

# Colorado Title II, Part A Evaluation Summary: Trends in IIA-Funded Activities

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In conjunction with

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## Introduction

Title II, Part A (IIA) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides funding for district-based initiatives designed to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in schools. Title IIA funds may be used for a vast array of activities including high-quality professional development, recruitment and retention of effective educators, helping teachers become highly qualified, and class size reduction. However, emerging research on the different allowable activities suggests that some strategies have more impact on educator effectiveness, and ultimately on student learning, than others.

Based on a review of this research, CDE has been encouraging districts over the last several years to prioritize IIA spending on activities that appear to be the most effective at improving educator quality (e.g., high quality professional development and recruitment and retention (RR)). As part of this shift in prioritization, CDE has expected districts to adhere to the ESEA definition of high quality professional development (e.g., activities that are high-quality, intensive, job-embedded, and on-going, ESEA, 2001, Section 9101(34)(A)(v)) when planning and implementing IIA-funded professional development. Further, RR has been shown to be an important part of an effective teacher and leader system. Because of this demonstrated success and the evident need in districts, CDE has devoted time and effort to obtaining additional funding for RR activities. For example, CDE has repurposed funds from other sources outside of IIA to fund a competitive process to support initiatives aimed at increasing RR efforts (e.g., high-quality teacher mentoring programs) within districts.

In contrast, CDE has de-emphasized the use of IIA funds for class-size reduction (CSR) and highly qualified (HQ) activities. As the ESEA deadline to have all core content teachers HQ passed and the State's number of HQ teachers has approached 100%<sup>1</sup>, funds to support teachers in becoming highly qualified (e.g., paying for subject matter competency tests) have become less essential. Additionally, the research on the effectiveness of class-size reduction is mixed (e.g., Krueger, 1999, Hanushek, 1999). Given the limited amount of IIA funds for most districts, CSR does not provide the same widespread system level impact that some of the other human capital strategies do (e.g., a district's entire allocation may be spent on one third grade teacher). Districts then find it difficult to evaluate the usefulness of those funds.

In the past two years, CDE has been working collaboratively with its external evaluator, OMNI Institute, to examine how Colorado districts allocate their IIA funds and whether budget patterns reflect the shifts in CDE's policies and priorities. Recent IIA-funded activities (2008-2009) were compared to those of earlier program years (2003-2004). The trends and changes detected in the collaborative research are presented in this brief summary.

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<sup>1</sup> Colorado's definition of HQ: "In accordance with section 1119 of NCLB, Colorado defines Highly Qualified Teachers as teachers that are fully licensed and able to demonstrate subject matter competency in each core content area in which they are assigned. This definition applies to both general and special education teachers that are responsible for providing instruction in core content subject areas." For additional details see *The HQ Handbook for Districts* at [http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt.asp)

