Section 1. Introduction

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) the following *2015 Texas State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators* (2015 Equity Plan) in response to Section 1111 (b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As required, the 2015 Equity Plan sets forth specific "steps that the state education agency will take to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers and the measures that the state education agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress."

Texas faces several challenges with the development and implementation of a state plan to ensure equitable access to excellent educators. The first challenge is the size and diversity of the state. The Texas public school system consists of 1,227 school districts and charters with 8,571 campuses employing over 334,500 teachers and serving 5.15 million students. A diverse student population includes the following demographic features:

- 60.2 % Economically Disadvantaged
- 17.5 % Limited English Proficient
- 51.8 % Hispanic
- 12.7 % African American

Unlike many other states, Texas faces an additional challenge involving the availability of state-level data that identifies excellent educators. The most accurate means of identifying an excellent educator is through a well-designed teacher evaluation system using classroom observations and multiple measures. While Texas currently is in the process of developing and piloting such an evaluation system, the resulting data will not be available to the state, but rather will be retained at the local level.

Recognizing these challenges, Texas embarked upon the development of the 2015 Equity Plan by first identifying the following guiding principles that would be critical to the design of an effective plan.

- Seek input and guidance from those individuals and organizations in a position to make the Equity Plan succeed by relying on a robust stakeholder process
- Ensure that districts and campuses at the local level, with access to the most precise data regarding effective educators and with the authority to enact local policies directed at increasing equity, are empowered
- Leverage not layer initiatives selected to be implemented by taking advantage of existing resources, programs, and successes to build upon promising work already underway
- Invest in actions with the greatest potential to narrow the equity gap by evaluating each proposed strategy in terms of both its feasibility and its likely impact

To develop the 2015 Equity Plan, an Equity Planning Team (Planning Team) was established to include key policy and data experts from both TEA and the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at SEDL, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (Appendix 1). In developing the 2015 Equity Plan, the Planning Team took advantage of data, tools, and guidance provided by ED and the Equitable Access Support Network (EASN). To supplement these resources, the Planning Team accessed relevant educator data collected statewide by TEA and sought

meaningful input from a wide-ranging and diverse group of Texas organizations, educators, and individuals with a commitment to and stake in the well-being and improvement of public education in Texas.

The planning process for development of the 2015 Equity Plan included the following steps:

- Conduct a policy scan of relevant statewide statutes, policies, and programs;
- Implement a strategy for soliciting stakeholders' input and engage them in the 2015 Equity Plan's development;
- Analyze data secured from national and TEA data systems to identify equity gaps;
- Perform root-cause analyses with stakeholders to identify potential reasons for the equity gaps;
- Develop and prioritize strategies, with stakeholder assistance, targeting root causes for the equity gaps; and
- Identify measures and methods for assessing and reporting progress toward implementation of the 2015 Equity Plan.

As a preliminary step in the planning process, TXCC performed a scan of current state policies and programs relevant to issues of equitable access to excellent educators. The purpose of the policy scan was to ensure that all individuals participating in the development of the 2015 Equity Plan have a clear understanding of the foundation on which the equity plan was to be built. The scan reviewed existing state statutes, policies, and practices for improving educator recruitment, evaluation, retention, development, support, and strategic compensation, including the status of Texas' efforts to develop, pilot, and implement a new Educator Evaluation and Support System. A summary of the policy scan is included as Appendix 2.

Section 2. Stakeholder Engagement

Recognizing that the success of the 2015 Equity Plan will depend in large part on the involvement of and input from organizations and educators firmly committed to improving public education in Texas, TEA and TXCC developed a robust stakeholder engagement process. Seeking to capitalize on the different strengths and perspectives of diverse stakeholders, the Planning Team created a stakeholder process that solicited input from both state-level policy organizations as well as local educators.

The Planning Team assembled a Policy Stakeholder Group (Appendix 3) comprised of state-level organizations representing the policy interests and concerns of the following groups:

- Teachers,
- Campus and district administrators,
- School board members,
- Parents,
- School personnel administrators,
- Small and rural community schools,
- Counselors, and
- Civil rights advocacy proponents.

The Planning Team then created a second stakeholders group, comprised of individuals who deal with students and their learning on a daily basis. This Practitioners Stakeholder Group (Appendix 4) was selected with a view to ensuring diversity of geographic area, district type (urban, rural, and small city), campus (elementary and secondary), ethnicity, and gender. Participating districts were also selected to ensure strong representation of educators and administrators serving students who are identified by their district as economically disadvantaged, minority, English language learners (ELL), and those receiving special education services. Of the seven districts represented on the Practitioners Stakeholder Group, the percentage of their student populations who:

- Are economically disadvantaged ranges from 60% to 70%,
- Are minority ranges from 56% to 100%,
- Are ELL ranges from 2% to 27%, and
- Receive special education services ranges from 7% to 13%.

The Practitioners Stakeholder Group consists of individuals working at the local level representing the following categories:

- Teachers,
- Principals,
- District administrators,
- School board members,
- Parents,
- Human resource coordinators,
- Counselors,
- Educator preparation program (standard) directors,
- Education preparation program (alternative certification) directors, and
- Regional education service center staff.

To take advantage of the expertise, experience, and talent of these stakeholders, the Planning Team scheduled a series of stakeholder meetings, including an initial meeting with each stakeholder group followed by a "virtual town hall" meeting. Prior to the initial meeting of the Policy Stakeholder Group, a questionnaire (Appendix 5) was sent to all invited stakeholders requesting their thoughts and opinions on a variety of questions related to equitable educator access. This questionnaire provided policy stakeholders with an opportunity to communicate in writing their perspective on teacher equity challenges currently facing Texas and served as a mechanism to capture input for those stakeholders unable to attend. The Planning Team used the results of these questionnaires (Appendix 6) to frame the discussions.

The initial stakeholder meetings were designed to create an interactive opportunity for stakeholders to review data and serve as advisors on interpreting the data. Due to different levels of familiarity with data among the members of the stakeholder groups, the Planning Team ensured that one of its members with expertise in data analysis was on hand to walk stakeholders through the data discussion. Using the data collected and analyzed to identify equity gaps, stakeholders then participated in a root-cause analysis to identify reasons for gaps and strategies likely to impact the root causes. This process is described in greater detail in Section 4.

The virtual town hall meeting, held in late April, provided stakeholders an opportunity to review the draft of their work and make final suggestions. A survey designed to ensure a focused examination of the plan's key features was distributed prior to the virtual town hall.

As the final stage for development of the 2015 Equity Plan, stakeholder feedback from both the virtual town hall and the stakeholder survey as well as suggested improvements offered by reviewers from the Equitable Access Support Network (EASN) in a thorough pre-submission process were carefully examined. Final revisions to the 2015 Equity Plan reflect this feedback.

Texas will continue to involve stakeholders in the plan implementation and monitoring phase of the 2015 Equity Plan. A key mechanism for this ongoing stakeholder engagement process is the Texas Equity Plan Website (Website), designed and hosted by TXCC. The Website will be used to update all interested stakeholders, local education agencies, policy-makers, and the general public on developments and progress made in implementing the 2015 Equity Plan. This website will serve as a central location for information and resources as well as a collaborative space for ongoing discussions about improving the state's initiatives toward ensuring equitable access in Texas. The Website has the potential to serve as an ongoing platform for soliciting stakeholder input through questionnaires, surveys, and posted responses to inquiries as well as a means by which updates can be broadly dispersed through list serves and postings.

Outreach efforts to involve other organizations and individuals beyond the original stakeholders include plans to engage, inform, and solicit input regarding the 2015 Equity Plan from the following organizations:

- Texas Title I Committee of Practitioners
- State Board of Educator Certification
- Educator Preparation Advisory Committee
- Education Service Centers Executive Directors and Core Group
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Section 3. Equity Gap Exploration and Analysis

The Planning Team selected metrics and data sources that are considered to be indicative of statewide equity gaps in students' access to excellent educators based on guidance from ED as well as input from EASN. Staff from TXCC and TEA collected, organized, reviewed, and analyzed these statewide data for presentation to the stakeholder groups, which are discussed in Section 2. The following equity data and analyses comprise the basis for the 2015 Equity Plan.

Definitions and Metrics

As a starting point for an analysis of equity gaps in developing the 2015 Equity Plan, Texas considered the definition and metrics for measuring a Highly Qualified (HQ) educator as set forth in federal statute in Section 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Since 2006, Texas has made substantial gains in the number and percentage of teachers meeting the federal Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT)[1] standard. Concurrently, the gap between students at high-poverty, high-minority campuses and those at low-poverty, low-minority campuses served by non-HQ teachers has narrowed to less than one percent. Despite this narrow gap, there is general consensus that work still is needed to achieve equitable access to excellent teachers and that the HQT definition does not adequately or fully address the multiple factors that make an educator excellent.

Definition of Excellent Educators: A more useful definition of "excellent educator" is one recently offered by ED in its November 10, 2014, document entitled *State Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: Frequently Asked Questions* (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), in which ED encourages state education agencies "to define an excellent educator as an educator who has been rated effective or higher by high quality educator evaluation and support systems." Texas has made a substantial commitment of resources to operationalize this definition by developing, piloting, and providing local education agencies with a tool and process for assessing and rating a teacher based on the quality and impact of a teacher's instructional practice. This initiative, known as the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), introduces the most accurate means of identifying an excellent educator by using classroom observations and multiple measures to determine where a teacher is performing along a continuum of excellence. T-TESS recognizes that evaluating educators is not a one-time annual event but rather an ongoing, collaborative process to assist teachers, even excellent ones, to improve their instructional practice through targeted professional development.

Definitions of Metrics Used to Measure Equity Gaps: In Texas, data identifying excellent educators using educator evaluation instruments, such as T-TESS, are available only to the local education agency administering T-TESS or other locally developed instruments and not to the State. Therefore, in the development of the state-level 2015 Equity Plan, the Planning Team found it necessary to rely on other metrics to analyze statewide equity gaps. The following metrics used include those set forth in the plan guidance provided by ED and others for which statewide data were available:

[1] The definition of a "highly qualified teacher" is found in Title 1, Part A, of NCLB. To meet the highly qualified standard, all public school teachers teaching a core academic subject must: hold a bachelor's degree (or higher); have obtained full state teaching certification; and demonstrate subject competency in the core academic subject(s) they teach.

1. **Teacher Experience**. Teachers with less than one year of experience were defined as "inexperienced."
2. **Unqualified Teachers**. Teachers who have not met the federal HQT standard (see Footnote 1).
3. **Out-of-Field Assignments.** Teachers who are teaching a course or grade that they are not prepared or licensed to teach and are therefore categorized as "out-of-field."
4. **Teacher Absences.** Teachers who have more than 10 absences.

Definitions of Other Related Terms

1. "Poor student" is defined using the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
2. "Minority student" is defined as all students who are not white. Minority here includes students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Two or More Races.

Data Sources

Data were drawn from the following state data accountability systems:

- DATA: Student, staff, and campus data. SOURCE: 2013-2014 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the state. EXPLANATION: The TAPR Reports present a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. The reports also provide extensive information on school and district staff, programs, and student demographics. The data presented come from the campus-level TAPR data for the entire state. (For more details, see http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2014/.)
- DATA: Unqualified teacher and out-of-field teaching. SOURCE: 2013-2014 Highly Qualified (HQ) Report for the state. EXPLANATION: NCLB requires states to report annually the percentage of teachers who are not highly qualified to the U.S. Department of Education. Districts submit campus-level information to TEA concerning the number and percent of teachers and number and percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers. This is collected annually through the state's Highly Qualified Compliance Report in Texas' eGrants system. The data reported must reflect the "highly qualified" status of teachers at each campus in the district. (For more details, see http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/NCLB_and_ESEA/Highly_Qualified_Teachers/Highly_Qualified_Teachers/.)
- DATA: Teachers absent more than 10 days. SOURCE: Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) (http://ocrdata.ed.gov), 2011-2012. EXPLANATION: 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.

- DATA: Geographical areas. SOURCE: District type data, 2011-2012. EXPLANATION: The district type data set classifies Texas public school districts into the following nine categories: major urban; major suburban; other central city; other central city suburban; independent town; non-metropolitan fast growing; non-metropolitan stable; rural; and charter school districts. (For more details, see http://tea.texas.gov/index4.aspx?id=2147494894&menu_id=2147483698.)

Results

Using these metrics, several data analyses were conducted. To start, a database was created that included all schools in the state. For each school, percentages were determined of students living in poverty[2], minority[3] students, students in special education, and students who are English language learners. Additionally, all Texas schools were classified based on the four teacher metrics (i.e., rate of teachers with less than one year of experience, rate of non-HQT, rate of out-of-field assignments, and rate of teacher absences).

As modeled by EASN, TEA used quartiles to examine equity gaps. For example, schools in the highest quartile had the largest concentration of students living in poverty whereas schools in the lowest quartile had the smallest concentration of students living in poverty. (See Table 1 for statewide characteristics of Texas.) Schools were divided into quartiles based on the percentage of students in poverty and the percentage of minority students, and comparisons were made using the four teacher quality metrics.

Table 1. Statewide Characteristics of Texas Schools and Students in 2013-2014

Number of schools	8,574	**Average Percent Students in Poverty**		**Average Percent Minority Students**	
In each quartile	*2,085*	All Schools	63%	All Schools	67%
Number of districts	1,215	Highest Poverty Quartile Schools (HPQ)	87%	Highest Minority Quartile Schools (HMQ)	95%
Total Student Enrollment	5,135,880	Lowest Poverty Quartile Schools (LPQ)	44%	Lowest Minority Quartile Schools (LMQ)	44%
Total Number of Teachers	334,511				

Equity Gap Analysis

Analysis of statewide Texas school data reveals some differences (for all four of the statewide teacher quality metrics used) between the top and bottom quartile for students living in poverty

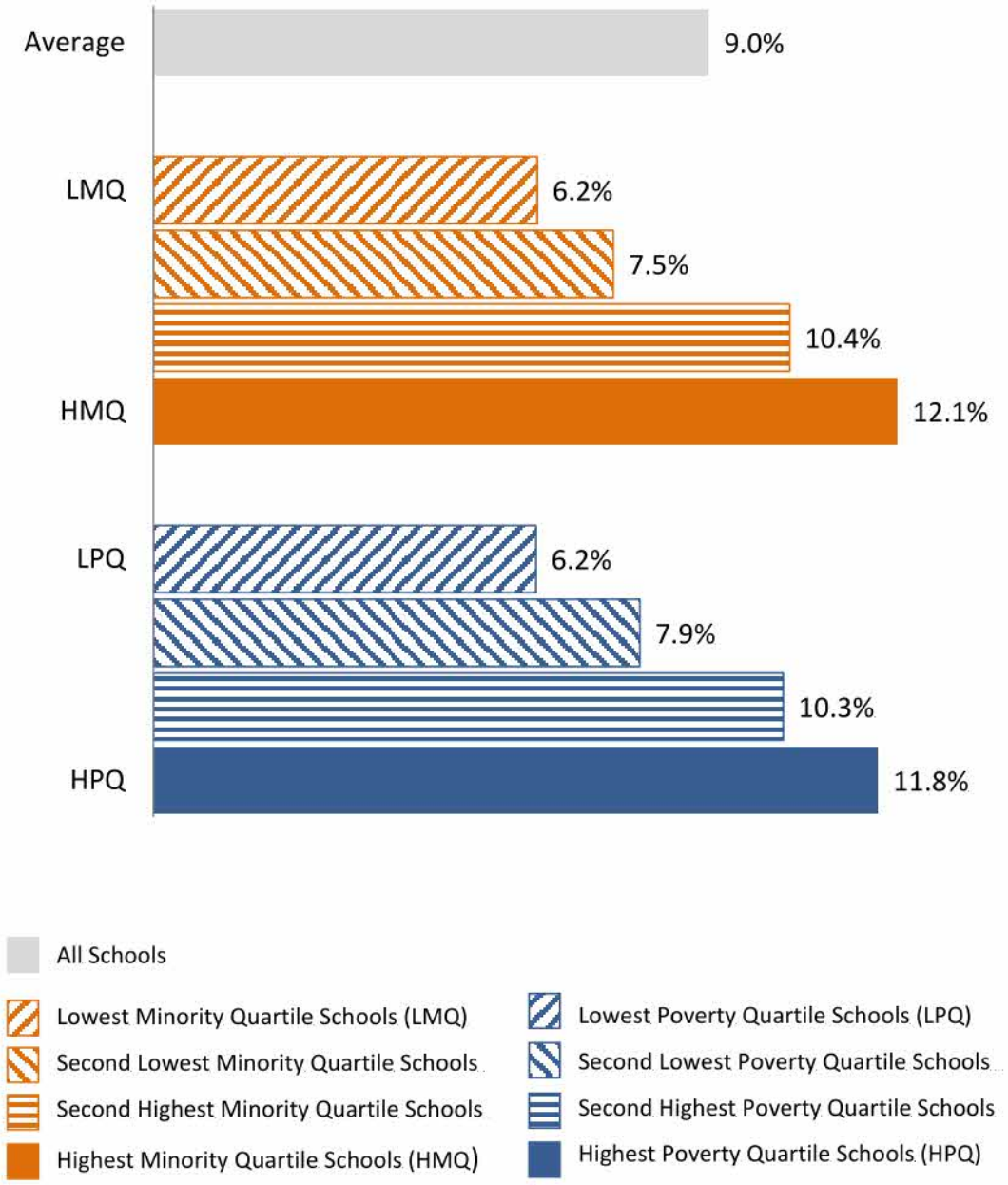
[2] "Poverty" is defined using the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The highest poverty schools are those in the highest quartile in a state. In Texas, the schools in the highest poverty quartile have more than 86 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The lowest poverty schools are those in the lowest poverty quartile in the state; in Texas, these schools have less than 44 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

[3] "Minority" is defined for purposes of this table as all students who are not white. Minority here includes students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Two or More Races.

and for minority students. However, the analysis did not show differences for students receiving special education services or for English language learners, so these analyses are not included in the discussion.

