

### ESSA Teacher and Leader Quality Focus Group Meeting

October 18, 2016 – 3:30pm (in-person); October 25, 2016 – 3:30 p.m. (webinar)

During the focus group session on October 18 and a follow-up webinar October 25, Assistant Superintendent Amy Maisterra shared a presentation on key updates the new ESSA law makes to help ensure minority and low-income students are taught by effective, in-field, and experienced teachers. The focus group broke into smaller subgroups where LEA leaders, teachers, and national experts shared in-depth feedback on three key teacher policy areas where ESSA requires new policy considerations. OSSE will incorporate this feedback into DC’s state ESSA plan. Note that no final decisions were made in this meeting or follow-up webinar. Below you will find a summary of the discussion based on points raised by various participants.

Area Discussed	Summary of Discussion	Next Steps & Follow Up (if applicable)
<p><b>1. <u>LEA Equitable Access Plan Requirement</u></b></p> <p>In addition to DC’s state Teacher Equity plan, ESSA now requires all LEAs to submit a plan.</p> <p><b>Critical Questions:</b></p> <p>a. What in this new LEA requirement seems most challenging? What seems unclear?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do small LEAs ensure equitable access?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Single-school LEAs often have homogeneous high-poverty populations, so within-LEA equity gap isn’t relevant.</li> <li>- LEA plans could share their plans/strategies on recruitment, retention, and improving teacher effectiveness.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>b. How can OSSE support LEAs in this work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSSE currently provides LEAs with the opportunity to join the DC Staffing Data Collaborative (the Collaborative):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is a partnership between LEAs, a research organization, and OSSE that is designed to help LEAs develop a strategic staffing policy to recruit and retain the teachers they need.</li> <li>- 21 LEAs participated in the Collaborative in its first year.</li> <li>- The Collaborative helped simplify the data submission process.</li> <li>- Participating LEAs share data with TNTP, examine root causes for inequitable teacher access, and work together on action steps to improve teacher equity.</li> <li>- Participating in the Collaborative meets the law’s requirement for identifying</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p>data on equitable teacher access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participating LEAs receive a comprehensive report tailored to each LEA on pipelines, preparation, demand and supply, licensure, placement, retention, evaluation, compensation, and other relevant aspects based on the analyses of data submitted by the LEAs.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For LEAs that are not part of the DC Staffing Data Collaborative, OSSE may offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assisting them in establishing/setting goals.</li> <li>- Providing a template for an LEA equity plan.</li> <li>- Providing every LEA with touching points for support throughout the year. (e.g., Check in on LEAs’ action steps and goals throughout the year.)</li> <li>- Offering statewide training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>c. Other issues raised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving effectiveness comes with improving professional development (PD) plans.</li> <li>- Inexperienced or out-of-field teachers need extra professional development (PD), and it takes planning and money.</li> <li>- Some provides PD for all teachers by cluster or topic, and others focus on lowest-performing teachers or targeted to specific teacher needs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaluations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-house evaluators have disadvantages (no outside, objective perspective), but also advantages (frequent contact and ongoing support).</li> <li>- Need enough administrators and time for evaluations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>2. <b><u>State “Teacher Effectiveness” Definition</u></b></p> <p>ESSA now requires states to describe how low-income and minority children are not served at disproportionate rates by “<b>ineffective</b>, out-of-field, or inexperienced...” teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSSE’s draft minimum standards for teacher evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants thought most LEAs would be able to meet/address the five criteria in the draft minimum standards for teacher evaluation; some ‘tweaking’ of current evaluation systems may be needed to meet these criteria.</li> <li>- Participants thought these standards are fine but would not necessarily enable/force LEAs to create a stronger evaluation system.</li> <li>- Participants emphasized that a state policy should not focus on “requiring” LEAs to evaluate and improve instruction (as this is something they don’t need incentive for) but rather supporting them in doing so.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What would be the value add of having standardized components?</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Critical Questions:</b></p> <p>a. Should OSSE move forward with a plan for statewide teacher evaluation standards? (This would not be a statewide uniform evaluation.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All LEAs are doing something with regard to evaluating their teachers but they vary in quality/rigor.</li> <li>- Having a set of minimum standards doesn't mean a unified definition of effectiveness but it is to have consistent rigor across different/various evaluation systems.</li> <li>- OSSE would like the employers/LEAs determine the effectiveness</li> <li>- Through consistent data and consistent rigor, we can find the areas where we can provide targeted assistance to address their respective challenges.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How these standards/evaluation systems will be framed is very important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These should not be seen or framed as punitive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>b. Other issues raised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies that OSSE focuses on need to be around increasing the supply of highlight effective teachers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not just increasing the supply of teachers.</li> <li>- Focus on ensuring/improving pipelines of effective teacher, especially in areas such as STEM.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. <u>State “Out-of-Field” and “Experienced” Teacher Definitions</u></b></p> <p>ESSA requires states to define these terms.</p> <p><b>Critical questions:</b></p> <p>a. What criteria are important in defining inexperienced teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants preferred the term ‘novice’ rather than ‘inexperienced’ teachers.</li> <li>• The group generally agreed that inexperienced (novice) teachers are teachers with 1-2 years of experience</li> <li>• Further disaggregating in reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group also suggested that while LEAs must report on the number of students taught by inexperienced, out-of-field and ineffective teachers, LEAs should address gaps based on students taught by teachers who are BOTH ineffective and inexperienced, as many “inexperienced” teachers are in fact effective.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>b. What criteria are important in defining out-of-field teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes are more important than a teacher’s minimum qualifications (BA, MA, subject-matter qualifications, etc.) in determining/defining ‘effectiveness’</li> <li>• Overall, participants would like as few requirements as possible at the state level for entering/new teachers.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Licensure based on teacher effectiveness is an improvement but there is still room for more improvement.</li> <li>- DCPS and Charter Board are not on the same playing field (Charter Board has more flexibility) and would like continue moving toward focusing on outcomes as opposed to the inputs.</li> </ul>	
c. Other issues raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants were more interested in strategies for improving the teacher pipeline than in the definition of a qualified teacher because the problem for a lot of schools/LEAs is the availability of effective teachers.</li> <li>• Focus on outcomes more than inputs, even in early years of teaching.</li> </ul>	

<p><b><u>Attendee Organizations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center City PCS</li> <li>• DC Prep PCS</li> <li>• DC Public Schools</li> <li>• DC International PCS</li> <li>• E.L. Haynes PCS</li> <li>• Mid Atlantic Comprehensive Center/WestEd</li> <li>• OSSE</li> <li>• Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS</li> <li>• TNTP</li> <li>• Two Rivers PCS</li> </ul>
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