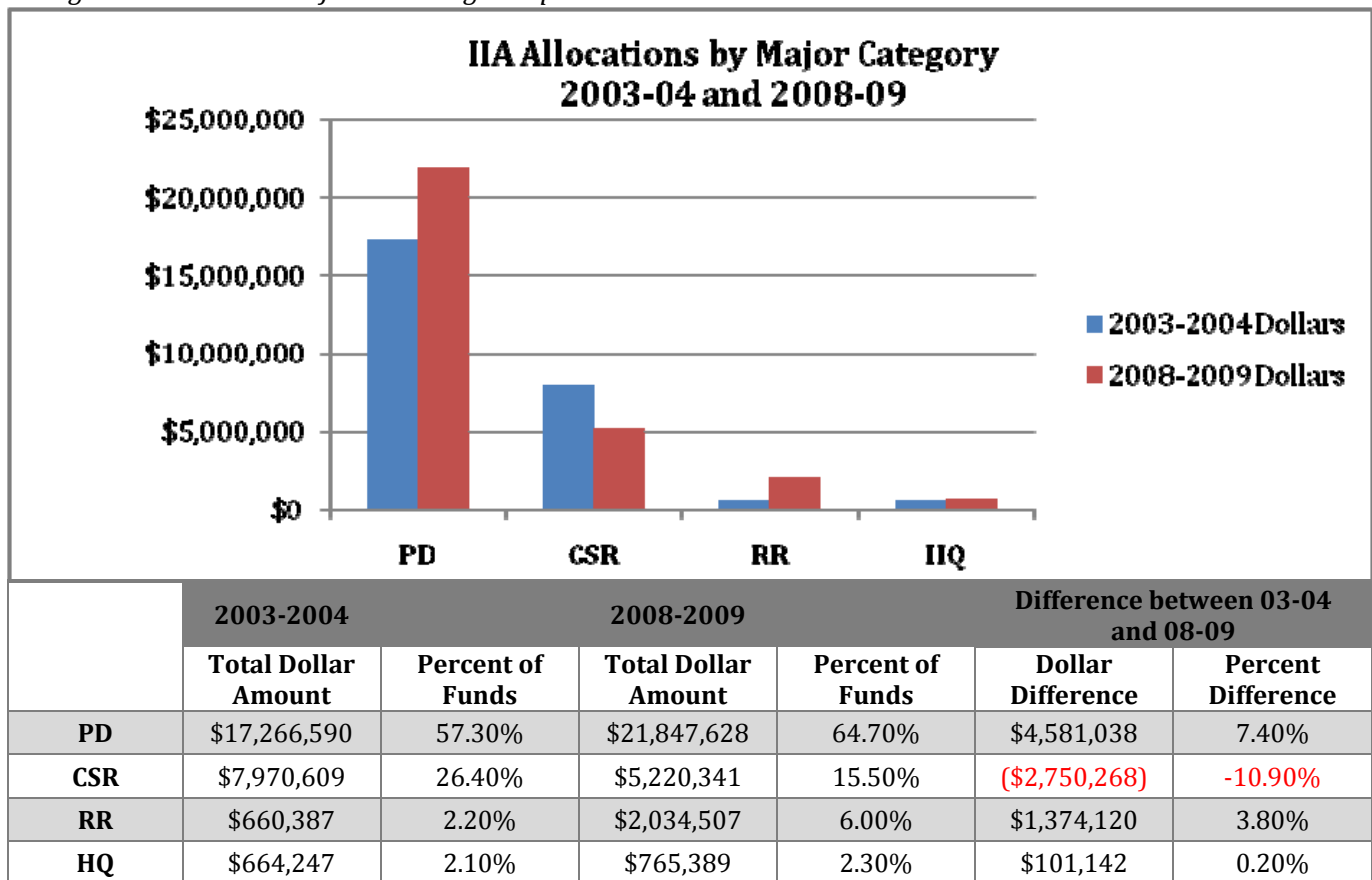
## Colorado's Trends on the Use of IIA Funds

In both years of analyses, IIA funds were assigned to the following five major categories: Professional Development (PD), Class Size Reduction (CSR), Recruitment and Retention (RR), Highly Qualified (HQ), and Other Activities (OA). Any activities that did not fit precisely into one of the other four activities were coded as OA. The categorization was based on the description provided in the budgets submitted by districts with their application for IIA funds. District budget items were coded into various allowable activities using a coding scheme developed specifically for this project (available upon request).