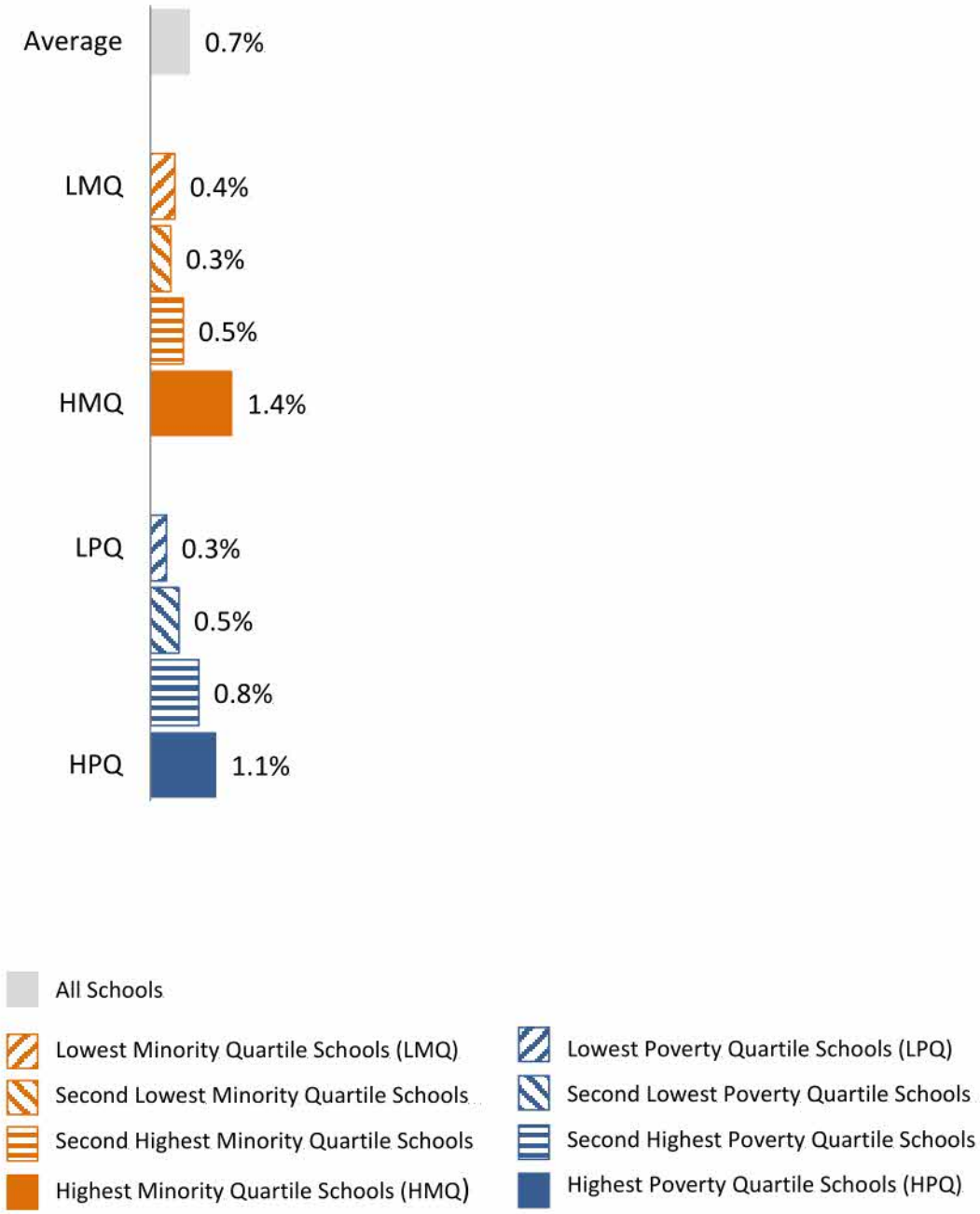
- **Data Analysis Measurement 1: Inexperienced teachers.** The results of the analyses show that schools with high concentrations of minority students and students living in poverty do have higher percentages of inexperienced teachers than schools with low concentrations of those students (see Figure 1). Across the state, on average, schools had 9 percent of their teachers with less than one year of experience. Schools in the highest student minority quartile had 12 percent of their teachers with less than one year of experience. In comparison, schools in the lowest quartile of minority students had 6 percent of teachers who were inexperienced. The trend is similar in terms of students living in poverty. Schools in the highest quartile by student poverty status had almost 12 percent of their teachers with less than one year of experience. In comparison, schools in the lowest quartile by student poverty status had 6 percent of their teachers who were inexperienced. There is a 6 percent difference in the percentage of inexperienced teachers at campuses in the high-poverty/high-minority quartiles versus campuses in the low-poverty/low-minority quartile.

Figure 1: Percent of Teachers with Less than One Year of Experience, 2014



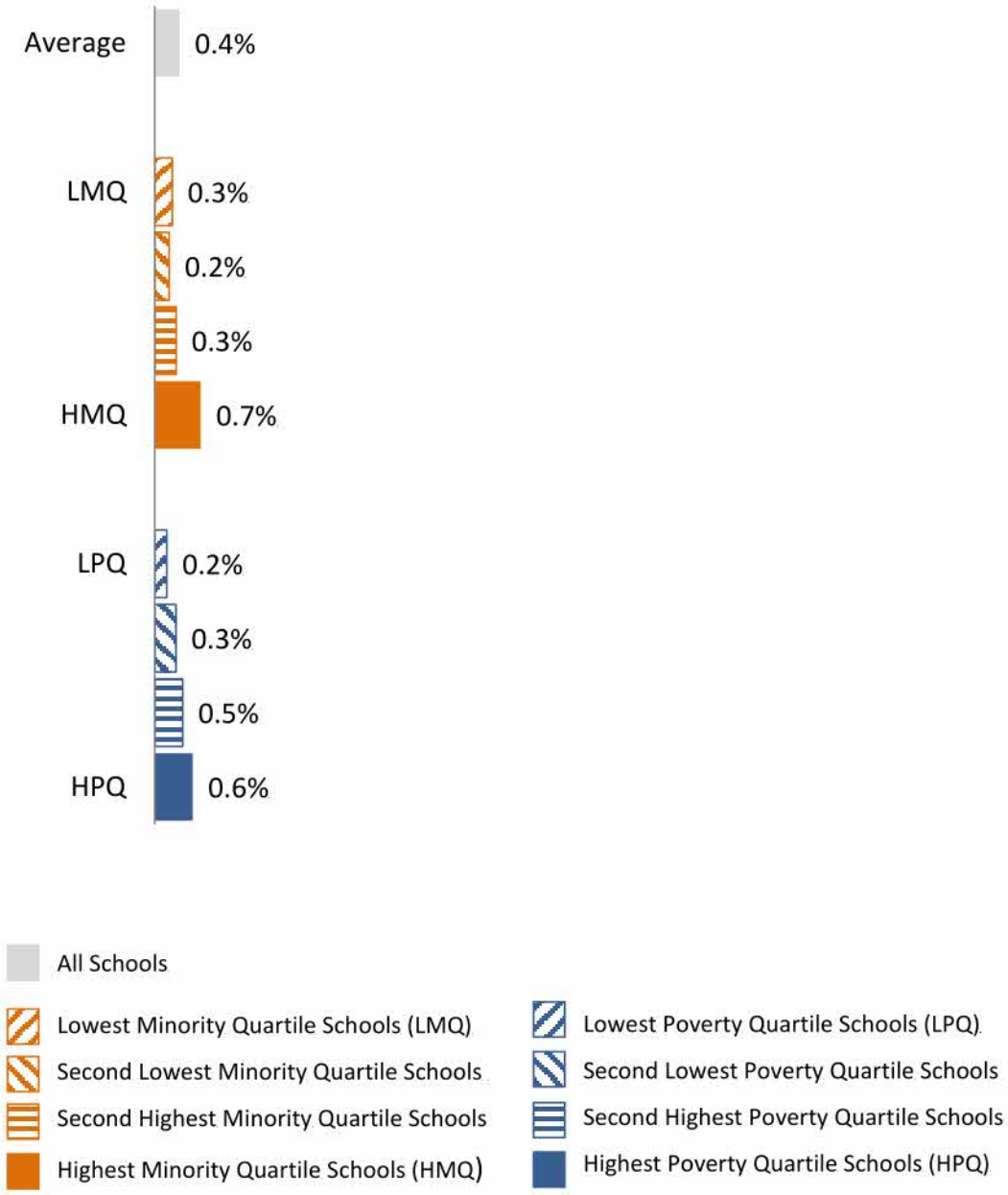
- **Data Analysis Measurement 2: Unqualified teachers.** Across the state, on average, schools employed less than one percent (0.7 percent) of teachers who failed to meet the HQT standard (see Figure 2). Although this percentage is small, the distribution of unqualified teachers by student minority status and poverty status shows that there were higher percentages of unqualified teachers (non-HQT) in schools with high concentrations of minority students and students living in poverty. Schools in the lowest minority student quartile had 0.4 percent of their teachers fail to meet the HQT standard, whereas schools in the highest student minority quartile had more than one percent (1.4 percent) of their teachers fail to meet the HQT standard. The trend is similar by student poverty status. Schools in the lowest quartile of poor students had 0.3 percent of their teachers fail to meet the HQT standard. In comparison, schools in the highest quartile of poor students had over one percent (1.1 percent) of their teachers fail to meet the HQT standard. There is a 1 percentage point difference when comparing the high-minority versus low-minority student quartiles and 0.8 percentage point difference when comparing the high-poverty versus low-poverty student quartiles.

Figure 2: Percent of Teachers Not Meeting Highly Qualified Standard, 2014



- **Data Analysis Measurement 3: Out-of-field teachers.** Across the state, on average, schools had less than one percent (0.4 percent) of their teachers in an out-of-field teaching assignment (see Figure 3). Although the percentages are small, the distribution of out-of-field teachers by student minority status and poverty status demonstrates that there are higher percentages of out-of-field teachers in schools with high concentrations of minority students and students living in poverty. Schools in the lowest minority student quartile had 0.3 percent of their teachers in an out-of-field assignment, whereas schools in the highest minority student quartile had 0.7 percent of their teachers in an out-of-field assignment. The trend is similar by student poverty status. Schools in the lowest quartile of poor students had 0.2 percent of their teachers in an out-of-field teaching assignment. In comparison, schools in the highest quartile of poor students had 0.6 percent of their teachers in an out-of-field assignment. The difference between groups is 0.4 percentage points when comparing the high-minority versus low-minority student quartiles and 0.4 percentage points when comparing the high-poverty versus low-poverty student quartiles.

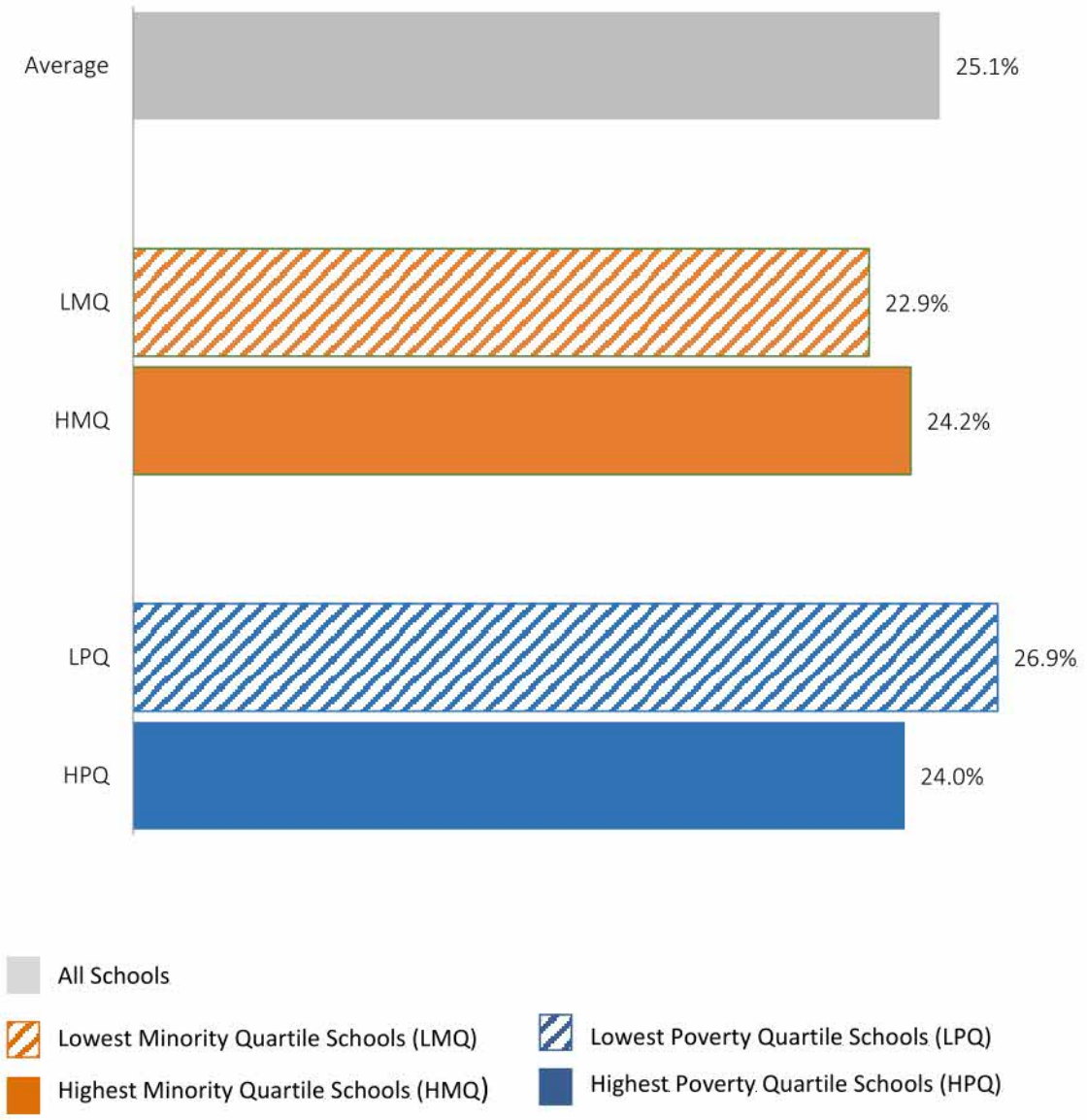
Figure 3: Percent of Out-of-Field Teachers, 2014



- **Data Analysis Measurement 4: Absent teachers.** Across the state, on average, 25 percent of teachers had more than 10 absences during the 2011-2012 school year (see Figure 4[4]). The findings in regards to inequity and teacher absences are mixed. In terms of student minority status, schools in the highest quartile had slightly greater percentages of teachers with more than 10 absences (24.2 percent) than did schools in the lowest student minority quartile (22.9 percent). Examining the distribution of teacher absences by student poverty status, there were higher percentages of teachers with more than 10 absences in schools in the lowest student poverty quartile (26.9 percent) than in the highest student poverty quartile (24 percent – a difference of 2.9 percent).

