



Research Report

Professional Development Funding

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Prepared for

**THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
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**2017-18
Adequacy
Study**

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Requirements For Professional Development.....	1
Professional Development Policy History.....	2
Arkansas Ideas.....	3
Teacher Survey Results	4
Professional Learning Communities	6
Professional Development Funding	8
Professional Development Expenditures.....	10
Professional Development Fund Balances	11
Conclusion	12

INTRODUCTION

According to Arkansas statute, “The purpose of professional development is to improve knowledge and skills in order to facilitate individual, team, school-wide, and district-wide improvement designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on the state academic standards” (§ 6-17-704(b)). In Arkansas, professional development (PD) is funded through categorical funds to restrict the use of money for those purposes.

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the state’s PD requirements, the distribution of PD funding to districts and charter schools, the expenditures of PD funding by districts and charter schools, and survey results from Arkansas teachers and districts regarding PD.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

According to Arkansas statute, districts must include no less than six professional development days in educator contracts (§ 6-17-2402). State law (§ 6-17-704) also requires districts to annually prepare a professional development plan that does the following:

- Improves the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of teachers;
- Improves the knowledge and skills of administrators and paraprofessionals concerning effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills;
- Leads to improved student academic achievement; and
- Is research-based and standards-based.

Act 969 of 2013 and department rules established that one of the following topics is required for educators each year on a rotating basis over four years (previously some of the topics were required annually):

- Two hours on child maltreatment;
- Two hours on parental involvement;
- Two hours on teen suicide awareness and prevention; and
- Two hours on Arkansas history (to teachers who provide instruction in Arkansas history)

Act 1294 of 2013 requires all teachers to receive professional awareness on dyslexia by 2014-15. Act 765 of 2017 requires that districts annually make available thirty minutes of professional development on human trafficking.

Athletic coaches working in school districts are required to complete training every three years on the following:

- Concussions, dehydration or other health emergencies;
- Environmental issues that threaten the health or safety of students;
- Communicable diseases; and
- Sudden cardiac arrest (added by Act 1013 of 2017).

Act 1063 of 2017 requires districts and charters to provide PD in specific scientific reading instruction. For teachers licensed at the elementary level, districts and charters must provide PD for one of the “prescribed pathways to obtaining a proficiency credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction.” For teachers licensed at levels other than elementary, districts and charters must provide PD for one of the “prescribed pathways to obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction.”

Professional development can be earned in the following ways: approved conferences, workshops, institutes, individual learning, mentoring, peer-coaching, study groups, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification, distance learning, micro-credentialing approved by the department, internships, and college or university course work (§ 6-17-704(d)).

Additionally, up to twelve hours of PD credit may be earned by licensed personnel for time required at the beginning of the school year for planning and preparing a curriculum and other instructional materials (§ 6-17-705(a)).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY HISTORY

The General Assembly provided PD funding for the first time in 2004-05. In their 2003 report to the General Assembly, Lawrence O. Picus and Associates, an education finance consulting firm hired by the General Assembly in 2003, recommended that additional funding be provided for professional development. They also stated that “improving teacher effectiveness through high quality professional development is arguably as important as all of the other resource strategies identified; better instruction is the key aspect of the education system that will improve student learning.”¹ The report outlined four strategies to implement an effective professional development program:

1. Some time during the summer for intensive training institutes;
2. On-site coaching for all teachers;
3. Collaborative work with teachers in their school during planning and preparation periods; and
4. Funds for trainings

In response to these recommendations, the General Assembly passed multiple laws. Act 59 of the 2nd Extraordinary Session of 2003 extended the basic teacher contract length to 190 days, which was previously set at 185 days in the Rules and Regulations Governing the Standards for Accreditation², and included a total of ten days of professional development. To pay for these additional days, about \$101 per student was added to the funding allocated for teacher salaries. The foundation funding rate established by Act 59 included funding for 2.5 instructional facilitators to help with the on-site coaching Picus and Associates recommended. Act 462 of 2003 called for teachers to have planning periods (200 minutes each week) in increments of no less than forty minutes to allow for more collaborative work with other teachers. And Act 59 provided \$50 per student in PD funding, or \$25,000 for a prototypical school of 500 students, to bring in trainers, pay for travel associated with intensive summer institutes, and cover other miscellaneous PD costs.

