

State and District Use of Title II, Part A Funds in 2018-19

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State and District Use of Title II, Part A Funds in 2018-19

February 2021

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Increasing student achievement by improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders is one of the key goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title II, Part A of ESEA (Title II-A) provides over \$2 billion per year in funding to states and districts to support effective instruction through the preparation, recruitment, and training of educators. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the ESEA in 2015, provided greater flexibility for states and districts in how they use Title II-A funds, by expanding the option to transfer funds to other ESEA programs, and authorizing states to set aside additional funds for training principals and other school leaders. This report, required by Congress, provides a national picture of state and district priorities for Title II-A funds in the 2018-19 school year.

KEY FINDINGS

- *Half of the states and a quarter of districts used new ESSA flexibility.*
- *Professional development was a popular and substantial use of districts' Title II-A funds, with both short- and long-term training common.*
- *To a lesser extent, districts also invested in reducing class size, and in recruiting and retaining effective educators.*

Title II, Part A is the key legislation through which the Federal Government provides funds to states and districts to improve the quality and effectiveness of their teachers, principals, and other school leaders. The program also seeks to recruit new teachers to the field, encourage teachers and leaders to remain in education, and provide low-income and minority students with greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders. State education agencies are allowed to spend up to 5 percent of these funds directly, with the remainder passed on to local school districts. Grants to and within states are distributed using formulas that favor places that serve more students and more low-income students.

Because Title II-A is one of the largest sources of federal education funds for states and districts, it is important to understand how the grant money is used. In addition, Congress requires the U.S. Department of Education to collect and publicly report this information annually. This report responds to that mandate using survey data to examine Title II-A-funded activities and use of funding flexibility during the 2018-19 school year. Because districts of different size, type (regular and charter), and locality (urban, rural, and suburban) may use funds in different ways, the report discusses where there are significant differences by district characteristics.

SUMMARY OF STUDY DESIGN

What data were collected? A state survey on the use of Title II-A funds was administered to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in the spring and summer of 2019. (For simplicity, this report refers to all 52 entities as “states,” consistent with the ESEA statute, which indicates that the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are treated as states under this law.) At the same time, surveys were administered to a nationally representative sample of 5,489 local education agencies (typically school districts). In addition to representing the nation, the district sample was selected to be representative of each state, and to include a national sample of charter school districts. All states and 4,915 districts (90 percent) responded to the surveys, including 4,460 traditional districts and 455 charter school districts. Appendix A provides more detail on the sample and data collection.

How was the study conducted? Responses to survey questions were tabulated into descriptive statistics (such as percentages) and simple statistical tests (such as tests for differences between percentages). The study is descriptive and not designed to estimate the impact of Title II-A policies on state and district actions.

FUNDING FLEXIBILITY OPTIONS USED BY ABOUT HALF THE STATES AND A QUARTER OF THE DISTRICTS

Before ESSA, states and districts could take advantage of a flexibility option created under the prior version of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). “Transferability” under NCLB allowed states and districts to move funds between Title II-A and two other sections of ESEA (Title I-A and/or Title IV-A) if they thought this would enable them to meet the particular needs of their students more effectively.

Under ESSA, the transferability option was expanded in two ways.

1. Increased the set of programs from which states and districts could transfer funds to include four additional programs.¹
2. Allowed states and districts to transfer **all** of their Title II-A funds to one or more of the other specified programs (or all of their funds from other programs to Title II-A), rather than the maximum transfer of 50 percent under NCLB.²

In addition, ESSA provided states with the flexibility to reserve additional funds for state-level activities to support school leadership development.³ Specifically, states may reserve up to 3 percent of funding for district subgrants to use for state-level principal and school leader support, in addition to the traditional authority to reserve up to 5 percent of total funding for state-level activities.⁴

The most common state use of flexibility in the 2018-19 school year was to reserve additional funds for supporting principals and other school leaders. Twenty states reserved additional funds to support principals and other school leaders (Exhibit 1). States that reserved funds to support principals and other school leaders allocated 2.7 percent of the total budget for local

education agencies for this support. Fourteen of the 20 states reserved the maximum allowable 3 percent, four states reserved 2.8 percent, and two others reserved smaller amounts (see Appendix Exhibit B.2).

Few states transferred funds between Title II and other programs. Just four states transferred funds to Title II-A from other ESEA programs. No states transferred funds from Title II-A to other programs (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1. State use of ESSA flexibility provisions in the 2018-19 school year