[4] Complete data were not available, which prevented calculations for the middle two quartiles.

Figure 4: Percent of Teachers with More Than 10 Absences



Differences by Geographic Area

During the first stakeholder meeting, stakeholders suggested that TEA examine the four teacher excellence metrics outlined above by geographic area. In consultation with a demographer, TEA classifies Texas public school districts into the following nine categories: major urban; major suburban; other central city; other central city suburban; independent town; non-metropolitan fast growing; non-metropolitan stable; rural; and charter school districts. Data were analyzed by examining districts in terms of their geographic category. Districts in major suburban, major urban, and rural areas had the largest differences in terms of inexperienced teachers and unqualified teachers, which are displayed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Teacher Qualifications by District Type and Student Poverty Status

			First-Year Teacher Student Poverty Campus-level		Highly Qualified Teacher Student Poverty Campus-level	
District Type	**N Campuses**	**Percentage of Sample**	**Lowest Quartile**	**Highest Quartile**	**Lowest Quartile**	**Highest Quartile**
Other Central City	1,119	14.7%	6.3%	6.8%	100.0%	99.7%
Independent Town	450	5.9%	6.2%	7.9%	99.9%	99.0%
Other Central City Suburban	1,153	15.1%	4.6%	8.6%	99.9%	99.5%
Non-Metropolitan Stable	717	9.4%	6.1%	10.5%	99.0%	99.4%
Major Suburban	1,948	25.6%	4.8%	9.3%	100.0%	99.8%
Major Urban	1,294	17.0%	5.7%	10.7%	99.9%	99.2%
Rural	856	11.2%	5.7%	12.1%	99.1%	97.3%
Non-Metropolitan Fast Growing	78	1.0%	5.7%	21.1%*	99.7%	100.0%
Total	7,615	99.9%**				

** Only 2 campuses in this cell*

***Sample does not total to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Note: Of the 8,147 campuses in the TAPR and HQ teacher data set, 8,137 (99.8%) campuses had 2012-2013 district type data, 10 campuses did not. However, it should be noted that charter schools were all placed in a single category labeled "charter," and the district type data file does not differentiate charter schools by district type/geographic region. Because the data do not indicate if a charter is in any of the eight district types such as rural or major suburban, they were not included in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 3: Teacher Qualifications by District Type and Student Minority Status

			First-Year Teacher Student Minority Campus-level		Highly Qualified Teacher Student Minority Campus-level	
District Type	**N Campuses**	**Percentage of Sample**	**Lowest Quartile**	**Highest Quartile**	**Lowest Quartile**	**Highest Quartile**
Other Central City	1,119	14.7%	5.6%	5.7%	100.0%	99.8%
Independent Town	450	5.9%	6.7%	7.1%	99.9%	97.1%
Other Central City Suburban	1,153	15.1%	5.1%	7.0%	100.0%	99.4%
Non-Metropolitan Stable	717	9.4%	5.9%	8.8%	99.5%	99.6%
Major Suburban	1,948	25.6%	5.9%	9.8%	99.7%	100.0%
Major Urban	1,294	17.0%	7.3%	11.5%	98.9%	95.9%
Rural	856	11.2%	4.1%	9.8%	100.0%	99.5%
Non-Metropolitan Fast Growing	78	1.0%	4.8%	10.7%	99.9%	99.0%
Total	7,615	99.9%*				

**Sample does not total to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Note: Of the 8,147 campuses in the TAPR and HQ teacher data set, 8,137 (99.8%) campuses had 2012-2013 district type data, 10 campuses did not. However, it should be noted that charter schools were all placed in a single category labeled "charter," and the district type data file does not differentiate charter schools by district type/geographic region. Because the data do not indicate if a charter is in any of the eight district types such as rural or major suburban, they were not included in Tables 2 and 3.

Stakeholder Discussion of Data Analysis

Stakeholders, on a number of occasions, noted that the statewide measures of excellence used to determine the extent of the equity gap (i.e., the federal standard for "Highly Qualified," years of experience, and out-of-field placement) do not fully or precisely measure the characteristics of an excellent educator. Stakeholders argued that the HQT standard is too low of a bar and that excellent teachers teaching in out-of-field placements are still excellent teachers, regardless of their out-of-field status. Regarding the years-of-experience measure, several stakeholders challenged the notion that first-year teachers are, by definition, inadequate in comparison to their more experienced teaching colleagues. Stakeholders agreed that, with experience, teachers do improve and refine their teaching skills but that adequately supported first-year teachers can be highly effective as well. Nevertheless, stakeholders were in agreement that differences do exist.

Conclusion

As the data analyzed in Section 3 suggest, differences in access to excellent educators do exist statewide. However, most differences between students in high-poverty, high-minority schools and their counterparts on low-poverty, low-minority campuses are relatively small with the exception of the difference involving teachers with less than one full year of experience. The magnitude of the difference of this metric impacts by far the largest number of teachers and students of all the metrics considered. Consequently, this gap regarding inexperienced teachers was labeled as the equity gap around which the 2015 Equity Plan would be framed.

While this analysis is helpful, it is based on statewide data involving metrics that are markers, but not precise measures, of the presence of excellent educators, as noted by the stakeholders. Fortunately, Texas is the process of implementing T-TESS, which as identified by ED is a more effective tool for identifying excellent teachers. This recognition led to the development of one of the key strategies (Strategy 1) set forth in Section 5 of the 2015 Equity Plan.

Section 4. Root-Cause Analysis

Statewide data describing excellent educator access gaps between campuses serving students on high-poverty, high-minority campuses and those on low-poverty, low-minority campuses were collected and analyzed as a part of the 2015 planning process. The results of this data analysis, described in Section 3 of this report, were presented to both stakeholder groups during the spring of 2015 to serve as a catalyst for discussing possible root causes for the equity gap and subsequent strategies aimed at addressing the causes. The list of strategies, organized by root cause, as developed by the Policy Stakeholder Group is provided in Appendix 7. The process for identifying and organizing root causes by the Practitioners Stakeholder Group is illustrated in Appendix 8. The final list of strategies, organized by root cause, representing a combination of the input from both stakeholder groups is provided in Appendix 9.

EASN policy experts led the first group of stakeholders, the Policy Stakeholder Group, through a root-cause analysis process described in Resource 7 of the *Equitable Access Toolkit* (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2015). This process included the following steps:

- Identify and discuss possible root causes
- Categorize the root causes
- Describe the root causes and their categories using a visual organizer
- Discuss strategies that would address these causes

This meeting was followed by a convening of the Practitioners Stakeholder Group, which engaged in a similar process. Policy experts from TXCC employed a Technology of Participation (TOP) facilitation process, developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs, to identify root causes and map strategies to those root causes. The TOP facilitation process included the following steps:

- Generate new ideas about possible root causes
- Form new relationships among those causes using a visual organizer
- Discern a consensus among stakeholders
- Re-order and label the causes on the visual organizer to describe the consensus
- Discuss strategies that would address these causes
- Prioritize root causes with accompanying strategies

Both stakeholder groups identified numerous root causes associated with the 2015 Equity Plan's equity gap involving inexperienced teachers as well as their understanding of the reasons for inequitable distribution in general. Subsequently, the following highest priority root causes were then selected:

- Insufficient training and support for teachers
- Campus leadership challenges

Section 5. Strategies for Eliminating Equity Gaps

As one stakeholder cautioned, "closing equity gaps is a tough problem to tackle. There are structural, economic, political, social, and educational factors that influence access to excellent teachers." The mix and relative weight of these factors varies from community to community. TEA recognizes both the complexity of and the variation among districts regarding the educator equity issue. Moreover, TEA acknowledges the critical role to be played by local education agencies in designing and implementing district-specific plans that address unique local conditions, assets, and challenges. Consequently, TEA's 2015 Equity Plan is built on the following theory of action.

Theory of Action:

> **IF:** districts—particularly high-poverty, high-minority districts—receive guidance and tools to develop and implement local plans focused on creating comprehensive, integrated teacher and campus leader support systems specifically designed to attract, retain, and develop excellent educators,
>
> **THEN:** all students, regardless of income or minority status, will have equitable access to excellent educators, resulting in improved student performance.

Selection of Strategies

Texas' 2015 equitable access strategies were identified through a structured stakeholder engagement process designed to surface thoughtful responses to probing questions, encourage collaboration while valuing diversity of experiences and perspectives, challenge assumptions, and evaluate conclusions though the lens of equity gap data and root cause analyses. The resulting strategies, including those identified by the Policy Stakeholder Group and the Practitioners Stakeholder Group, were grouped based on similar or related characteristics and then organized by root cause, as displayed in Appendix 9.

Although over 30 promising and substantive strategies were identified through the stakeholder engagement process, not all of them can be acted upon immediately, given limitations of time and resources. Those strategies not prioritized for inclusion in the 2015 Equity Plan will be retained for consideration and possible implementation as future equity initiatives to be undertaken by the Agency.

"Leverage not layer" was a guiding principle used to select strategies for the 2015 Equity Plan. Every effort was made to avoid adding new equity initiatives on top of the many initiatives already in place in Texas districts and on Texas campuses. Instead, equity strategies were identified to take advantage of existing resources, programming, and successes and to effectively integrate the equity strategies into or build upon promising work that is already underway. Existing initiatives that were leveraged in the development of the 2015 Equity Plan are identified in Appendix 10.

Identifying strategies for inclusion in the 2015 Equity Plan involved prioritizing all stakeholder strategies using an Impact-Feasibility Matrix displayed in Figure 5. Strategies likely to have a high impact in narrowing the equity gap, based on research and experience, were placed on the right side of the y-axis, whereas those deemed to have a smaller impact or for which there was

less evidence of an impact were placed on the left side of the y-axis. These same strategies were then evaluated in terms of their feasibility. Strategies that require statutory changes, involve financial resources that the Agency currently does not have, or include difficult-to-implement features were placed below the x-axis, whereas those strategies that could be implemented using existing legislative authority, with existing financial resources, and with fewer barriers to implementation were situated above the x-axis.

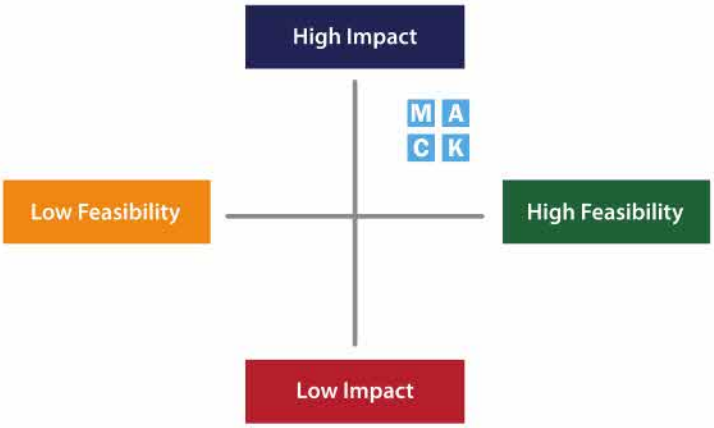
As a result of this analysis, strategies located in the upper-right quadrant of the matrix are those determined to have the highest degree of impact and to be the most feasible to implement. The following upper-right quadrant strategies form the basis or foundation for the 2015 Equity Plan:

1. Develop guidance and tools for districts to create and implement local equity plans[5];
2. Facilitate targeted professional development for teachers, including teacher candidates;
3. Pilot opportunities for reward, recognition, and advancement of excellent teachers;
4. Facilitate campus leader training and support; and
5. Encourage training of and support for mentors of novice teachers.

Unfortunately, statewide data is limited describing the extent to which these strategies are currently employed in Texas and their impact. Consequently, this plan relies also on stakeholder insights and national research to provide a fuller description of the strategies.

[5] Strategy 1 resulted from subsequent analysis by the Planning Team and therefore is not reflected in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Quadrant Matrix for Prioritizing Strategies/Actions & Supports



- **A** Targeted professional development for teachers
- **C** Mentor training and compensation
- **K** Campus leader training and support
- **M** Opportunities for reward, recognition, and advancement of teachers

Correlates to the document *Appendix 9 - Strategies Summary*

Strategy 1: Develop guidance and tools for districts to create and implement local equity plans

A. Root causes addressed

1. Insufficient training and support for teachers
2. Campus leadership challenges

B. Analysis and stakeholder feedback

A recurring concern expressed by stakeholders was the absence of a definition of an excellent educator that could be measured with state-level data. Given this limitation, it is important to recognize that data defining and measuring teacher excellence and performance are more abundant and more readily accessible at the local level than at the state level. Some of the most accurate and precise measures of an excellent teacher result from data, collected and analyzed by trained appraisers, based on observations of the teacher's instructional practices and engagement with students. Such teacher appraisal data is available in Texas only at the local level and is not made available to the state. Moreover, much of the decision-making that affects teaching assignment, teacher distribution, and support of teachers is under the authority of local decision-makers. In a state like Texas that is committed to the practice of local control, it is critical that efforts to narrow and close the equity gap include development of local plans to address this critical issue.

C. Background

Over the past several years, TEA has been engaged in an effort to provide district and campus leaders with tools to develop and enhance the district and campus teacher workforce. The most promising of these initiatives is a high-quality teacher evaluation and support system, T-TESS, designed to help teachers and their appraisers identify the type of professional development needed to accelerate an individual teacher's professional growth. A critical feature of this appraisal system is a carefully calibrated evaluation matrix that enables an appraiser to rate a teacher's current performance across four domains using a five-point scale from "Improvement Needed" to "Distinguished." Among its multiple uses, this system enables local decision-makers to define and identify excellent educators.

In 2012, a steering committee comprised of teachers, principals, and representatives from higher education and educator organizations began work to create this new evaluation system by reviewing and strengthening teacher standards and then developing an evaluation instrument aligned with these new standards. T-TESS emerged from this undertaking.

A parallel process also is underway to revise principal standards and create a principal appraisal system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). During the spring of 2014, a principal steering committee, comprised of campus principals, central office administrators, members of the higher education community, and principal association members was convened to build a state-recommended principal evaluation system in accordance with Texas Education Code §21.3541. The

outcome was T-PESS, a research-based evaluation system focused on the key dimensions of effective school leadership and tied to Texas principal standards.

