



## Local Education Agency Teacher Equity Guidance Update: August 1, 2021

### Summary

- This guidance updates and replaces the Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE’s) 2019 Local Educational Agency (LEA) [Equity Gap Calculation Guidance](#) and [LEA Equity Plan Template and Related Guidance](#).
- In spring 2020, OSSE waived the 2021 LEA Equity Plan Update requirement to alleviate burden during the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency.
- After the 2020-21 school year, one LEA Equity Plan update remains in the initial three-year pilot cycle outlined in OSSE’s 2019 [LEA Equity Gap Calculation Guidance](#).
- This requirement is also waived: LEAs in the initial cohort are not required to submit [LEA Equity Plan Updates](#) in their December 2021 Consolidated Grant Application.
- Moving forward, OSSE will address its teacher equity requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by providing teacher equity data to LEAs in an interactive *Educator Talent and Equity Dashboard*. Visualizations will provide the rates at which students are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers, along lines of student race and household income. This dashboard will replace the static Teacher Equity Letters, that OSSE previously sent to LEAs in a PDF format. Upon release of this Dashboard, OSSE will provide LEAs with immediate and ongoing opportunities to engage in technical assistance on this important topic.

### Background

Under ESSA, OSSE is charged with reporting and addressing gaps in equitable access to excellent educators, also called teacher equity gaps (ESSA § 1111(g)(1)(B)). As one component of this effort, OSSE shares school-level staffing data with LEAs in the context of citywide trends. These data are shared with LEAs to help ensure that students of all races, all income levels, all neighborhoods, all linguistic backgrounds, and all abilities have equitable opportunities to be taught by experienced, in-field, and effective teachers throughout their pre-K-12 educational experience in the District of Columbia.

### Teacher Equity Definitions

A substantial body of education research indicates that teachers are the most important influence on student achievement within schools.<sup>1</sup> As a result, ensuring that all students have access to excellent teachers is necessary to close achievement gaps. Unfortunately, data reveal that there are education systems across the United States with “teacher equity gaps,” in which students from low income households and students of color are more likely to be assigned to ineffective, novice, and out of field teachers. As part of OSSE’s 2015 [state plan](#) for Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers, OSSE identified that such teacher equity gaps exist in DC.

Definitions of teacher equity terms can be found below:

### Teacher Terms

Term	DC Definition
Ineffective Teacher	Teachers rated on any tier that is below “effective” on an LEA’s teacher evaluation system.
Novice Teacher	A teacher in their first year of teaching, or second year teacher rated “ineffective” (as defined above) in their first year of teaching. <sup>2</sup>
Out-of-Field Teacher	Teachers who do not have a major, certification, or an “effective” teacher evaluation designation in the subject which they are teaching, with the exception of special education teachers. For special education teachers, an out-of-field teacher is defined as a teacher who has not met the

<sup>1</sup> See for example Gordon, Robert, Thomas J. Kane, and Douglas O. Staiger (2006). Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job” Hamilton Project Discussion Paper. Brookings Institution.

<sup>2</sup> This definition is updated from the previous guidance for clarity.

requirements<sup>3</sup> outlined in OSSE's SPED certification policy. Requirements are described in [OSSE's Dear Colleague letter](#) dated April 5, 2016.

**School Terms:**

Term	Description
Low-Income School	OSSE's federally required definition of "low income school" that is used in teacher equity analyses is a school where 50 percent or more of students qualify for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), are experiencing homelessness, or are Wards of the State through the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).  (Note, this definition is provided in OSSE's ESSA State plan; see page 39-40 of OSSE's <a href="#">ESSA State Plan</a> ).
Low-Income Students	Students who qualify for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), are experiencing homelessness, or are wards of the state through the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).  *Note, this definition is aligned with OSSE's ESSA State Plan definition for "low income school"; see page 39-40 of OSSE's <a href="#">ESSA State Plan</a> .
School percentage of students with disabilities	A school's percentage of students with disabilities identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.
School percentage of English learner students	A school's percentage of English learner students identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.
School percentage of Black students	A school's percentage of Black students identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.
School percentage of Asian students	A school's percentage of Asian students identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.
School percentage of Latino students	A school's percentage of Latino students identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.
School percentage of White students	A school's percentage of White students identified during the enrollment audit of the current school year.

**Teacher Equity Policy Historical Context**

From spring 2018 to spring 2020, OSSE addressed the teacher equity requirements of the law by:

- **Providing LEAs with a static teacher equity data notification letter.** In the notification letter, OSSE reported to each LEA whether there are teacher equity gaps at any of their schools (see OSSE's 2019 [LEA Equity Gap Calculation Guidance](#), Appendix A, for historical methodology). The letter provided a data summary of teacher equity gaps in schools within the LEA, in the context of city and LEA trends. Data included those that LEAs provided to OSSE via the [Faculty and Staff data collection](#).
- **Providing LEAs with optional state-level supports.** These included technical assistance, a community of practice, and professional development opportunities available to support LEAs and schools in addressing teacher equity gaps.
- **Requiring LEAs with identified gaps in the 2018 pilot cohort to submit an LEA Equity Plan and provide three annual required LEA Equity Plan Updates within their Consolidated Grant Application.** For historical context, please see the [LEA Equity Plan Template and Related Guidance](#).
- **Waiving the 2020 LEA Equity Plan update requirement in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.** In the 2020 teacher equity letter, OSSE provided a notification that the requirement to submit an LEA Equity Plan update in their 2020 ESEA Consolidated Grant Application was waived.

<sup>3</sup> These are: (1) obtained full certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification), or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher (does not apply to charter LEAs); (2) has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis (does not apply to charter LEAs); and (3) holds at least a bachelor's degree.

## **Teacher Equity Policy Updates**

The following updates replace OSSE's 2019 [LEA Equity Gap Calculation Guidance](#). These changes are designed to support LEAs and schools in identifying, understanding and addressing gaps in students' access to excellent teachers, while minimizing burden and providing pathways for coherence between teacher equity and talent planning.

- 1. LEAs will receive their teacher equity data in an interactive dashboard.** OSSE's new Talent and Equity Dashboard, slated for release in fall 2021, will provide each LEA with LEA-specific teacher equity data and citywide trends. The Talent and Equity Dashboard will also provide LEAs with additional data about the educator workforce, including educator demographic and retention data.
- 2. LEAs are not required to respond to any specific questions regarding teacher equity in the Consolidated Grant Application.**
- 3. OSSE will continue to provide LEAs with an opportunity to engage in optional supports around this important topic,** such as technical assistance communities of practice, and professional development opportunities to support LEAs in leveraging data and talent development to improve students' equitable access to excellent educators.

## **Point of Contact**

For questions, please reach out to Elizabeth Ross at [Elizabeth.Ross@dc.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Ross@dc.gov) or Rose Goff at [Rose.Goff@dc.gov](mailto:Rose.Goff@dc.gov).