

2018-19 Evaluation of Title II Programs

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for training and recruiting through Title II, Part A. The two-fold purpose of Title II, Part A is to increase student achievement through improved teacher and principal quality and to hold local educational agencies and schools accountable for student academic improvement.

The Dallas ISD used grant funds to assist in many areas of professional development (PD), such as alternative certification training, advanced academic teacher training, dual credit teacher training, content-based PD, and campus-specific training. Funds also were used for recruitment of certified teachers and alternative certification interns.

Methodology

The worksopes for Title II were reviewed for each area to note the amount of funding allotted, program goals, and plans for implementation. In addition, formal and informal in-person interviews were conducted with program managers for implementation data related to 2018-19. Surveys were administered by individual departments, and the data were shared with the evaluator. Additional follow-up information was collected via phone and email.

Funding

The district received \$8,599,721 in Title II, Part A funds in 2018-19, a decrease of \$464,833 from 2017-18's total of \$9,064,554 (Watson, 2018). The largest amounts were budgeted for Teacher Recruitment and Retention (\$1,693,990) and Early Learning Professional Development (\$1,543,805).

Program Activities and Implementation

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program

Human Capital Management (HCM) staff members were responsible for recruiting and screening highly qualified teachers to meet state and federal legislative requirements. Recruitment activities included attending recruitment events, advertising, conducting information sessions, screening applicants, processing H-1B visa applications, and monitoring and documenting recruitment activities. HCM staff members conducted 69 recruitment events and university visits between October 2018 and May 2019 (up from 49 during the 2017-18 year; Watson, 2018). At total of 987 elementary school teachers, 394 middle school

teachers, and 555 high school teachers were hired as of March 2019. The total number of new 2017-18 hires as of March 2018 was 490 elementary, 353 middle, and 370 high school teachers (Watson, 2018). HCM staff members processed 23 new H1-B teacher visas (down from 53 new H1-B visas during the 2017-18 school year; Watson, 2018) and extended existing visas.

Alternative Certification Program

Alternative Certification staff members used Title II funds to recruit, train, and certify new teachers that had not completed traditional teacher certification. Between summer 2018 and spring 2019, 100 interns enrolled in the program, down from 156 interns between summer 2017 and spring 2018 (Watson, 2018). Of those who completed the program in 2017-18, 92 (67%) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2018-19 school year. On the intern feedback survey, most interns ($n=71$; 87.7%) indicated that their field supervisor helped them solve problems, made specific recommendations for improvement, or acted as their advocate.

Instructional Effectiveness – Professional and Digital Learning Program

Instructional Effectiveness – Professional and Digital Learning staff members used Title II funds to provide supplemental professional development and resources for teachers, principals, and other instructional staff. PD included training on a variety of online learning resources and software and hardware usage. As of March 2019, staff members conducted 53 PD sessions, totaling 565 attendee visits.

Advanced Academic Teacher Training

Advanced Academic Services staff members used Title II funds to increase the number of highly qualified advanced academics teachers by sending Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP teachers to AP Summer Institutes hosted by local universities. A total of 245 teachers attended these sessions, an increase from 162 in 2017-18 (Watson, 2018).

Dual Credit Teacher Credentialing

The Dual Credit Teacher Credentialing program aimed to support the District's Collegiate Academy Initiative, as well as support the expansion of dual credit opportunities for all students. Title II funds were used to recruit and retain dual credentialed teachers to teach courses to district high school students that confer both high school and college credit in partnership with the

Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). Fifteen teachers participated in the inaugural program and began their coursework in the spring semester of 2019. They are expected to be fully dual credentialed at the conclusion of the fall 2019 semester, and eligible for placement instructing a dual credit course during the 2020-21 school year. Recruitment for the second cohort began in April 2019.