D. Current efforts

TEA, with the support of the state's 20 education service centers, is currently piloting T-TESS and T-PESS in over 50 districts, with approximately 175 additional districts joining the pilot during the 2015-2016 school year. Statewide implementation of these systems is scheduled for the 2016-2017 school year. Once the evaluation system is fully implemented, district and campus leaders will be able to determine the extent to which a teacher has achieved or is approaching excellence and what specific support he or she may need to advance toward that goal.

E. Proposed state action

1. Support districts in developing a local equity plan setting forth the steps they will take to narrow and close the equity gap using locally available data with a focus on data emerging from the T-TESS and T-PESS appraisal systems, the development of which is supported using Title II, Part A and state-appropriated funds.

2. Explore options for incentivizing districts to develop a local equity plan, including assigning priority points for competitive grant programs to be awarded to districts with equity plans.

3. Contract with a vendor experienced in plan development and training to create a toolkit and training curriculum, using Title II, Part A funds, for distribution to ESCs to train districts in developing and implementing a local equity plan. The toolkit will include some of the following resources:

    a. Guidelines on how to effectively engage stakeholders in the planning process,
    b. Strategies for collecting and analyzing relevant data that help define the nature and scope of inequities,
    c. Methods for identifying potential root causes of those inequities,
    d. Procedures for developing strategies to address root causes, and
    e. Methods to monitor progress.

4. Continue, in partnership with TXCC, the data analysis conducted for 2015 Equity Plan by exploring new sources of data, both at the state and local level, to assist districts with models they can use to build their local equity plans.

5. Continue to support the development and implementation of T-TESS and T-PESS, using Title II, Part A and state-appropriated funds, to provide teachers and local education leaders with valuable data identifying excellence in educators and supporting teacher and principal efforts to become excellent educators.

F. Measures of progress:

1. Number and percentage of districts receiving from ESCs the training and resource toolkits to assist with development of local equity plans
2. Percentage of districts voluntarily reporting to ESCs preparation of local equity plans

Strategy 2: Facilitate targeted training and professional development for teachers, including teacher candidates

A. Root cause addressed

Insufficient training and support for teachers

B. Data analysis and stakeholder feedback

Stakeholders expressed high levels of consensus regarding the value of professional development and training for teachers as well as the importance of targeting that professional development to support teachers as they strive to improve their instructional practice. Unfortunately, it appears that professional development targeted to an individual teacher's needs is not a common practice. According to a professional development audit (PD Audit) commissioned by TEA in 2014, two-thirds of Texas educators indicated they were not required to develop an individual professional development plan (TEA, PD Audit, 2015).

Stakeholders' concerns about the time available for teacher professional development also support the strategy for more targeted use of professional development. According to the state's PD Audit, at least 70 percent of respondents reported that they currently participate in more than five full days of professional development annually, and 90 percent receive at least three days of professional development (TEA, PD Audit, 2015). In response to these concerns, one stakeholder, whose district currently is participating in the newly developed teacher appraisal system, T-TESS (described in Strategy 1), suggested that T-TESS is a way to target professional development in a way that can be sustained over time.

Stakeholders discussed the importance of targeted training for teacher candidates as well. Concern focused primarily on the adequacy of the field-based experiences prior to assuming responsibility for a classroom of students.

C. Background

Texas teachers have access to a wide variety of training and professional development. The real challenge is to identify the specific professional development most likely to have the greatest impact on a teacher's instructional practice, given a teacher's particular strengths and weaknesses. The state-recommended teacher evaluation system known as the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), implemented in 1997, was intended to assist teachers in identifying the type of professional development they needed. Unfortunately, this instrument, which has not been updated for the past 17 years, has drifted from its original intent—a professional development system for teachers—and became instead a system focused more on compliance with rules. Texas' new teacher appraisal system, T-TESS, was designed to serve not as a single snapshot in time but rather as an ongoing process between teachers and their appraisers for the specific purpose of equipping teachers and their principals with the tools and information needed to develop an individualized professional development plan.

Teacher candidates, on the other hand, face a different type of targeted training issue. Statute was enacted in 1995 that required the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules providing flexible options for any field experience required for certification. In 1996, SBEC set the number of hours of field-based experience before one could begin student teaching, clinical teaching, or an internship. For teacher candidates in a traditional undergraduate program, these hours ranged from 45 to 60 hours while teacher candidates in an alternative teacher certification program had to complete 20 hours. In 2008, SBEC set the number of hours for both types of programs at 30 hours, with up to one-half of the field-based experience hours provided by use of electronic transmission or other video- or technology-based method. In 2011, statute was amended to require at least 15 hours of field-based experiences before a school district may employ a teacher candidate as a teacher of record. Candidates participating in field-based experiences are to be actively engaged in instructional or educational activities that include:

- Authentic school settings in a public school accredited by TEA or other school approved by TEA for this purpose;
- Instruction by content certified teachers;
- Actual students in classrooms/instructional settings with identity-proof provisions;
- Content or grade-level specific classrooms/instructional settings; and
- Reflection on the observation.

A teacher candidate in an alternative certification program who has not been accepted into a program before June 15 and who is hired for a teaching assignment by a school after June 15 or after the school's academic year has begun is considered a late hire and must complete at least 15 hours of active, supervised field-based experiences within 90 school days of assignment.

D. Current efforts

As discussed under Strategy 1, TEA, with the support of the state's 20 education service centers and TXCC, is currently piloting the new teacher appraisal system, T-TESS, in over 50 districts in the 2014-2015 school year with approximately 175 additional districts expected to join the pilot during a refinement year in the 2015-2016 school year. Statewide implementation is anticipated in the 2016-2017 school year. The distinguishing characteristic of the newly created T-TESS is that it is designed as an ongoing collaborative process between a teacher and his or her appraiser to identify the type of professional development that will assist teachers as they seek to improve their instructional practice.

Regarding training for teacher candidates, proposals in the 84th regular session of the Texas Legislature have been made to increase the number of field-based experience hours required in statute from 15 to 30 with none of the hours provided by use of electronic transmission or other video- or technology-based method. The efforts to strengthen the teacher candidate experience have faced the challenge of increasing district capacity to provide teacher candidates with strong field-based opportunities.

E. Proposed state action

1. Continue to oversee and support the implementation of T-TESS through its pilot and refinement years and into statewide implementation during the 2016-2017 school year, using Title II, Part A and state-appropriated funds. Over the next few years, TEA will carefully review interim appraisal process outcomes of T-TESS and seek detailed feedback from participating pilot districts in order to refine the program with the goal of creating a support system designed to provide targeted professional development to all teachers.

2. Identify and develop sources of data to determine the extent to which targeted professional development is provided to Texas teachers. Contingent upon legislative appropriations, one source of data would be an educator survey, similar to the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) survey administered in 2014.

3. Encourage districts and educator preparation programs to coordinate efforts to expand districts' capacity to provide robust classroom-based field experiences for teacher candidates.

F. Measures of progress

1. Percentages of teachers developing professional development plans, subject to future administration of a statewide climate and culture survey
2. Average number of hours of field-based experience provided by each EPP
3. Percentages of teacher candidates receiving at least 15 hours of actual classroom experience as a part of field-based experience

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities for reward, recognition, and career advancement for teachers

A. Root cause addressed

Campus leadership challenges

B. Stakeholder feedback and analysis

Both policy and practitioner stakeholders noted that non-competitive salaries and the lack of opportunities for advancement often discouraged excellent teachers from remaining in the education field. This loss of teacher talent represents a serious challenge to campus leaders in their efforts to maximize students' exposure to excellent teaching and instruction. National research by TNTP reports that starting salaries for teachers are around 25 percent less than those for professionals in comparable fields like marketing, nursing, and accounting (TNTP, 2014).

Educator salaries not only tend to be lower than their professional counterparts but also generally are based on an experience-based pay structure that compensates an excellent teacher no more than a proficient or inadequate teacher. Moreover, in most districts the opportunities for teacher career advancement often are limited to administrative positions that take the teacher out of the classroom. The absence of advancement opportunities has resulted in excellent teachers leaving both the classroom and the teaching profession.

C. Background

To address the compensation issue for excellent teachers, in 2005, Governor Perry established a performance-pay grant program for Texas public schools known as the Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG) program. GEEG targeted approximately 100 campuses with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and high student performance ratings as measured by the state accountability system.

Later, in 2006, the Texas Legislature authorized two additional performance-based pay programs for Texas teachers. The Texas Educators Excellence Program (TEEG) provided performance pay for teachers in almost 2,250 schools with large percentages of economically disadvantaged students and either high scores or significantly improved scores on state standardized assessments for math and reading. A related program, District Awards for Teaching Excellence (DATE), provided funds to districts to develop a strategic compensation plan in which at least 60 percent of each grant award was given to teachers who had made a demonstrable impact on student achievement. Up to 40 percent of these funds could be used for related compensation incentives including stipends and principal incentive pay. Funding for these recognition and rewards programs has either been eliminated or drastically reduced.

D. Current efforts

With substantially reduced funding of approximately $32 million appropriated to the DATE rider in the current General Appropriations Act, TEA has created a pilot program known as the Educator Excellence Innovation Program (EEIP). This program, which began in the spring of 2014, is designed to help districts systematically transform their human capital management systems by implementing comprehensive research-based strategies incorporating best practices in the areas of teacher recruitment, mentoring and induction, development, retention, and strategic compensation. As a major component of the EEIP grant, each of the 17 EEIP districts is piloting a performance-based incentive pay program to reward and retain high-performing teachers.

Another recent TEA initiative addressing this strategy is the Creating Turnaround Educator Pipelines (CTEP) program, which is piloting Public Impact's Opportunity Culture models at select campuses in two of Texas' Title I districts. The Opportunity Culture models are designed to identify exceptional teachers, referred to as teacher-leaders, and place them in a position to impact multiple classrooms of students using a variety of flexible strategies, including assigning classroom teachers with prior success in a core subject to teach that subject in all classrooms or modeling effective direct instruction on a lesson to a combination of classrooms. The teacher-leader is not only responsible for multiple classrooms of students but also for the professional growth of multiple teachers. The strategic use of paraprofessionals, self-paced digital learning, and remote teachers reduces the number of teachers needed, with the savings used to substantially increase the teacher-leader's salary anywhere from 20 to 130% (Hassel & Hassel, 2013). The Opportunity Culture model not only provides excellent teachers with career advancement opportunities and salaries competitive with other professions, which are keys to recruitment and retention, but also extends the reach of excellent teachers so that more students have access to them.

E. Proposed state action:

1. Support, monitor, and evaluate the EEIP program, funded with state-appropriated funds, to identify, highlight, and disseminate those comprehensive human capital management best practices that emerge from the pilot to other districts throughout the state.

2. Expand the CTEP pilot, funded with Title I funds, designed to implement the budget-neutral Opportunity Culture models employing innovative staffing and compensation practices that allow excellent teachers to impact multiple classrooms of students.
3. Develop CTEP toolkits, using Title I funds, to equip ESCs with the necessary resources to support additional districts interested in implementing the budget-neutral Opportunity Culture models.

F. Measures of Progress

1. Percentage of EEIP teachers receiving strategic compensation
2. Percentage of EEIP teachers receiving strategic compensation who stayed the following year
3. Number of districts accessing CTEP resources developed with TEA contract through ESCs
4. Number of districts piloting CTEP
5. Improvement in student performance by high-poverty, minority students on CTEP campuses

Strategy 4: Facilitate campus leader training and support

A. Root cause addressed

Campus leadership challenges

B. Stakeholder feedback and analysis

The majority of stakeholders spoke of the critical role of the principal in creating a school culture in which teachers grow and students learn. Stakeholders noted that it is the principal who hires, develops, and supports talented teachers. It is the principal who sets the tone, articulates the vision, prioritizes what is important, and ensures implementation of policies—all of which make for a strong, positive school culture. School culture is driven by who leads, not by who attends.

Another critical role of an effective campus principal is the retention of excellent teachers. New Leaders, in 2013, reported that 24 out of 25 teachers say that the number one factor in whether or not they stay at a school is their principal (New Leaders, 2013).

Principals also influence student performance. Early research reported in *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results* stated that approximately 60 percent of a school's impact on student achievement is the teacher-plus-principal effect, with teachers accounting for 33 percent and principals 25 percent. The study noted that the highest impact is made with the lowest performing students (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). More recent research confirms the importance of principal leadership and reports that highly effective principals can raise the achievement of students by 2-7 months of additional learning each year (Branch, Gregory, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013).

A clear consensus emerged among stakeholders regarding the importance of strong campus leadership in addressing the equity gap. Stakeholders considered principal training and support as a key strategy in strengthening campus leadership and increasing a principal's ability to influence access to excellent teachers.

C. Background

The type of professional development and support a principal receives is largely determined by district policy. Although the response rate for the TELL survey was limited, of the principals responding, 78 percent indicated that professional development for principals was a priority in their district. However, principals did express a need for more professional development in school improvement planning and instructional leadership (TEA, TELL Survey, 2014). To address the issue of professional development for principals, TEA created T-PESS, which is described in greater detail under Strategy 1, as a research-based evaluation and support system focused on the key characteristics of effective school leadership. T-PESS enables principals and their appraisers to identify the type of professional development and support needed for the principal to improve as a campus and instructional leader.

Although principal training and support varies from district to district, all new principals must satisfactorily complete the state-developed mandatory training, known as Instructional Leadership Development (ILD), in order to be certified as a teacher appraiser. The last major revision of ILD was almost 15 years ago. Redesign of the ILD training began in early 2015. The newer version, known as Advancing Educational Leadership (AEL), employs a more interactive training format and includes such skills as conferencing with teachers and conflict resolution that are integral to implementation of the new teacher appraisal system, T-TESS, but are addressed only minimally or not at all in the older ILD training. Incorporating the latest research-based best practices, AEL is designed to strengthen a campus administrator's instructional leadership skills with the following training components:

- Curriculum and instruction,
- Data gathering and analysis,
- Goal setting,
- Effective conferencing skills,
- Conflict resolution skills,
- Team-building skills, and
- Teacher coaching and mentoring.

D. Current efforts

Regarding the T-PESS initiative, TEA, with the support of the state's 20 education service centers and TXCC, is currently piloting this principal appraisal and professional development system in over 50 districts, with 175 additional districts expected to join the pilot in the 2015-2016 school year. Statewide implementation of this system is scheduled for the 2016-2017 school year, thus providing all principals with a mechanism to identify the type of professional development most targeted to their individual needs.

Implementation of the new AEL training will include train-the-trainer opportunities to enable staff, not only at the 20 education service centers but also at all Texas educator preparation programs, to become certified trainers to deliver AEL training to new and potential principals. AEL training for new principals will be offered immediately prior to the 2015-2016 school year.

E. Proposed state action

1. Continue the expansion, refinement, and evaluation of T-PESS through its current pilot stage to statewide implementation in 2016-2017, using Title II, Part A and state-appropriated funds. Based on evaluation results of and feedback from pilot districts, TEA will make adjustments and improvements to enhance the effectiveness of T-PESS with the goal of creating a support system designed to provide targeted professional development to all principals.

2. Make available AEL's instructional leadership training, developed with Title II, Part A funds, to all new principals who are yet to be certified.

3. Design and offer an AEL version for those principals already certified as teacher appraisers through the old ILD training program but who are interested in strengthening their skills with the more recent and robust AEL training, developed with Title II, Part A funds.

F. Measures of Progress

1. Number of new principals completing AEL
2. Number of experienced principals voluntarily completing AEL
3. Principal retention rate

Strategy 5: Encourage training of and support for mentors of novice teachers

A. Root cause addressed:

Insufficient training and support for teachers

B. Data Analysis and Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholders flagged the need for support for first-year and pre-service teachers as critical to any effort to increase equitable access to excellent teachers. Stakeholders referenced the data analysis in Section 2 that revealed a substantial gap between the percent of first-year teachers on high-poverty, high-minority campuses as compared to the percent of first-year teachers on low-poverty, low-minority campuses.