### Overall IIA Funding

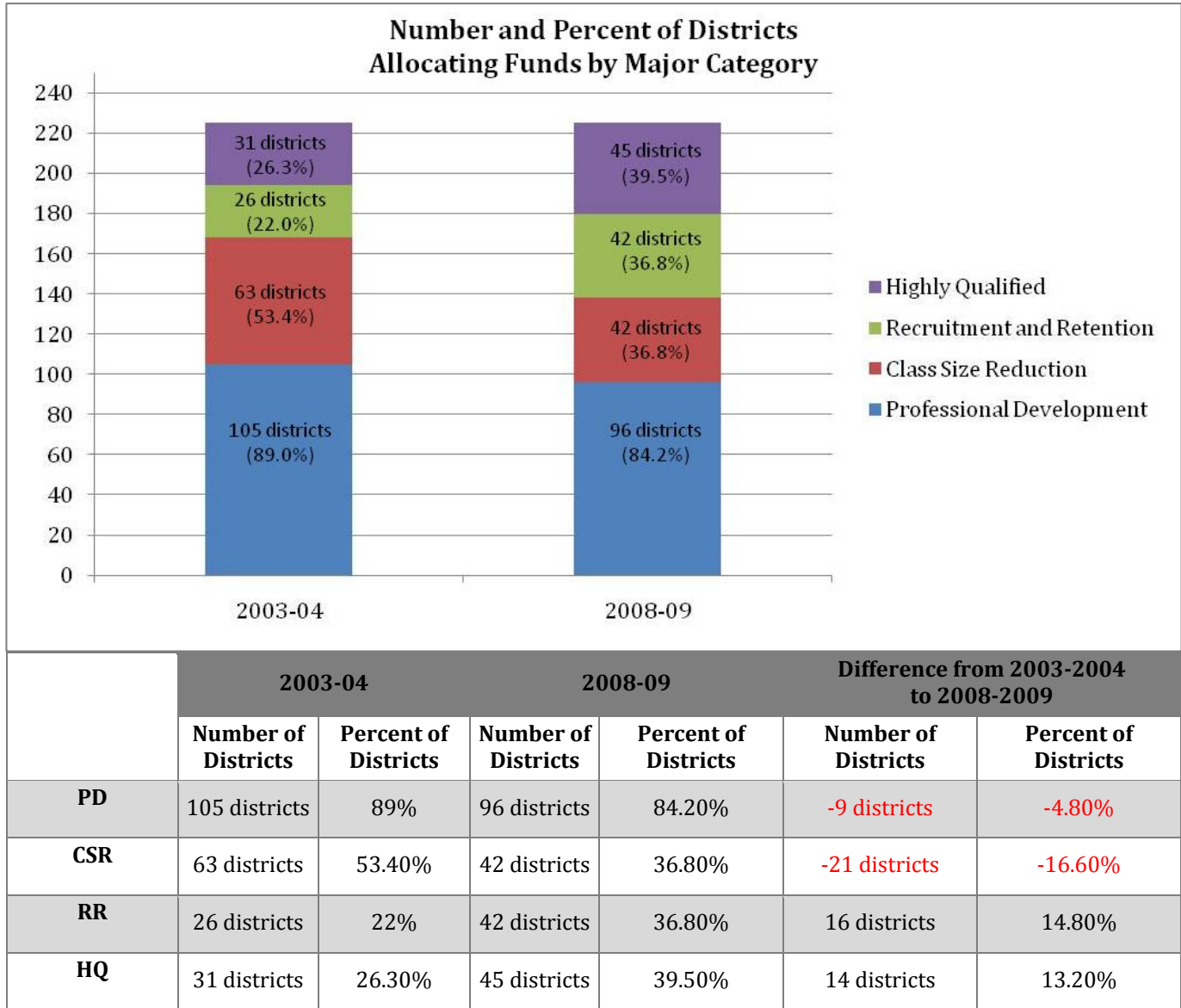
Figure 1 below shows the overall IIA funding comparison between 2003-04 and 2008-09. In 2003-04, the \$30,135,571 in IIA funds were budgeted as follows: 57.3% on PD, 26.4% on CSR, 2.2% on RR, and 2.1% on HQ. The 2008-09 data indicated shifts in funding allocations that aligned with CDE's guidance and direction. PD allocations increased to 64.7% and RR allocations increased to 6%, while CSR funding reduced to 15.5% of the overall IIA funds. Despite state HQ percentages approaching 100%<sup>2</sup>, the percentage of HQ funding increased slightly from 2.1% in 2003-04 to 2.3%, in 2008-09.

Figure 1: Overall Use of IIA Funding Compared Across Two Years



<sup>2</sup> In 2003-2004, 91% of classes were taught by HQ teachers and by 2008-2009, the percentage had reached 98.5%.

Figure 2: Comparison of IIA Activities by Number of Districts\* Across Two Years<sup>3</sup>



\*Districts were included in analyses when at least one budget item was allocated to PD.

