MS/JH	\$40,109	\$39,523	\$39,509	\$40,545
High School	\$39,284	\$38,785	\$39,268	\$40,309
Special Education	\$38,416	\$38,041	\$38,300	\$39,294
Gifted	\$45,730	\$45,046	\$44,906	\$48,580
Deaf/ Hearing Impaired & Blind/Visually Impaired	\$41,083	\$39,080	\$40,180	\$43,402
All Administrators	\$72,904	\$72,863	\$73,758	\$75,057
Elementary Principal/Assistant	\$68,742	\$68,184	\$69,051	\$70,164
MS/JH Principal/Assistant	\$68,954	\$69,312	\$69,254	\$70,462
High School Principal/Assistant	\$70,752	\$70,664	\$71,496	\$73,024
Superintendent/ Assistant	\$84,426	\$84,706	\$86,249	\$88,104

Source: South Dakota Department of Labor Online Reporting

While it is important to understand what has been happening with the average salaries across the state for teachers, looking at the average teacher salary compared with the average salaries of other public service professions in the state, and looking at the level of education needed for these careers helps to situate teaching as a profession within the broader labor market. The average teacher salary is comparable with salaries of Social Workers and Library occupations, which require similar amounts of training, and slightly less than public safety occupations like patrol officers. The average teacher salary in 2013-2014 was significantly less than the Department of Labor's projections for registered nurses, which requires a similar amount of schooling.

If the average teacher salary were converted from a 175-day school year calendar to a 261 work-day amount (the common figure used in labor projections for full-time, full-year positions), this would increase the calculated salary by approximately one-third and would bring the teacher salary up to \$53,231, which is in line with the salary for a registered nurse in South Dakota. However the "school year" to "full-time employment year" conversion does not take into account time spent on professional development, planning, or other activities completed outside of the scheduled school year or traditional 8-hour work day.

Public Service Career Field	DOL Calculated Salary	Level of Education Typically Needed
Registered Nurse	\$ 54,308.80	Associate or Bachelor's Degree
Postal Service Mail Carriers	\$ 48,609.60	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Emergency Management Directors	\$ 43,222.40	Bachelor's
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	\$ 42,931.20	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Fire Fighter	\$ 41,142.40	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Education Training and Library Occupations	\$ 40,622.40	Bachelor's
Healthcare Social Workers	\$ 40,580.80	Bachelor's
Teacher (Based on 2013-14 SD DOE Average Salary)	\$ 40,023.00	Bachelor's
Postal Service Clerks	\$ 38,500.80	High School Diploma or Equivalent
Child Family and School Social Workers	\$ 38,043.20	Bachelor's
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	\$ 29,224.00	Some Postsecondary Education (Less than Associate Degree)
Ambulance Drivers	\$ 21,673.60	High School Diploma or Equivalent

Source: South Dakota Department of Labor Online Reporting

In addition to comparing teacher salaries to public service salaries, it is important to compare teacher salaries to other growing occupations in the state. The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation has identified teaching as one of 12 high-needs occupations based on the estimated percent growth of the profession between 2012 and 2022. Among the typical level of education needed for these high-needs positions, the projected teacher salary is the lowest of the targeted areas requiring college coursework. Again, if the teacher salary, were equated from a 175-day to a 261 work-day amount, the estimated annual wage would increase to \$54,961 which is in line with the expected wages for information technology specialists and nurses, both of which also require college education.

	Percent Change Estimated 2012 to 2022	Estimated Average Annual Openings	Estimated Annual Wage	Level of Education Typically Needed for Entry
Physicians	3.0%	14	\$ 206,767	Doctoral or professional degree
Engineers	18.3%	38	\$ 68,544	Bachelor's degree
Accounting/Finance	8.8%	268	\$ 65,029	Bachelor's degree (Associate degree for Financial Analysts)
Sales Representatives	8.4%	189	\$ 61,279	Bachelor's degree or high school diploma
Information Technology	11.3%	99	\$ 54,171	Bachelor's degree (some college, no degree for Computer User Support Specialists)
Nurses	13.1%	370	\$ 54,031	Associate's degree
Supervisors	8.2%	160	\$ 53,688	High school diploma or equivalent
Specialty Trades	13.8%	128	\$ 42,985	High school diploma or equivalent
Teachers	6.4%	306	\$ 41,324	Bachelor's degree
Mechanics	8.5%	139	\$ 40,010	High school diploma or equivalent
Truck Drivers	5.8%	192	\$ 38,002	High school diploma or equivalent
Welders	11.3%	108	\$ 33,026	High school diploma or equivalent
Average Estimated Targeted Wage			\$ 51,655	

Source: South Dakota Department of Labor Online Reporting

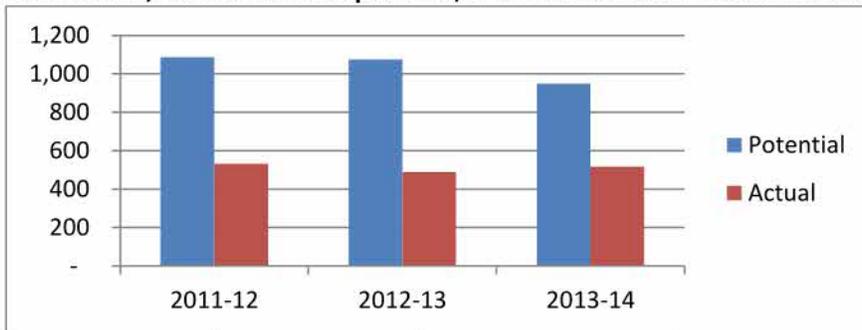
UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR NEW TEACHERS

This section includes a review of two important forces – retirement and a growing student population – impacting the need school districts have to fill current and/or new positions.

Expectations for retirement and/or those leaving the profession

Data from the South Dakota Retirement System shows the number of educators (a category that includes teachers, administrators and school service specialists) who were eligible for retirement in the last three years. On average, 49.6% of those eligible for retirement have retired in any given year. From this data, it can be estimated that a total of 1,250 teachers, administrators and school service specialists will retire over the next five years. In any given year, teachers comprise 83.15% of actual retirees. If this proportion remains constant, **it can be estimated that 1,039 teachers will leave the field due to retirement over the next five years.**

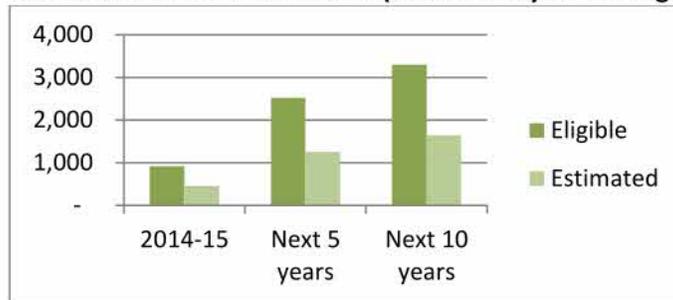
Administrator, School Service Specialist, and Teacher Retirements 2011-2013



	Potential	Actual	Percent
2011-12	1,086	532	49.0%
2012-13	1,075	488	45.4%
2013-14	949	517	54.5%
Average:			49.6%

Source: South Dakota Retirement System.

Estimates: Future Retirements (based on 3 year average)



	Eligible	Estimated	Estimated Number Teacher Retirements
2014-15	913	453	377
Next 5 years	2,521	1,250	1,039
Next 10 years	3,298	1,636	1,360

Source: SD DOE projections

There are reasons other than retirement that teachers leave the profession. Based on a review of the most recent data reported to SD DOE, it can be estimated that in any given year, 3% of teachers leave the field of teaching in South Dakota. Assuming this percentage holds steady, and assuming public schools reach the estimated number of teachers below (based on student projections and 14:1 student-teacher ratio), **the five-year need to replace those leaving the field for reasons other than retirement will be 1,434.**

Estimated Number of Teachers Leaving the Field for Other Reasons

	Estimated number of teachers	Estimated number no longer employed in teaching in SD
2014-15	9,362	281
2015-16	9,394	282
2016-17	9,541	286
2017-18	9,676	290
2018-19	9,818	295
Five Year Total		1,434

Source: SD DOE PRF system

Expectations for student enrollment

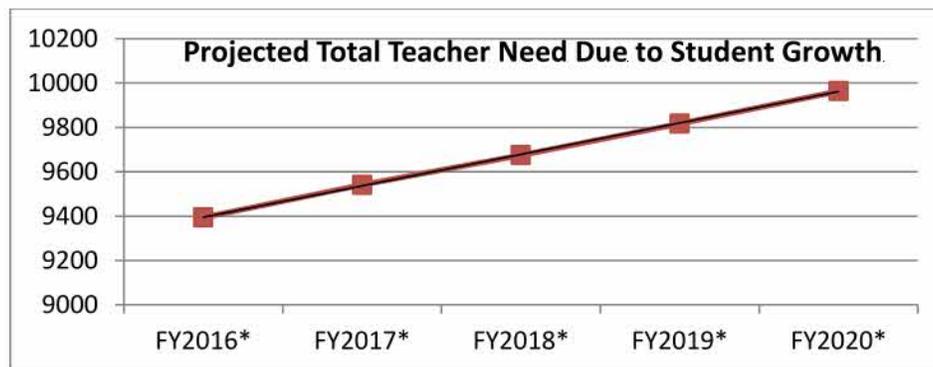
Data surrounding births compared to graduation and grade promotion rates can be used to project growth in the state student population through 2020. As the table below details, student populations are expected to continue to grow for the foreseeable future and are expected to reach a level of approximately 139,500.