These provisions remained relatively unchanged through 2013. That year the General Assembly significantly reduced the amount of PD funding provided to districts. In an effort to buoy the public school employee insurance plan, Act 2 of the 1st Extraordinary Session of 2013, reduced the PD funding rate by 40%, from \$54 (which had been established for FY2015 during the 2013 regular session) to \$32.40 per student. This funding change was made with the expectation that the State Board of Education would reduce the required number of professional development hours from 60 to 36. The Department of Education’s (ADE) Rules Governing Professional Development were then changed to reduce the required PD days to six days (or 36 hours) of professional development in the basic contract for educators (1.02.1). In 2015, the General Assembly passed Act 44, which reduced the number of PD days in the basic teacher contract from ten to no less than six. ADE’s Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts still requires ten PD days but is in the process of revising that to match the requirements set forth in statute. Even though the number of PD days were reduced to six, the total number of contract days remains at 190.

The Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) asked all district superintendents in Arkansas to complete an online survey. Out of the 260 surveys distributed, 244 responses (94%) were

¹ *An Evidence Based Approach to School Finance Adequacy in Arkansas*. Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.

² ADE Rules and Regulations Governing the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools (June 2002).

received as of Jan. 10, 2018. This survey was sent to them on October 6, 2017, with the last survey received on November 16, 2017. BLR has received additional responses since then but were not received in time for inclusion in this report. Among those questions, BLR asked how their district was using the additional PD days. For this question, every superintendent completing the survey responded.

Table 1 - District Survey Question: In 2015, the General Assembly reduced the number of days districts are required to use as Professional Development (PD) days from 10 to 6, but did not reduce the number of days required in the basic teacher contract. What is your district doing with the remaining 4 days?

Increasing the student interaction days	Continuing to treat them as PD days	Paying teachers for these days, but not requiring them to work	Other, Describe
3%	89%	1%	11%

As seen in Table 1 above, 89% of superintendents (218) said they continue to treat the extra four days as PD days. About 11% of superintendents (27) responded that they are treating these days in other ways. Among these superintendents, 59% (13) said they use these days in a combination of ways (e.g., two classroom prep days and two PD days). Three superintendents responded that at least one or more of these additional days are used to work on their professional learning community (PLC).

ARKANSAS IDEAS

ArkansasIDEAS (Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools) is a partnership between ADE and the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) to provide online professional development for Arkansas licensed educators and those wishing to obtain an Arkansas educator license. ArkansasIDEAS “connects K-12 educators with quality ADE-approved professional development and educational opportunities.”³ It also offers programs of study to assist teachers in “obtaining an Arkansas Educator License or additional grade band endorsements added to an existing license.”⁴ Additionally, it provides professional development that helps teachers understand new statutory requirements such as dyslexia intervention and Common Core State Standards.

In 2005, the General Assembly passed Act 2318 of 2005 which created the Arkansas Online Professional Development Initiative. The idea for the statewide program was to pool resources and create one online system that individual school districts and co-ops could use for professional development at no charge. ADE set up the online system by awarding grants to AETN and other organizations to establish and maintain a portal for online courses, known as ArkansasIDEAS. The program develops some course content and subscribes to other course content developed by outside vendors. While AETN now receives all of the program funds, other organizations, such as educational cooperatives, have received funding in the past.

Special language included in Act 2131 of 2005 authorized ADE to use up to \$4 million of the professional development funding to “develop and implement statewide professional development support systems for teachers that will benefit student achievement.” This special language was included in each Public School Fund appropriation bill until 2015 when it was removed in an effort to reduce unnecessary language. However, it was re-added in 2017 with Act 1044 at the urging of ADE and made effective July 1, 2017. When this special language was re-added in 2017, the language was amended to require ADE to report information back to the state including annual expenditure information, statistics pertaining to users, course offerings, course hours completed, and certificates awarded. The new language also reduced the amount

³ <http://ideas.aetn.org/>

⁴ <http://ideas.aetn.org/>

to \$3.5 million due to ADE's new grant review process. AETN is required to report at the end of the fiscal year the amount of their grant monies remain unspent. ADE lowered the grant award amount in response to these reports in an effort to get AETN to spend down their existing fund balances for the program.