OnRamps Program

The OnRamps program used Title II funds to support teachers in receiving the required professional development to teach multiple courses in the core content areas of mathematics, science, English, and social studies. Teachers were trained at the University of Texas at Austin, beginning with the program on the university's campus and including yearlong professional development and support at their home campuses. The program sought to provide at-risk students the opportunity to take college credit courses with teachers with which they were already familiar at their high school. A total of fifteen teachers participated in the program during the 2018-19 school year, teaching courses in Computer Science, English III (Rhetoric), Precalculus, Statistics, Physics of Mechanics, Heat, and Sound, and United States History to a total of 380 students. All surveyed teachers ($n=13$) expressed interest in teaching an OnRamps course again next school year. When asked about challenges to teaching OnRamps courses, 81.8 percent of teachers ($n=9$) cited a lack of access to technology as hindering student success. Similarly, 90 percent ($n=9$) stated that the most pressing need was technology support from central office, illustrating a need for focus on improvements to technology delivery in the future.

Content-Based Professional Development

Title II funds supported content-specific professional development to educators in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), computer science, social studies, world languages, improved arts-based curriculum, and reading language arts.

STEM staff members provided online and face-to-face science and mathematics pedagogy and content training to educators. In addition to face-to-face professional development, STEM employees created virtual Professional Learning Communities (vPLCs)¹ to provide online PD. Teachers earned 602 mathematics and 414 science vPLC certificates throughout the year as compared to 252 mathematics certificates and 432 science certificates in 2017-18 (Watson, 2018). STEM professional development survey responses were

overwhelmingly positive, with 95 percent or more stating their satisfaction with all aspects of the training.

Computer Science coordinated PD for the district's robotics and computer science teachers and coaches. The Computer Science and Technology PD coordinators designed and conducted 61 computer science and robotics PD sessions throughout the school year (similar to the 63 sessions conducted between June 2017 and March 2018; Watson, 2018). The Elementary Computer Science program, first piloted at one school in 2016-17 and expanded to include 32 schools in 2017-18, was further expanded to include an additional 50 schools in 2018-19. In a survey of Elementary Computer Science teachers, a vast majority (91.3%, $n=42$) felt that teaching computer science to elementary students was "very" or "extremely" important, and almost all teachers reported that they believed teaching computer science helped students with their learning in other content areas (95.7%, $n=44$).

Social Studies staff members used Title II funds to provide PD to improve social studies instructional quality and student achievement. A total of 22 face-to-face training sessions were organized between January and April 2019, up from 19 sessions between September 2017 and February 2018 (Watson, 2018). Of the 29 participants who responded to the feedback survey, 100 percent stated that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the PD session had added value to their instructional practices. Language, Literacy, and Social Studies staff members hosted a conference called "Read For Me," on March 23, 2019 at W. H. Adamson High School. It was open to all social studies teachers and provided interactive social studies PD.

World Languages staff members used Title II funds to create and conduct face-to-face training sessions. The department's PD coordinator, along with outside providers, offered 57 face-to-face training sessions (between July 2017 and March 2018, World Languages offered 89 face-to-face training sessions; Watson, 2018). Of 134 participants who responded to the optional training feedback survey, almost all rated their training session as either "Excellent" ($n=103$; 76.9%) or "Good" ($n=20$; 14.9%). In addition to PD sessions, World Languages hosted its first Asian Festival, in partnership with Language, Literacy, and Social Studies' "Read For Me" conference, on March 23, 2019 at W. H. Adamson High School. The event allowed approximately 1,100 students, parents, and community members to share and promote Korean, Japanese, and Chinese cultures and languages.

¹ The vPLC modules provided 90 to 120 minutes of content and pedagogical instruction. The modules included opportunities for participant engagement.

The *Visual and Performing Arts* Department staff members used Title II funds to provide training to teachers, instructional coaches, and academic facilitators. In 2017-18, the department did not have a specialist on staff. The Visual and Performing Arts PD specialist organized 162 training sessions between June 2018 and April 2019, serving 4,069 teachers. Sessions were conducted by the PD specialist, Visual and Performing Arts division directors and staff, and by professional artists through partnerships with the district. A total of 193 of the teachers who responded to the feedback survey (77.2%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they learned new things that they could implement in their classrooms from the sessions. The PD specialist also provided one-on-one support to new teachers, through the New Teacher Support program.