Projected 5 Year Student Enrollments

Academic Year	Enrollment Projection
2015-2016	131,515
2016-2017	133,572
2017-2018	135,457
2018-2019	137,447
2019-2020	139,487

Source: Based on promotion and graduation trends as well as SD Birth Data

Based on these estimates of student growth, the projected need for teachers in 2020 – if South Dakota is to remain at a student to teacher ratio of 14:1 – is 9,963.36 FTE. If the current teacher FTE remains at the 2014-15 estimate of 9,362, it can be projected that **there will be an increased need of 601 teachers to the field due to student growth over the next five years.**



Source: SD DOE projections

Summary of need

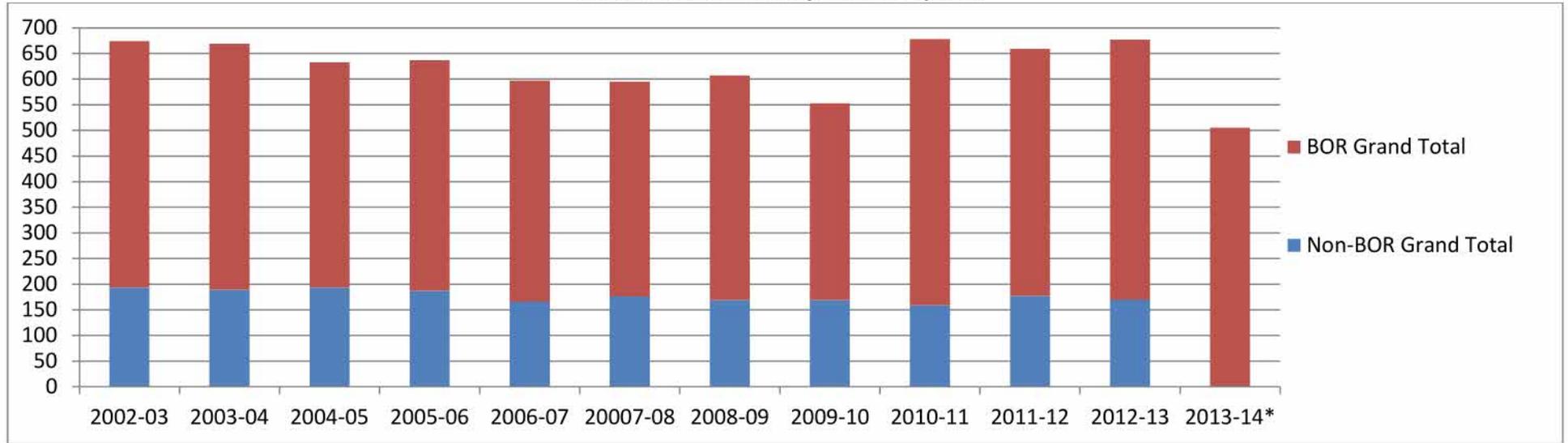
Over the course of the next five years, **it is estimated that public schools in South Dakota will need an additional 3,074 teachers in order to meet the number of teachers needed to maintain a 14:1 student-teacher ratio.** This number includes a total of 1,039 teachers lost due to retirement; 601 teachers due to estimated student growth; and 1,434 teachers leaving the field for reasons other than retirement.

Understanding the Teacher Pipeline

This section offers an overview of the major sources contributing to the teacher pipeline: in-state teacher-education graduates, teachers coming from out of state, and alternative routes to certification.

One of the primary ways to meet teacher need is to hire new graduates from South Dakota’s state universities. For the last four years, the number of Teacher Education graduates from South Dakota Board of Regents’ universities has hovered around 500. In the most recent two years, private colleges in the state have graduated approximately 170 students per year. This has resulted in about 670 potential teacher candidates coming out of the state’s pipeline in each of the last three years for which there is data available.

South Dakota University Teacher Pipeline



	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Non-BOR Grand Total	193	189	193	187	166	176	169	169	159	177	170	*
BOR Grand Total	481	480	440	450	431	419	438	384	519	482	507	505
Combined Grand Total	674	669	633	637	597	595	607	553	678	659	677	*

SOURCE: SD BOR University data from SD BOR; Non-BOR Totals from IPEDS Completion report (2013-14 data not yet available)

Projections based on the most recent 12 years of data for Board of Regents universities and the most recent 7 years data for the Non-Board of Regents schools result in estimates of between 650 and 670 graduates coming out of the pipeline in each of the next 5 years.

5 Years Estimated SD Teacher Graduates

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Board of Regents Universities	485	488	492	495	499
Non-BOR Universities	170	170	170	171	171
TOTAL	655	658	662	666	670
Five Year Total				3,311	

Source: SD DOE projections

It is important to note that these new Teacher Education graduates provide an important source of educators not just for South Dakota schools, but also for schools in other states. Based on the last 10 years of data, the average rate at which graduates from South Dakota Board of Regents’ teacher preparation programs are employed in public schools in the state is 50.9%. Comparable numbers are not available for non-Board of Regents Universities. Based on the graduation projections above and assuming the placement rates for the non-Board of Regents Universities in the state are similar as a whole to the Board of Regents placement rates, **an estimated 1,685 of the projected new 3,311 teachers will be employed in South Dakota public schools.**

Just as South Dakota Universities provide educators to schools in other states, educators coming from out of state provide another source to fill South Dakota teaching positions. The number of out-of-state graduates receiving teaching certificates for the first time in South Dakota has hovered around 400 for each of the last five years. An average 61.51% of all educators from out of state receiving South Dakota certification have been employed in the state over the last five years. Based on these numbers, it can be estimated that over the next five years, **2,281 out-of-state graduates will apply for certification in the state of South Dakota, and of those, 1,403 will be employed in the state’s public schools.**

Certificates Issued to Out-of-State Graduates

	Certificates Issued	Number Employed in SD	Percent Employed in SD	Administration Endorsement	School Service Specialist Endorsement	Teacher Endorsement
2010	440	268	60.91%	27	24	389
2011	414	247	59.66%	17	21	376
2012	466	283	60.73%	24	30	412
2013	490	320	65.31%	27	11	452
2014	435	265	60.92%	21	20	394

SOURCE: SD DOE Certification and Personnel Record Form databases

In addition to filling teaching positions using graduates from both in-state and out-of-state teacher education programs, public schools in the state hire teachers through alternative certification programs, including the Teach for America (TFA) program.

Alternative Certification in South Dakota

	Alternative Certificates	Teach For America	Total Alternative
2010-11	41	26	67
2011-12	37	17	54
2012-13	51	15	66
2013-14	48	23	71
2014-15	55	31	86

Source: SD DOE Certification and PRF databases

Based on the historical data, and the expectation that while the state Alternative Certification program will continue to grow, the Teach For America supply of teachers will remain steady, **it can be projected that 335 new teachers will join South Dakota’s public school ranks over the next five years.**

Five Year Projections for Alternative Certificates

	Alternative Certificates	TFA Certificates	Total Alternative
2015-16	28	31	59
2016-17	32	31	63
2017-18	36	31	67
2018-19	40	31	71
2019-20	44	31	75
TOTAL:			335

Source: SD DOE projections

Summary of the pipeline

Considering these three critical sources of teachers entering the profession; 1) in-state teacher preparation programs, 2) out-of-state teachers coming into the state, and 3) teachers entering the profession through an alternative route, **it can be estimated that these sources combined will provide a potential teacher pool of 3,423.** This includes an estimated 1,685 teachers entering the profession through university teacher preparation programs; 1,403 educators prepared out-of-state who come to South Dakota to teach; and 335 teachers who enter the profession through either the Alternative Certification or Teach for America programs. **The estimated supply of teachers indicates the potential teacher pool will be 349 more than the minimal five-year need.**

Further Study Needed

It is important to note that the data previously presented does not take into account the depth of the pool of resources available; nor does it reflect the more detailed picture of hiring challenges in terms of particular academic content areas and/or geography. Nor do these numbers address the trend of teachers teaching outside their certification areas (for example, a high school math teacher teaching a physics course) who are placed on a POI. In the most recent year, 373 teachers were on POIs, and the 2014-15 year is on track to have the highest POI numbers on record. Further, there are a number of market factors, including the role of teacher salaries in attracting and retaining teachers, and the role technology can play in providing an avenue for delivery of instruction, that need to be considered as part of this discussion.