In 2015, ArkansasIDEAS switched to a new Learning Management Software (LMS). The LMS user registration system is now integrated in ADE's educator licensure system, allowing teachers who are registering to use ArkansasIDEAS to be more quickly identified as licensed educators and granted access. The new system requires all users to register or reregister annually, allowing a fresh look at the numbers of people actually using the system. By the end of 2015, 20,537 educators had registered to access the portal. That number increased to 35,381 as of March 31, 2017 with 611 courses being offered. Since 2007, ArkansasIDEAS has awarded 2.3 million PD credit hours and 135,870 certificates (received after each course completed).⁵

According to the FY17 year-end report, the most popular courses taken include the courses associated with trainings mandated by ADE. These courses include trainings on: child maltreatment, dyslexia, parental involvement, suicide awareness, Arkansas history, and communicable diseases.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the adequacy study, BLR surveys superintendents, principals, and a sample of teachers in Arkansas schools. The teacher survey was distributed to teachers in the 74 schools randomly selected to participate in BLR's school site visits, which included an in-person interview with the principal. BLR distributed 2,572 teacher surveys and 1,005 have completed a survey (as of January 10, 2018). The first surveys were distributed on October 23, 2017, and the remaining surveys were distributed through January 12, 2018. All remaining surveys were due by the end of January 2018. The following questions were included, among others, on this survey.

Table 2: What percentage of your professional development is provided by each of the following options:

For this question, there were 1,005 responses. Table 2 shows the average percentage of time each type of PD makes up teachers' overall PD. PD from educational cooperatives make up the largest percentage of teachers' PD with 21.7%, followed closely by district or school facilitated use of ArkansasIDEAS. College courses and out-of-state conferences and workshops make up the smallest proportion of teachers' PD.

Educational cooperatives	21.7%	Collaboration with instructional facilitators/ academic coaches	8.8%
District- or school-facilitated use of ArkansasIDEAS	20.5%	Individual use of Arkansas IDEAS	4.8%
Collaboration with other teachers	14.4%	Other (See Below)	3.2%
Collaboration with school leaders/ administrators	12.6%	College courses	2.3%
In-state conferences or workshops	10.1%	Out-of-state conferences or workshops	1.8%

⁵ ArkansasIDEAS FY 2016-2017 Year-End Report

Table 3: "Other" types of PD indicated in Table 2 above

District/school provided	45
Self-Directed research/work	10
State Programs/ Professional Organizations (EAST, APPEL, ADOL, Kappa Delta Pi)	7
Other in-state workshops/conferences (Crystal Bridges, Makerspace, AP Institutes)	5
Online Sources (IDEAS, Edweb, and webinars)	4
Solution Tree/PLC/Collaboration among educators	4
Athletic Coaches Trainings	2
College Courses	1
Active Shooter training	1
Experience	1

*Does not include six responses that were marked "other" in error. Some teachers included more than one type of PD in their response.

Table 4: Please rate the usefulness of each form of professional development in terms of enhancing your teaching and knowledge (essential, very useful, useful, somewhat useful, or not very useful).

For this question, there were 970 responses. Table 4 shows how teachers rated different forms of professional development. Forms of professional development are ranked using the total percentage of teachers ranking each form of professional development useful, very useful, and essential. Collaboration with other teachers was considered the most useful with 94% rating it useful or above. Nearly half considered it essential. The top five forms of professional development include collaboration with teachers, school leaders/administrators, or instructional facilitators/academic coaches. Table 5 shows the "other" responses listed. The most common included some form of a PLC or teacher collaboration and self-directed research/work.

Rating	Form of PD	Essential	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful
1	Collaboration with other teachers	44%	30%	20%	4%	3%
2	Collaboration with school leaders/administrators	22%	28%	34%	11%	6%
3	In-state conferences or workshops	16%	30%	34%	11%	10%
4	Educational cooperatives	18%	29%	32%	15%	6%
5	Collaboration with instructional facilitators/academic coaches	19%	28%	29%	13%	11%
6	College courses	8%	18%	33%	17%	25%
7	District- or school-facilitated use of Ark. IDEAS	6%	17%	32%	23%	21%
8	Individual use of Arkansas IDEAS	5%	15%	35%	24%	22%
9	Out-of-state conferences or workshops	5%	20%	27%	15%	33%
10	Other (See Below For More Details)	12%	13%	27%	7%	42%

*Responses that did not rate a form of PD are not included in this table.

*Types of PD are ranked based on the percentage of teachers ranking it useful, very useful, or essential.

Table 5: Other Forms of Professional Development shown in Table 4 above

Solution Tree/PLC/Collaboration with other teachers	7	State programs/ professional organizations (ADOL, AOE, and TAPP)	2
Self-Directed Research/Work	6	Athletic Coaches Trainings	1
District Staff	5	Active Shooter training	1
Online Sources (IDEAS, Edweb, and webinars)	4	Working with parents	1
Other in-state workshops/ conferences (Crystal Bridges, EAST)	2		

*These responses do not include 15 responses made in error or did not answer the question. Some teachers listed multiple reasons in their responses.

Table 6: How prepared do you feel to help your students succeed on the ACT Aspire?