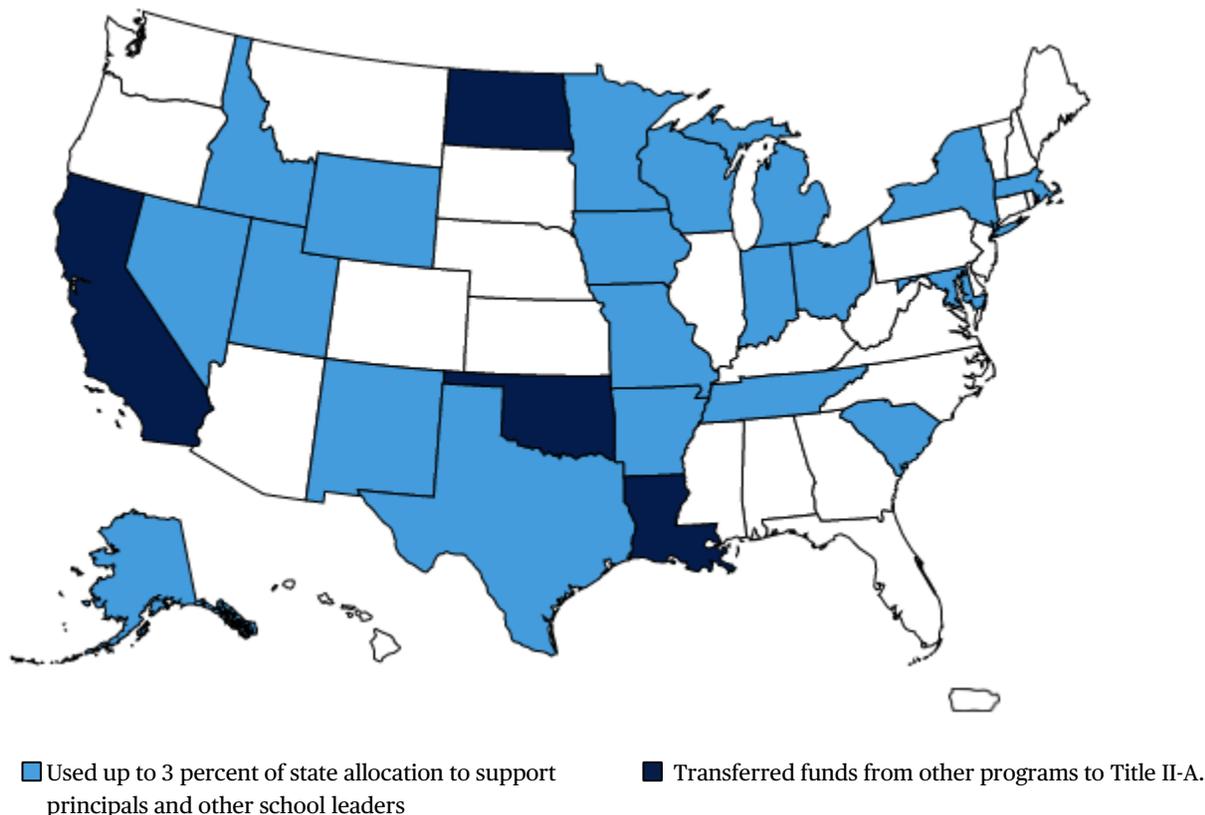


Exhibit reads: Four states transferred funds from other programs to Title II-A (California, Louisiana, North Dakota, and Oklahoma).

Note: No states transferred funds from Title II-A to other programs.

Source: 2018-19 State Education Agency (SEA) survey (see Appendix Exhibits B.1, B.2, and B.3 for additional detail).

Districts most commonly used the transferability option to transfer funds from Title II-A to Title I-A; few made transfers into Title II-A. Overall, 23 percent of all districts transferred funds out of Title II-A (Exhibit 2); 22 percent transferred funds to Title I-A, 1 percent transferred funds to Title IV-A, and 1 percent transferred funds to Title V-B (Appendix Exhibit B.4). In contrast, just 6 percent transferred funds to Title II-A from other programs (Exhibit 2).⁵ A small number of districts transferred funds both into and out of Title II-A (Appendix Exhibit B.5).

Districts' use of the transferability option varied across states. For example, the three states with the highest percentages of their districts transferring funds out of Title II-A were Oklahoma (80 percent), Montana (64 percent), and North Dakota (52 percent), while six states had just

1 percent or fewer of their districts making such transfers.⁶ Although transfers into Title II-A were less common, this approach was relatively widely used by districts in several states, including Delaware (32 percent), Tennessee (26 percent), South Carolina (20 percent), and Maine (20 percent); on the other end of the spectrum, 16 states had 1 percent or fewer of their districts making transfers into Title II-A (Appendix Exhibit B.6). See Appendix D for all state-level tables.

Exhibit 2. Use of funding transferability by Title II-A districts

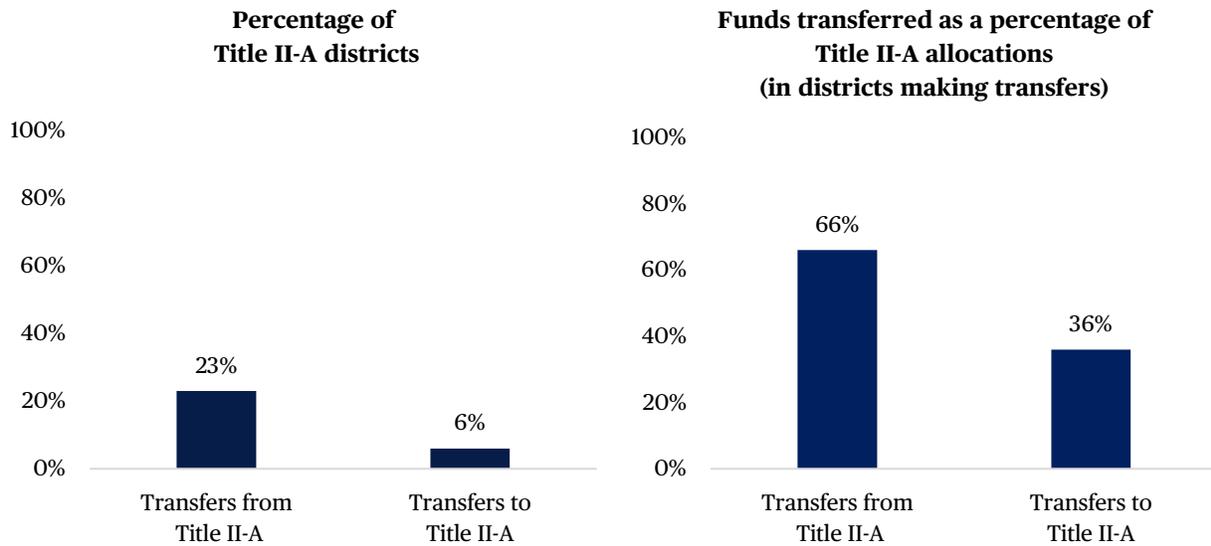


Exhibit reads: Twenty-three percent of Title II-A districts transferred funds from Title II-A to other programs. Among districts that transferred funds from Title II-A to other programs, collectively these districts decreased their Title II-A funds by 66 percent.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

Districts and states that transferred funds often substantially altered the proportion of funds available under Title II-A. Examining the combined change in funding across all districts that transferred funds from Title II-A, there was a 66 percent decrease in Title II-A funds in those districts. Using a similar approach to examine funding in districts that transferred funds to Title II-A, there was a 36 percent increase in Title II-A funds (Exhibit 2). Among districts that transferred funds out of Title II-A, 67 percent transferred all of their funds and an additional 16 percent transferred more than half of their funds (Appendix Exhibit B.7). Some of the federal programs to which districts transferred funds also support activities related to teacher quality. Among districts that transferred funds into Title II-A, 4 percent transferred all of their funds and an additional 20 percent transferred more than half of their funds (Appendix Exhibit B.7).

