

Independence Charter School West Federal Programs - Equity Plan 2023/2024 School Year

July 2023

LEA/SCHOOL: Independence Charter School West – Grades K-8

Local Education Agencies (LEA) that elect to accept federal dollars are required by the federal government (ESEA) to develop an equity plan for how they place teachers in schools/classrooms to ensure that their lowest achieving students are not being taught at a disproportionate rate by teachers who are inexperienced (in PA, “experienced” means 3 or more years of teaching), teaching out of the field, or who are not HQ under ESEA.

LEAs are required to address the issue of equity through district plans (LEA Equity Plan) describing actions the LEA would implement should there be any inequities. Equity is defined as impartial, fair opportunities for all children, including poor and minority students, to have access to highly qualified students. Independence Charter School West (ICSWest) chooses to accept Title I funding. In doing so, the school entity abides by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

ICSWest believes in equitable access to the best instruction for all students. The LEA/School is committed to implementing best practices in all classrooms to improve the achievement of all students. The following items are an integral part of the planning of the equity plan:

- **School accountability status**

6/9/23; 7/17/23 – Work completed / Review ; 1/12/23 - Review

- **Demographic percentages / information**
- **Academic proficiency levels**
- **Teachers' applicable certification status**
- **Teacher experience percentage / effectiveness status / limitations / turnover**
- **Staff & student attendance**
- **Covid-related issues Impact on students and staff**

As part of its application for Title I funds, LEAs are required to provide an assurance that poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers (1112(c)(1)(L)). In the event that the data would indicate the presence of such inequities, this plan also indicates a brief description of strategies that the LEA has developed that would be implemented to correct these issues as well as how the LEA will determine whether or not the strategies are effective. ICSWest's Schoolwide program serves all students with a strong focus on struggling learners in its' K-8 school.

Title II-A (ESSA) requires that all students, including poor and minority have equitable opportunities with respect to quality instruction, teacher's instructional experience, class size, and the ability to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Approximately one-half of Title II and all of Title IV allocated funds have been "transferred" into the Title I program so as to optimize each student's "well rounded education". ICSWest's Equity Plan has been developed to insure the provision of equity for poor and minority students. A portion of ICSWest's Title II-A funds are utilized to support equity needs as they are identified in the area of professional development.

Annual Needs Assessment:

The school's annual needs assessment is designed to identify areas of need and addresses the equity components. This is done through ICSWest's leadership team which meets on a regular basis, the most recent School Required Future Ready PA Index,

parent, student, and student surveys/personal feedback, the collaboration of school stakeholders,, trustees, Philadelphia School District, COVID impact and needs, and community-based partner organizations.

The LEA addresses inequities and needs, if identified. The CEO and her school leadership team will determine if students need to be moved to another class within the school or if an additional class must be added.

Section 1 Equity Data and Worksheet

School Name: Independence Charter School West - Annual Charter Report: Submitted for 22/23 in a timely manne

School Status: Schoolwide

School poverty percentage: ICSWest is a CEP school / 100% (88.51%)

Enrollment: 845 (ACS)

Grade Levels: K-8

Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity:

Black – 90.39%

White – 2.73%

Hispanic – 3.56%

Asian – 0.0%

American Indian/Alaskan Native – 0.36%

Other – 2.97%

Female & Male Students Female Students: 50.78% // Male Students 49.22%

Special Education: 22.3%

6/9/23; 7/17/23 – Work completed / Review ; 1/12/23 - Review

Gifted Education: 0.0%

Setting: – Large City

English Language Learners: – 3.3%

Eligible for Title I Funding: – Yes (Approved - Schoolwide Program) Schoolwide Plan – Submitted for 23/24 in a timely manner

School Safety Plan – current and posted on the school website / submitted / uploaded on required PDE sites

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In the 2021/2022 school year, ICS West used a benchmarking system (iReady) to track student progress, including base line at the beginning of the school year, mid-point, and end of school year. Based on this data, the math interventionist and reading specialist deployed their time to work with those students requiring additional supports / instruction. The impact of COVID related issues has also been taken into consideration with regard to instruction and supports.

Summary of Findings

Because of the structure of the school and the general levels of certification and experience, the majority of students receive instruction in core areas from certified teachers. As stated earlier, Independence Charter School West, there are currently two academic programs, the Spanish Enhanced program (primarily English language instruction) and the Spanish Dual-Language program (English and Spanish instruction). Given the make-up of the student population, the overwhelming majority of students come from low-income backgrounds, and also belong to a racial or ethnic minority group. Therefore, the supports implemented to achieve equity are done primarily at the school level.

Student racial and ethnic make-up in both language programs is identical, as students are automatically enrolled depending on which grade the student attends. Moreover, parents do not have the option to opt-out or opt-in into any particular language program. This

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ensures that the instruction provided to all students is rooted in best practices utilizing the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (2013) as a tool for feedback.

The mentorship and coaching of all Year 1 and novice teachers have both increased the academic rigor in all classrooms where these teachers teach. This dynamic has also positively impacted their instructional practices employed daily. The new educator induction program requires specific monthly professional development focusing on the domains of the Charlotte Danielson Framework. In addition, all teachers receive actionable feedback and coaching through walk-throughs, and formal observations. Teachers are identified through this process as needing additional supports and coaching in different domains. Teachers also receive weekly professional development, which targets areas of need school-wide and is differentiated as needed to address small group or individual needs.

Strategies to Ensure Equitable Access to Certified and Experienced Teachers

Currently, Independence Charter School West offers tuition reimbursement for teachers seeking education which could lead to certification. Administration encourages teachers to seek out colleagues who have already completed the certification process to serve as a resource. Also, because of the nature of the immersion program, a number of teachers who seek certification are originally from Spanish-speaking countries and they have certification in their country, but are unable to attain here due to citizenship.

Further, as part of the school's strategic plan, school aims to only hire certified teachers for all core content areas (Reading & Math) and Special Education. The result of this transition will help eliminate the discrepancies in Spanish language instruction, such that all students will likely have the same teachers and thus equitable access to certified and experienced teachers. The school will also continue to provide coaching and professional development support for all teachers both certified and non-certified, to ensure they provide the highest quality of instruction to all of their students.

In an effort to continue to hire highly qualified staff ICS West will use various avenues such as local universities, recruitment fairs, online platforms such as PAREAP, and Indeed. ICS West will also continue to work to align our system of recruitment, hiring, induction, supervision, and professional development.