For this question, 991 responses were received. Of these responses, 173 were removed because they responded “not applicable” to this question. These may include teachers who teach a grade or class that does not take the ACT Aspire. As seen in Table 6, at least 80% of the teachers surveyed stated they are at least somewhat prepared to ready students for the ACT Aspire. Only 24% felt very prepared. The remaining 20% of teachers stated they were either minimally prepared or not prepared at all.

	Percentage of Teachers
Very prepared	24%
Somewhat prepared	56%
Minimally prepared	16%
Not prepared	4%

When asked to explain why they felt minimally or not prepared at all, teachers provided a variety of reasons, as seen in Table 7 below. One of the biggest concerns was that there are not enough/adequate test materials from ACT Aspire. Many stated that they needed more guidance on what the tests would look like, which included having example questions to use. Another main concern was a lack of resources (textbooks, curriculum, etc.) and training needed to better prepare students for the exam. Additionally, teachers voiced concerns involving the technology needed for the exam and student inexperience with technology. Many of these teachers stated that younger students especially struggled with the exam due to their lack of computer skills (operating a computer, typing, etc.). Another concern was that the exam did not line up with state standards.

Table 7: Why Teachers Feel Minimally or Not Prepared to Help Students Succeed on the ACT Aspire?

Inadequate test preparation materials from ACT Aspire	27%	No feedback provided on writing portion or value given to how student achieved their answer	3%
Inadequate training/resources from school/district (textbooks, curriculum, test prep to non-core teachers, teachers in younger grades, new teachers)	23%	Too much pressure on test scores/teaching to test	3%
Inadequate technology/technology issues/student inexperience with technology (especially among younger students)	11%	Hard to prepare for science- too broad	2%
Students not tested at the correct grade level (including special education, high poverty, and struggling students)	7%	9th and 10th Grade Math section more integrated than being taught in classroom	2%
Assessment does not line up with AR frameworks and requirements	7%	Lack of motivation among students	1%
Not enough prep time/too many testing periods	3%	Hard to prepare for always changing assessments	1%

*Does not include non-ACT Aspire teachers unless they indicated need in knowledge of assessment.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, ADE, in partnership with Solution Tree (a private organization that provides professional development resources, training, and support to K-12 educators), started the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Pilot Program. This is a result of recommendations from the 2016 Adequacy report. Funding was provided by Act 427 of 2017, which required that additional funding provided for professional development above the amount required by statute (currently \$32.40 per student) shall be used by ADE for the development and administration of professional learning communities. This excess amount includes \$4 million which was paid to Solution Tree to implement a pilot PLC program in the 2017-18 school year. Please see Table 8 on the next page for a breakdown of how PD funding will be distributed.

Table 8: Breakdown of how PD funding is distributed in 2017-18

2017-18 Appropriation	\$20,617,836
Districts	\$11,983,248
Charters	\$394,601
AETN (Arkansas IDEAs)	\$3,138,941
Remaining for PLC Pilot Program*	\$5,101,046

*Estimate determined based on the amount remaining after distributing to districts, charters, and AETN. ADE's contract with Solution Tree specifies only \$4 million to be used.

Out of 83 applications, eleven schools and one district were chosen to participate in the pilot program. These include:

Ballman Elementary School (Fort Smith SD)	Monticello Middle School (Monticello SD)
Bragg Elementary School (West Memphis SD)	Morrilton Intern. School (So. Conway Co. SD)
Douglas MacArthur Junior High School (Jonesboro SD)	Premier High School (Little Rock)
Eastside Elementary School (Greenbrier SD)	Prescott School District
Frank Mitchell Intermediate School (Vilonia SD)	Rogers High School (Rogers SD)
Joe T. Robinson Middle School (Pulaski Co. Special SD)	Spradling Elem. School (Fort Smith SD)

In the pilot program, Solution Tree will implement its PLC at Work model in the selected schools. According to ADE, Solution Tree is the only vendor that can deliver the PLC at Work process. The resources are copyrighted and the intellectual property of Solution Tree.⁶

ADE defines a PLC as an “ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.”⁷ The underlying assumption behind PLCs is that it is the “key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.” Broadly, PLCs can also refer to some form of structured collaboration between educators within a school in which educators share experiences, ideas, resources, and strategies for improved student achievement. It can be a formal program implemented in the school or include informal meetings among educators in a school. Some states are utilizing learning communities or collaborative teaching statewide. For example, in Missouri, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) sponsors the Missouri Professional Learning Communities Project.⁸ This school improvement initiative first started in the 2003-04 school year. Schools can opt in, and the state provides comprehensive ongoing training, technical assistance and support. In 2017, New Jersey added a new category in its state budget for general aid to schools, PLC aid. New Jersey is providing \$10 per student per district to “support the development of learning communities within and across districts in order to help teachers and administrators analyze and use the assessment data they collect to improve classroom instruction.”⁹ PLCs have been in use for decades, but their popularity has increased over the last several years. However, since PLCs can be interpreted and implemented in multiple ways, it is hard to determine exactly how many schools/districts are using a form of a PLC.