At the state level, four states transferred funds to Title II-A from other programs, with wide variation in the proportion of funds transferred. Louisiana reported the largest transfer, increasing its funding for Title II-A state activities by 133 percent.⁷ Other states transferring funds included Oklahoma (38 percent), North Dakota (24 percent), and California (5 percent) (Appendix Exhibit B.3).

Small districts, rural districts, and charter school districts were more likely to transfer funds from Title II-A. Over one quarter (27 percent) of small districts (with fewer than 2,500 students)

transferred funds to another program, compared with 11 percent of medium districts (2,500 to 10,000 students) and 5 percent of large districts (more than 10,000 students). Similarly, 31 percent of rural districts transferred funds to another program, compared with 23 percent of urban districts (Exhibit 3). In contrast, small and rural districts were less likely than other districts to transfer funds to Title II-A from another program (Appendix Exhibit B.8). Comparing across the type of district, 28 percent of charter school districts transferred funds from another program, compared with 22 percent of traditional districts, but neither type of district was significantly more likely to transfer funds to another program (Exhibit 3).

The types of districts that were most likely to transfer Title II-A funds to other programs – and least likely to transfer funds into Title II-A – were those that received relatively small allocations (Appendix Exhibit C.1). For these districts, combining federal funds from multiple programs provides more resources with which to purchase specific resources or services.

Exhibit 3. District use of option to transfer funds from Title II-A to other programs, by district characteristics

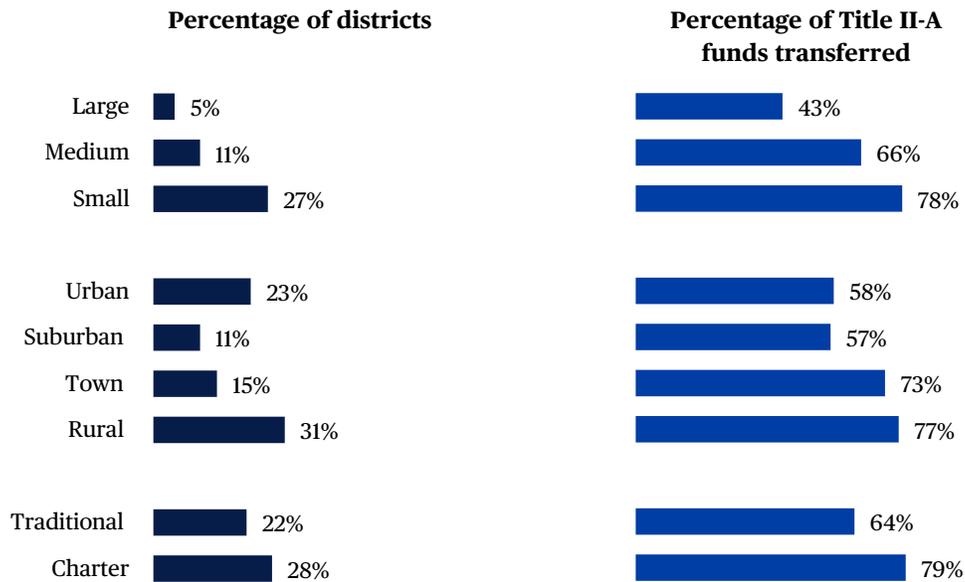


Exhibit reads: Five percent of large Title II-A districts transferred funds from Title II-A to other programs. Among large districts that transferred funds, they collectively transferred 43 percent of their total original Title II-A funding to other programs.

Note: Large districts = districts with more than 10,000 students; medium districts = districts with 2,500 to 10,000 students; small districts = districts with less than 2,500 students.

In all cases, the percentage of districts transferring Title II-A funds and the percentage of funds transferred differed significantly by district size (chi-squared test, $p < 0.05$), urbanicity (chi-squared test, $p < 0.05$), and type (t-test, $p < 0.05$). See Appendix Exhibit B.8 for additional information.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

Not only were small and rural districts more likely than large districts to transfer funds out of Title II-A; they also tended to make larger transfers. Among small districts that transferred funds, they collectively transferred 78 percent of their Title II-A funds to other programs compared with 43 percent in large districts (Appendix Exhibit B.8). Similarly, rural districts making such transfers shifted 77 percent of their Title II-A funds to other programs, compared with 58 percent in urban

districts. Among districts that transferred funds in the other direction—to Title II-A from other programs—the size of the percentage increase in Title II-A funding did not vary substantially by district characteristics.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY FOR DISTRICTS’ TITLE II-A SPENDING, COMMONLY USED FOR BOTH SHORT- AND LONG-TERM TRAINING

Professional development has long been a key strategy that districts use to increase the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Title II-A encourages districts to provide “high-quality, personalized professional development that is evidence-based” and focuses on a broad range of topics to improve teachers’ instructional practice. Indeed, ESSA defines the professional development to be supported through Title II-A and other programs as “sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused,” consistent with what research suggests is most effective.⁸

Professional development was the most popular use of Title II-A funds among districts. A large majority (80 percent) of districts reported using Title II-A funds on professional development. This amounted to a total of \$1.04 billion, or 58 percent of all Title II-A spending at the district level (Exhibit 4 and Appendix Exhibit B.9). District reports indicated that, on average, 68 percent of teachers participated in Title II-A-funded professional development (Appendix Exhibit B.10). Title II-A spending on professional development amounted to an average of \$377 per full-time equivalent teachers in districts that used Title II-A funds for this purpose and \$551 per targeted teacher (Appendix Exhibit B.11).