An additional challenge noted by Texas stakeholders was the fact that many high-need schools, particularly those in small and rural settings, serve as a "stepping stone" for novice teachers who leave after receiving intensive support in their first few years to go teach in larger or more affluent communities. These high-need schools then are faced with disproportionately large numbers of vacancies that they often can fill only with a new cohort of first-year teachers, who also will need substantial support.

National research suggests that comprehensive, multiyear mentoring programs accelerate the professional growth of first-year teachers, making them more effective in a shorter amount of time, improving student learning, reducing the attrition rate of first-year teachers, and providing a positive return on investment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In Texas, after five years in the profession, 28.8 percent of beginning teachers leave the teaching force (TEA, 2014b). Feedback from stakeholders serving on the Texas Teacher Mentoring Advisory Committee (TTMAC) suggested that the number one reason beginning teachers leave the profession is due to a "lack of support" (TTMAC, 2014).

In order to fulfill the role of mentor successfully, training is needed. According to research by Matlach and Potemski, training is critical for mentors to adequately support beginning teachers and develop a successful and collaborative mentor/mentee relationship (Matlach & Potemski, 2014).

C. Background

Several mentoring approaches have been implemented in Texas, including the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) grant program and the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS). BTIM was established to increase retention of beginning teachers. The program allowed for grant funds to be used for stipends as well as training and/or release time for mentors to meet and observe beginning teachers. State funding for BTIM decreased significantly over time and ended altogether when the state rider funding BTIM was no longer included in the 2012-2013 state appropriations bill. TxBESS, a teaching framework with accompanying resources that is designed to guide mentors/staff as they support beginning teachers, has not been funded by the State since 2002. However, districts can pay to access TxBESS through several regional education service centers.

D. Current Efforts

In 2012, state legislation passed requiring the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House to appoint a mentoring advisory committee. The Texas Teacher Mentoring Advisory Committee (TTMAC) was charged with developing a set of recommendations for submission to the Texas Legislature designed to improve Texas' school district mentoring programs. TTMAC's report was published January 1, 2015.

The EEIP pilot program, described under Strategy 3, enables pilot districts to design and test innovative human capital management practices. Among these practices are the use, selection, assignment, and compensation of mentor teachers. TEA anticipates that best practices will emerge from this pilot that can then be disseminated to districts statewide.

In another initiative with the potential to help districts enhance their mentor programs, TEA, in December 2014, awarded a contract designed to develop a major upgrade of state training for all new principals aligned to the newly developed teacher appraisal system, T-TESS. This AEL training, described under Strategy 4, includes research-based modules that would be particularly valuable for teacher mentors.

E. Proposed state action

1. Develop, in collaboration with TXCC, a communication plan to make all districts aware of the research and recommendations of the 2014 TTMAC report designed to help local districts improve mentoring and coaching for first-year teachers.

2. Create a one-day training program for mentors and other teacher-leaders using select modules from the newly developed AEL principal training program, developed with Title II, Part A funds, to include those modules focused on developing such skills as conducting conferences with teachers, mentoring and coaching, and conflict resolution.

3. Explore options for gathering information on the nature and scope of mentoring and coaching services currently provided to first-year teachers by districts throughout the state either through revision to the annual Principal Survey or the statutorily mandated Campus Improvement Plans.

4. Analyze results of that portion of the EEIP pilot program, developed with state-appropriated funds, that involves mentoring and disseminate information regarding best practices involving use, selection, assignment, and compensation of mentors to all districts statewide.

F. Measures of progress

1. Number of districts receiving information about TTMAC research and recommendations
2. Number of first-year teachers assigned a mentor, contingent upon revision of the annual Principal Survey
3. Number of EEIP teachers assigned a mentor
4. Percent of EEIP first-year teachers assigned a mentor
5. Percent of EEIP first-year teachers assigned a mentor who teaches or has taught the same subject
6. Average number of time-release hours, per EEIP mentee, for the purposes of collaboration with or observation of their mentor
7. Attrition rate of teachers assigned a mentor as a part of implementing EEIP

Section 6. Ongoing Monitoring and Support

Texas has a strong history of commitment to its high-poverty and minority students. Innovative, far-reaching initiatives and substantial resources have been dedicated to ensure high-poverty and minority Texas students graduate from high school prepared for college and career. Texas' current graduation rate for minority students is one of the highest in the nation, and its participation rates in AP courses by economically disadvantaged students and Hispanics have increased substantially. According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the College Board, the following accomplishments for the Class of 2013 are a few of the indicators of Texas' ongoing support of the purpose and strategies set forth in the 2015 Equity Plan:

- Graduation rates for African American and Hispanic Texas students rank 1st in the nation;
- Graduation rates for economically disadvantaged Texas students rank 2nd in the nation;
- Graduation rates for Texas students with disabilities rank 3rd in the nation;
- Graduation rates for Limited English Proficient students in Texas rank 9th in the nation;
- Almost half of the 2013 graduates who took at least one AP test were low-income compared to only 23 percent ten years earlier; and
- Over 36 percent of Hispanic students in Texas who score 3 or greater on the AP test in 2013 were Hispanic as compared to only 28.7 percent ten years earlier.

Resources to support implementation of the 2015 Equity Plan will include continued use of Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A funds to address the Plan's strategies as well as related efforts targeting high-poverty and minority students. Additionally, TEA, in partnership with TXCC, will continue to provide oversight of the 2015 Equity Plan and meet regularly to monitor its implementation. (See Appendix 11 for a summary of the plan.) Monitoring will include tracking the extent to which the following indicators of successful implementation are met:

- Progress measures, as detailed in Section 5, for each strategy, contingent upon development of and revision to current data collection instruments,
- Proposed deadlines for implementation of strategies,
- Progress narrowing the educator access gap for campuses in the lowest quartile of both income and minority status using gap measures analyzed in the 2015 Equity Plan, and
- Progress narrowing the educator access gap for campuses in the lowest quartile of both income and minority status using new measures, such as teacher and principal retention, to the extent that staffing resources are available.

Public reporting on progress will include posting progress reports on the Texas Equity Plan Website. A more detailed description of the role of the Website as a mechanism for ongoing stakeholder engagement is provided in Section 2. Stakeholders, policy-makers, and local education agencies will be notified of its location and purpose.

Texas Equitable Access Timeline

KEY

RED = Strategy 1: Develop guidance and tools for districts to create and implement local equity plans

ORANGE = Strategy 2: Facilitate targeted training and professional development for teachers, including teacher candidates

GREEN = Strategy 3: Explore opportunities for reward, recognition, and career advancement for teachers

BLUE = Strategy 4: Facilitate campus leader training and support

PURPLE = Strategy 5: Encourage training of and support for mentors of novice teachers

June 2015

- Begin summer trainings for T-TESS/T-PESS Refinement Year
- Begin summer trainings for T-TESS/T-PESS Refinement Year
- Progress reports from EEIP districts due
- Begin annual evaluation of EEIP
- Begin expansion of CTEP Pilot Program
- Begin development of CTEP toolkits for ESCs

July 2015

- Begin work on teacher equity toolkits for LEAs
- Review Dallas ISD and other available local equity plans
- Meet grant managers of competitive grant programs to create priority point assessment regarding exploration of new sources of data
- Offer Advancing Educational Leadership (AEL) training to all new principals
- Continue CTEP expansion process
- Complete EEIP evaluation
- Develop a communication plan to make all districts aware of the research and recommendations of the 2014 TTMAC report designed to assist local districts to improve mentoring and coaching for first-year teachers
- Analyze results of that portion of the EEIP pilot program that involves mentoring and disseminate information regarding best practices involving use, selection, assignment, and compensation of mentors to all districts statewide

August 2015

- Begin T-TESS/T-PESS Refinement Year
- Begin T-TESS/T-PESS Refinement Year
- Continue CTEP expansion process
- Begin data gathering work and research on targeted professional development (contingent on legislative appropriation)

September 2015

- Complete CTEP toolkits for use during 2015-2016 school year
- Complete CTEP expansion process in time for 2015-2016 school year

October 2015

- Meet with districts and EPPs to begin efforts to expand classroom-based field experiences for teacher candidates
- Call for RFP for new teaching and learning survey
- Begin offering modular AEL trainings to principals and other appraisers as necessary

November 2015

- Complete initial teacher equity toolkit for review
- Continue working with EPPs and LEAs on enhancing field-based experiences for teacher candidates
- Progress reports from EEIP districts due
- TEA, in conjunction with TXCC, will develop a communication plan for school districts to make all districts aware of the research and recommendations of the 2014 TTMAC report designed to assist local districts improve mentoring and coaching for first-year teachers. Plan will include a letter from the TEA commissioner
- Begin revision process of Principal Survey

December 2015

- Continue working with EPPs and LEAs on enhancing field-based experiences for teacher candidates
- Finalize Principal Survey revisions

January 2016

- TEA rolls out strategy/plan for EPPs and LEAs to improve field-based experiences for teacher candidates

February 2016

- TEA rolls out strategy/plan for EPPs and LEAs to improve field-based experiences for teacher candidates
- Begin exploration of options for gathering information on the nature and scope of mentoring and coaching services currently provided to first-year teachers by districts throughout the state either through revision to the annual Principal Survey or the statutorily mandated Campus Improvement Plans

March 2016

- Make teacher equity toolkit available to LEAs in preparation for 2016-2017 academic year
- Begin development of one-day training program for mentors and other teacher leaders using modules from the AEL principal training program

April 2016

- Make AEL available to both new and certified principals for the 2016-2017 school year

May 2016

- Complete T-TESS/T-PESS Refinement Year ends

June 2016

- Begin annual evaluation of EEIP

August 2016

- Begin statewide implementation of T-TESS/T-PESS

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Educator Equity Tracker (Major Tasks, Events, & Communication Opportunities)		
Task Name	**Start**	**Finish**
TEA staff conduct internal review of federal requirements and EASN resources for development of 2015 Equity Plan	11/15/2014	1/15/2015
TEA and TXCC meet to discuss partnering on development of 2015 Equity Plan	1/30/2015	1/30/2015
TEA and TXCC attend Educator Equity Conference (San Diego, CA)	2/2/2015	2/4/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner on Educator Equity Conference in San Diego and discuss key issues for 2015 Equity Plan development	2/5/2015	2/5/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding stakeholder proposal	2/9/2015	2/9/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding status of 2015 Equity Plan development	2/11/2015	2/11/2015
Equity Planning Team consisting of key staff from TEA and TXCC convenes first meeting	2/13/2015	2/13/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding data elements under consideration for 2015 Equity Plan	2/13/2015	2/13/2015
TXCC Educator Equity staff call with EASN expert (RE: stakeholder convening)	2/17/2015	1/20/2015
TEA Executive Management approve plan for stakeholder engagement	2/17/2015	2/17/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	2/23/2015	2/23/2015
POLICY STAKEHOLDERS COMPLETE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONNAIRE	2/23/2015	3/4/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with Equity Plan development	2/26/2015	2/26/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with Equity Plan development	3/4/2015	3/4/2015
POLICY STAKEHOLDERS GROUP CONVENES	3/9/2015	3/9/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with 2015 Equity Plan development	3/11/2015	3/11/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with 2015 Equity Plan development	3/18/2015	3/18/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	3/25/2015	3/25/2015
TXCC Educator Equity staff conduct call with EASN expert (RE: synthesize stakeholder feedback)	3/27/2015	3/27/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	2/27/2015	2/27/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	3/13/2015	3/13/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	3/20/2015	3/20/2015
Equity Planning Team present to the Educator Effectiveness Research Alliance regarding status of the 2015 Equity Plan	3/23/2015	3/23/2015
PRACTITIONER STAKEHOLDERS GROUP CONVENES	3/26/2015	3/27/2015
EASN technical assistance staff provide assistance on strategies development to TXCC and TEA	3/29/2015	3/29/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	4/1/2015	4/1/2015

TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with Equity Plan development	4/1/2015	4/1/2015
TXCC Educator Equity staff conduct call with EASN expert (RE: how have other states drafted their plans)	4/3/2015	4/3/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	4/6/2015	4/6/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding progress with Equity Plan development	4/8/2015	4/8/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	4/13/2015	4/13/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	4/20/2015	4/20/2015
TXCC Educator Equity staff correspond with EASN expert (RE: appendices layout)	4/21/2015	4/22/2105
EASN technical assistance staff provide assistance to TXCC and TEA on plan tracker	4/27/2015	5/6/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	4/27/2015	4/27/2015
TEA submits draft plan to EASN for Pre-submission review	4/27/2015	4/27/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding Pre-submission conference call with EASN	4/29/2015	4/29/2015
TEA Executive Management review and approve strategies and proposed state actions for inclusion in 2015 Equity Plan	4/30/2015	5/4/2015
TEA Executive Management review and approve stakeholder survey	4/30/2015	5/4/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) meet	5/4/2015	5/4/2015
ALL STAKEHOLDERS GROUPS (POLICY, PRACTITIONERS, TITLE I COP) COMPLETE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK REGARDING DRAFT 2015 EQUITY PLAN	5/4/2105	5/15/2015
TEA Project Lead presents to the Title I Committee of Practitioners on status of the development of 2015 Equity Plan and draft content including equity gap, strategies, and proposed state action to be included in the plan and invites input from Title I COP members	5/5/2015	5/5/2015
Equity Planning Team participate in phone conference with EASN to discuss EASN pre-submission review of and suggestions for draft 2015 Equity Plan.	5/7/2015	5/7/2015
TEA Project Lead briefs TEA Associate Commissioner regarding EASN suggestions	5/8/2015	5/8/2015
STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL TOWN HALL TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT 2015 EQUITY PLAN	5/11/2015	5/11/2015
Equity Planning Team (TEA and TXCC) collaborate to determine how best to incorporate EASN suggestions from pre-submission review and stakeholder input from virtual town hall	5/14/2015	5/14/2015
TEA Associate Commissioner conducts final review of the plan based on stakeholder feedback	5/15/2015	5/19/2015
TEA Executive Management review and approval of draft plan	5/20/2015	5/22/2015
Submission of 2015 Equity Plan to ED		6/1/2015

Appendix 1 – Equity Planning Team

Equity Planning Team
Jan Lindsey 2015 Equity Plan Project Lead Director, Division of Educator Initiatives Texas Education Agency John Spence 2015 Equity Plan Coordinator Senior Technical Assistance Consultant Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research Tim Miller Director, Division of Educator Preparation Texas Education Agency Mark Baxter Director, Division of School Improvement Texas Education Agency Tim Regal Director, Educator Evaluation and Support Texas Education Agency Michael Vriesenga Director, Data Reporting and Accountability Texas Education Agency James Golsan Program Specialist, Educator Initiatives Texas Education Agency Jason LaTurner Deputy Director Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research Rita Ghazal Senior Technical Assistance Consultant Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research Angelica Herrera Senior Researcher Texas Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research

Appendix 2 – Policy Scan Grid

	Groups of Strategies							
Strategies to Address Gaps	Reporting Systems	Teacher Preparation and Certification	Out-of-Field	Recruitment and Retention	Professional Development	Specialized Knowledge	Working Conditions	Policy Coherence
Alternative Certification		✓	✓					
Creating Turnaround Educator Pipelines (CTEP) Pilot				✓	✓		✓	
Educator Excellence Innovation Program – Pilot				✓	✓		✓	
Educator Professional Development Requirement (150 hours/5 years)		✓			✓	✓		✓
Federal and State Teacher Loan Forgiveness Programs			✓	✓				
Highly Qualified Teacher Compliance Reports								✓
Highly Qualified Teacher Reporting Requirements	✓							✓
Instructional Leadership Development (ILD)				✓	✓		✓	✓
Mentoring Advisory Committee				✓	✓		✓	
Parent Notification			✓					
PK–16 Data	✓							
Principal Survey of First-Year Teachers	✓	✓						
Professional Development (State and ESC)			✓		✓	✓		
Project Share		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Retiree Rehiring			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Teach for America		✓			✓			
Teacher and Principal Standards		✓			✓			✓
Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Texas Evaluation and Support System (T–TESS/T–PESS)	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Texas Troops to Teachers Program		✓		✓				
Texas Teacher Quality Grants Program			✓		✓			
Texas Regional Collaboratives for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching (TRC)					✓	✓		
Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS)				✓			✓	
UTeach and related models		✓	✓	✓				