Solution Tree's PLC at Work program is a specific way of implementing a PLC. Each school will be matched with a certified PLC at Work Associate (or Pilot School Site Coach) who will coordinate the school's PLC services. The site coaches are overseen by a PLC project manager. A Solution Tree project administrator will coordinate the internal Solution Tree team with the project manager and the site coaches to form the project administration and evaluation team. This team will monitor, assess, and report on the pilot school services and will provide periodic feedback to ADE. Each school will have its own Pilot School Plan that will be

⁶ ADE contract with Solution Tree (2017)

⁷ <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/special-projects/professional-learning-communities-in-arkansas>

⁸ <https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/school-improvement-initiatives/professional-learning-communities>

⁹ *Using Professional Learning Community (PLC) Aid to Improve Classroom Instruction*. Non-Regulatory Guidance Document. NJ DOE, Office of Professional Development. (Oct. 2016).

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/resources/LearningCommunityAid.pdf>

collaboratively developed based on a needs assessment at the beginning of the year. Each customized plan will be built on the following components¹⁰:

- Up to fifty days of onsite professional development from certified PLC at Work associates
- Book, video, and online resources for school staff
- Schoolwide subscriptions to global professional development (Professional development tool for PLCs)
- Registrations for PLC events
- Ongoing phone and email support from Pilot School Site Coach (assigned to each school)

According to ADE, the intended outcomes of the pilot project include increased levels of “student achievement through teacher collaboration, a focus on learning, and a results orientation”.¹¹

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Table 9 below shows the per-student amount of professional development funding the state has provided since 2010-11. The cut in funding in 2015 was the result of Act 2 of the 1st Extraordinary Session of 2013. The savings generated by the reduction were redirected to the public school employee insurance plan. Starting in 2017-18, any PD funding that exceeds \$32.40 per student will go towards to the PLC Pilot Program. This comes from Act 427 of 2017 which requires any increases in professional development funding each school year above \$32.40 to be used for PLCs.

Table 9: PD Funding Per-Student

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
\$50	\$51	\$52	\$53	\$32.40	\$32.40	\$32.40	\$32.40*	\$32.40*

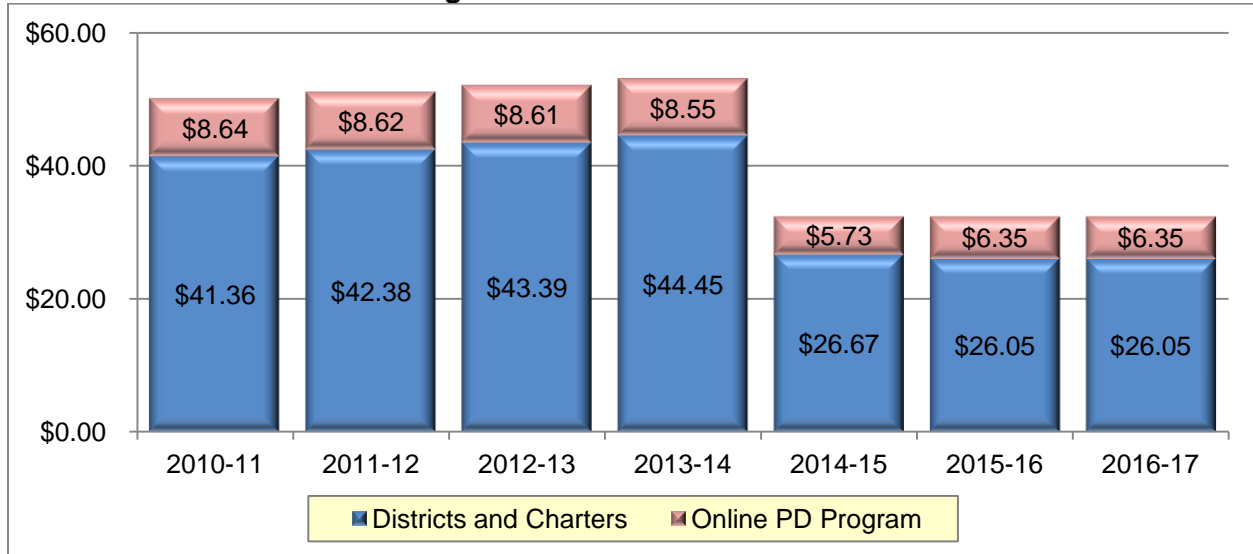
*For 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, the funding above \$32.40 will support the PLC Pilot Program due to Act 427 of 2017.