Strategies

As the SEA worked with stakeholder groups to identify root causes and strategies to address these root causes, several key next steps came out of the conversation. Given the governance structure of South Dakota and the focus on local control, paired with the belief that districts are best equipped to make decisions that are in the best interest of their local students, recommendations for strategies do not center around requirements for LEAs to engage in prescribed practices, or statewide plans for narrow and impractical redistribution of educators from low-need to high-need districts and classrooms. Strategies to improve equitable access to excellent educators center around three particular areas: 1) Expanded analysis and access to data surrounding inequities; 2) Engagement of key stakeholders; 3) Leverage of high quality supports and professional development opportunities.

Data Analysis and Access

Both the PLC and CTL groups identified the need for further data analysis to be done to identify where the largest equity gaps exist. The general consensus was that there are concerns about finding highly qualified teachers across the board, and that creating more specific metrics to label “underserved” districts would help paint a better picture of the biggest equity concerns across the state. The groups recommended several changes to definitions and the types of analysis that the SEA will use to guide further equity work. This expanded data analysis will be embedded organically into the larger delivery work of the department, and will serve as the basis for an annual report to the state and the field relating to the status of teaching in South Dakota.

RECOMMENDED NEW OR CHANGED DEFINITIONS

ESEA requires that states define three groups of teachers and analyze whether groups of students are more exposed than others to these teachers. As the equity work moves forward the SEA is proposing to update definitions as follows:

Inexperienced Teachers are those teachers who are in the first three years of practice. This definition mirrors the definition of “probationary teacher” found in state statute and administrative rule.

Out of Field Teachers are those teachers who are not properly certified to teach the subject to which they are assigned and who are placed on a POI pursuant to state administrative rule. These teachers may or may not meet the requirements to be considered highly qualified.

Unqualified Teachers are those teachers who do not meet the requirements to be considered “Highly Qualified” and who may or may not meet the state requirements to be properly certified.

Highly Qualified Teachers are those teachers who are fully certified or qualified by the SD DOE to teach the subject and grade span to which they are assigned.

In addition to looking at outcomes for teachers, the SEA plans to expand the equity work to place a substantial focus on the role of leadership and the access that students have to quality administrators. The following definitions will be used to help identify potential gaps in access to qualified leadership across the state:

Inexperienced Administrators are those administrators who are in the first four years of practice. This definition mirrors the practices being used in the state evaluation system.

Unqualified Administrators are those administrators who do not meet the requirements to be considered state certified.

Highly Qualified Administrators are those administrators who are fully certified or qualified by the SD DOE to serve as principal or superintendent.

At the urging of the stakeholder groups, the SEA will update the definitions of the following groups, and include additional groups defined herein be a focus for the next round of analysis:

Poor student: A student who qualifies as “economically disadvantaged” in the state accountability system. Typically a student who qualifies for free or reduced price lunches.

Poor school: A school that is either:

- a school in the quartile of schools in the state with the highest percentage of “poor students” as defined above; or
- a school in which more than 60% of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunch in the most recent year for which data is available.

Minority Student: Because the largest minority group, and the most consistently underachieving minority group in the state is the Native American group, stakeholders thought it may be prudent to examine the Native American group specifically when identifying minority group for the purpose of equity, and that it would be better to address the larger underrepresented minority groups as a part of a deeper analysis of Gap group student access. For this reason, the SEA plans to focus in the next iteration of the plan, on those students classified as being Native American for the purposes of the state accountability system as the key “minority students” on which the plan will focus.

High Minority School: A school that is either:

- a school in the quartile of schools with the highest percentage of Native American students; or
- a school in which more than 60% of the student body is identified as Native American.

Gap Group Student: A student who is classified as being in the Gap Group in the state Accountability system. In 2014-15 the gap group included students who belong to one or more of the following subgroups: Native American; African American; Hispanic; English Language Learners; Special Education; Economically Disadvantaged.

High Gap School: A school that is either:

- a school in the quartile of schools with the highest percentage of Gap Group students; or
- a school in which more than 60% of the student body is identified as belonging to the Gap Group

RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVENESS DATA SOURCES TO INCLUDE

A key piece of expanding the data analysis for the equity plan will be identifying other sources of data that can inform the work that the SEA is undertaking. To this aim, the SEA has identified other potential data sources to help inform the ultimate delivery plan that will be generated surrounding teacher and leader quality and equity. Other data sources available to the SEA include:

Educator Effectiveness research: South Dakota's Educator Effectiveness Evaluation system was designed in 2013; piloted on a small scale in the 2013-14 school year, and rolled out to all schools during a 2014-15 learning year across the state. It will be fully implemented in 2015-16 year for teachers, and the principal evaluation component will be fully implemented in the 2016-17 year. Research focused on early adopters/ pilots has occurred and will continue through the 2016-17 school year. Going forward, the SEA will continue to collaborate with Education Service Agencies, SDEA, the CTL, and researchers from Black Hills State University, and will engage its Regional Educational Lab (REL) to assist in research efforts. Research in the pilot year was based on a scientifically selected representative sample of 20 schools from across the state piloting teacher evaluation and 12 districts across the state piloting principal evaluation.

To date, research has focused on two areas:

- 1) Identifying the supports and education needed for effective implementation based on the relative size and preparedness of participants; and
- 2) Evaluation of the outcomes of the effectiveness process relative to measurement of student growth and evidence of changes to professional practice as a result of the effectiveness process.

The in-depth research efforts are expanding to an additional six sites that will be included in the next three years of research, and will engage other schools that voluntarily want to participate. Annual reports are made available for review by the CTL and will serve as the basis for recommended updates to the models and handbooks. The CTL will continue to be engaged in the evaluation process going forward through at least the 2016-17 school year.

As part of the research, special attention will be given to the goals principals are setting surrounding the School Performance Index and Annual Measurable Objectives to ensure that they are rigorous, appropriate, and help to meaningfully differentiate performance across the three required evaluation levels. Throughout the process, the CTL will be engaged and provide oversight to ensure the system is working as intended. In the event the research indicates a concern with the system, the CTL will use the research to build recommendations for changes to the state model, which will then be shared with other stakeholder groups and presented to the state Board of Education for consideration.

Data from the research study will be used to help the SEA target professional development opportunities around those areas teachers and administrators most need support, with the aim that all teachers in the state will be more focused on professional and student growth as a result of the process.

Summative Effectiveness Data: Beginning with the results of evaluations conducted in the 2016-17 academic year, SD DOE will collect teacher and principal effectiveness summative ratings in aggregate at the school level. During the 2014 legislative session, House Bill 1030 passed protecting evaluation data as part of a teacher or principal's confidential human resources file, so this information will not be collected at the individual teacher level. Data will be collected during the fall collection of personnel data via the Personnel Record Form (PRF). The PRF is a state database that is used to capture employment data that aids the state in identifying critical needs teaching areas and completing highly qualified calculations. When schools log-in to submit data to the PRF, an additional form will be added for districts to indicate, by school, how many teachers and principals were evaluated in the prior year, and of those how many fell into each of the three categories: Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, Exceeds Expectations, and the number of times professional judgment was used as well as the rationale for using this option. The data is collected in the fall to allow time for final assessment data to be used in the growth calculation after the close of the prior school year..

SPI Data: Once this data has been collected, SD DOE's Statewide System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SSRAS) will review the data and compare it to the data generated in the SPI index. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which the results of educator effectiveness match up to the Growth Model indicator as well as to Student Achievement gains in relation to Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Those schools with the most disparate difference between ratings of educator effectiveness and student growth/gains towards AMOs, and those schools with the highest incidences of use of professional judgment will receive site visits and be provided technical assistance opportunities relating to educator effectiveness implementation with Title I, Title II and Teacher Quality staff members. At least 5 percent of public schools in the state will be selected for annual follow up through this process. Schools or districts found to have concerns through this data review for multiple years may be selected for an accreditation follow up site-visit prior to the five-year review date.

Gap Analysis and Planning Documentation: Beyond the formal research effort surrounding educator effectiveness systems, South Dakota is taking steps to ensure that schools are working to appropriately implement high quality teacher and principal effectiveness systems consistent with the state requirements.

