At-a-Glance

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for training and recruiting through Title II, Part A as authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act, Public Law 107-110. 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.

Program Description
Dallas ISD used grant funds to assist in the areas of instructional support services (ISS), distance learning, class-size reduction, certified teacher recruitment, the district’s teacher alternative certification (AC) program, International Baccalaureate (IB), and campus-specific supplemental training. Recruitment activities were part of class-size reduction and certified teacher recruitment efforts, whereas staff training was the focus of the remaining grant activities. Separate full-scale program evaluations were conducted for two additional Title II components: (1) Reasoning Mind and (2) Professional Development and School Leaders Academy.

Methodology
The workscopes for Title II, Part A were reviewed to note the amount of funding allotted for each area, program plans for implementation, and goals. In addition, formal and informal interviews were held with program managers to find out details related to 2012-13 implementation and to collect program documentation. Follow-up information was collected via phone and email.

Amounts of Funding
The district received $10,859,688 in Title II, Part A funds. Over half ($5,848,616) was allotted to the Class Size Reduction Program. Approximately $1.5 million was budgeted for the Certified Teacher Recruitment Program ($1,637,466) and Professional Development and School Leaders Academy ($1,491,557). Other large amounts included ISS Training ($865,075), Reasoning Mind training ($525,000), and Expansion of the Alternative Certification (AC) Program ($275,946). Another $85,108 was allotted to Distance Learning teacher professional development. The remaining allocations were for specialized campus training and ranged from $15,900 (Montessori) to $35,000 (Wilson and Long IB).

Program Activities and Implementation

Instructional Support Services Training
ISS staff provided supplemental professional development and created resources for teachers, principals, and other instructional staff. Professional development included core content training as well as training on the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework, the Student Support Team (SST) process, and the EXCEED Student Achievement Management System. In addition, ISS provided technical assistance and resources related to the integration of the RtI and SST processes. ISS staff members were in the beginning stage of embedding RtI into all core content areas. ISS staff coordinated Region 10 Student Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)/End of Course (EOC) Academy training sessions for teachers, CILT members, and principals. The purpose was to provide the latest information on STAAR and to discuss instructional adjustments necessary for student success. Through the sessions, resources and strategies were shared to assist campus staff with planning, instructional rigor, and student engagement.

Distance Learning
Instructional technology staff members provided training and technical support for reading and math content specialists in the development of online training courses. Also, they provided teachers and administrators with the opportunity to collaborate in Virtual Professional Learning Communities (vPLCs). The vPLCs were created in core content areas for elementary, middle, and high school staff members. As part of each vPLC session, teachers were required to complete a scaffolded field experience in their classrooms; staff participated in follow-up discussions through a Campus Professional Learning Community (cPLC). Of the total teachers that could have participated (N=10,277), involvement was high with 99% for vPLC 1, 93% for vPLC 2, and 98% for vPLC 3. Results of vPLC surveys showed that staff members were positive toward the vPLC approach to learning.

Class Size Reduction Program
Grant money was used to fund teacher positions in core subject areas to reduce class sizes and better meet the instructional needs of students. Per Human Capital Management (HCM) staff member interviews, the grant positions were filled based upon grant guidelines and a prescribed district formula. HCM staff
members worked with principals to identify campus needs and to hire highly qualified teachers. Positions were filled on an “as needed” basis throughout the year. As of the middle of April, there were 92.98 grant-funded teacher positions across 66 campuses.

Certified Teacher Recruitment Program

HCM teacher recruitment efforts resumed in Fall 2012 after being suspended during the 2011 calendar year. Activities included attending recruitment events, advertising, conducting information sessions, screening applicants, processing candidates for H-1B visa applications, and documenting recruitment activities. HCM and AC staff collaborated to recruit high-quality teachers for critical need areas: bilingual, math, and science. Upon completion of recruitment events (N=96), staff members wrote short follow-up reports. HCM staff processed 68 new teacher visas, 187 extensions, and 5 H-1B visas. In 2012-13, a new centralized selection model to screen potential teacher candidates was developed; the new screening process was used for the first time in February 2013.

