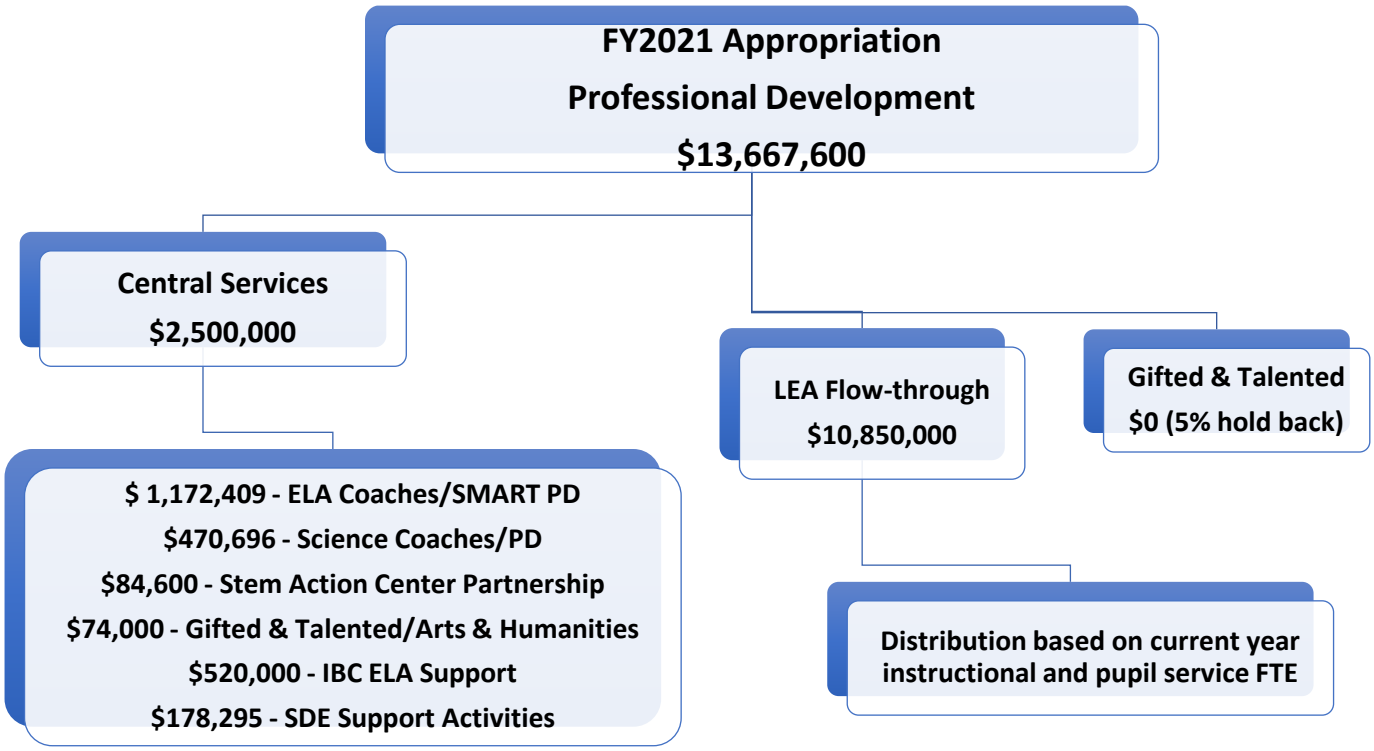
Professional Development

Overview

Professional development funds support resources in the State Department of Education in the superintendent's central services budget. Funds distributed to districts and charter schools are to be used to support professional development activities for educators and staff to improve student learning and can be used for educator mentoring and collaboration.



Idaho ELA/Literacy Coaches

The State Department of Education has full-time regional coaches focused on supporting educators in improving instructional practices and developing deeper understanding of Idaho's English Language Arts/Literacy Content Standards. $1,398,813 is allocated and used to contract with 13 ELA/Literacy specialists to provide this strategic support. They connect to schools and districts by attending regional superintendent meetings, through personal visits with district leaders, by conducting needs assessments, and through email lists, newsletters, and social media. They network with teachers through large group events and get to know local school leaders through follow-up support at the site level. The purpose of the Idaho Coaching Network is to improve student performance through ongoing professional development for teachers, instructional coaches, curriculum teams, administrators, and support staff. This network provides a cohesive, strategic, and sustainable method for implementing the

Idaho Content Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy, cultivates local leadership, and facilitates implementation of research-based instructional strategies.