In the fall of 2013, districts were asked to do two key tasks:

- 1) Participate in a stoplight survey to assess common core and teacher and principal effectiveness readiness in the district; and
- 2) Indicate if they felt that they were ready to implement the full teacher and principal effectiveness systems in 2014-15 or if they would be working on planning and implementation over the course of the year.

All teachers, superintendents, and principals were sent the stoplight survey, and South Dakota worked with the Education Delivery Institute (EDI) to aggregate the data results and create individualized reports for every district. Each district then scheduled a stoplight coaching session, where education specialists, trained by SD DOE, went to the district and met with district leadership teams consisting of superintendents, principals, and teacher leaders to review the results. These results were used to help the districts identify gaps in both common core and teacher effectiveness implementation.

At these coaching sessions, leadership teams reviewed the options for state-sponsored professional development over the next two years and began to plan next steps for implementation and closing gaps

found in the survey. In the fall of 2014, this survey was repeated, and regional coaching was provided to districts in the spring of 2015. This will once again be completed in the Fall of 2015, and will be used to help the SEA and its LEAs target professional development through the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years.

Additionally, LEAs submitted an updated plan, detailing their progress and needs in implementing teacher and principal effectiveness systems, to the SEA in the summer of 2015. This data will be used to help the SEA identify and support via technical assistance and training, the areas of greatest need across the state.

RECOMMENDED EXISTING DATA TO EXAMINE: In addition to looking at the data available surrounding teacher effectiveness, key stakeholder groups identified other metrics surrounding the teaching profession they want the department to consider as it seeks to more broadly define, understand, and set goals surrounding equity issues in the state. These include:

- The impact that school size, setting (urban vs rural), and sparseness of a district have on the recruitment and retention of teachers. Some stakeholders suggested that there may be more of a link between being a small, sparse, rural school and teacher recruitment and retention than there is between poverty or ethnicity and teacher recruitment or retention. If this is true, increasing equity may mean increasing the access of students in these areas to expanded opportunities to interact with high quality instruction, and other programs, such as the state dual-credit or virtual school programs.

Other specific data points stakeholder groups recommend for consideration include:

- The impact being on or near an Indian reservation or being a Hutterite Colony school has on teacher recruitment and retention.
- The proportion of English Language Learners as related to teacher data.
- School fund balances and average teacher and administrator salaries as they relate to teacher data.
- Relationships between potential “equity gaps” and indicators of student and school success including: percentage of students proficient in specific subject areas; 4 year cohort graduation and completion rates; college readiness as measured by ACT scores.
- Specific information about the percentage of teacher and administrator turn-over and positions left vacant on an annual basis.
- Proportions of teachers or administrators on Plans of Intent by specific broad content areas.
- The proportion of teachers coming through alternative certification programs.
- The average number of subjects or preparations teachers are assigned.
- The average amount of preparation time awarded to teachers.
- The proportion of high school students taking dual-credit or AP coursework.
- The number of course options in different content areas a school provides to students.
- The proportion of highly qualified para-professionals.
- The proportion of Nationally Board Certified teachers.
- The proportion of teachers with post-bachelors degrees.
- The proportion of minority and Native American teachers.
- Teacher and administrator age ranges.
- The average student to teacher ratio.

- The average experience of teachers and administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DELIVERY WORK AND PUBLIC REPORTING

Currently, the SEA is in the process of developing a delivery plan that addresses the foundational supports of the state strategic plan. As part of the creation of the delivery plan, the SEA will be identifying an overarching goal of ensuring all students have access to high quality educators and instruction, and will identify smaller target areas against which it will be measuring progress.

Five year trajectories for each goal and target area will be created, and annual targets set that will let the SEA measure progress towards meeting these goals. Particular attention will be paid to increasing equitable access of minority and low income students to highly qualified, highly effective educational opportunities. Additionally, targets will be created surrounding any other equity gaps identified in expanded analysis called for in the next stage of Equity Plan work.

The recommendation is that Equity analysis should be embedded into this work, and LEAs be given corresponding reports annually to help them better understand potential equity concerns in their district. Additionally, it is the intention that an annual “Status of Teaching in South Dakota” report will be generated that includes key information, not just about the state of the profession, but about inequities in access across the state.

The SEA will share this information with the key stakeholder groups identified in this plan as regular stakeholder meetings take place on either a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis depending on the structure and schedule of the group.

Updates and progress tracking will happen at the SEA level quarterly and will be used to track trajectories towards success. Quarterly stock-takes will be given to senior SEA management to ensure that the state is on track to meet these goals. Data analysis, reporting and monitoring will be the responsibility of the Division of Assessment and Accountability.

Engagement of Key Stakeholders

The second key strategy for ensuring increased equitable access to effective educators centers around engagement of key stakeholders in the state. Simply put, if we are not discussing inequities with stakeholders, it is difficult, if not impossible for stakeholders to provide feedback or to help impact changes.

EQUITY WALKS AND (MORE) ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The SEA will engage key stakeholder groups including the Indian Education Advisory Council, the CTL, and the PLC in equity walks beginning in the Spring of 2016, to examine expanded data reports previously mentioned. The intent is that equity walks will be conducted on an annual basis with stakeholders to ensure that trends are examined and other potential data needed for analysis is identified. One key portion of the walks will be to re-evaluate and expand as needed upon the existing root cause analysis. This will ensure that the SEA is keeping an active pulse on the needs and realities in the field.

STOCK-TAKES

Once the delivery plan that will encompass the equity work is complete, the SEA will internally host quarterly “stock-takes” with senior leadership to recap work done to date and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies being implemented. A condensed version of these stock-takes, as well as the annual data report will be shared with the key stakeholders identified within this plan based on regular meeting schedules.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

The SEA will work as it develops the broader delivery plan to embed pertinent recommendations from both the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council. Recommendations and programs created as a result of legislation will be examined to ensure they are being implemented in a manner that addresses any equity concerns.

Potential Leverage Points

As the work of the above groups comes together and helps paint a broader picture of the status of teaching and equity in the state, there exist several statewide initiatives that SD DOE hopes to leverage to bring added focus to the work. Specifically, attention needs to be given to work occurring in the following areas:

Delivery Work

As detailed in South Dakota’s ESEA Flexibility waiver, increasing collaboration between offices within SD DOE has been a key focus of the SEA in recent years. This has resulted in cohesive systems of support, and clear identification of some of the strategies that have the most promise for schools. Key supports are being directed to the state’s lowest achieving schools, many of whom are the highest minority and poverty schools in the state.

In 2012, SD DOE began working in partnership with the Education Delivery Institute (EDI) to help provide clarity to SEA work centered around the goal of increasing the number of South Dakota students graduating **College, Career, and Life Ready**. A Delivery Unit was created in the fall of 2012 to help oversee this work.

South Dakota works to integrate and utilize the delivery approach to establish and maintain focus by establishing high impact goals for student success, determining high-impact strategies to achieve the goals, and creating clear plans to bring these intentions to life and drive the day-to-day work. This approach produces results by focusing on four fundamental questions: What are we trying to do? How are we planning to do it? At any given moment, how will we know whether we are on track? If not, what are we going to do about it? As the SEA moves forward with a new, revised equity plan, this approach will serve as the backbone to guide the work.

SD DOE developed and is focused on seven goal areas to achieve the aspiration: ***“All students graduate college, career, and life ready”***.

1. Students enter 4th grade proficient or advanced in reading.
2. Students enter 9th grade proficient or advanced in math.
3. Increase the academic success of Native American students, the largest minority group in the state.
4. Students graduate high school ready for postsecondary or the workforce.
5. Students have access to high quality standards and instruction.
6. Students are supported by effective teachers and leaders.
7. Students enter schools that provide an environment conducive to learning.

Within the context of this work, the SEA is focusing best practices and supports towards those schools identified as having the greatest needs. The equity plan will serve as the baseline for the creation of a specific delivery plan centered around goals 5, 6 & 7. This plan will serve as the SEA’s basis for evaluating progress towards increased equity in all schools.

SSRAS Team

Beyond the creation of the Delivery Unit, the SD DOE has created other internal structures and processes to increase collaboration and create a shared sense of accountability across divisions and offices. One of significant importance as it relates to equity, is the Statewide System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support Team (SSRAS). The SSRAS group, containing key personnel from all divisions within SD DOE, was originally created to help oversee the transition of the state to their ESEA flexibility waiver. This group now meets every other week to ensure that the SEA is examining data and is addressing any concerns with the accountability system in a cohesive manner. This group has collaborated to create work plans, to modify Focus and Priority School guidance, to better define watch list school supports, to clarify and guide work with School Support Team members (SSTs) assigned to Focus and Priority schools, to identify opportunities to offer regional trainings, and to ensure that SD DOE is supporting Priority and Focus schools in implementing systems of support and interventions that are based on best practices and aligned to the turnaround principles. Work within the department is much less “siloed” as a result of this group, and much attention is paid to the particular needs of schools and districts to receive technical assistance to better be able to meet the needs of historically underperforming subgroups including minority, low income students, English language learners and students with disabilities.

