



# THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT: WHAT'S IN IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR EQUITY? TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

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## Why do teachers and school leaders matter for equity?

Research and experience show the powerful impact that teachers and school leaders have on student learning. But far too often, the students who most need the strongest teachers and leaders are the least likely to be assigned to them. Turning this pattern around is one of the most important things we can do to close gaps and raise achievement for all.

## What does the Every Student Succeeds Act require?

### *Attention to — and action on — equity*

States and districts<sup>1</sup> must ensure that low-income students and students of color are not taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and must measure and report on progress toward eliminating inequities.

### *Transparency*

State and district report cards must include data that show how high-poverty and low-poverty schools compare based on the number and percentage of:

- Inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
- Teachers with emergency or provisional credentials; and
- Out-of-field teachers.

### *Funds to support improved attention to equity*

ESSA's Title II program provides grants to states and districts that can be used on activities that improve access to strong teachers and leaders for low-income students and students of color. These funds can be used to, among other things, address inequities in access to effective teachers, provide professional development, improve teacher recruitment and retention, and develop and implement evaluation systems. If states choose to use federal dollars for development or implementing educator evaluation systems, these systems have to include measures of student achievement as one of multiple indicators.

States and districts can also apply for additional competitive grant dollars for programs designed to improve teacher and school leader effectiveness, recruitment, and retention.

## What key questions should equity-minded advocates be asking?

- How will states measure educator effectiveness? Will this measure allow your state to identify teachers who are particularly strong or particularly weak at improving student learning?
- How will states and districts live up to their responsibility to ensure equitable access to effective, experienced, in-field teachers?

<sup>1</sup> When used in this document, the term “district” refers to both traditional public school districts and charters.