Reading Language Arts staff members used Title II funds to create and conduct 68 training sessions, serving 2,372 total participants. This is a significant increase over last year, when staff members conducted a total of 30 training sessions, with a total attendance of 645 between August 2017 and March 2018 (Watson, 2018). Responses to the Reading Language Arts professional development feedback survey were very positive, with 93 percent (n=1,603) of respondents stating that they were “likely” or “very likely” to implement the content from that professional development session in their classroom or campus.

Campus-Based Professional Development

Title II funds supported campus-specific professional development to Public School Choice campuses as well as International Baccalaureate and Montessori programs.

The *Public School Choice* department filled campus instructional coach positions at Solar Preparatory School for Girls at James B. Bonham Elementary School, Solar Preparatory School for Boys, IGNITE Middle School, Sudie L. Williams Talented and Gifted Academy, the School for the Talented and Gifted in Pleasant Grove, City Lab High School, and Personalized Learning Preparatory at Sam Houston. Between August 2018 and April 2019, these campus instructional coaches facilitated professional development sessions on topics such as project-based learning, Google drive, design thinking, adaptive and technical challenges, school logistics, and Professional Learning Community (PLC) plans, serving all teachers on the campuses.

International Baccalaureate (IB) and Montessori programs were located at Eduardo Mata Montessori, Mount Auburn Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Academy, J. L. Long Middle School, Hillcrest High School, Preston Hollow Elementary School, Woodrow Wilson High School, Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Arthur Kramer

Elementary School, William Lipscomb Elementary School, Harry Stone Montessori, George B. Dealey Montessori, and Geneva Heights Elementary School. The teacher training program provided PD designed to enhance teacher skills and impart deep understanding of program implementation, so that students benefited from the rigor and relevance of each program.

Three other Title II-funded programs, Student Engagement and Counseling program, Instructional Support Services program, and Early Learning Department Professional Development program were evaluated separately.

Recommendations

Improve the collection of vendor-led PD participant feedback. Programs that hire outside vendors and experts to provide training should strive to gather feedback from participants about the quality of the PD. A large portion of Title II funds was spent on PD provided by vendors or outside experts. Although attendance information was collected for these PD sessions, in some cases feedback was not gathered to determine the quality and usefulness of the training. In others, the feedback was not collected from a large enough sample to draw meaningful conclusions. The data would be useful for future planning and quality control.

Seek feedback about programmatic challenges directly from participants. While departments do collect program participant feedback, the current methods limit the usefulness of the data. Most teachers are satisfied with PD sessions provided, but feedback survey designs do not allow for a robust measure of the challenges or needed improvements to programs. Most surveys ask about satisfaction on a Likert scale, but if a participant indicates that they are “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with an aspect of a program, program management and evaluators almost always do not know why. An open-ended survey item for “additional feedback” is skipped by most respondents. In cases where the item is completed, the sample size is too small for rigorous analysis. Adding feedback on the challenges of implementation or weaknesses of training sessions through closed-ended items, even through the selection of broad categories of issues, can help narrow the focus of research into needed improvements. This was accomplished well by the OnRamps program this year, by asking program participants to select issues by category (i.e. technology, parental support, etc.) that may be hindering program success.

Improve data collection on vPLC participation. Each individual department has the flexibility to manage its own online PD courses using a free open source course management software system called Moodle. Face-to-face PD attendance is currently tracked in a different learning management software system

accessible by web called Cornerstone, which is where teachers' required annual PD hours are managed. Departments must manually transfer registration and attendance and completion data from Moodle into Cornerstone in order to track vPLC session credits. At this time, the process is not completed by each department with the same fidelity, and in some cases is not completed at all. Expanded virtual learning offerings may likely be the future of PD, as also seen with student learning. Data collection processes should be comprehensive and uniform to best measure impact.

Reference

Watson, C. E. (2018). 2017-18 Evaluation of Title II Programs (EA18-142-2). Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District, Department of Evaluation and Accountability.

An electronic version of this report as well as the full 2018-19 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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