

Professional Development in North Carolina

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FINANCING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN NORTH CAROLINA

Most teachers participate in some professional development during their careers. Many school districts spend significant time and money providing professional development for teachers. The reasons are numerous and include:

- Most states require teachers to participate in a specified number of hours of professional development for license renewal.
- Teacher shortages have demanded that schools and districts recruit outside the teacher education workforce, therefore, schools and districts have an increased need to prepare educators to be able to respond to the needs of the changing student population and other demands of the education environment.
- As in any profession, an individual is not the most effective in his or her profession on the first day and must, therefore, continue to learn and improve job skills on a continuing basis.
- Research has shown that better teachers improve student learning and suggests that professional development can help schools and districts improve student outcomes.
- The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires states to show an annual increase in the percentage of teachers who participate in “high-quality” professional development.

As districts struggle to meet the demands of standards-based reform and requirements for “highly-qualified” teachers in the face of increasing fiscal constraints, professional development has the potential to be a significant part of a district’s improvement strategy. To use dollars effectively, districts must think about how to best integrate professional development expenditures and activities with their overall strategies to improve student performance. To develop & implement a coherent, comprehensive professional development strategy that maximizes their return on their investment and is aligned with school and district improvement goals, schools and districts need to understand their spending – how much, on what activities, how the activities align with goals, and how flexible resources are.¹



The challenges to identifying this information are great. Due to the variety of funding sources, a lack of uniform categorical definitions, and inadequate data collection capacity and management systems at the local level, few districts can definitively determine how much money is spent on professional development. Districts often fail to have a uniform definition of what constitutes professional development. While most districts have a line item within their budget for professional development, those figures rarely capture the entirety of professional development activities within a district.

Finally, sources of funds are difficult to identify as professional development expenditures by districts are typically reported in combination with other spending from funds that may come from the federal, state, or local level. Neither state nor federal governments routinely track how much is actually spent on professional development.²

North Carolina has purposed to support the planning of high-quality professional development by helping districts better understand how to best integrate professional development expenditures and activities with their overall strategies to improve student performance. The Department of Public Instruction believes a critical first step is understanding what funds are available for expenditure. The following ‘funding map’ has been designed for this purpose.

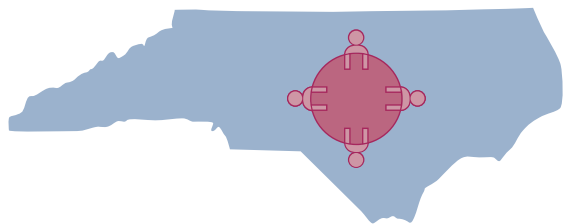
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING SOURCES

State Funds	
PRC	
012	Driver Training
014	Vocational Education - Program Support
015	School Technology Fund
019	Small County Supplemental Funding
020	Program Enhancement - Foreign Exchange
024	Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding
028	Staff Development
029	Behavioral Support
031	Low-Wealth Counties Supplemental Funding
032	Children With Special Needs
034	Academically/Intellectually Gifted
036	Charter Schools
040/041	Title I/CSRD
055	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
056	Learn & Earn (ECHS)
063	Transportation of Pupils
068	Developmental Day & Community Residential
069	At-Risk/Alternative Schools
072	At-Risk/Alternative Schools
093	Student Accountability Standards
	High Priority Schools

Federal Funds	
PRC	
017	Vocational - Basic Grant
023	Vocational Education - Tech Prep
026	Homeless Children
044	Handicapped
046/086	Public Charter Schools
048	Safe & Drug Free Schools/Communities
049	Pre-School Handicapped
050/084/105	Basic Program & School Improvement
051	Migrant Education
057	Abstinence Education
059	Innovative Programs
060	Handicapped
064	Learn & Serve America
065	Even Start Family Literacy
103	Improving Teacher Quality
104/111	English Language Acquisition
106	Reading First
107/108	Educational Technology
109	Rural/Low Income
110	21st Century Community Learning Ctrs.
112	Mathematics & Science Partnership

REFERENCES

Niles, K.A., Odden, A., Fermanich, M. & Archibald, S. (2005). *Inside the Black Box: School District Spending on Professional Development in Education*. *Journal of Education Finance*, 30(1), 1-26.



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