Educator Equity Policy Scan Summary - Definitions

Strategies to Address Gaps	
Alternative Certification	Alternative certification programs offer non-traditional routes to teacher certification at colleges, universities, education service centers, community colleges, and private entities. One option allows candidates to teach while simultaneously completing the certification program.
Creating Turnaround Educator Pipelines (CTEP) Pilot	CTEP is a pilot of innovative models that redistribute instruction so that the highest performing teachers impact greater numbers of students.
Educator Excellence Innovation Program – Pilot	The program is designed to improve educator quality and effectiveness through implementation of innovative practices involving recruitment, preparation, hiring, induction, evaluation, professional development, strategic compensation, career pathways, and retention of teachers.
Educator Professional Development Requirement (150 hours/5 years)	Classroom teachers must renew their standard teaching certificate every five years. To meet this requirement, teachers must complete 150 hours of continuing professional education.
Federal and State Teacher Loan Forgiveness Programs	The programs offer loan forgiveness to teachers that teach in qualifying schools and/or subjects.
Highly Qualified Teacher Compliance Reports	Reports are based on TEA monitoring and reporting that pertain to highly qualified teachers.
Highly Qualified Teacher Reporting Requirements	NCLB requires districts annually to report the percentage of teachers who are not highly qualified, including the extent to which teachers who are not highly qualified are assigned to teach in high-poverty areas.
Instructional Leadership Development (ILD)	A 36-hour training designed to train and prepare beginning administrators for teacher evaluation, curriculum, school culture and routines, etc.
Mentoring Advisory Committee	The governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives appointed members to a mentoring advisory committee designed to (1) evaluate the implementation of Texas' mentoring programs and policies and (2) develop recommendations for continued mentoring in Texas. The committee's report was submitted in January 2015.
Parent Notification	Federal Requirement: Parents of Title I, Part A, students are required to be notified by the LEA if their child is not taught by a highly qualified teacher. State Requirement (TEC 21.057) provides that LEAs that assign an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to a classroom for 30 days or longer must notify the students' parents of this assignment.
PK–16 Data	The reports include data related to teacher certification, counts, and test passing rates.
Principal Survey of First-Year Teachers	School principals complete a survey designed to rate the effectiveness of educator preparation programs in preparing first-year teachers.
Professional Development (State and ESC)	State and federal funding (under Title II of the NCLB Act) supports teacher professional development. Additionally, Texas Education Code §21.451 sets forth staff development requirements.
Project Share	Project Share is a digital learning space where educators can access various professional development tools, resources, courses, and professional learning communities.
Retiree Rehiring	Texas statute allows for the rehiring of retired school teachers without penalties and/or reductions to the retiree's retirement pension.
Teach for America (TFA)	TFA recruits and trains recent college graduates and professionals to teach for two years in low-income, rural, and urban public schools.
Teacher and Principal Standards	Standards, set forth in rule, identify indicators, knowledge, and skills designed to align with training, appraisal, and professional development for teachers and principals.
Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey	The TELL Survey is a school working conditions survey designed to collect information about school conditions and available supports.
Texas Evaluation and Support System (T–TESS/ T–PESS)	Texas' new teacher and principal evaluation and support systems are being piloted using multiple measures to support educator growth and development while improving student performance.
Texas Troops to Teachers Program	Texas Troops to Teachers assists individuals who have served in the U.S. armed forces and are no longer in active service to obtain teacher certification and become employed in districts that have teacher shortages.
Texas Teacher Quality Grants Program	This program of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board awards grants to higher education institutions to promote improved student performance in math and science by providing professional development to public school teachers.
Texas Regional Collaboratives for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching (TRC)	TRC is an award-winning statewide network of 57 P-16 partnerships that provide sustained and high-intensity professional development to PK–12 teachers of science and mathematics across the state.
Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS)	TxBESS is a teaching framework designed to guide mentors and staff as they support beginning teachers during the school year.
UTeach and related models	UTeach is a teacher preparation program that provides undergraduates the opportunity to graduate in four years with a degree in science, mathematics, and computer science and a secondary school teaching certificate. Similar models are operating in other institutions of higher education.

Appendix 3 – Policy Stakeholder Group

Policy Stakeholder Group
Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)
Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)
Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS)
Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)
Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA)
Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP)
Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA)
Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA)
Texas NAACP
Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA)

Appendix 4 – Practitioners Stakeholder Group

Practitioners Stakeholder Group
Jesus Amaya, Board Member, Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District (CISD)
Marlen Anaya, Human Resources Director, Los Fresnos CISD
Kristin Booth, Principal, Andrew Jackson Middle School, Grand Prairie Independent School District (ISD)
James Butler, Teacher, Gullet Elementary School, Austin ISD
Juliet Campbell, Teacher, Glenwood Elementary School, Amarillo ISD
Adriana Diaz, Teacher, Glenwood Elementary School, Amarillo ISD
Jodi Duron, Superintendent, Elgin ISD
Dora Fabelo, Executive Director of Human Resources, Austin ISD
Buddy Fox, Director of Clinical Experiences, West Texas A&M University
Donald Henderson, Parent, Los Fresnos CISD
Betty Jenkins, Principal, Blackshear Elementary School, Austin ISD
Jesus Lopez, Superintendent, Prairie Lea ISD
Dean Munn, Education Specialist, Region 15 Education Service Center
Myliss Parker, Director, Office of Advanced Academics, Los Fresnos CISD
Asha Phillips, Teacher, North Garland High School, Garland ISD
David Rivera, Teacher, Los Fresnos High School, Los Fresnos CISD
Anne Rojas, Teacher, North Garland High School, Garland ISD
Gonzalo Salazar, Superintendent, Los Fresnos CISD
April Shaw, Principal, Whitt Fine Arts Academy, Grand Prairie ISD
Jennifer Stumbaugh, Principal, Los Fresnos United 9th Grade Campus, Los Fresnos CISD
Anna Valdez, Los Fresnos High School, Los Fresnos CISD
Lidia Zatopek, Director, Alternative Certification, Harris County Department of Education

Appendix 5. Stakeholder Pre-Meeting Questionnaire

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1. **How would you define a "highly effective" teacher?**

2. **Based on your involvement with public education, to what extent do you think that low-income or minority students have less access to highly effective teachers than do high-income, non-minority students?**

- ○ Low-income/minority students have significantly less access
- ○ Low-income/minority students have somewhat less access
- ○ Low-income/minority students have the same access
- ○ Low-income/minority students have somewhat more access
- ○ Low-income/minority students have significantly more access
- ○ Other

3. **Of all of the factors impacting academic performance of low-income, minority students, how significant do you believe that unequal access to highly effective teachers is for low-income, minority students' performance?**

- ○ The most significant factor
- ○ One of several equally significant factors
- ○ One of many factors, but not significantly more serious than any other factors
- ○ Not a very significant factor
- ○ Not a factor

4. **What factors do you think influence the level of access that students have to highly effective teachers?**

5. **What does your experience with public education suggest are the major reasons (or root causes) for an inequitable access to highly effective teachers?**

6. **What strategies or policies already exist or could be proposed to address the root causes of inequitable access to highly effective teachers?**

7. **What role do you think the state should have in addressing the issue of student access to highly effective teachers?**

8. **Organization** *

9. **Educator Equity Contact at Your Organization** *

10. **Person Completing Questionnaire** *

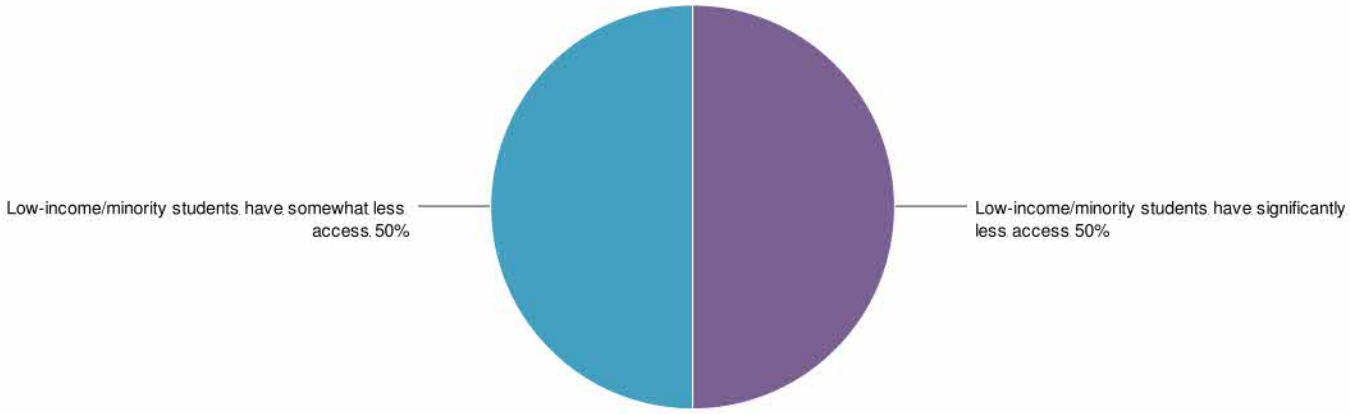
Appendix 6. Stakeholder Pre-Meeting Questionnaire Results

1. How would you define a “highly effective” teacher?

Count	Response
1	This is a teacher who can work competently with all kinds of diverse learners and move them to achievement of the standards. this teacher is culturally responsive in their style and approach to learning and provide appropriate instruction in culturally competent ways
1	A highly effective teacher positively contributes to the students achievement of targeted academic, social and cognitive outcomes.
1	First and foremost, we think it is important to distinguish a definition of effectiveness from the more commonly used frameworks, such as "highly qualified," “in-field” and "tenured" or “experienced”. Our approach to teacher training, support and development holds that our most effective teachers are those that have a positive, meaningful impact in the immediate and longer term on students. Included in this approach are typically more easily measured outcomes like teacher impact on student growth and achievement or proficiency on externally validated measures/assessments as well as some of the harder to measure outcomes such as promoting and cultivating student habits of learning (i.e. time management, goal setting, organization) and values regarding education (i.e. strong sense of power of education, recognition of power in developing self-esteem, desire to work across lines of difference). Additionally, we see employer (principal) or other trained evaluator observations and surveys, as well as student and parent surveys as an emerging set of information that could significantly inform discussions and definitions of teacher effectiveness. In reviewing the definition of a teacher at Level 5 across all dimensions of the Texas Teacher and Evaluation support rubric, we believe that there is considerable information here that can serve as a foundation for a definition of a "highly effective" teacher. Lastly, given any definition of a "highly effective" teacher will rely heavily on formal and informal data sources, we recognize that teachers new to the profession will not yet have experience to inform these data sources. With this in mind, we think that this conversation regarding teacher effectiveness should also warrant a conversation about the overall effectiveness of teacher pipeline programs (IHE and alternative), as new teachers coming through effective or exceptional teacher preparation programs would have a higher likelihood of success than those being trained and supported by struggling programs. This dimension could be informed by the Title II reporting that the state already does, with an even greater degree of granularity to inform decisions about "highly effective" teacher pipelines such that school systems (LEAs) can have increasingly useful information about the average performance of teachers coming through the variety of pipelines in Texas.
1	A "highly effective" teacher is able to inspire motivated students and to motivate the students who are unmotivated.
1	Although unclear how this is related to the stated purpose of the Equitable Access Plan, for general discussion purposes, I would define a highly effective teacher as an appropriately certified, qualified, and experienced teacher who enables students to learn and apply the content and skills taught as determined by various methods which are designed for that purpose and closely proximate to the classroom.
1	Effective teachers are well prepared, well trained, and certified in the subject they teach. They are supported by their campus and district, have manageable class sizes, have time to collaborate with peers so they can meet the individual needs of every child. To be effective, teachers must have necessary resources, including a school climate that is conducive to the learning needs of the student population served. Effective teachers should be given appropriate time for curriculum planning and for opportunities for ongoing, relevant professional development that addresses the needs of the students they serve. Teacher effectiveness should be based on classroom observations of instructional practice and feedback from peers. Effectiveness should not be determined by student test scores and the flawed assumption that test scores are solely the result of what teachers do in their classrooms.
1	One who has the innate ability to love children, lead them to high standards of learning, and serve as examples of patriotism, life-long learning, and discipline.

Count	Response
1	Although it's difficult to come up with a simple definition of what constitutes an effective teacher, ATPE has learned through our research that there is a positive association between measures of teacher quality and student achievement on state standardized tests, and that certain characteristics of high-quality teachers translate to higher levels of student achievement. Thus, teacher characteristics and qualifications are useful measures of teacher quality that should not be ignored when defining or assessing a highly effective teacher. While some argue that effectiveness of teachers must be measured exclusively through outcomes rather than through inputs, we disagree. Our research suggests the inputs that help to make a teacher highly qualified are just as useful in measuring teachers' effectiveness.

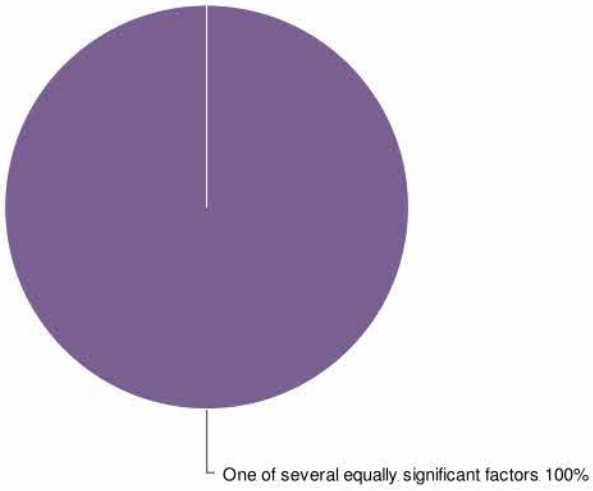
2. Based on your involvement with public education, to what extent do you think that low-income or minority students have less access to highly effective teachers than do high-income, non-minority students?



Low-income/minority students have significantly less access	50.0%		4
Low-income/minority students have somewhat less access	50.0%		4
Low-income/minority students have the same access	0.0%		0
Low-income/minority students have somewhat more access	0.0%		0
Low-income/minority students have significantly more access	0.0%		0
Other	0.0%		0
		Total	8

Responses "Other"	Count
Left Blank	8

3. Of all of the factors impacting academic performance of low-income, minority students, how significant do you believe that unequal access to highly effective teachers is for low-income, minority students' performance?



The most significant factor	0.0%		0
One of several equally significant factors	100.0%		8
One of many factors, but not significantly more serious than any other factors	0.0%		0
Not a very significant factor	0.0%		0
Not a factor	0.0%		0
		Total	8

4. What factors do you think influence the level of access that students have to highly effective teachers?

Count	Response
1	There are structural, economic, political, social, and educational factors that influence access.
1	School district personnel assignment policies, the attractiveness of a given school (including quality of leadership, working conditions), the physical location of the school, school district student assignment policies, school district resource allocation policies.

