

Fiscal Highlights

Educator Professional Development - Current Status and Cost Estimates - Ben Leishman

It costs approximately \$7.8 million to provide one professional development day for licensed educators, according to a recent estimate from the Utah State Office of Education (USOE). This estimate was presented in combination with a report on effective professional development to the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee in August. As part of the report, the USOE surveyed Utah's local education agencies (LEAs), namely the 41 school districts and 85 charter schools, on their current professional development programs.

In FY 2010, the Legislature eliminated the Quality Teaching Block Grant to help balance the state's budget. The block grant provided approximately \$77.6 million annually to LEAs to implement long-term professional development plans in the public schools. In effect, this funding provided additional contract time for educators to receive additional training throughout the school year. The number of additional days provided through the program varied by LEA, but likely numbered around 5 to 8 days.

Without additional state supported contract time, the subcommittee raised questions on the current status of educator professional development in the LEAs. To answer this question, the USOE conducted a survey of LEAs and found the following:

- Most LEAs continue to provide additional contract days for educator professional development, with approximately 6 school districts and 29 charter schools providing 5 or more days. The majority of school districts continue to provide at least 2 to 3 additional contract days.
- LEAs funded the majority of these additional contract days through their general operating budgets. Some LEAs used federal funds (Title I and Title IIA) or funding from specific MSP categorical programs or initiatives to pay for professional development services.

While not a comprehensive survey, this information provides some insight for policy makers into the amount of time provided by LEAs for educator professional development activities. USOE highlighted that some additional work may need to be done to ensure consistent results. For example, further research is needed into the reasons why charter schools generally provide more professional development time than school districts. Is this due to greater flexibility with educators in regards to paid contract time? Or, have school districts moved to a different model of providing job-embedded professional development?

Further information on the report and presentation provided by the USOE can be found by following these links:

[Effective Professional Development](#)

[Investing in High Quality Professional Learning](#)