Exhibit 4. District uses of Title II-A funds, by type of activity

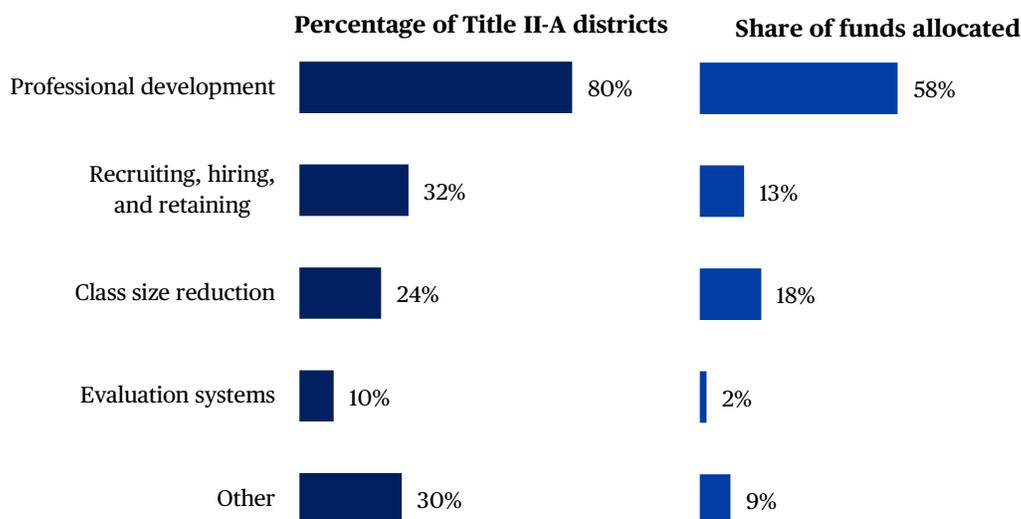


Exhibit reads: Eighty percent of Title II-A districts used Title II-A funds for professional development. Collectively, Title II-A districts spent 58 percent of Title II-A funds on professional development.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

In addition, most districts in a majority of states reported professional development as the most common Title II-A funded activity (Appendix Exhibit B.12). Specifically, more than 80 percent of the districts reported using Title II-A funds for professional development in two-thirds of the states (34 states). However, in two states (Iowa and South Dakota), less than half of the districts reported using Title II-A funds for this purpose. The share of Title II-A funds that districts spent on professional development varied considerably across the states, ranging from 82 percent in Nevada to 22 percent in Montana (Appendix Exhibit B.13).

Professional development was more commonly used by large districts, urban and suburban districts, and charter school districts. For example, 96 percent of large districts and 88 percent of urban and suburban districts used Title II-A funds for this purpose, compared with 76 percent of small districts and 73 percent of rural districts (Appendix Exhibits B.14 and B.15). Eighty-six percent of charter school districts used Title II-A funds for professional development, compared with 79 percent of traditional districts (Appendix Exhibit B.16).

Districts most commonly used Title II-A professional development funds for short-term training, but many districts also supported longer-term training and education, and some supported job-embedded training. Among districts that used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development, 83 percent reported supporting short-term training of less than three days or conferences, while 67 percent supported longer-term training or education; only 46 percent of districts reported supporting activities that were collaborative or job-embedded (Exhibit 5). In addition, these districts most commonly reported that one of their largest two expenditures for teacher professional development was for short-term training (69 percent of districts), compared with 53 percent that reported this for longer-term training and 26 percent that reported this for collaborative or job-embedded development (Appendix Exhibit B.17).

Exhibit 5. District use of Title II-A funds for various types of professional development activities for teachers and principals

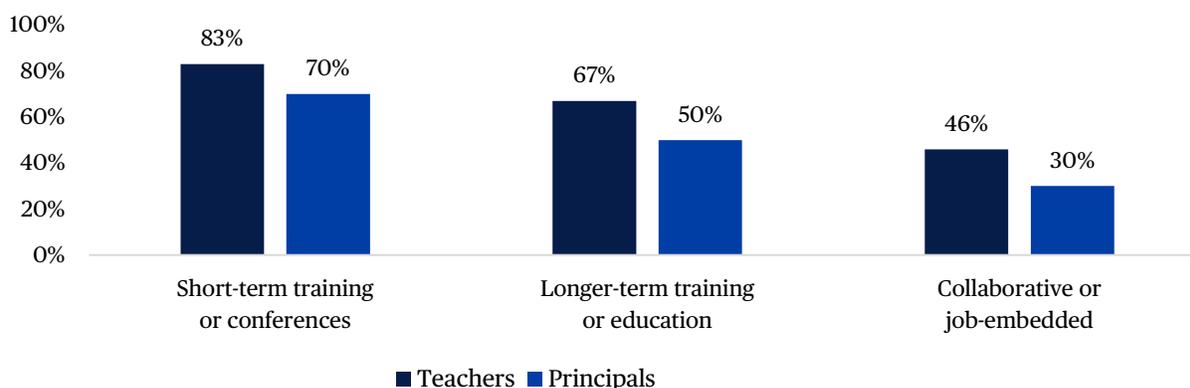


Exhibit reads: Among districts that used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development, 83 percent reported supporting short-term training of less than three days or conferences. Among districts that used Title II-A funds for principal professional development, 70 percent reported supporting short-term training of less than three days or conferences.

Note: Districts were asked to indicate all types of professional development for which they used Title II-A funds.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

Exhibit 6 provides additional detail on the types of teacher training that districts supported with Title II-A funds.

Exhibit 6. Percentage of districts using Title II-A funds for various types of professional development for teachers

Type	Percentage of Title II-A districts
Short-term trainings or conferences	83
Short-term training (3 days or less), single session	80
Conducted by external provider	71
Conducted by district or school-level staff	60
Professional conferences or organizations	59
Longer-term training or education	67
Longer-term training with connected content (4 or more days)	55
One-on-one support from teacher leaders or coaches	38
Group support (e.g., lesson study, peer-to-peer communities of practice)	28
University or college courses	18
Professional certifications (e.g., national board certification, state-level credentials)	17
Collaborative or job-embedded	46
One-on-one support from teacher leaders or coaches	38
Group support (e.g., lesson study, peer-to-peer communities of practice)	28

Exhibit reads: Among districts that used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development, 83 percent reported supporting any type of short-term training. Among districts that used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development, 80 percent reported supporting short-term training that involved a single session of less than three days, conducted by any provider type.