Count	Response
1	Assuming that we can arrive at a common definition of a highly effective teacher, we think that the preliminary information that has been compiled in the 2011-2012 Texas Educator Equity Profile (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/txeep.pdf) regarding the distribution of teachers across high poverty and high minority districts (compared to low poverty and low minority districts) might illuminate a few potential sources of influence. While the 2011-2012 data referenced above seems to show little variation in average salary across the comparison groups (high/low poverty and high/low wealth), there could be valuable information in disaggregating this data even further by teacher experience level and possibly even by cost of living in the region, so as to better understand the extent to which there may be salary disparities at play. We believe that school systems serving a majority high poverty and/or high minority student population require teachers who are willing and able to effectively address the additional demands and challenges associated with education of these populations, which sometimes requires longer days, longer hours, and different demands—and we would hope to see compensation systems developed which reflect this.. Lacking any consistent, coordinated financial incentive systems to attract and retain "highly effective" teachers in these contexts could be contributing to the inequitable distribution of these teachers across the state and across communities. Additionally, we would look to the overall availability of teacher candidates from teacher pipeline programs (IHE or alternative certifications) that the state recognizes as "high performing." We believe that inequitable distributions of high performing teacher pipeline programs across the state of Texas would lead to inequitable distributions of highly effective teachers in certain geographies of Texas, and we encourage the state to consider helping highly effective teacher preparation programs grow and to focus additional efforts on preparing effective teachers for low-income communities in Texas.
1	My experience has been that school districts need to do a better job preparing principals and teachers to serve the need of students in lower economic situations. Then, they need to follow up by repeating those teachers who choose to remain in those types of schools. Supporting those teachers and principals with ongoing training and help in gaining respect of the community.
1	Location (i.e. whether that school is perceived as a desirable teaching site) Campus leadership (principal) Working conditions (Funds not always available to provide adequate facilities and equipment) Campus student demographics (challenging to teach)
1	Too often the assessment of highly effective teachers is focused on outcomes while inputs are largely ignored. Unfortunately, studies commissioned by ATPE revealed that teacher quality, measured by factors such as experience level, was much lower in high-poverty, high-minority, and struggling schools and also lower in the areas of math and science. ATPE's research also supported many experts' belief that novice teachers (those with fewer than three years of experience) are on average substantially less effective than teachers with more experience. In our most recent study, the researcher developed an index that could be used to measure the quality of the educator workforce at each school using factors such as the teachers' experience level, the quality of the preparation and training they had received, and whether they were teaching the subjects they were trained to teach or being assigned outside their field. Not surprisingly, our poorest schools and those with the highest minority populations scored much lower on teacher quality indexes than their wealthier, low-minority counterparts. This is not to suggest that educators in schools with a lower score on a teacher quality index are bad educators. Primarily, they are inexperienced and might not have been trained for or supported in the assignments they've been given.
1	1. The size of the community. Small towns have less success attracting quality teachers. 2. The quality of the campus leadership. 3. The positive involvement of parents.
1	Basic resources, like equitable and adequate funding, are necessary for schools to attract and keep highly qualified educators in the profession. In addition, district and school policies play a key role in how teachers are assigned to their students.

5. What does your experience with public education suggest are the major reasons (or root causes) for an inequitable access to highly effective teachers?

Count	Response
1	See response #4 and a lack of will regarding certain Types of learners.
1	Schools with the highest need students, who are struggling to keep up or catch up with their peers, need the most experienced teachers to help them move forward, but the opposite usually occurs, as schools tend to assign brand-new teachers to some of the most challenging classrooms. That tendency, coupled with high teacher turnover, keeps struggling schools at the lower end of the teacher quality index. Retention of experienced teachers and principals at a school over several years promotes growth in student achievement. Regrettably, our accountability systems are not designed to foster longevity; to the contrary, state and federal accountability laws typically demand more frequent staffing changes at struggling schools that contribute to their poor teacher retention rates. As a result, we end up with a revolving door at schools with the highest numbers of poor and minority students.
1	Schools with high low-income student populations tend to not receive the kind of attention, allocation of resources from their school districts as other schools; poor leadership and working conditions at these schools tend to make them less desirable places to teach for teachers, district enrollment policies.
1	Any answer to this question would first require a common definition of highly effective teachers. Assuming that some elements of our definition from question #1 were included, we would project that the total number of "highly effective" teachers in Texas is a relatively small group compared to the total size of the teaching force. This, then, would by design mean that there were a limited number of these teachers available; combined with some of the factors identified in question #4, we think that the main cause of any inequitable distribution of highly effective teachers is rooted in the lack of a state wide strategy to ensure that our most effective teachers are leading students of the highest need.
1	In 2011, the Texas legislature made $5.4 billion cuts to public education. In the Fall of 2014, a state district judge in Austin ruled that the state raised its standards of required academic achievement while depriving school districts of the resources needed to help students meet those standards. He cited the ongoing effects of deep budget cuts enacted in 2011—including layoffs of teachers and support personnel, inflated class sizes, and the elimination of pre-kindergarten expansion grants and extra services for struggling students. To this day, our schools are $611 per pupil short in real, inflation-adjusted terms compared to fiscal year 2008 at a time when economically disadvantaged children make up 60 percent of the student population in Texas. Texas teachers serve an increasing number of children living in poverty and an increasingly diverse student population, which compounds the existing problems of chronically underfunded public schools.
1	Poverty dictates where a student lives and attends school. Apathy (Failure to insist and monitor that highly effective teachers are assigned equitably.)
1	See number 4. I have been in this type of situation and I've seen principals and teachers disrespected for remaining for years. Little training, little ongoing support, and little ongoing training. They also deserve an extra measure of respect.
1	1. The complex nature of teaching as a career. 2. Poor mentoring for new teachers. 3. Poor teacher evaluation system. 4. Ineffective motivators to attract quality teachers to the campus.

6. What strategies or policies already exist or could be proposed to address the root causes of inequitable access to highly effective teachers?

Count	Response
1	Leadership training, collection of data on teaching and learning conditions at high-need schools, along with research-based strategies to improve teaching/learning conditions in these schools, and state-level structures to ensure appropriate local allocation of resources and support to high-need schools.

Count	Response
1	The Community School concept has already been used with demonstrable success by some districts in Texas and other states as an alternative to the state's sanctions schemes that punish but fail to improve low-performing schools. Services provided at Community Schools reflect the specific needs identified by parents, teachers, and community stakeholders and may include: academic programs like tutoring, enrichment activities, early college start programs; medical services like vision, dental, nutrition and mental health; and programs for parents like adult education, ESL classes, housing assistance and job training. This proven strategy should be funded and expanded to more districts in need of improvement throughout the state.
1	We must correct our course on accountability by paying as much attention to the characteristics of our teaching workforce (factors like the teachers' experience level, the quality of the preparation and training they received, and whether they teach the subjects they were trained to teach or assigned outside their field) as we do to the results they produce. Because a highly qualified teaching workforce raises the effectiveness of teachers, ATPE advocates for the following strategies aimed at preparing, supporting and maintaining high quality teachers. • States and LEAs should be held accountable for their teacher quality. Specifically, all taxpayer-funded schools should be required to assign fully certified educators to teach within their certification areas. ATPE has urged lawmakers to incorporate teacher quality measures into our accountability systems in such a way that would not penalize schools that are struggling but instead highlight their needs and funnel resources to assist them. Our goal is to require schools to work toward an educator quality target that consists of fully certified teachers being assigned to teach the subjects in which they are certified with a high level of teacher retention. An educator quality assessment should be structured in a manner that measures both absolute compliance and progress toward compliance, with a requirement that LEAs out of compliance submit an educator quality improvement plan. Such improvement plans would allow the state to analyze the reasons for out-of-field assignments and direct resources where they are needed to address those situations. For instance, if a district had teaching vacancies because its compensation range was not competitive with neighboring districts, the state could work with that district to secure additional incentive funds to boost compensation or offer signing bonuses to attract the teachers needed for those positions. Such interventions might also include the assignment of technical assistance teams to help an LEA improve the quality of its workforce. An educator quality assessment could also be used to examine other factors, such as the duration of the principal's employment at a campus. ATPE has also advocated for annual reporting on the distribution of teacher quality, which can be a valuable tool in improving the teaching profession but has been largely ignored. • Mentoring should be prioritized, as it has been proven to be one of the most efficient mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of beginning teachers in a way that translates to improvements in student achievement data and teacher retention rates. In Texas, it has been estimated that half of our teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching, and teacher turnover costs the state half a billion dollars each year. ATPE has advocated for a comprehensive, state-funded mentoring program that would be mandatory for new teachers in Texas. Although some LEAs in Texas have mentoring programs, there is no state statutory requirement for all new teachers to be mentored. Texas laws and regulations certainly recommend mentoring, and state lawmakers often assume that school districts or educator preparation programs will voluntarily bear the cost of providing mentors for novice teachers. However, our experience reveals that localizing the decision to prioritize or not to prioritize spending on mentoring programs has been an ineffective approach, particularly in a climate where education funds are scarce and needs are increasing. ATPE believes it is imperative for Texas to prioritize resources to implement a comprehensive mentoring program, which can produce long-term savings following a minimal upfront investment. The need is even more critical in schools with challenging populations, where mentoring would help improve the distribution of teacher quality across high-poverty and high minority schools. To be most effective, mentoring programs should set limits on the workload of mentors and provide them with training and a portable mentor certification. • ATPE believes the intense focus on tying evaluations to standardized test scores is misguided. We believe it causes the observational and interactive aspects of an evaluation, which we know to be of utmost importance based on our members' input, to be overlooked. Regardless of their experience level or their subject or grade level taught, teachers want and need frequent observations by multiple appraisers with face-to-face coaching interactions and direct, ongoing, timely feedback to help them quickly improve their practice in meaningful ways. Of course, financial investments are necessary to create opportunities for such interactions to occur throughout the school year, and policymakers too often abandon that highly effective approach to evaluation in favor of cheaper alternatives, such as focusing on formulaic growth measures and more "objective", but less reliable, data that can be run through computers and matrixes. • ATPE strongly supports initiatives to encourage more selective recruitment of educators by setting high standards for educator preparation and certification. Educator preparation and certification standards must be adopted at the state level to ensure that teachers are appropriately trained to handle the rigors of the classroom and provide a quality education for their students. Teachers who have completed the training that leads to certification are more effective than those who have not. High standards help ensure that prospective teachers acquire the background knowledge required to be successful in the classroom. This includes both knowledge of the subject matter to be taught and how to teach that content to a wide range of learners, along with the ability to manage a classroom, design and implement instruction, and work skillfully with students, parents, and other professionals. State and federal policymakers should consider offering financial incentives to

Count	Response
	entice educator preparation programs to produce teachers who can fill shortage areas and reward those programs that succeed. All educator preparation programs—whether based in traditional university settings or provided through alternative means—must be held to minimum standards for admission, such as GPA requirements and proof of content knowledge. Making the education profession more selective would raise the prestige of teaching and entice more of our most talented youth to pursue education as a career. Unfortunately, Texas is not a role model for the nation in this area. Our admission standards fall well below national averages and beneath the thresholds recommended by researchers. • ATPE supports incentives for quality professional development programs for all school personnel. Such programs should be easily accessible and available to teachers at no cost. Our members consistently tell us that they want and need professional development covering a broad range of topics, such as utilizing technology; understanding education laws; individualizing instruction and educating special populations (especially students with disabilities, who are increasingly mainstreamed and taught by educators not specifically certified in special education); improving classroom discipline; ensuring school safety; identifying and helping students with mental health needs, including those at risk for suicide; and promoting cultural awareness. We also support flexibility. Texas teachers are required to complete a minimum number of continuing education hours for renewal of their teaching certificates. There have been proposals to limit teachers' flexibility in choosing how to fulfill this requirement, such as requiring teachers to select only continuing education courses that are directly linked to the subject they currently teach. Although we recognize the need for educators to use professional development opportunities as a tool for improving the skills critical to their current job assignments, ATPE believes this type of limitation would have the unintended consequence of discouraging teachers from pursuing additional certifications or taking courses to become highly qualified in additional subjects. For example, a social studies teacher might be disinclined to work toward becoming a math teacher if she were unable to count her math coursework toward the continuing education requirements.
1	1. Strong, structured mentoring for the first few years of teaching. 2. Administrators who use the evaluation system to imporve instruction rather than to dismiss weak staff. 3. High quality benefits for "high quality" teachers who will serve on the campus.
1	the current civil rights laws and promulgated by OCR, DOJ by other civil rights-focused organizations
1	Our recommendations for improving any equitable distribution of highly effective teachers includes: · Define, conceptually, with strong data, "highly effective teacher" · Compensation reform, including loan forgiveness from the state for teachers in Title I schools · We do not think that "forced transfer" policies at state or local levels to require highly effective teachers to teach elsewhere are optimal, as we value the agency of teachers, and we instead orient around incentive programs to help highly effective teachers make the choice to teach in low-income, high minority schools · Creating significant incentive (including financial) for highly effective teachers to make a choice to teach in high poverty, high minority communities · Expand teacher programs with a proven track record of success in producing highly effective teachers who teach in high-poverty communities in Texas · Ensure that teachers who are identified as highly effective are not leaving the profession at rates higher than the average · Focusing on improving the working and learning conditions in low-income, high minority schools
1	I'd say that Title money helps if used to train teachers and principals in effective measures to help children and communities. And, really, more attention needs to be given to improving neighborhoods where these schools are located. There must be a community effort.

7. What role do you think the state should have in addressing the issue of student access to highly effective teachers?

Count	Response
1	The state should provide funds to recruit and train teachers and principals who have a heart for students in low economic schools. Then, they should continue to support them with training and material. ..and technology.
1	Given the power of teacher effectiveness in closing achievement and opportunity gaps among students, we think that this topic is of critical importance to the State of Texas. That said, some of the strategies or policies that could address this issue may be best addressed at a state level, while some are more clearly the purview of local communities and school districts. The state could provide grant funding and resources to enable local districts and schools to innovate when it comes to compensation, could consider loan forgiveness programs and other incentive programs for highly effective teachers who work in low income and high minority schools, could fund and conduct a comprehensive review of all teacher pipeline programs in the state to determine their relative and absolute performance in teacher preparation outcomes, and could help expand teacher preparation programs in the state which produce highly effective teachers.
1	1. Require and monitor that highly effective teachers are assigned in equal numbers to campuses with high minority or poor students. 2. Providing monies and incentives to attract and retain highly effective teachers in campuses with low income and minority students
1	The state should play an active role in ensuring highly qualified, adequately supported, and highly effective teachers are in every classroom.
1	The state should provide the salary and other benefits to attract a quality professional staff, and it should provide a model teacher evaluation system that focuses on improved instruction.
1	The state must directly address the state district court's findings that formula weights are outdated and ineffective, and that per pupil funding is inequitable and inadequate. Evidence at trial showed a disparity of nearly $2,000 per pupil between the high-wealth and low-wealth districts, despite legislative changes in 2013 intended to reduce such inequities. Even without the 2011 cuts, the judge said, a trend toward systematic underfunding has been evident over the past decade in Texas. The districts hit the hardest have been those with the highest concentrations of high-need students—the economically disadvantaged and English Language Learners especially. Overall, the judge found, credible expert testimony indicated a shortfall in state funding as high as $1,000 per pupil. That would translate into more than $5 billion a year that is needed but not being provided to meet state college-readiness targets. An update of formula funding weights and an overall increase in per pupil funding would allow districts to have the ability to provide an adequate salary and benefits package to attract the best trained and most experienced teachers to every district.
1	My understanding of the charge given to the state from USDE is that the state must, at a minimum, address how the state will ensure that students from low-income families and students of color are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. Since in my view, much of the root cause for inequitable access to experienced, certified, and qualified teachers is due to factors at the local district level, the role of the state should be to establish structures to ensure appropriate local allocation of resources and support to high-need schools.
1	the states should demonstrate their commitment to the task by providing appropriate guidance, implementation, and accountability for the implementation of the plan.