#### *Professional Development (PD)*

The largest proportion of IIA dollars was used to support PD activities. While the PD allocations increased from over \$17 million (57.3% of IIA funds) in 2003-2004 to over \$21 million (64.7% of IIA funds) in 2008-2009, a higher percentage of districts (N = 105, 89%) were allocating funds to PD in 2003-2004 than in 2008-2009 (N = 96, 84.2%).

<sup>3</sup> The percentage of districts allocating funds to various activities will not total 100% because districts can expend funds to more than one type of activity and therefore can be counted in more than one category.

### *Recruitment and Retention (RR)*

The total funds allocated to RR more than tripled from \$660,387 (2.2% of IIA funds) in 2003-2004 to \$2,034,507 (6% of IIA funds) in 2008-2009. As demonstrated in Figure 2 above, the percentage of districts allocating funds to RR also increased from 26 districts (22%) to 42 districts (36.8%).

### *Class Size Reduction (CSR)*

There was a significant decrease in funds allocated to CSR between 2003-04 and 2008-09. In 2003-2004, allocations for CSR totaled almost \$8 million (26.4% of IIA funds), while in 2008-09, funding for CSR dropped to a little over \$5 million (15.5% of IIA funds). Significantly fewer districts (42 or 36.8%) allocated funds for CSR in 2008-09 compared to 63 districts (53.4%) in 2003-04.

### *Highly Qualified Activities and Strategies (HQ)*

Funds allocated to HQ activities and strategies remained fairly low in both years, with minimal increases in allocations. In 2003-04, \$664,247 (2.1% of IIA funds) were allocated for HQ by 31 districts (26.3%). In 2008-09, there was a slight increase to \$765,389 (2.3% of IIA funds) by a larger number of districts (N = 45, 39.5%).

CDE and OMNI examined the 2008-2009 data further to determine which types of activities were being funded out of the major categories of PD and RR and by what percentage of districts. The results of that investigation are presented below.

### *Additional Analysis on Professional Development (PD) Activities*

Table 1 provides the dollar amounts and percent of funds allocated to various PD activities, as well as the number and percent of districts allocating funds for each type of activity.

*Table 1: Professional Development Activities Supported by IIA Funds in 2008-2009*

PD Category	Amount	Percentage of PD Funds	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts
Coaching	\$8,961,241	41.0%	47	41.2%
Trainings	\$4,205,080	19.2%	59	51.8%
External Experts/Facilitators	\$2,034,322	9.3%	30	26.3%
PD Coordinators	\$1,586,547	7.3%	19	16.7%
Conferences	\$960,979	4.4%	41	36.0%
Curriculum	\$730,117	3.3%	17	14.9%
Professional Learning Communities	\$217,915	1.0%	14	12.3%
Multiple Categories & Other PD Activities	\$3,151,427	14.4%	22 & 60	19.3% & 52.6%

Of the districts that allocated IIA funds to PD in 2008-2009, 47 of the districts (41.2%) allocated funds for coaching (almost \$9 million) and 59 districts (51.8%) allocated funds for internal trainings (over \$4 million). Nineteen districts hired PD coordinators to organize and facilitate PD – accounting for 7.3% (\$1,586,547) of PD funds. An additional 9.3% of PD funds (\$2,034,322) was allocated for external experts and facilitators hired by districts to provide PD. Only 41 districts (36%) allocated PD funds (\$960,979) for conferences.

### *Additional Analysis on Recruitment and Retention (RR)*

Table 2 below shows the dollar amounts and percent of funds allocated to each RR category as well as the number and percent of districts allocating funds for each type of activity.

*Table 2: Recruitment and Retention Activities Supported by IIA Funds in 2008-2009*

RR Category	Amount	Percentage of RR Funds	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts
Induction and Support	\$1,290,930	63.5%	20	17.5%
Teacher Mentoring	\$401,381	19.7%	24	21.1%
Recruitment Initiatives	\$179,454	8.8%	11	9.6%
Teacher Advancement Initiatives	\$133,873	6.6%	3	2.6%

Of the over \$2 million dollars spent in 2008-2009 on RR, 63.5% was allocated for induction and support for new teachers and principals. Twenty percent of the RR funds were allocated to teacher mentoring, 9% to recruitment initiatives and 7% to teacher advancement initiatives.