Note: Districts were asked to indicate all of the listed types of teacher professional development for which they used Title II-A funds.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

Large districts were more likely than small districts to report using Title II-A funds for teacher training that was longer-term (93 percent versus 60 percent), short-term (94 percent versus 80 percent), and collaborative or job-embedded (77 percent versus 38 percent) (Appendix Exhibit B.18).

District survey responses indicated similar patterns for principal professional development. For example, districts that used Title II-A funds for principal development were more likely to support short-term training or conferences (70 percent) than longer-term training or education (50 percent) or activities that were collaborative or job-embedded (30 percent) (Exhibit 5). In addition, these districts most commonly reported that one of their largest two expenditures for principal development was for short-term training (64 percent of districts). By contrast, 44 percent reported that longer-term training was one of the largest two expenditures for principal development, and 22 percent did so for collaborative or job-embedded development (Appendix Exhibit B.19).

In a few states, a relatively high percentage of districts reported using Title II-A funds for teacher development that was longer-term, collaborative, or job-embedded. In seven states, more than 90 percent of districts used Title II-A funds for longer-term training (Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada, Vermont, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia). In six of these seven

states, more than three-quarters of districts used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development that was collaborative or job-embedded (Appendix Exhibit B.20).⁹ Five of the seven states also had the largest percentage of districts reporting using Title II-A funds for principal professional development that was longer-term or collaborative or job-embedded (Appendix Exhibit B.21).

Professional development most commonly focused on improving instructional practice and teachers’ content knowledge, particularly in English language arts (ELA) and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Among districts that invested Title II-A funds in teacher professional development, 88 percent of them reported using Title II-A funds to support teachers’ instructional practice, while 78 percent supported training to improve teachers’ content knowledge (Appendix Exhibit B.22). To improve instructional practice, 75 percent of these districts supported training on instructional strategies for academic subjects and 69 percent of districts supported training in the use of data and assessments to guide instruction (Exhibit 7). To improve teachers’ content knowledge, 68 percent supported training in ELA and 61 percent supported training in STEM subjects.

Exhibit 7. Teacher professional development topics supported with Title II-A funds

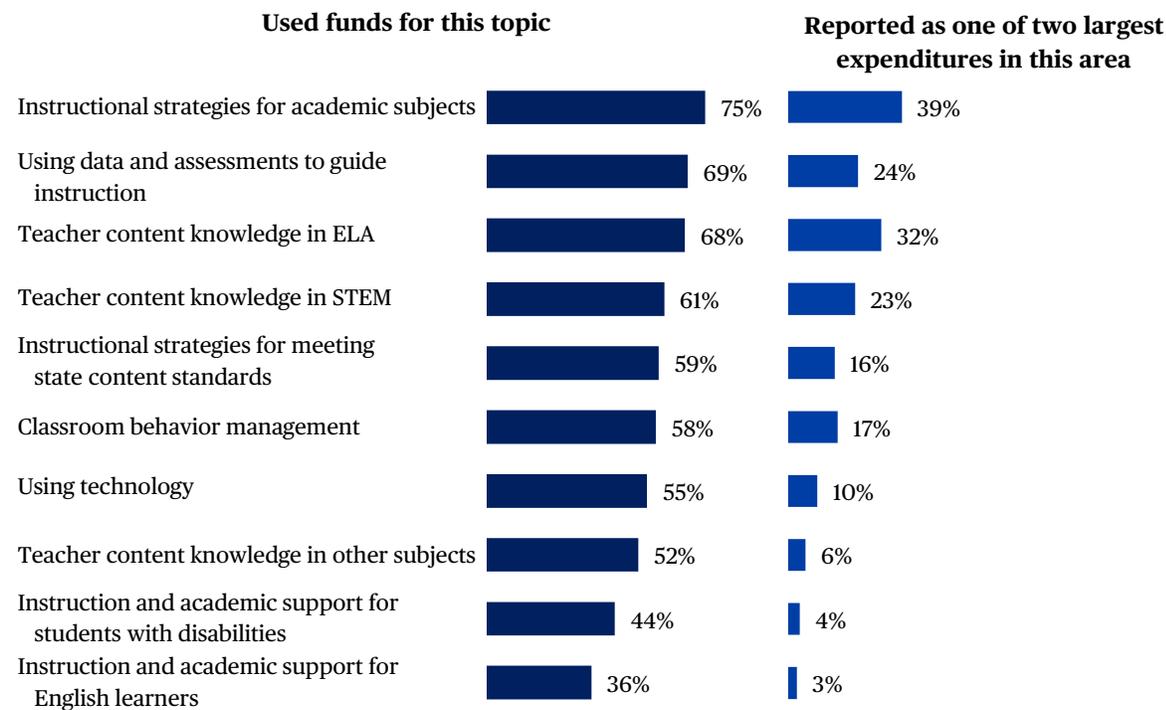


Exhibit reads: Teacher professional development on instructional strategies for academic subjects was supported with Title II-A funds by 75 percent of districts that invested Title II-A funds in teacher professional development and was selected as one of the top two professional development strategies by 39 percent of districts that invested Title II-A funds in teacher professional development.

Note: Districts were asked to indicate all of the listed topics of teacher professional development for which they used Title II-A funds. Districts first indicated whether they used Title II-A funds for each activity, then indicated which two areas were the “top two” based on the amount of funding allocated. The exhibit includes the 10 most frequently reported topics. See Appendix Exhibit B.22 for complete survey results and Exhibit B.23 for state representative results.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the needs of students with special needs. In the 2018-19 school year, the last full school year before the onset of the pandemic, fewer than half of all districts reported using their teacher professional development funds to support students with disabilities (44 percent) or English learners (36 percent) (Exhibit 7). However, large districts and urban districts were more likely than other districts to use Title II-A funds for professional development on instruction and academic support for students with special needs. Training related to instruction for English learners was reported more than twice as much by large districts as by small districts (67 percent versus 27 percent), and more commonly by urban districts than by rural districts (47 percent versus 24 percent) (Appendix Exhibits B.24 and B.25). Similarly, training in instruction for students with disabilities was reported by 60 percent of large districts versus 41 percent of small districts, and by 53 percent of urban districts versus 39 percent of rural districts.¹⁰

For principal professional development, districts most commonly invested in strategies and practices to help teachers improve instruction. Among districts that reported spending Title II-A funds on principal professional development, the three most common areas to invest funds were strategies and practices to help teachers improve instruction (71 percent), school improvement planning or identifying interventions to support academic improvement strategies (67 percent), and advancing organizational development (53 percent) (Exhibit 8). Districts also reported that these three areas were the most likely to be among the largest two expenditures for principal professional development.