Math Initiative

In 2008, through Idaho Code 33-1627, the Idaho Legislature acknowledged that mathematical skills are increasingly important to the future academic and career success of Idaho students. To promote improvement of mathematical instruction and student achievement, the statute calls for one or more of the following: high quality, ongoing professional development for Idaho educators; a statewide online mathematical instruction program for remedial and advancement opportunities; and formative assessments to assist teachers in identification purposes. The superintendent's budget for FY20/21 appropriated $1,717,800 for the initiative. Nearly 87% of the allocation provides funding for the Idaho Regional Math Centers, described in the next section.

Idaho Regional Math Centers

The Idaho Regional Mathematics Centers are housed within the colleges of education at each of Idaho's four-year institutions of higher education: Boise State University, Lewis Clark State College, Idaho State University and the University of Idaho. The diversity and geography associated with Idaho's districts and schools necessitates a need for a statewide system of regional centers. Each center is staffed with Directors and Regional Specialists, all of whom have experience in K-16 mathematics education, designing and delivering professional development, instructional technologies and educational research.

Regional center staff work collaboratively with the State Department of Education and representatives from local industries, as well as faculty from higher education, to ensure the best possible support is provided for each region. Connections to schools and districts are made through personal visits with district leaders, attending regional superintendents' meetings, as well as use of surveys, email lists and newsletters. Center staff network with teachers through large group events and get to know local school leaders through follow-up support at the site level.

Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars

Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars (ISAS) is a competitive program that allows high school juniors to take an engaging online NASA-developed course on Space Exploration through Idaho Digital Learning that teaches a broad range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills aligned with Idaho Content Standards. The allocation for this program is $362,300.

Partnership with STEM Action Center

The SDE partners with the STEM Action Center in the annual summer iSTEM event. This intensive four-day event held at Universities in each of the six regions connects hundreds of K-12 teachers in the areas of Science, Math, and Technologies. We partner by providing a grant, training, and support to the course

providers and the STEM Action Center. This year the partnership grant is $84,000, which sponsors 7 courses in this diverse professional development event.

Science Coaches

The Idaho Science Coaches are experienced science teachers contracted by the SDE to provide customized professional development services as requested by districts, schools and teachers. They teach a nine-week online course, supporting teachers in implementing the standards in their own classrooms, reaching 20-60 education professionals per session; a 4-week course on integrating Science and English Language Arts in K-5 classrooms reaching 20-30 education professionals per session; and a year-long in-depth study of Idaho State Content Standards based lesson development reaching 10-15 education professionals per session. Additionally, they produce a monthly newsletter with announcements and resource links reaching 5,000 people a month, and manage the Idaho Science Coaching Center with links to standards, implementation modules, assessment tools, digital resources, inquiry units and lessons, Idaho based phenomenon and other resources.

LEA Professional Development Flow-through Funds

A study conducted of district and charter spending of professional development funds distributed to districts per HO385 Section 4 found on average, 27.5% was spent for job embedded professional development, 36% for mentor teachers and/or instructional coaches, 36.5% for in district professional development, 24.5% for continuing education, 19.5% on conferences, and 11.5% on other, spent of district allocated funds. Tables 1 – 5 give a quick view of frequency.