## **Discussion**

CDE has encouraged districts to direct their IIA funds on activities that appear to be the most effective at improving educator quality, specifically emphasizing the importance of high-quality professional development and effective recruitment and retention strategies. As evidenced in the data presented above, districts have begun shifting their use of IIA funds in response to this direction. Significantly fewer districts are using funds for CSR, while allocations for PD and RR increased from 2003-04 to 2008-09.

Since 36% of districts (41 districts) allocated PD funds for conferences in 2008-09, CDE will continue to emphasize the importance of high-quality PD and discourage the use of IIA funds for one-day trainings, workshops, or conferences. Conferences often do not meet the standards for high quality professional development since they are not job-embedded or ongoing. Researchers (e.g., Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007) have criticized one-day workshops or conference attendance, explaining that these brief and general trainings do not provide the depth and connection to expanding content knowledge and improving practices needed for PD to be effective. The few remaining districts allocating funds for such events will need to consider other PD activities that better meet the ESEA definition of high quality PD and that research has demonstrated to be effective in improving teacher content knowledge and pedagogy.

Although 53% of the teachers who completed the TELL Colorado Survey (2009) reported that school leaders adequately addressed PD needs, only 33.33% of teachers reported receiving PD that was differentiated to meet individual teacher needs. When asked if PD enhances teachers' abilities, 52% of teachers and 84% of principals surveyed considered PD a requirement for meeting diverse learning needs of students. These data highlight the importance of using IIA funds to ensure that teachers have access to high quality differentiated PD.

In addition, teachers reported a greater likelihood to remain in the same school if they had strong leadership and received adequate support from school leaders (TELL Colorado Survey, 2009 results). In 2008-09, \$20,855,761 (95.5% of PD funds) were allocated to providing PD to teachers, while only \$166,450 (0.8% of PD funds<sup>4</sup>) were reserved for principals. In order to ensure that schools are staffed by the strong leaders teacher indicate are necessary, those leaders also need high-quality PD. Therefore, CDE encourages districts to use a portion of IIA funds to provide principals with more

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that \$771,667 (3.5% of PD funds) were allocated to providing PD to multiple personnel, making it difficult to ascertain precise amounts and percentages for principals. Therefore, a portion of the funds spent on multiple personnel might have been spent for leadership training, in addition to the funds stated in the text. However, even factoring in this 3.5%, the percentage allocated to PD for principals would only be 4.3% of the funds allocated for PD.

access to high quality PD opportunities designed to improve the quality of leadership and support provided to teachers.

The funds allocated to RR more than tripled from 2003-04 to 2008-09, and the number of districts allocating funds to RR in 2008-09 increased from 26 to 42 districts. Given the high cost of teacher attrition, estimated at \$10,000 to hire and train each new teacher, and the importance of teacher quality delineated in the *Shining the Light II: State of Teacher Quality, Attrition, and Diversity in Colorado* (2008), CDE encourages districts to think critically and creatively about use of IIA funds for supporting recruitment and retention efforts.

Because over 99% of Colorado educators have been highly qualified for several years now, CDE will continue to discourage districts from reserving large amounts for HQ activities. HR policies have been created in most districts that ensure that only HQ teachers are hired. Funds for HQ activities should be minimal and support maintenance purposes (e.g., HR staff to oversee the collection of accurate data for NCLB reporting).

Similarly, CDE will continue to limit the use of IIA funds for CSR, especially for those districts identified for improvement under section 2141(c) of NCLB. Through the Unified Improvement Planning process, CDE is emphasizing that districts determine the root cause for not making AYP and/or HQ targets. Title IIA funds should be used to assist in resolving the root cause.

CDE will continue to guide districts to use IIA funds purposefully and plan activities based on national research findings, as well as the results of the budget analyses presented in this report. Additionally, CDE encourages districts to evaluate their own use of IIA funds to determine the effectiveness of the funded activities and the impacts made by the funds on school and student outcomes. CDE invites districts to share the results of such investigations, and CDE will take such findings into consideration in future guidance to the field on the use of IIA funds.

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