Exhibit 8. Principal professional development topics supported with Title II-A funds

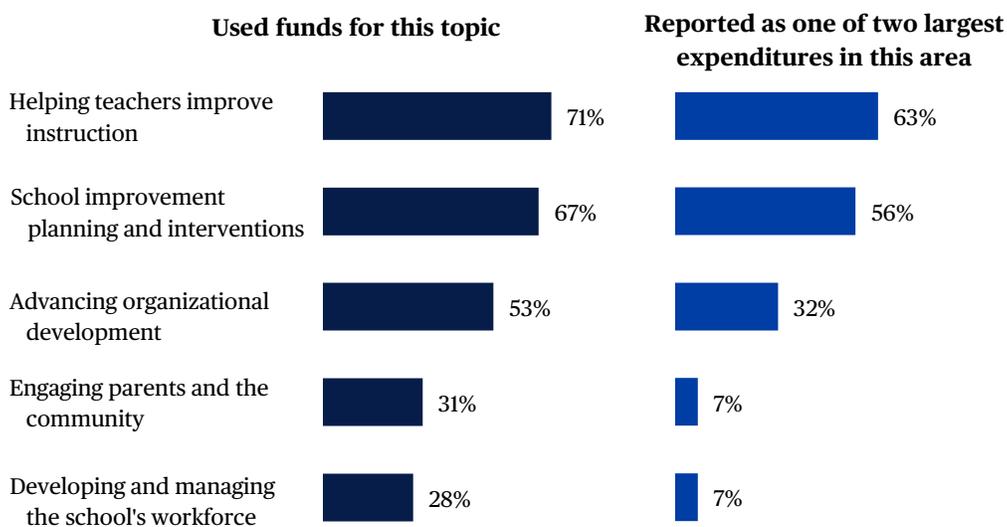


Exhibit reads: Principal professional development on helping teachers improve instruction was supported with Title II-A funds by 71 percent of districts that invested Title II-A funds in principal professional development and was selected as one of the top two professional development strategies by 63 percent of districts that invested Title II-A funds in principal professional development.

Note: Districts were asked to indicate all of the listed topics of principal professional development for which they used Title II-A funds. Districts first indicated whether they used Title II-A funds for each activity, then indicated which two areas were the “top two” based on the amount of funding allocated. See Appendix Exhibit B.26 for additional detail and Exhibit B.27 for state representative results.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

SEAs spent more of their funds on professional development programs than on any other activity other than administrative costs. States reported spending \$20.3 million of their state activities funds on professional development, amounting to 23 percent of their Title II-A spending. In all, 32 SEAs used at least some funds for professional development and the most common use was for principals (18 states and \$12.6 million). States also reported supporting professional development to improve instruction and instructional leadership in STEM subjects (17 states and \$5.1 million), among other things (Appendix Exhibit B.28).

OTHER MAIN USES OF TITLE II-A FUNDS INCLUDE REDUCING CLASS SIZE AND STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS

While professional development is an important strategy for increasing the effectiveness of classroom teachers and school leaders, districts and states also used Title II-A funds for other types of strategies intended to achieve this goal, such as recruiting and retaining effective teachers and principals; reducing class sizes by hiring more teachers; and, to a lesser extent, designing and implementing evaluation systems for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Overall, including professional development, districts reported that 89 percent of their Title II-A funds were used to support teachers (Appendix Exhibit B.29). The remaining 11 percent were used to support principals.

Some of these activities are intended to recruit and develop new teachers who will be effective in the classroom, such as through reforming state certification systems and teacher preparation programs, recruiting individuals from other fields to become educators, improving the efficiency of district hiring systems, and developing or improving induction and mentoring programs. Other strategies are designed to support career growth and job satisfaction for experienced teachers and school leaders, such as career ladder opportunities that give veteran teachers additional leadership roles while keeping them in the classroom, differential and incentive pay, and improving the quality of evaluation and support systems.

ESSA also allowed two new uses of funds to help improve teacher effectiveness: states can establish preparation academies for teachers, principals, or other school leaders; and states and districts can bolster teacher evaluation and support systems.¹¹ In contrast, class size reduction—hiring additional teachers to reduce the number of students taught by each teacher—is a strategy intended to increase teacher effectiveness by enabling them to give more individualized attention to students. However, due to the need to expand the supply of teachers, this policy can increase the number of inexperienced and uncertified teachers if implemented quickly on a large scale.¹²

After professional development, districts collectively spent the most funds on class size reduction; this use was most popular in small and rural districts. About one-quarter of districts (24 percent) used funds for class size reduction. Collectively, this accounted for 18 percent of all Title II-A spending—more than on any other single use other than professional development (Exhibit 4 and Appendix Exhibit B.9).

Class size reduction was most commonly used by small and rural districts and least often used by charter school districts. Small districts spent almost twice as much of their funds on class size

reduction as large districts (27 percent versus 14 percent), and rural districts similarly spent almost twice as much of their funds as urban districts did (29 percent versus 15 percent) (Exhibit 9). Charter school districts spent 3 percent of their Title II-A funds on class size reduction, compared with 18 percent in traditional districts.