PD Menu

As part of a statewide professional development initiative, the SEA has worked with regional ESAs to create high quality training designed to support educators, including educators in our many remote, rural, high needs areas as the state transitioned to new college and career ready standards and to new evaluation systems. The SEA allocated a set number of days/trainers to each district to use as needed to allow districts to work with local ESAs to provide professional learning or coaching for implementation of the standards or teacher effectiveness system. Trainings will continue through May of 2016. Districts can schedule the professional learning or coaching from the “state sponsored menu of options” in their own district or work with neighboring districts to offer regional professional learning opportunities.

Cross-state Collaborative

The SEA received additional funding from the Helmsley Charitable Trust to support a cross-state 6-12 grade math collaborative. The ultimate goal of this project is to develop, strengthen and support the professional community of middle school and secondary teachers of mathematics across the four-state region (Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota). The project will increase the capacity of state, district and school leaders to lead, support, and monitor teaching and learning aligned with state standards in mathematics. At the heart of the process is a professional development plan that supports the work of coaches, teachers, and principals as they build a common vision of what it means to teach and align instruction to the math standards and a shared understanding of how to lead this challenging work.

Core Reading

SD DOE’s Offices of Special Education and Learning and Instruction have partnered to offer CORE reading training to help instructional coaches, MTSS schools, RtI schools, and schools participating in the SSIP process additional literacy training. The training covers the CORE Foundational Reading Skills focusing on the big five skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Additionally, the trainings serve to broaden educator’s working knowledge of assessment needed to specify interventions, and to give educators assistance in applying the material presented in the class to their teaching practices. Continued support in this area is being provided across the state, especially as districts are working to embed instructional coaching into their daily practices.

SD Counts

South Dakota MSP funds are used to establish SD Counts, a focused statewide professional learning program designed to build a broad-based expertise and leadership for improving student achievement in K-12 mathematics instruction. The primary goal of the program is to deepen content knowledge of South Dakota’s math standards, strengthen instructional practices and implement data based instructional decisions for math teachers in grades four through eight. Teachers participate in a four day intensive summer math institute and also receive at least 24 hours of follow-up professional learning and in-classroom coaching provided by instructional coaches during the school year, providing teachers safe opportunities to receive coaching that allows them to embed “best practices” in teaching mathematics into their classrooms.

SD MTSS

South Dakota's Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) initiative provides districts with the training, tools, and support to implement a multi-tiered approach for meeting students' needs in a proactive and positive way. Districts that were already working with the state to implement RtI and/or PBIS are offered the opportunity to work with a State MTSS coordinator to assist them in scaling up their current implementation by systematically adding grade levels and focusing on both RtI and PBIS district wide. South Dakota currently has 25 districts working toward full MTSS implementation. Support for PBIS and RtI remains ongoing in the state.

- **PBIS Initiative:** In 2006, South Dakota began helping districts implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is comprised of a broad range of systemic school-wide, group, and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior for all students. PBIS is not a specific "model" but a compilation of effective practices, interventions, and systems change strategies that have been proven to be empirically effective and efficient. PBIS has relevant applications to educating all children and youth in schools or other community settings. PBIS is a data driven systems approach developed to assist schools and community settings achieve socially important behavior change. Systems are put in place to support staff while they teach and encourage positive, healthy behaviors.
- **RtI Initiative:** In 2007, South Dakota began helping schools implement Response to Intervention (RtI). The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE, 2005) defines RtI as the practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention based on a student's needs, changing instruction and/or goals through frequent monitoring of progress, and applying the student response data to important educational decisions. RtI represents a progressive intervention approach that identifies students at risk for learning difficulties, including those who may have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), and provides early intervention with the goal of improving the achievement of all students. To that end, RtI also aligns itself with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001.

Instructional Coaches

The SEA is also providing additional support by offering reading and math instructional coaches to select watch list schools. Currently 16 schools are participating in the instructional reading coaching program for grades K-3, and nine schools are participating in the instructional math coaching program for grades 4-8.

The instructional reading coaching program provides K-3 teachers professional learning in foundational reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and in-classroom coaching once a month. The program also requires teachers to administer a local assessment to measure the foundational reading skills and use the data to drive instruction. The first year of the program will focus on supporting solid tier one instruction for all students, while year two will support the transition to a Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

The instructional math coaching program provides math teachers in grades 4-8 professional learning in the following:

1. Designing math lessons in three acts (launch, explore, communicate) to develop a classroom with strong student discourse through the incorporation of the five practices: Anticipating, Monitoring, Selecting, Sequencing, and Connecting
2. Strengthening the use and type of deeper level questioning

3. Implementing Formative Assessments
4. Cultivating Classroom Culture and Grouping Students
5. Engaging Students in Productive Struggle and Rigorous Tasks

The instructional math program also requires teachers to administer a local assessment to be used to analyze student progress. Like the reading coach program, the math coaches provide classroom coaching and feedback at least six times a year.

Starting in the 2015-2016 school year, the SEA will align the instructional math coaching program goals to the goals of South Dakota Counts program. The South Dakota Counts program is funded by federal Title I B or Math and Science Partnership (MSP) funds. If MSP funds are awarded to the SEA, this will allow the state to provide continued support to schools/teachers and expand the number of participating schools for math.

The Title office, Special Education office, and Learning & Instruction (standards/curriculum) division are working together to support schools with instructional coaches and to build capacity within the districts. The state will continue to build capacity of coaches and district interventionists in the understanding of foundational reading skills, data use skills, and quality math instruction.

Educator Effectiveness Focused on Educator Growth

South Dakota is transforming the way that teacher and principal effectiveness is approached in the state. Work that was begun in 2010 has laid the groundwork for the comprehensive and holistic efforts taking place today at the SEA, LEA and higher education levels. The conversation regarding the evaluation of our teachers and school leaders has changed from one of a punitive and deficit based nature to one that seeks to clearly identify what constitutes good teaching and good school leadership for South Dakota students. The system focuses on how to best provide support at the state and local levels, recognizing that both the K-12 and higher education systems must be involved in this conversation. South Dakota is taking a system-wide approach to ensuring each child in the state has access to an effective teacher and an effective school leader.

Since January of 2013, SD DOE has collaborated with CTL to develop and pilot a teacher effectiveness system that will go into effect statewide in the 2015-16 academic year. District teacher evaluation procedures serve as the basis for programs to increase professional growth and development of certified teachers. The evaluation procedures culminate in a final rating and a recommendation that teachers meeting expectations develop a Professional Growth Plan and teachers not meeting expectations be placed on a Plan of Assistance.

Using a recommended method, schools will separately determine a Professional Practice Rating and a Student Growth Rating and will roll these up into one final teacher summative rating. The elements of the teacher effectiveness system serve as a foundation for the principal effectiveness system, which will be implemented statewide in the 2016-17 school year.

Between 2013 and 2015, a tremendous amount of training has been offered to teachers across the state surrounding the system. Of note, in the summer of 2014, 5,828 educators attended a total of 11,474 training days surrounding the creation and use of high quality Student Learning Objectives. This represented over 63% of current South Dakota teachers and more than 92% of South Dakota school districts. These trainings are being repeated and elaborated on in collaboration with the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA), which received a NEA grant to help advance the work. Training in SLOs

and the development of assessments is an option that districts can choose from within the state sponsored professional development menu of options. A key focus of these trainings centers around appropriately identifying where students are and differentiating support to help drive student growth.

Additionally, all public schools in the state have been provided the opportunity to utilize the Teachscape Reflect system to collect data and assign professional practices ratings to their teachers. SD DOE provides this software, which has been customized to follow the state evaluation workflow and has embedded the state created evaluation forms into the workflow.

Ongoing training to support professional practice evaluations is being delivered through *Teachscape Focus*, a comprehensive web-based training program aligned to the South Dakota Framework for Teaching (Danielson Model). *Teachscape Focus* provides in-depth training for both teachers and evaluators. *Teachscape Focus* includes approximately 20 hours of training to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of South Dakota's professional teaching standards and standards-based evaluations of professional practice. The training also helps teachers apply the South Dakota Framework for Teaching to improve instructional practice. Training is also made available in the *Teachscape Focus* system to help evaluators develop an understanding of the professional teaching standards and takes them through additional training in conducting accurate assessments of professional practice relative to the South Dakota Framework for Teaching. Evaluator training promotes accurate, consistent and evidence-based evaluations that limit evaluator bias. In-depth evaluator training takes approximately 30 hours to complete and concludes with a rigorous evaluator proficiency assessment.

