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 certified teacher recruitment, class-size reduction, instructional support services (ISS), expansion of the Alternative Certification (AC) program, distance learning, arts based professional development, advanced academic teacher training, International Baccalaureate (IB) training, 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. Full-scale program evaluations of two additional Title II components (Reasoning Mind and the Leadership Development Fellows Academy) were conducted separately.

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 2013-14 implementation and to collect program documentation. Follow-up information was collected via phone and email.

Amounts of Funding
The district received $11,862,964 in Title II, Part A funds. As seen in Table 1, almost six million ($5,848,616) was allotted to the Class Size Reduction Program. Approximately $1.4 million was budgeted for the Certified Teacher Recruitment Program ($1,432,729) and Instructional Support Services Training ($1,343,309). Other large amounts included the Principal Fellows Academy ($1,196,470), Expansion of the Alternative Certification (AC) Program ($697,331) and Reasoning Mind Professional Development ($525,000). Another $321,000 was allotted to Advanced Academic Teacher Training. The remaining allocations were for specialized campus training and ranged from $15,900 (Montessori Professional Development) to $170,216 (Distance Learning).

Program Activities and Implementation

Certified Teacher Recruitment Program
Human Capital Management (HCM) teacher recruitment activities included attending recruitment events, advertising, conducting information sessions, screening applicants, processing candidates for H-1B visa applications, and documenting recruitment activity success. Between September 2013 and April 2014, 66 recruitment activities took place in Texas (N=47; 71%) and other locations within the United States (N=19; 29%). Upon completion of recruitment events, staff members wrote short follow-up reports, which will be used to guide future recruitment events. HCM staff processed 23 new teacher visas and 64 extensions.

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. 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. During the 2013-14 school year, there were 64 grant-funded teacher positions across 44 campuses. Positions were spread across Division 1 (N=15), Division 2 (N=11), Division 3 (N=10), Division 4 (N=17), and Division 5 (N=11).

Instructional Support Services Training
ISS staff utilized Title II funds to provide supplemental professional development and resources for teachers, principals, and other instructional staff. Professional development included face-to-face and online core content training, as well as 67 training sessions on the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework and the Exceed Student Achievement Management System. ISS staff coordinated four Region 10 Student Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)/End of Course (EOC) Academy training sessions for staff. 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.
Expansion of the Alternative Certification Program

Grant funds were used to expand the AC program by supplementing recruitment, training, and retention activities. AC staff participated in 52 recruitment events between July 2013 and June 2014. There were 527 interns placed in 165 campuses during 2013-14. More than half (59%) were in the district’s critical need areas of bilingual, math, and science. The AC hiring goals of 150 bilingual, 50 mathematics, and 50 science interns were met for bilingual (N=198), mathematics (N=50) and science (N=63). Of the 317 candidates that were certified in 2012-13, 220 (67%) continued to teach in the district during 2013-14.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning staff members provided training and technical support for core content specialists in the development of online training courses. They also helped instructional staff create virtual Professional Learning Communities (vPLCs), which allowed for teacher and administrator collaboration. As part of each vPLC session, teachers were required to complete a scaffolding field experience in their classrooms. Distance Learning staff also facilitated a blended learning initiative in Imagine 2020 secondary schools. To prepare teachers for blended learning instruction, Distance Learning staff developed and presented 19 Google Drive modules throughout the school year.

Improved Arts Based Professional Development

Arts based professional development was provided to instructional staff to improve the quality of art instruction and align the curriculum to the new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. In the fall, program staff conducted 45 professional development sessions for 1,387 participants. During the spring, 1,212 participants attended the program’s 45 professional development sessions. During the 2013-14 school year, Dallas ISD students competed in more University Interscholastic League events and earned more “good,” “excellent,” and “superior” ratings than in the previous two school years. Students also received fewer “poor” and “unsatisfactory” ratings.

Advanced Academic Teacher Training

Title II funds were budgeted for advanced academic teacher training to increase the number of highly qualified advanced academic teachers. Advanced academic teachers, including Advanced Placement (AP), Pre-AP, and IB teachers, attended professional development to improve their effectiveness. The National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) and International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) hosted and conducted the training. NMSI provided two workshops for AP teachers during the school year and two sessions for Pre-AP and AP teachers in June 2014. Three teachers were sent to IB workshops in Florida and Dallas in June 2014.

International Baccalaureate Professional Development

Grant funds were used to fund professional development for three Dallas ISD IB campuses. In December 2013, J.L. Long became an authorized Middle Years Program (MYP) school. Harry Stone remained in the candidacy phase to become an IB MYP campus, pending the outcome of an authorization visit made in May 2014. Wilson was in its third year as an authorized International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBD) campus and in its second year to offer the International Baccalaureate Career-Related Certificate (IBCC).

Harry Stone. Stone sent 29 staff members to IB training between July 2013 and October 2014. To comply with IBO requirements, sixth grade was moved into middle school and given a middle school Texas Education Agency (TEA) code. All but four of the 69 eighth grade students (94%) were accepted into their selected high school.

Long. Long sent 20 IB staff members to out-of-state IB training sessions between September 2013 and June 2014.

Wilson. Wilson used Title II funds to send 10 staff members to IB training sessions. In all, 182 students in ninth and tenth grade took pre-IB courses, and 38 eleventh- and 28 twelfth-grade students participated in the IBD program. By the end of the school year, all 28 IB seniors had graduated and were accepted into at least one college. Of those 28 IB students, 25 met requirements to receive the IB diploma. An additional 28 eleventh and 19 twelfth grade students took IBCC courses. All 19 IBCC seniors were accepted into college, and two completed the IBCC program. Wilson will not offer the IBCC program in 2014-15.

Campus-Based Professional Development

Title II grant funds were used to provide supplemental training to meet the unique instructional needs of Barack Obama Leadership Academy, Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School and George Bannerman Dealey Montessori. Barack Obama used Title II funds to send staff to workshops, bring in speakers for staff training, and purchase books for a summer book study. Irma Rangel sent nine staff members to five conferences and training sessions. Dealey Montessori sent four teachers to the downtown Dallas Montessori Academy to receive training on how to use the Montessori teaching methods and materials.

Recommendations

A majority of Title II funds were spent on professional development. Although attendance information was collected, in some cases, feedback was not gathered to determine the quality and usefulness of the training.
Programs that include training and utilize Title II funds should include an end-of-course survey to gather feedback from participants. The survey data would be useful for future planning and quality control.

ISS staff members collected survey data for online and face-to-face training sessions, but the survey did not specify whether training was online or in person. It would be best to add an item to the survey that asks participants to specify the training type attended or collect the data separately. That way ISS staff can gauge the quality of training by training type.

The Response to Intervention program implemented a survey to gather feedback from staff for 2013-14. It is recommended that the survey be administered again in 2014-15, so that changes can be tracked over time and so that RtI staff can continue to pinpoint needs.

Distance Learning program staff created a usage report of student and staff Chromebook activity. However, the usage report did not include enough detail to evaluate the quality of blended learning in the classroom. The report did not specify whether a staff member was using the Chromebook for training or instructional purposes. Similarly, the report did not include information about the length of activities; for example, students and staff that used the Chromebook for one minute appeared the same on the report as those that were online for one hour. Adjustments should be made to capture more detailed information about specific Chromebook activity, so that the quality of blended learning can be better evaluated.

References


The full 2013-14 Title II report can be found at http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.