Exhibit 9. Share of Title II-A funds used for class size reduction, by district characteristics

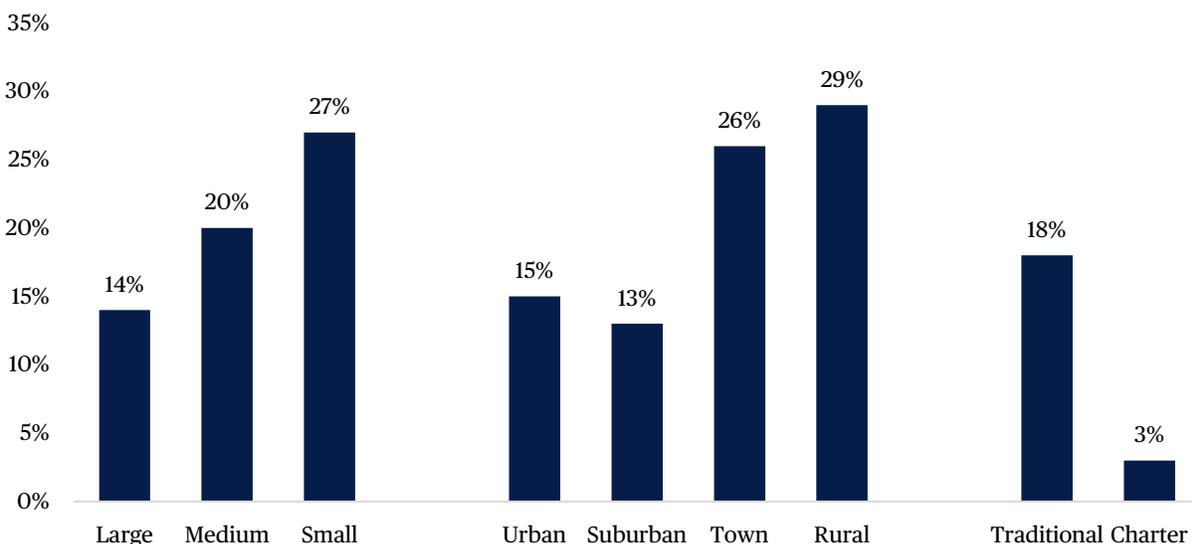


Exhibit reads: Collectively, large districts spent 14 percent of their Title II-A funds on class size reduction, while medium-sized districts collectively spent 20 percent of their Title II-A funds on class size reduction, and small districts collectively spent 27 percent of their Title II-A funds on class size reduction.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

Districts' use of Title II-A funds for class size reduction varied considerably across states. The share of Title II-A funds that districts in the sample spent on class size reduction ranged from 73 percent in Montana to 0 percent in four states (Arizona, District of Columbia, Mississippi, and Nevada) (Appendix Exhibit B.13).

Districts and states also commonly used Title II-A funds for recruiting and retaining effective educators, often with supports like individualized professional development and mentoring.

Overall, 32 percent of districts reported using funds to support recruiting and retaining educators, collectively spending 13 percent of their Title II-A funds for this purpose (Appendix Exhibit B.9). This percentage varied considerably across states, ranging from a high of 46 percent in the District of Columbia to less than 3 percent in Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico (Appendix Exhibit B.13). Charter school districts that used funds in this way collectively spent 24 percent of their Title II-A funds on this category, compared to 13 percent spent by traditional public school districts (Appendix Exhibit B.16).

Among districts that used Title II-A funds to recruit, hire, and retain educators, the most common strategies that districts reported in this area were tailoring professional development to individual teacher or leader needs (80 percent) and induction or mentoring programs for new teachers and leaders (71 percent) (Exhibit 10). In addition, they commonly reported that these two activities were among the largest two expenditures in this area: 68 percent of these districts reported that

tailoring professional development was a “top two” strategy, while 59 percent of these districts reported this for induction and mentoring programs.

Exhibit 10. District strategies to recruit and retain effective educators using Title II-A funds

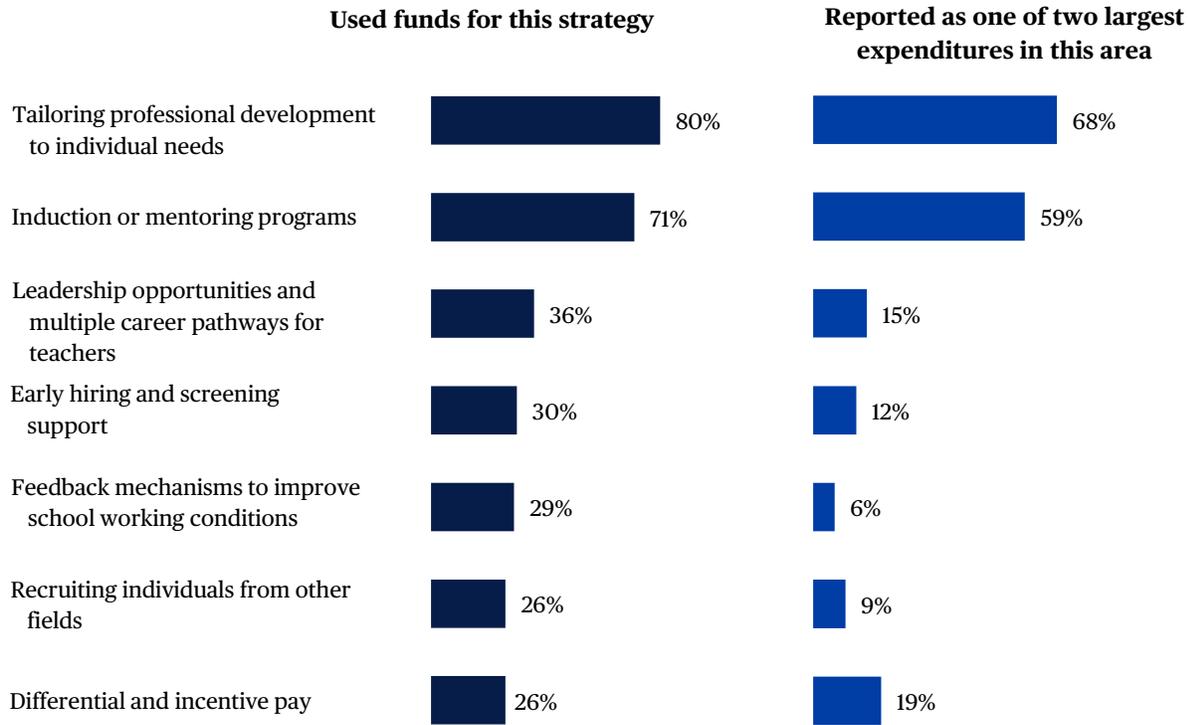


Exhibit reads: Among districts that reported using Title II-A funds to recruit, hire, and retain effective educators, tailoring professional development to individual needs was supported by 80 percent, and was selected as one of the top two professional development strategies by 68 percent.