WoLakota

South Dakota is cognizant that many of our highest needs schools in the state are located on or near Indian Reservations, where both cultural differences and social issues surrounding poverty are additional concerns that new educators may find themselves unprepared to address. To this aim, the SEA has been targeting support and mentoring opportunities to some of the schools in these areas that have historically had some of the highest teacher turnover rates in the state. Of note, 100% of the teachers that participated in the first year of this project returned the following year to their district. This is a significant achievement in districts and schools which may see 100% turnover from year to year.

The WoLakota project supports students in several high-need schools across the state, including two Priority schools, pairing trained mentor-teachers with new teachers and providing *Courage to Teach* circles to tend to the 'hearts' of each person. Mentors support the embedding of the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU) into practice, complementing the Common Core.

South Dakota has adopted the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings and Standards, which are a set of core concepts identified by a representative group of American Indian educators and elders determined to be essential to understanding and teaching the history and culture of South Dakota's Dakota, Lakota and Nakota peoples, or the Oceti Sakowin. The OSEU address the achievement gap of American Indian students by embracing their identity, and promoting cultural understanding among non-native students and teachers.

Early in the development of the project, it became apparent there were several young principals who could also use mentoring support in one of the Priority Schools that was piloting WoLakota. The project was expanded to provide mentoring opportunities for these administrators.

Currently, the resources that have been created to support the WoLakota Project can be found on the project website – www.wolakotaproject.org (active as of July 13, 2015). A bank of professionally edited videos of American Indian elder interviews and songs is at the core of the project, bringing the voices of the elders to the teachers and classrooms of South Dakota. These resources are currently being used not only in the pilot program, but also throughout the state as awareness of the resources grows.

The WoLakota Advisory Council, comprised of learning specialists familiar with the project, national civil rights leaders, Lakota/Dakota/Nakota elders, representation from tribal colleges, teachers and administrators from schools located on or near South Dakota reservations, and individuals from the SEA meet as needed to discuss and plan for the future of the project. Of note, Advisory Council members participated in and helped to facilitate a US Department of Education Learning Lab in the spring of 2015.

JAG

The Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program provides guided mentoring and targeted training to students at risk of dropping out of school. The program works specifically with schools and districts who have significant Native American student populations, one of the state's most underachieving subgroups. Nearly 100 percent of participants in the program graduated high school in the first two years it was in place in South Dakota.

CEEDAR

South Dakota was awarded a Technical Assistance Grant with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center. Working collaboratively with CEEDAR and four South Dakota institutions of higher education (IHEs), the state will revise teacher and leader preparation programs to ensure that graduates are prepared to use evidence-based practices in integrated ways to help students with disabilities reach college- and career-ready standards. These programs will also provide in-service teachers and leaders with sustained, effective learning opportunities to be more effective educators. The state's work on these reform efforts will be based on individual state needs, contexts, existing initiatives, and resources. The SEA and IHEs will convene a leadership team to serve as the primary mechanism for building and sustaining reform efforts.

Because most students who are considered "Special Education" students spend approximately 70% of the school day in the classroom with a general education teacher, it is important that any work towards equity look at efforts that ensure that all students are given the opportunity to learn in an appropriate environment in which their educational needs are met. Work in the special education area suggests that at the local levels, this may be a concern.

As equity and CEEDAR work move forward, special attention will need to be paid to those areas in which the CEEDAR work identifies as critical places in which students may have unequal access to high quality, appropriate education that meets their needs.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

The work of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Teachers and Students, and the Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council must be embedded in the equity delivery plan if the plan is going to succeed. Preliminary reports from these groups should be available in winter 2015, with formal recommendations being used to drive legislative work in early 2016. The recommendations and data developed through these collaborative efforts will be essential components of the ultimate delivery plan. Without knowing the direction the groups are taking, it is hard to predict what changes the solutions will bring, but the SEA remains committed to ensuring future work will help guarantee all students are supported by high quality teachers and leaders to help them graduate college, career and life ready.

REWRITING CERTIFICATION RULES

Currently, South Dakota is partnering with the regional Comprehensive Center (NCCC) and with CTL to redesign the state certification system, with the express intent of designing a system that meets the needs of the state. As part of this work, the group is focusing on those things that all teachers should know and be able to do to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. This work will go hand in hand with the equity plan.

Ongoing Monitoring and Support

Key work to support increasing access to equitable teachers that will occur over the next year is as follows:

Summer 2015:

- CORE reading training is being conducted. Follow up work will happen as part of the state SSIP plan and the Rtl process throughout the year.
- Districts across the state are receiving technical assistance and training surrounding the teacher and principal evaluation system, and will be provisioned access to the learning materials in the Teachscape system. Support in this area will continue through the school year and will be overseen by an Educational Service Agency, by SD DOE's Office of Certification and Teacher Quality, and will include the research being conducted in conjunction with BHSU and the REL.
- ESAs are receiving training in a train-the-trainer model to support the need to build consistent trainings that will be part of the menu of options that districts will use to help meet their biggest professional development needs. Particular emphasis will be given to trainings surrounding the use of new assessment and accountability data to better enable districts to understand the most critical needs of their students, including the needs of their minority students and their students living in poverty. This work will be a partnership between SD DOE's Division of Assessment and Accountability and the Division of Learning and Instruction.
- School Support Team members (SSTs) are receiving in depth training to allow them to better mentor and guide leadership teams at the state's Priority and Focus schools (most of whom are high poverty, high minority, low achieving schools on or near the state's Indian reservations or Hutterite Colonies). Ongoing work will occur throughout the year to ensure that SSTs are supported and districts and schools identified for improvement are receiving targeted feedback to help them make progress in supporting both their teachers and students. Work will be monitored by SD DOE's Title I office and the SSRAS.
- Existing Focus and Priority Schools are receiving support through guided data retreats designed to help them understand their data and identify the key interventions and supports needed to improve outcomes. Their work will continue both in district and with their SSTs through the entirety of the 2015-16 year and will be monitored by SD DOE's Title I office and the SSRAS.
- Institutes of Higher Education are coming together to begin redesigning courses to better prepare ALL teachers to meet the needs of students through differentiated instruction as part of the CEEDAR project. The initial focus will be on courses for general educators focused on literacy, as skills in these areas are critical for all teachers and students. Work will be overseen in collaboration with SD DOE's Office of Special Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability, and the Board of Regents.
- The Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force and Native American Student Achievement Advisory council are collecting and analyzing data.

- SD DOE's Indian Education Office will continue to oversee work to develop resources aligned to the OSEU, that support the WoLakota project.

Fall 2015:

- A new cohort of new to the field teachers in high poverty, high minority, low achieving schools on or near the state's Indian reservations will be identified as participants in the WoLakota project. They will receive in-depth support and mentoring over the course of the year. This work will be overseen by SD DOE's Title II office in conjunction with the Regional Educational Lab and a state ESA.
- New Focus, Priority and watch list schools will be identified. Focus and Priority schools will begin working with their SSTs to better understand their data and plan for improvement. This work will continue through the entirety of the 2015-16 year and will be monitored by SD DOE's Title I office and the SSRAS.
- Instructional Coaches will continue to work with teachers in watch list schools. The majority of these schools are high poverty, high minority, low achieving schools on or near the state's Indian reservations. Teachers supported will also include teachers working with Hutterite Colony students. This work will be overseen by SD DOE's Division of Learning and Instruction and will continue through the entirety of the 2015-16 year.
- The Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force and Native American Student Achievement Advisory council will begin work on their final reports.
- Schools will complete their staffing reports for the department. This work is overseen by SD DOE's Certification and Teacher Quality Offices.
- Work surrounding SD Counts and the Cross-state Collaborative will continue throughout the 2015-16 year. This work is overseen by SD DOE's Division of Learning and Instruction.
- New JAG programs will receive year one supports, and existing programs will begin working with returning students most in need of support. This work will continue through the entirety of the 2015-16 year and is overseen by the Secretary of Education.
- PBIS programs will receive support and help through implementation as needed by the Office of Special Education. This work will continue through the entirety of the 2015-16 year.
- SD DOE's Office of Learning and Instruction will oversee the delivery of the annual stoplight survey to help the department identify the most critical needs for teacher and administrator support in the upcoming year.
- Specific training for special educators surrounding the development and use of SLOs will be offered across the state. SD DOE's Offices of Special Education and Certification and Teacher Quality are overseeing this work and will use feedback from these trainings to develop future professional learning opportunities.

