

State and District Use of Title II, Part A Funds in 2019–20

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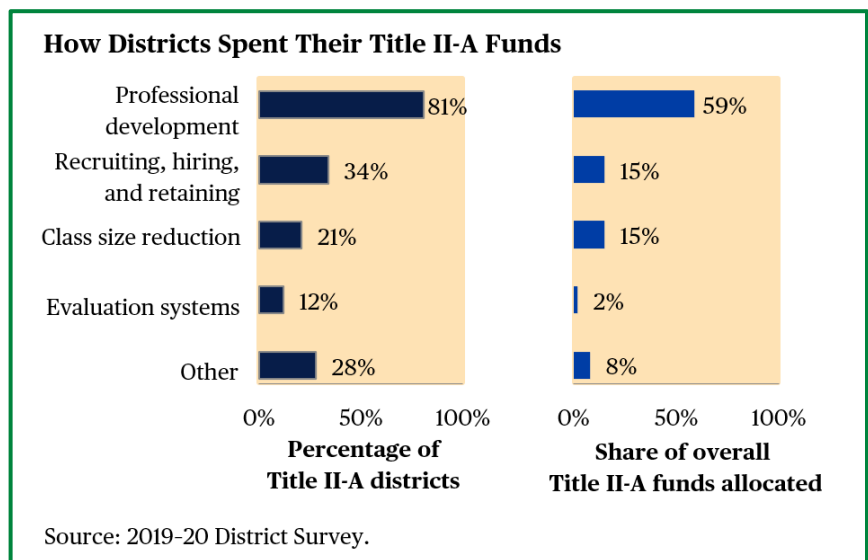
Increasing student achievement by improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders is one of the key goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title II, Part A of ESEA (Title II-A) provides over \$2 billion per year in funding to states and school districts to support effective instruction through the preparation, recruitment, and training of educators. States are allowed to spend up to 5 percent of these funds directly, with the remainder passed on to local school districts. 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.

The report, required by Congress, provides a national picture of state and district priorities for Title II-A funds in the 2019–20 school year. State and district surveys on the use of Title II-A funds were administered in the spring and summer of 2020. The district sample of 5,515 school districts included enough districts in each state to permit state-level estimates of districts' use of Title II-A funds.

Key Findings

- **About half of the states and a quarter of the districts used new ESSA flexibility.** The most common state use of flexibility in the 2019–20 school year was to reserve additional funds for supporting principals and other school leaders (23 states). By contrast, only four states transferred funds between Title II and other programs. School districts were more likely to transfer funds, with 25 percent making transfers from Title II-A and 7 percent making transfers into Title II-A. Transfers from Title II-A collectively resulted in a 67 percent decrease in Title II-A funds in those districts, while district transfers to Title II-A provided a 40 percent increase in Title II-A funds.

- **Professional development was a popular and substantial use of districts' Title II-A funds, with both short- and long-term training common.** Professional development was the most common use of district Title II-A funds: 81 percent of districts reported this use of funds, accounting for 59 percent of overall Title II-A spending (see exhibit). Among districts that used Title II-A funds for teacher professional development, nearly all used the funds for short-term training (93 percent), but many districts also supported longer-term training and education (77 percent), and some supported job-embedded training (52 percent). District-funded professional development focused on improving instructional practice and teachers' content knowledge, while state funds for professional development supported programs for principals.



- **To a lesser extent, districts invested in recruiting and retaining effective educators and reducing class size.** One-third of districts (34 percent) reported using funds for recruiting, hiring, and retaining educators, accounting for 15 percent of all Title II-A funds (see exhibit). The most common strategies were (1) tailoring professional development to individual teacher or leader needs, and (2) induction or mentoring programs for new teachers and leaders.

In addition, 21 percent of districts used funds for class size reduction, which accounted for 15 percent of all Title II-A funds. Over the long run, Title II-A spending on class size reduction has declined. For example, in 2012–13, 41 percent of districts spent funds on class size reduction, accounting for 31 percent of funds.