The \$32.40 per student is divided by the portion supporting the online program and the portion going to the districts. The allocation of \$4 million for the online statewide professional development program resulted in the reduction of the per-student rate paid to school districts by more than \$8 per student thru 2013-14. Though the districts were losing some of the PD funding, the statewide program was expected to offer an efficient online course delivery system that would be free to educators and their employers.

Chart 1 shows the total amount of PD funding distributed to districts per student each year for the last seven years. It shows the amount distributed to districts and open enrollment charter schools and the amount set aside for use under the statewide online PD program. The PD funding designated for the PLC Pilot Program is not included here since it was not distributed as part of the per-student amount.

¹⁰ ADE contract with Solution Tree (2017)

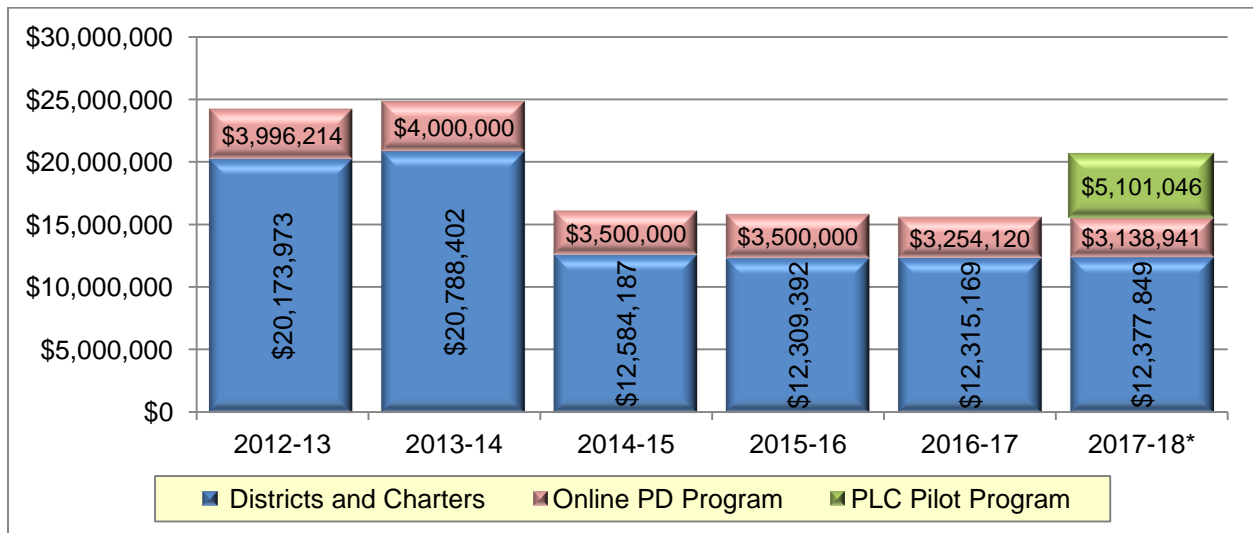
Chart 1: Per-Student PD Funding



Data Source: The per-student amount distributed to districts and charter schools comes from the Arkansas Department of Education’s State Aid Notice for each year. The remaining amount was calculated as the PD funding rate, minus the amount distributed to districts and charter schools. * In 2015-17, ADE supplemented the \$5.73 and \$6.35 per student amount with reserve funds to provide a total of \$3.5 million for the online PD program in 2015 & 2016 and \$3.3 million in 2017.

Chart 2: Distribution of PD Funds

Chart 2 shows the total funding provided for professional development. Like the previous chart, the figures are broken into the amount provided to districts and charter schools and the amount allocated to the online PD program. Additionally, the amount distributed to the PLC pilot program is included to better demonstrate how PD money will be distributed.