- Results from the teacher and principal effectiveness research project and surveys of teachers and administrators will be used to create additional training for districts regarding best practices for the development of SLOs and implementation of the evaluation system. As the Office of Certification and Teacher Quality oversees this work, sustainability of support will be a primary focus.

Winter 2015-16:

- The Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force and Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council will present their final reports to the Governor’s Office and make recommendations for needed legislation. SD DOE will examine any recommendations to determine what role they may need to have in implementation.
- The 2016 legislative session will conclude, and SD DOE will begin implementing statutorily called for changes made in response to the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force and Native American Student Achievement Advisory Council.
- SD DOE’s Division of Assessment and Accountability will finish reviewing the Fall 2015 staffing data and will begin running data analysis to inform an expanded delivery plan that will include equity.
- The CTL will finish the work to design a new certification system and the SEA will solicit public input on the proposal.
- The results of the stoplight survey will be aggregated and shared with LEAs. Trainings will occur to assist LEAs in planning support for their teachers.

Spring 2016:

- SD DOE’s Division of Assessment and Accountability will release a final/revised delivery plan to address the SEA goals of ensuring that:
 - Students have access to high quality standards and instruction.
 - Students are supported by effective teachers and leaders.
 - Students enter schools that provide an environment conducive to learning.

This will include an expanded equity plan and data report that will become an annual data report. Data tables from the report will be generated at the school, district, and state levels and will be shared with LEAs. Aggregated data will be made publicly available. The SEA will share this information with the key stakeholder groups identified in this plan as regular stakeholder meetings take place on either a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis depending on the structure and schedule of the group.

Updates and progress tracking will happen at the SEA level quarterly and will be used to track trajectories towards success. Quarterly stock-takes will be given to senior SEA management to ensure that the state is on track to meet these goals. Data analysis, reporting and monitoring will be the responsibility of SD DOE’s Division of Assessment and Accountability.

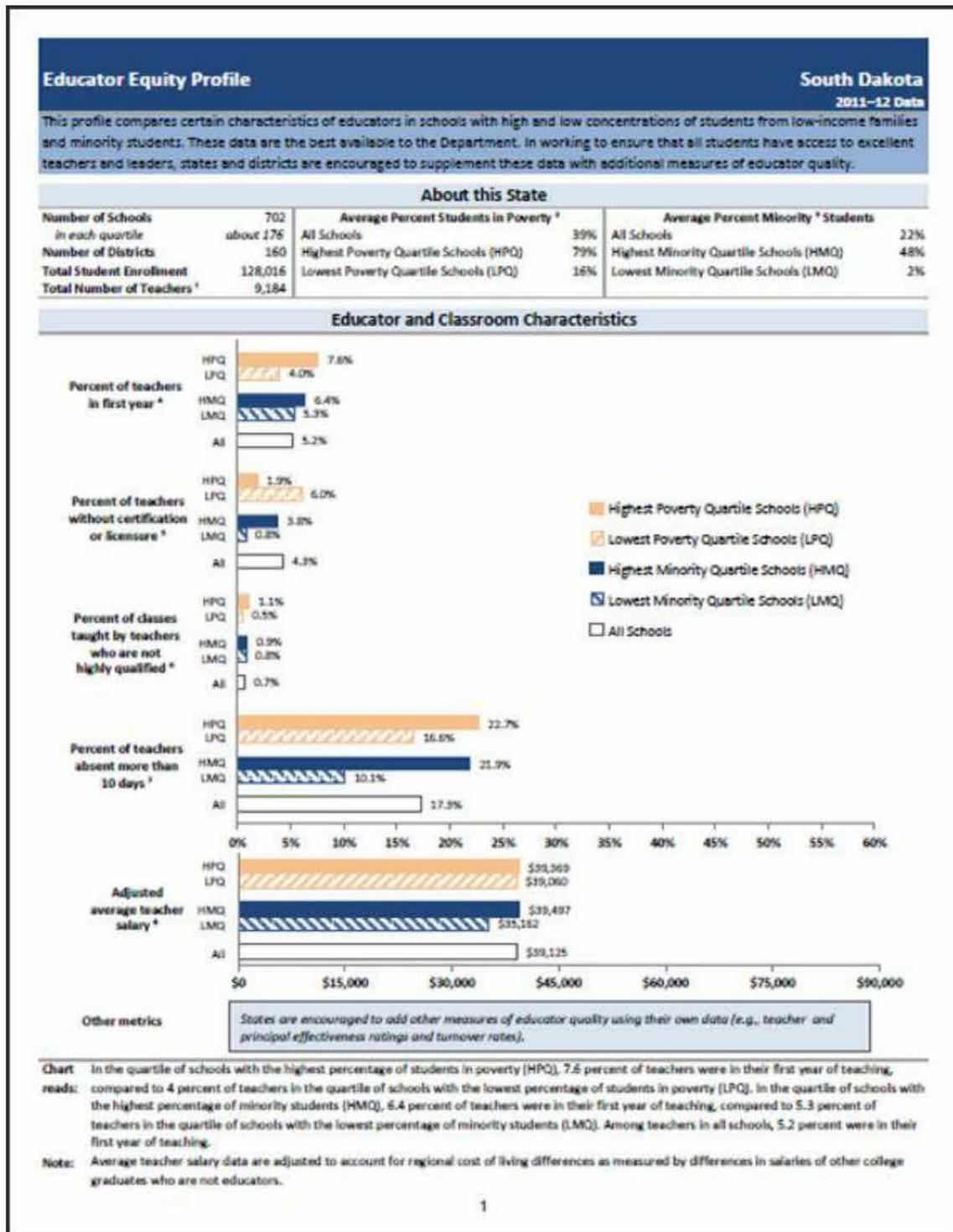
Conclusion and Summary

The SEA regularly engages key stakeholders in its work and is dedicated to improving access to excellent educators for all students in the state. The work of key stakeholder groups including the Commission on Teaching and Learning and a teacher-leader Professional Learning Community served to inform this equity plan. Key stakeholder engagement remains a long-term strategy for ensuring equity is at the forefront of discussion in the state for the foreseeable future. South Dakota will continue to engage key internal stakeholders such as the SSRAS, and external stakeholders such as the CTL, the PLC, SASD, SDEA, ASBSD, the Secretary's Advisory Council, the Parent Advisory Council, the Committee of Practitioners, the Indian Education Advisory Council, and any special legislative task forces that may be convened as they work to embed their equity work into the larger delivery work and strategic planning in the department.

This Equity Plan comes at a time where the state narrative is one of a teacher shortage, in which the projected pipeline barely meets the needs of the state, and in which specific geographical and content areas of the state seem to be at a greater disadvantage. Since Equity Plans were first required of states, South Dakota has made tremendous progress in closing the state equity gaps. Where gaps still exist, they tend to be centered around rural, remote, high poverty schools in the state that have a large Native American population and that are located on or near Indian Reservations. These are areas of the state in which the SEA is providing as much targeted support of teachers as is practically possible.

SD DOE will continue to make progress in this area by conducting more comprehensive and in-depth reviews of data, engaging stakeholders in regular "equity walks", conducting root cause analyses to identify the challenges and appropriate strategies, leveraging existing high impact strategies, and by regularly monitoring and reporting on progress.

Appendix A: State Equity Profile



State's Highest Poverty Schools – by District and Locale

District	Number of State's highest poverty schools	Total number of schools	Percent of teachers in first year in State's highest poverty schools	Percent of teachers without certification or licensure in State's highest poverty schools	Percent of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified in State's highest poverty schools	Percent of teachers absent more than 10 days in State's highest poverty schools	Adjusted average teacher salary in State's highest poverty schools
District							
Sioux Falls	23	50	8.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	28.9	\$30,621
Todd County	11	12	12.4	0.6 ✓	0.0 ✓	18.6	\$38,366
Shannon County	8	8	—	—	0.0 ✓	—	—
Rapid City Area	7	28	7.9	10.4	0.0 ✓	19.4	\$41,834 ✓
Eagle Butte	6	6	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	3.0	22.7	\$42,110 ✓
Huron	6	10	6.4	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	27.8	\$44,147 ✓
Andes Central	4	4	5.0	0.0 ✓	6.4	24.8	\$41,115 ✓
White River	4	4	6.4	2.1 ✓	3.8	2.1 ✓	\$34,044
Bennett County	3	3	10.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	2.6 ✓	\$37,791
Burke	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	\$34,305
Dupree	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	83.8	\$40,135 ✓
McIntosh	3	3	4.1	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	2.1 ✓	\$58,118 ✓
McLaughlin	3	3	—	—	2.8	—	—
Oelrichs	3	3	15.7	0.0 ✓	1.6	70.5	\$44,202 ✓
South Central	3	3	12.3	0.0 ✓	1.7	18.5	\$38,379
Locale*							
City	30	73	8.3	4.4 ✓	0.0 ✓	24.9	\$35,304
Suburb	0	2	†	†	†	†	†
Town	12	100	6.1	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	22.3	\$55,977 ✓
Rural	132	527	7.3	0.4 ✓	1.6	21.2	\$39,853 ✓
For comparison							
State average for lowest poverty schools			4.0	6.0	0.5	16.6	\$39,060

How to read this table:

Among the State's highest poverty schools, 23 are located in Sioux Falls. In those schools, 8.5 percent of teachers were in their first year; this is higher than the percentage of teachers in their first year in the lowest poverty schools in the State (4 percent). Among the State's highest poverty schools, 30 are located in cities. In those schools, 8.3 percent of teachers were in their first year; this is higher than the percentage of teachers in their first year in the lowest poverty schools in the State (4 percent).