Expansion of the Alternative Certification Program

Grant funds were used to supplement the recruitment, training, and retention efforts of the AC Program. There were 323 interns during 2012-13 including 281 in Phase 46, 22 in Phase 47, and 20 in Phase 48. About half (52%) were in the district’s critical need areas of bilingual, math, and science. The AC hiring goals of 100 bilingual, 30 math, and 30 science interns were met for math (N=36) and science (N=47) but not for bilingual (N=89). Like previous years, recruiting events were paid for through Title II funds; in March, an AC recruiter was hired to strengthen recruitment efforts. Beginning in February, AC applicants were screened and selected through HCM staff rather than through AC staff. Of the 87 candidates that were certified in 2011-12, all continued to teach in the district during 2012-13. In comparison to past years, the number of certified candidates was lower due to the district’s hiring freeze that began in spring 2011.

International Baccalaureate Professional Development

Grant funds were used to fund professional development for three Dallas ISD IB campuses. In 2012-13, Harry Stone and Long were in the candidacy phase to become IB Middle Years Program (MYP) campuses. Wilson was in its second year as an authorized International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBD) campus and in its first year to offer the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Certificate (IBCC).

Harry Stone. Ten staff members received MYP training in July 2012; Texas IB Schools and the Texas Education Agency conducted the training in Round Rock, Texas in cooperation with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). In addition, 24 attended a full-day workshop on February 9; Stone’s IB consultant provided the training while on campus for a three-day site visit. Stone made gradual changes to the curriculum all year including the development of interdisciplinary units.

Long. Through Title II funds, all IB staff members were trained for a full day on November 17. In addition, 29 staff members attended IB training sessions locally and in other states. Long modified the curriculum in 2011-12 and continued the changes during 2012-13 in anticipation of becoming an IB campus.

Wilson. The IB program at Wilson was formally authorized in April 2011. Both IBD and IBCC were limited to eleventh- and twelfth-grade students; ninth- and tenth-grade students could participate in pre-IB courses. During 2012-13, there were five Wilson staff members that received training in the fall and 19 that participated during the summer of 2013. Grant funds were also used to purchase IB resources. In 2012-13, there were 104 ninth-grade pre-IB students, 82 tenth-grade pre-IB students, 39 junior IBD students, and 5 senior IBD students. In addition, there were 32 juniors working on the IBCC and 21 junior and senior students enrolled in a stand-alone Psychology Certificate course. All five seniors graduated from high school and were all accepted into college; none of the seniors earned the IB Diploma.

Montessori and Obama Leadership Academy Training

Dealey Montessori. Three teachers attended training at the Dallas Montessori Academy, which issues certificates to teachers that graduate from the program. Due to the specialized procedures and curriculum at Dealey, new teachers are required to receive training on how to use the Montessori teaching methods and materials. The teachers attended training on Thursday evenings and some Saturdays during the school year. Also, they were to attend six to eight weeks of training in the summer.

Obama Leadership Academy. On August 20 and 21, Dr. Leonard Sax from National Association for Single Sex Public Education conducted a two-day workshop for staff and an evening workshop for parents. Dr. Sax presented on gender-specific best practices in the single-sex classroom and the importance of understanding how race and socioeconomic status influence best practices for single-sex classrooms. In June 2013, staff members attended College Board and National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) Laying the Foundation training sessions. Grant funds were also used to buy books for campus-wide study. Books included Boys Adrift by Leonard Sax and How Children Succeed by Paul Tough. The books were discussed during training and during every monthly professional learning community (PLC) meeting. Grade level and support team members were assigned chapters to present during PLC meetings.
Recommendations

During 2012-13, much training took place using Title II funds. Although sign-in sheets were used to document participation, in most cases, data was not collected to ensure the training was high quality and met the needs of the trainees. As a result, all training funded through Title II should include some type of end-of-course survey to gather feedback from participants. Systemic quantitative evaluation measures are needed for quality control purposes, so that staff members have “real time” information as they plan for future training.

Instructional technology staff members collected thorough documentation including participation data and end-of-course feedback for most vPLC sessions; however, data were missing for a few vPLC sessions due to some course instructors deciding to collect data in a different way. Also, no feedback was collected on the other training modules that were developed through grant funds, and participation data was missing for the online math modules that were developed. In the future, during online course development, it would be best to require that course instructors set up courses consistently to ensure that participation and end-of-course evaluation information can be collected for all courses.

HCM began new ways of reporting findings from recruitment events as well as a new screening process. It will be important to note which recruitment events yielded the most high-quality candidates and how recruitment should be tweaked based on the data. Also, the new screening process should be reviewed to note whether principals and other hiring managers find the process efficient and successful. Screening data should be studied and compared to teacher observation data to note whether new hires were successful in the classroom during 2013-14.

Separate full-scale program evaluations were conducted for two additional Title II components: (1) Reasoning Mind and (2) Professional Development and School Leaders Academy.

References