Note: Districts were asked to indicate all of the listed strategies to recruit and retain effective educators for which they used Title II-A funds. Districts first indicated whether they used Title II-A funds for each activity, then indicated which two areas were the “top two” based on the amount of funding allocated. See Appendix Exhibit B.30 for additional details and Exhibit B.31 for state representative results.

Source: 2018-19 District survey.

When states used Title II-A funds to support recruiting and retaining effective educators, they also commonly focused on efforts to strengthen teacher and principal skills. Among the 39 states that used Title II-A state-level funds to support recruiting and retaining effective educators, the most common strategy was reforming certification, licensing, or tenure systems or preparation programs (reported by 24 states for a total amount of \$5.2 million) (Appendix Exhibit B.28). Other commonly reported activities included developing new teacher and principal induction and mentoring programs (17 states and \$1.7 million), supporting the use of teacher-led, evidence-based professional development (15 states and \$5.3 million), training and supporting instructional leadership teams (14 states and \$3.1 million), and developing career paths that promote professional growth including instructional coaching and mentoring (12 states and \$2.8 million).

In the first year of ESSA implementation, states and districts varied in their response to newly authorized uses of funds for developing new or expanded preparation academies and evaluation systems. Preparation academies offer an “alternate business model” for training educators, outside the typical track of education schools, with the potential to focus on training teachers in areas of high demand within the state.¹³ However, just two states reserved funds for preparation academies for teachers, principals, or other school leaders: Iowa reserved \$160,000 for this purpose and West Virginia reserved \$62,235, which amounted to 20 percent and 8 percent, respectively, of the funds they reserved for state-level activities (Appendix Exhibit B.1). In contrast, 22 states reported using Title II-A state activities funds to support evaluation and support systems for teachers, principals, and other school leaders, amounting to a total of \$7.7 million. Across the 22 states, the amount of state activities funds used for these evaluation and support systems ranged from \$11,000 in Nevada to \$1.7 million in New York; the share of state activities funds used for these systems ranged from 2 percent in Nevada to 75 percent in South Carolina (Appendix Exhibit B.32). At the district level, 10 percent of districts reported using funds to support evaluation and support systems, amounting to 2 percent of total district Title II-A spending (Appendix Exhibit B.9).

LOOKING AHEAD

The findings in this report reflect early responses to new flexibility and allowable uses of Title II-A funds contained in ESSA. It remains to be seen if the mixed response in using this flexibility and spending on newly allowed uses will continue, or whether more districts and states will make use of this flexibility over time. In addition, the current environment of the COVID-19 pandemic may lead to different choices in how to use Title II-A funds. Subsequent rounds of the annual surveys on state and district uses of Title II-A funds, such as those conducted in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, will show the evolving responses of states and districts to the new ESSA provisions as well as the changes they are making in response to the pandemic.

ENDNOTES

¹ The additional programs to which states and districts are allowed to transfer funds include Title I, Part C (Education of Migratory Children); Title I, Part D (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk); Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act); and Title V, Part B (Rural Education Achievement Program).

² For Title I-A, however, the transferability option is more limited: states and districts may transfer funds into but not out of their Title I-A programs.

³ Strong school leadership is associated with higher levels of student achievement, particularly in schools with the greatest needs (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Coelli & Green, 2012; Louis et al., 2010).

⁴ The maximum amount that a state may reserve is 7.85 percent of its state allocation—including up to 5 percent for state activities generally, and up to 2.85 percent for state-level principal and school leader support (i.e., 3 percent of the 95 percent earmarked for district subgrants). This would leave a minimum of 92.15 percent of the funds for district subgrants.

⁵ One percent of districts reported transferring funds both into and out of Title II-A. When examining the proportion of funds transferred in or out at the district level, this report focuses on net transfers. That is, districts are defined as having transferred funds into Title II-A if they transferred more funds into Title II-A than out of Title II-A. Conversely, districts are defined as having transferred funds out of Title II-A if they transferred more funds out of Title II-A than into Title II-A.

⁶ In this report, Hawaii and Puerto Rico are excluded from examples of state percentages of districts because they are single-district jurisdictions.

⁷ Louisiana initially reserved just 2 percent of its Title II-A allocation for state-level activities, and the transfer from other programs resulted in a total amount of funding for Title II-A state activities (4.7 percent) that was still less than the 5.0 percent that it could have reserved from Title II-A.

⁸ Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan 2018; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner 2017; Garet et al. 2016; Blank & de las Alas, 2009.

⁹ This analysis does not include Hawaii and Puerto Rico because they are single-district SEAs.

¹⁰ More broadly, large districts and urban districts were often more likely than other districts to support other specific professional development topics. This may reflect that these districts generally have larger Title II-A allocations and may also have more varied needs within the district.

¹¹ Allowable strategies intended to recruit, hire, train, and retain effective teachers are enumerated in Sections 2101(c)(4) and 2103(a) of the statute (*Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, 2015) and are further discussed in the non-regulatory guidance for states and districts (U.S. Department of Education 2016).

¹² The Tennessee STAR experiment with class size reduction in 79 participating elementary schools in the 1980s was found to have significant positive student achievement effects (Krueger & Whitmore, 2001). However, when California adopted a similar policy statewide in the 1990s, this led to a sudden increase in the numbers of inexperienced and uncertified teachers, particularly in schools with high concentrations of low-income and minority students (Jepsen & Rivkin, 2009). Millsap et al. (2004) discusses the early history of federal funding for class size reduction.

¹³ Arnett, 2016; Tooley, 2017.

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DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The study team for this report included staff from Westat. None of the study team members has financial interests that could be affected by findings from this report.