Note: Average teacher salary data are adjusted to account for regional cost of living differences as measured by differences in salaries of other college graduates who are not educators.

✓ Indicates that the State's highest poverty schools in that district (or locale) have equal or lower percentages for each characteristic (or higher salary), on average, than the lowest poverty schools across the entire State.

— Indicates missing data.

† Indicates that the locale had fewer than two schools in the State's highest poverty quartile.

Educator Equity Profile

**South Dakota – District and Locale
Highest Minority Quartile Schools**

2011–12 Data

State's Highest Minority Schools – by District and Locale

	Number of State's highest minority schools	Total number of schools	Percent of teachers in first year in State's highest minority schools	Percent of teachers without certification or licensure in State's highest minority schools	Percent of classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified in State's highest minority schools	Percent of teachers absent more than 10 days in State's highest minority schools	Adjusted average teacher salary in State's highest minority schools
District							
Sioux Falls	33	50	8.0	2.1	1.0	26.0	\$33,857
Rapid City Area	15	28	6.4	14.6	0.4 ✓	15.3	\$42,854 ✓
Todd County	11	12	12.4	0.6 ✓	0.0 ✓	18.6	\$38,366 ✓
Shannon County	8	8	—	—	0.0 ✓	—	—
Huron	8	10	2.8 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	20.9	\$43,461 ✓
Eagle Butte	6	6	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	3.0	22.7	\$42,110 ✓
Mobridge-Pollock	4	4	7.8	0.0 ✓	0.7 ✓	19.6	\$34,208
Sisseton	4	4	5.1 ✓	1.0	0.0 ✓	54.3	\$39,964 ✓
Wagner	4	4	5.4	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	22.8	\$56,491 ✓
White River	4	4	6.4	2.1	3.8	2.1 ✓	\$34,044
Kadoka Area	4	5	5.1 ✓	2.6	0.0 ✓	23.1	\$34,725
Bennett County	3	3	10.5	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	2.6 ✓	\$37,791 ✓
Chamberlain	3	3	4.8 ✓	3.2	0.9	14.5	\$50,274 ✓
Dupree	3	3	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	83.8	\$40,135 ✓
McIntosh	3	3	4.1 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.0 ✓	2.1 ✓	\$58,118 ✓
Locale *							
City	47	73	7.0	7.7	0.8 ✓	21.4	\$37,650 ✓
Suburb	0	2	†	†	†	†	†
Town	28	100	3.1 ✓	0.0 ✓	0.3 ✓	20.1	\$40,851 ✓
Rural	99	527	7.3	0.8 ✓	1.2	23.3	\$41,355 ✓
For comparison							
State average for lowest minority schools			5.3	0.8	0.8	10.1	\$35,162

How to read this table:

Among the State's highest minority schools, 33 are located in Sioux Falls. In those schools, 8 percent of teachers were in their first year; this is higher than the percentage of teachers in their first year in the lowest minority schools in the State (5.3 percent). Among the State's highest minority schools, 47 are located in cities. In those schools, 7 percent of teachers were in their first year; this is higher than the percentage of teachers in their first year in the lowest minority schools in the State (5.3 percent).

Note: Average teacher salary data are adjusted to account for regional cost of living differences as measured by differences in salaries of other college graduates who are not educators.

- ✓ Indicates that the State's highest minority schools in that district (or locale) have equal or lower percentages on each characteristic (or higher salary), on average, than the lowest minority schools across the entire State.
- Indicates missing data.
- † Indicates that the locale had fewer than two schools in the State's highest minority quartile.

State and District Profile Definitions:

- ¹ **Total number of teachers:** The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) classroom teachers; all teacher data are measured in FTEs.
- ² **Highest and lowest poverty schools:** "Poverty" is defined using the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The highest poverty schools are those in the highest quartile in a State. In South Dakota, the schools in the highest poverty quartile have more than 55 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The lowest poverty schools are those in the lowest poverty quartile in the State; in South Dakota, these schools have less than 23 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- ³ **Highest and lowest minority schools:** "Minority" is defined for purposes of this profile as all students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Two or More Races. The highest minority schools are those in the highest minority quartile in a State. In South Dakota, the schools in the highest minority quartile have more than 22 percent minority students. The lowest minority schools are those in the lowest quartile in a State; in South Dakota, these schools have less than 4 percent minority students. Note: There is no statutory or regulatory definition of "minority" in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. The Department has created this definition of "minority" only for purposes of presenting data in this Educator Equity Profile, which is intended to improve transparency about educator equity in each State. In developing its educator equity plan, including analyzing resources for subpopulations of students, each State should exercise its own judgment as to whether this definition of "minority" is appropriate in describing the student racial and ethnic demographics in the State. For further information about developing a State definition of "minority" for the purpose of a State's educator equity plan, please see the document titled "State Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: Frequently Asked Questions."
- ⁴ **First year teachers:** The number of FTE classroom teachers in their first year of teaching. The number of year(s) of teaching experience includes the current year but does not include any student teaching or other similar preparation experiences. Experience includes teaching in any school, subject, or grade; it does not have to be in the school, subject, or grade that the teacher is presently teaching.
- ⁵ **Teachers without certification or licensure:** The total number of FTE teachers minus the total number of FTE teachers meeting all applicable State teacher certification requirements for a standard certificate (i.e., has a regular/standard certificate/license/endorsement issued by the State). A beginning teacher who has met the standard teacher education requirements is considered to meet State requirements even if he or she has not completed a State-required probationary period. A teacher with an emergency, temporary, or provisional credential is not considered to meet State requirements. State requirements are determined by the State.
- ⁶ **Classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified:** In general, a "highly qualified teacher" is one who is: (1) fully certified or licensed by the State, (2) holds at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution, and (3) demonstrates competence in each core academic subject area in which the teacher teaches. When used with respect to any teacher teaching in a public charter school, the term "highly qualified" means that the teacher meets the requirements set forth in the State's public charter school law and the teacher has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis. Classes taught by teachers who are not highly qualified are core academic classes taught by teachers who do not meet all of these criteria. Core academic classes are: English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.
- ⁷ **Teachers absent more than 10 days:** The total number of FTE teachers who were absent more than 10 days of the regular school year when the teacher would otherwise be expected to be teaching students in an assigned class. Absences include both days taken for sick leave and days taken 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.
- ⁸ **Adjusted average teacher salary:** Total school-level personnel expenditures from State and local funds for teachers divided by the total FTE teachers funded by those expenditures. Personnel expenditures for teachers include all types of salary expenditures (i.e., base salaries, incentive pay, bonuses, and supplemental stipends for mentoring or other roles). Personnel expenditures for teachers exclude expenditures for employee benefits. Teacher salary is often dependent on the number of years of experience, education, and other credentials. Average teacher salary data are adjusted, using the Comparable Wage Index (CWI), to account for regional cost of living differences as measured by differences in salaries of other college graduates who are not educators. Adjusted salary data are not comparable across states.
- ⁹ **Locale:** Based on National Center for Education Statistics urban-centric locale code. A city is a territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. A suburb is a territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area. A town is a territory inside an urban cluster that is not inside an urbanized area. A rural area is a Census-defined rural territory that is not inside an urbanized area and not inside an urban cluster.

Sources: 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 come from the 2011–12 Civil Rights Data Collection. Data for classes taught by highly qualified teachers come from 2011–12 EDfacts. 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 come from 2011–12 Common Core of Data school universe file. The Comparable Wage Index (CWI) for the 2012 fiscal year comes from http://bxsh.tamu.edu/research/faculty/Taylor_CWI/.