Table 1

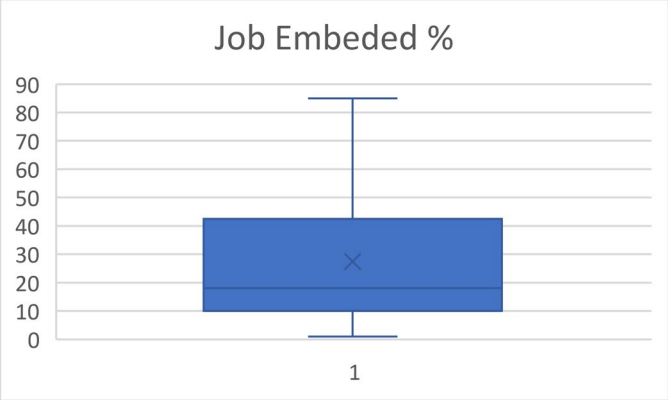
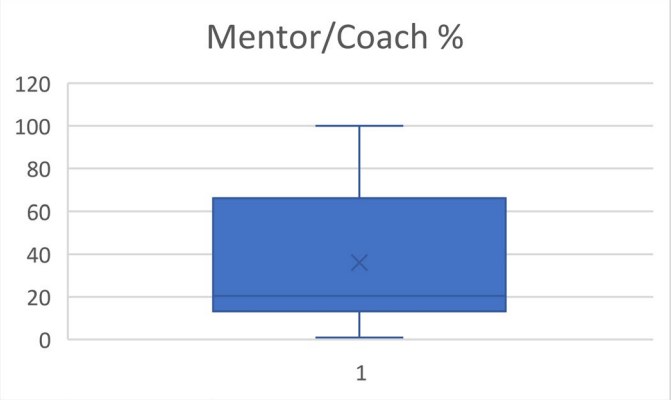


Table 2



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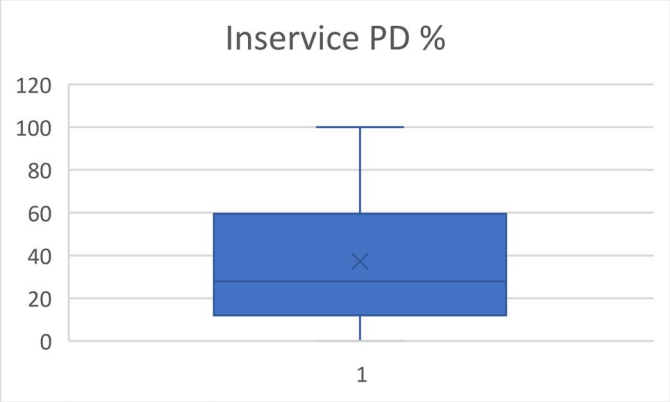

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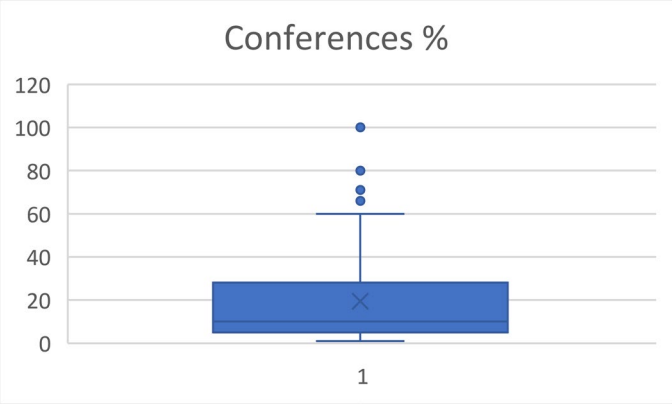

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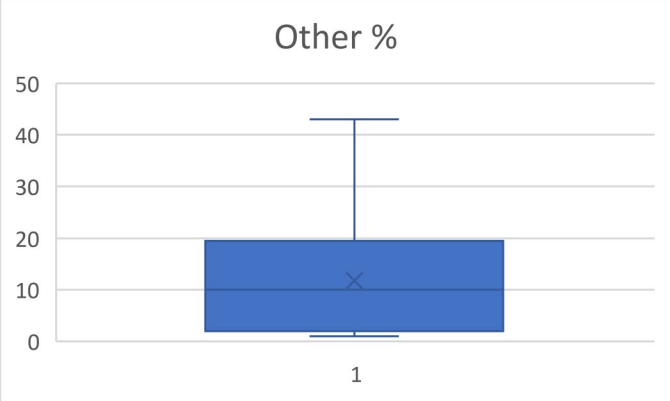

Effectiveness of these professional development programs were evaluated primarily by the degree of implementation in classrooms, teacher evaluations by building principals, input from teachers at PLCs and staff meetings, as well as through surveys, review of student data, attendance, and graduation rates. Whereas it was reported that positive student outcomes were most effected by increased teacher collaboration time and training in the use of data in design of instruction, it was often noted that all professional development which increased teacher capacity resulted in improved success of the student.