Data Source: Department of Education Grants Summarized by the Division of Legislative Audit and ADE’s State Aid Notice for each year. *2017-18 data is preliminary. PLC pilot program amount determined by subtracting the total amount distributed to districts/charters and online PD program (as of 1/5/18) from the total appropriated amount. This is also the amount ADE has available to spend up to for the PLC pilot program but the contract with Solution Tree is limited to \$4 million.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES

Table 10 below shows the total amount of funding provided to school districts and charter schools and the expenditures they made from those categorical funds. (The expenditures do not include any PD funding districts and charters transferred to other categorical funds.) The table also calculates the PD funding and expenditures as a per-student amount. These data show that, since 2013, collectively districts continue to spend more money than they received in PD funding. They were able to spend more money than they received in PD funding, in part, because they transferred money from other categorical funds (such as National School Lunch, English language learner and alternative learning environment state categorical funds). Since 2014, the amount transferred from other categorical funds to PD has nearly doubled and the amount transferred from PD to other categorical funds has been nearly cut in half.

Table 10: PD Funding and Expenditures for Districts and Charters

	Total State PD Revenue Provided by Statute	Transfers from Other Categorical Funds to PD	Total PD Expenditures	Transfers from PD to Other Categorical Funds	Per-Student PD Funding by Statute	Per-Student PD Expenditures
2012-13	\$20,173,973	\$2,085,266	\$21,181,539	\$1,135,661	\$43.39	\$45.56
2013-14	\$20,788,402	\$2,813,022	\$21,049,638	\$1,398,548	\$44.45	\$44.98
2014-15	\$12,584,187	\$4,273,795	\$17,089,118	\$507,214	\$26.67	\$36.22
2015-16	\$12,309,392	\$4,751,780	\$17,439,887	\$352,979	\$26.05	\$36.95
2016-17	\$12,315,169	\$5,605,307	\$17,124,973	\$772,216	\$26.05	\$36.22

Data Source: ADE's State Aid Notice for each year

*For districts and some charters, PD funding is based on the prior year ADM. However, for some charter schools (those receiving foundation funding based on current year enrollment), they will receive professional development funding based on projected enrollment student count as of July 1 of the current school year (§6-23-501)(a)(4).

Chart 3: PD Expenditures, 2015-2017

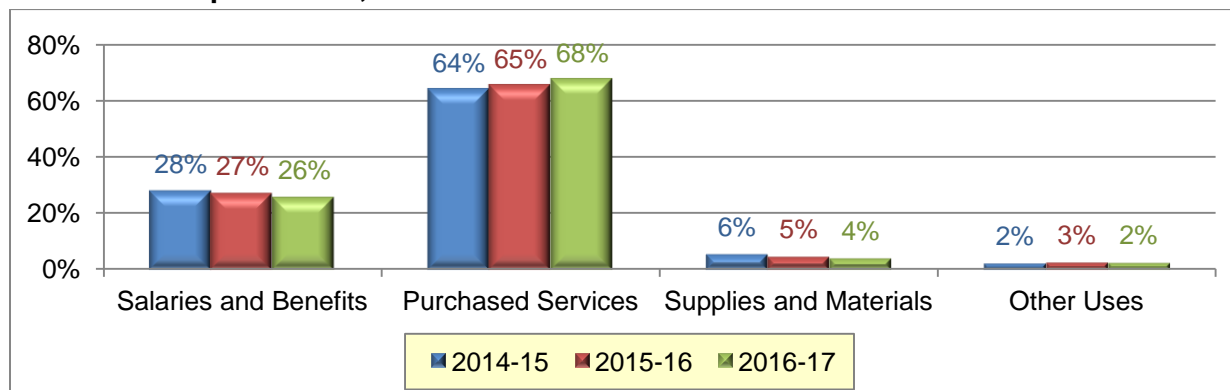
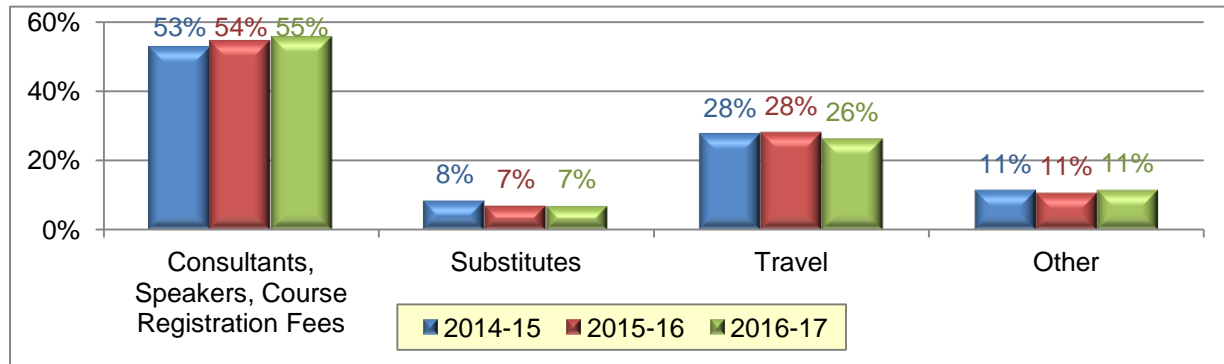


Chart 3 above shows that purchased services are the most common PD expenditure with 68% of districts' and charters' total expenditures being spent on this in 2017. The percentage of PD funding spent on purchased services has increased over the last three years. In 2015, districts and charters spent 64% of their total expenditures on purchased services. Purchased services expenditures are broken down in Chart 4 below.