8. Organization

Count	Response
1	Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)
1	IDRA
1	TEPSA
1	Teach For America
1	Texas - American Federation of Teachers
1	Texas Association of Community Schools.
1	Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators
1	Texas Classroom Teachers Association

9. Educator Equity Contact at Your Organization

Count	Response
1	Annabel Peña
1	Barry Haenisch
1	Dr. Bradley Scott, Director IDRA SCCE
1	Holly Eaton, Director of Professional Development and Advocacy
1	Kate Kuhlmann or Jennifer Canaday
1	Mark Terry
1	Patty Quinzi
1	Robert Carreon

10. Person Completing Questionnaire

Count	Response
1	Annabel Peña
1	Barry Haenisch
1	Dr. Bradley Scott
1	Holly Eaton
1	Kate Kuhlmann
1	Mark Terry
1	Patty Quinzi
1	Robert Carreon

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Appendix 7 - Policy Stakeholder Group Results

EQUITY GAP

Higher percentage of inexperienced teachers in schools with the highest concentrations of minority students and economically disadvantaged students

ROOT CAUSES

Educator Preparation

STRATEGIES

- Include cultural competency for teachers in educator preparation programs
- Expand teacher field experience requirements
- Invest in and expand mentorship opportunities
- Use data to inform teacher hiring process
- Add minimum CPE requirement and require administrative confirmation/review
- Develop a teacher leadership pipeline

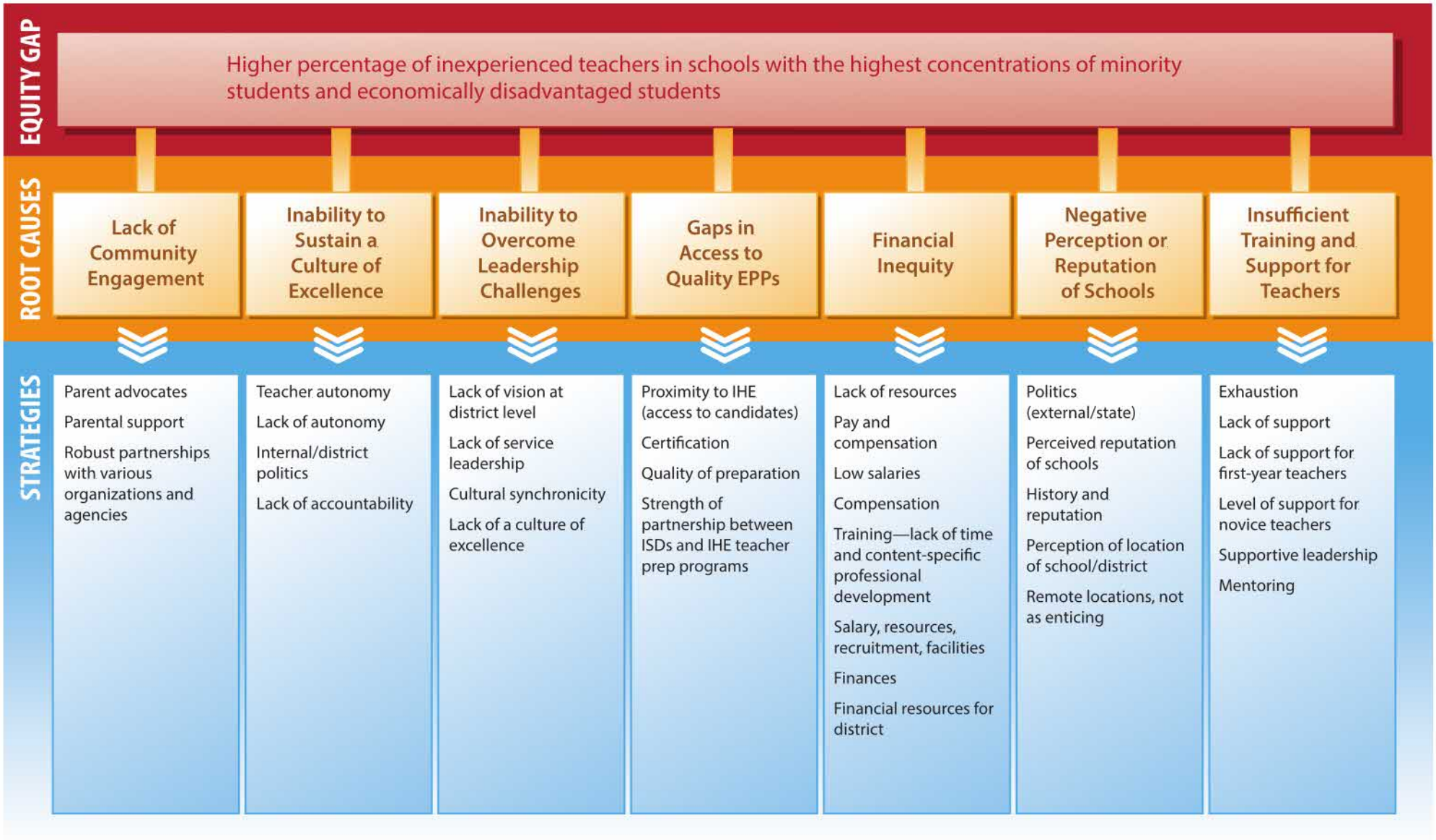
School Leadership

- Invest in a school leader pipeline
- Strengthen current principal hiring processes
- Revise current principal compensation and retirement systems
- Expand school leader professional development (PD) opportunities
- Provide principals with school community and positive working conditions PD

Policies

- Prioritize state and district funding for strategic teacher development and support
- Explore funding equity between schools and district-level resource allocation
- Provide guidance/data collection on equitable access initiative
- Monitor and report on equitable access initiative
- Review current district compensation policies
- Improve recruitment and retention practices
- Offer incentives to teach in hard-to-staff schools
- Review current policies and monitoring on teacher transfer and placement between schools
- Utilize teacher evaluation systems to promote professional growth
- Incentivize short-term placement programs to become longer-term commitments
- Scan Texas' existing programs, identify successes, and bring them to scale

Appendix 8 - Practitioners Stakeholder Group Results



Root Cause: Insufficient Teacher Training and Support

Strategies

A	**Targeted professional development for teachers (T-TESS)**
	Require district training to include a three- to five-year plan for new teachers that provides intentional and focused support, specifically on time management, emotional resilience, work-life balance, reflective practice, examining student work, and self-efficacy
	Continue targeted and intensive professional development for teachers; job-embedded practice could be peer-to-peer or administrator-to-teacher
	Utilize teacher evaluation systems to promote professional growth
B	**Professional development in cultural competency**
	Provide training in interpersonal effectiveness, emotional intelligence, and cultural synchronicity for working with children in poverty
	Fund culturally sensitive professional development for campuses
	Infuse cultural competency focus throughout educator preparation programs
C	**Mentor training and compensation**
	Provide training and compensation for mentors of new teachers
	Invest in time-specific mentorship; could be peer-to-peer or other methods and/or coaching
	Expand opportunities for field experience, increase the availability of mentoring roles for veteran teachers, and revise requirements for observation and coaching of teacher candidates by mentors
D	**New teacher cohort training**
	Provide sustained cohort training for new teachers
	Provide training and support for experienced teachers coming into a new district
E	**Expanded loan forgiveness**
	Expand loan forgiveness eligibility to include teachers in hard-to-staff campuses
F	**Incentives to teach in high-needs campuses**
	Establish a teacher incentive fund for teachers teaching in hard-to-staff schools (not a student loan repayment program) as defined by the district
	Review current compensation policies at the district level: Research competitive salaries with other professionals (recruitment and retention), offer incentives (monetary and/or non-monetary) for teaching in hard-to-staff schools
G	**Expanded opportunities for field experience**
	Expand opportunities for field experience (60 hours minimum; up to 10 hours virtual)
	Expand requirements for field experience (Incentivize programs to include multiple contexts for placements to support teacher experience in suburban, rural, and urban schools)
H	**Recruit teachers nationally**
	Recruit from institutions of higher education around the country
I	**Targeted training for alternative certification**
	Provide well-defined and "fast-tracked" training for alternative certification teachers, particularly in pedagogy
J	**Incentives for longer-term teaching commitments**
	Incentivize short-term placement programs (such as Teach for America) to become longer-term commitments

Root Cause: Inability to Overcome Leadership Challenges

Strategies

K	Campus leader training and support (T-PESS, AEL)
	Provide a common menu of strategies for increasing professional learning time and coaching new leaders
	Provide constraint training by identifying and addressing each school leader's own constraints so that the organization is not suppressed by a leader's shortcomings
	Ensure that leaders are well prepared to support and trust teachers
	Invest in a school leader pipeline by expanding the Campus Administrator Mentoring Program (CAMP) for mentoring, coaching, and induction
	Expand opportunities for systematic approaches to professional development for school leaders with a special focus on building school community and positive working conditions for all staff
L	Principal mentoring supports
	Implement a state-based program that ensures relevant, highly skilled mentorship for new principals with observations and oversight
	Provide professional development and mentoring programs for campus leadership
	Invest in a school leader pipeline by expanding the Campus Administrator Mentoring Program (CAMP) for mentoring, coaching, and induction
M	Opportunities for reward, recognition, and advancement of teachers (CTEP)
	Implement career ladders and/or incentives that honor experience and results
	Incentivize, reward, and retain educators, specifically in low-performing, high-need, high-minority schools
	Increase opportunities for teacher advancement outside of becoming an administrator
	Support the development of a teacher leadership pipeline, like the Educator Innovation Program Pilot
	Review and revise current compensation/retirement standards and create incentives to teach in high-need schools
N	Definition of a "quality principal for challenging schools"
	Define "quality" administrators of "challenging" schools
O	Strengthened hiring processes for principals
	Strengthen current selection/hiring processes by engaging superintendents and other relevant staff in developing protocols for hiring principal candidates

Root Cause: Financial Inequities

Strategies

P	**Increased flexibility and equity in funding**
	Increase flexibility in using current state aid
	Examine funding formulas at the state and district level by prioritizing funding for strategic teacher development/support planning, researching current funding equity between schools and district-level resource allocation and providing guidance, data collection, and reporting for ongoing monitoring of equitable access initiative
Q	**Streamlined teacher certification process**
	Improve effectiveness of certification process: (1) review the number of teacher certification tests per subject/certification (e.g., bilingual) and consider a possible reduction in the number of tests required for certification; (2) review the testing time tables and consider expanding them to allow more flexibility for test takers and LEA hiring needs; and (3) review and reconsider reducing the number of days between failing a test and sitting for the next test administration (currently the window is 60 days)
R	**Tailored deployment of teachers to equitable access campuses**
	Compare teacher experience profiles to student population and demographics and support financial flexibility (i.e., how are LEAs making these decisions to ensure that campuses are balanced across the district?)
	Review current policies and monitoring on teacher transfer and placement between schools by prioritize requests based on specialization
S	**Review education policy mandates and requirements**
	Review mandates and eliminate those that are no longer necessary or that, based on evidence, are not effective (e.g., testing)
T	**Solicit superintendents' cabinet input on equity issues**
	Include Commissioner's superintendent cabinet/practitioners as sounding board for policy decisions
U	**Increased district flexibility in staffing campuses**
	Increase flexibility around staffing decisions (e.g., a teacher's certification status)
V	**Scan and expand existing, successful programs**
	Engage TEA in a full scan of existing programs to identify successes and bring them to scale

ROOT CAUSE: Educator Preparation

Strategies

W	SUMMARY: Share educator preparation programs' quality data
	Identify and share data for decision makers (human resources and principals) to make informed selections in the hiring process by using the Principal Survey of First-Year Teachers
X	SUMMARY: Increased requirements for continuing professional education (CPE)
	Add minimum requirements to CPE and require administrative confirmation/review

Appendix 10 – Existing Leverage Points

Strategy 1. Develop guidance and tools for districts to create and implement local equity plans.

The **Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)** is a high-quality teacher appraisal system currently being piloted in over 60 districts. It is designed to help teachers and their appraisers identify the type of professional development needed to accelerate an individual teacher's professional growth and improve their instructional practice. A critical feature of this appraisal system is a carefully calibrated evaluation matrix that enables an appraiser to rate a teacher's current performance across four domains, using a five-point scale. Among its many benefits, this system enables local decision-makers to define and identify excellent educators.

The **Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS)** is an evaluation system similar to T-TESS that is tied to Texas principal standards. It is designed to create an appraisal process that identifies the specific professional development needed to strengthen an individual principal's campus and instructional leadership skills.

Strategy 2. Facilitate targeted training and professional development for teachers, including teacher candidates

The **Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)** as described in Strategy 1.

The **Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS)** as described in Strategy 1.

Strategy 3. Explore opportunities for reward, recognition, and career advancement for teachers.

The Educator Excellence Innovation Program (EEIP), which began in the spring of 2014, is designed to help districts systematically transform their human capital management systems by implementing best practices in the areas of teacher recruitment, mentoring, induction, professional development, retention, and strategic compensation. As a major component of the EEIP grant, each of the 17 EEIP districts is piloting a performance-based incentive pay program to reward and retain high-performing teachers.

The Creating Turnaround Educator Pipelines (CTEP) pilot provides exceptional teachers, referred to as teacher-leaders, with career advancement opportunities and competitive salaries by assigning them responsibility not only for multiple classrooms but also for the professional growth of the teachers working with students in those classrooms. CTEP empowers teacher-leaders to maximize the quality of teaching provided to each student, to support other teachers in improving their instructional practice, and to earn a competitive salary by reducing the number of teachers required for a group of classrooms. These benefits result from enabling teacher-leaders to employ the following flexible strategies:

- assign classroom teachers with prior success in a core subject to teach that subject to all classrooms;
- model effective direct instruction on a lesson to a combination of classrooms and teachers; and
- release teachers from oversight of routine learning activities that can be handled by paraprofessionals or self-paced digital learning.

Strategy 4. Facilitate campus leader training and support

Advancing Educational Leadership (AEL) is a redesign of the Instructional Leadership Development (ILD) training required of all new principals in order to become certified as a teacher appraiser. AEL incorporates the latest research-based best practices designed to strengthen a campus administrator's instructional leadership skills. It employs a more interactive training format and includes such new skills as effective teacher conferencing and conflict resolution, skills that are integral to implementation of the new teacher appraisal system, T-TESS.

Strategy 5. Encourage training of and support for mentors of novice teachers.

The **Texas Teacher Mentoring Advisory Committee (TTMAC),** established by the 83rd Texas Legislature (2013), was charged with developing a set of recommendations for submission to the Texas Legislature to improve Texas' school district mentoring programs and practices. TTMAC's report was published January 1, 2015.

Appendix 11 - Texas Equity Plan Summary

	1	2	3	4	5
SUMMARY	Develop guidance and tools for districts to create and implement local equity plans	Facilitate targeted training and professional development for teachers, including teacher candidates	Explore Opportunities for reward, recognition, and career advancement for teachers	Facilitate campus leader training and support	Encourage training of and support for mentors of novice teachers
ROOT CAUSES	Insufficient training and support for teachers; Campus leadership challenges	Insufficient training and support for teachers	Campus leadership challenges	Campus leadership challenges	Insufficient training and support for teachers
STRATEGIES	Support districts in developing local equity plans Explore options for Incentivizing districts to develop local equity plans Create a local equity plan toolkit Continue data analysis at the state and local level Support development and implementation of T-TESS and T-PESS	Expand and refine T-TESS Identify and analyze data on targeted professional development Expand classroom experiences for teacher candidates	Support, monitor, evaluate, and disseminate best practices from the EEIP program Expand the reach of excellent teachers through CTEP pilot expansion Develop CTEP toolkits	Expand and refine implementation of T-PESS Provide AEL training for all new principals Provide refresher AEL training for all principals	Disseminate the recommendations of the TTMAC report to all districts Create a one-day training for mentors and teacher-leaders Collect data on current district supports for first-year teachers Disseminate EEIP program information on mentoring best practices