Chart 4: Purchased Services Expenditures, 2015-2017

*This chart only includes substitutes hired by an outside company. Substitutes hired directly by the school are included in the salaries and benefits category of Chart 3 above.

Chart 4 shows that the most common purchased services include consultants, speakers, and other professional employee training and development services. The percentage of purchased services spent on professional employee training and development services has increased from 53% in 2015 to 55% in 2017.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BALANCES

Districts and charter schools are allowed to carry over funding from one year into the next. Any PD funding they do not spend during the year becomes a fund balance at the end of the year. At the end of 2016-17, 192 districts and charter schools had a collective PD fund balance of \$3,353,307. Table 11 below shows that the total PD fund balances have been decreasing since 2014, as well as the number of districts and charters with a fund balance. This means that districts and charters are collectively spending down more of their fund balances.

Table 11: PD Fund Balances

	Total PD Fund Balance	Districts/Charters with PD Fund Balance*	Districts/Charters without PD Fund Balance
2012-13	\$3,508,961	208	47
2013-14	\$4,760,246	209	46
2014-15	\$3,998,329	199	55
2015-16	\$3,245,161	190	66
2016-17	\$3,353,307	192	67

*This includes districts/charters with a balance of less than \$1.

As seen in Table 12 below, more than half of all districts and charter schools have relatively small fund balances (less than \$10,000). In 2017, only 16 districts and charters had a fund balance of more than \$50,000.

Table 12: Fund Balance Amounts

Ending Fund Balance Amounts	Number of Districts and Charter Schools		
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
\$0	55	66	67
\$0.01-\$1,000	32	43	48
\$1,001-\$10,000	85	80	70
\$10,001-\$50,000	65	54	58
More than \$50,000	17	13	16

CONCLUSION

Professional Development (PD) is designed to “improve knowledge and skills in order to facilitate individual, team, school-wide, and district-wide improvement designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on the state academic standards”(§ 6-17-704(b)). The state provides funding to help districts pay for professional development programs, such as the cost of bringing in a speaker or paying the travel costs and registration fees for conferences. Professional development was established as one of the state’s four categorical programs to ensure districts spend the funding only on professional development.

In 2017, the state provided \$15,869,289 for professional development. About \$12.3 million went to districts and charter schools and \$3.3 million was used for the online professional development program (IDEAS). This is a slight decrease from just over \$16 million in 2015. Since 2013, districts and charters continue to spend more money than they received in PD funding due, in part, because they transferred money from other categorical funds. Districts and charters transferred about \$5.6 million from other categorical funds to PD. Districts and charter schools spent 68% of their PD funding on purchased services. The most common purchased services include consultants, speakers, and course registration fees.

Districts and charter schools are allowed to carry over funding from one year into the next. Any PD funding they do not spend during the year becomes a fund balance at the end of the year. At the end of 2016-17, 192 districts and charter schools had a collective PD fund balance of \$3.4 million. The amount of districts and charters with a PD fund balance dropped from 208 in 2013 to 192 in 2017 and the total fund balance dropped from \$3.5 million in 2013 to \$3.4 million in 2017 (though it fluctuated during this time).

BLR survey results indicate that educational cooperatives, district/school facilitated use of Arkansas IDEAS, and collaboration with other teachers are the three most common types of PD used by teachers. However, the three most useful types of PD include collaboration with other teachers, school leaders/administrators, and in-state conferences or workshops. At least 80% of teachers surveyed stated they are at least somewhat prepared to ready students for the ACT Aspire. For teachers who reported feeling minimally prepared or not prepared, the most common reasons included inadequate test preparation materials from ACT Aspire and inadequate training and resources.

Starting in the 2017-18 school year, ADE partnered with Solution Tree to create a PLC Pilot Program in eleven schools and one district across Arkansas. It will be funded using PD funding that exceeds the \$32.40 per student amount. The program is intended to increase levels of “student achievement through teacher collaboration, a focus on learning, and a results orientation.”