

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

AN ISSUE BRIEF FROM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

ID: 320

APRIL 2013

OBJECTIVE

Educators in Texas are required to complete continuing professional education and the Texas Education Agency provides support for continuing education through Project Share, the Educator Mentor Program, and the Teacher Institute Program.

KEY FACTS

- ◆ Classroom teachers are required to complete 150 clock hours of continuing professional education every five years and educators who hold professional certificates are required to complete 200 hours of continuing professional education every five years.
- ◆ Project Share is a web-based professional development application maintained by the Texas Education Agency which provides free continuing professional education opportunities to educators throughout the state.

BUDGETARY IMPACT

In the 2012–13 biennium, the Texas Education Agency expended \$8 million on Project Share, \$1.5 million on the Educator Mentor Program, \$1 million on the Texas Institute Program, and \$0.5 million on Performance-based Academic Coaching Teams administered by the Texas A&M University System.

STATUTORY REFERENCES

Texas Education Code, Section 21.054

Educators in Texas are required to complete continuing professional education (CPE) requirements to renew a teaching certificate. The requirements vary depending on the type of teaching credential held, and include 150 clock hours every five years for classroom teachers and 200 clock hours every five years for educators who hold professional certificates including counselors, learning resource specialists and school librarians, reading specialists, educational diagnosticians, master teachers, superintendents, and principals. Educational aides are not required to complete CPE.

CPE courses may be taken online or in person through an approved provider. Providers may include public school districts; accredited public and private schools outside of Texas, regional education service centers (RESCs), accredited institutions of higher education, education associations that meet certain requirements, private companies approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), private schools recognized by TEA, and TEA.

STATE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

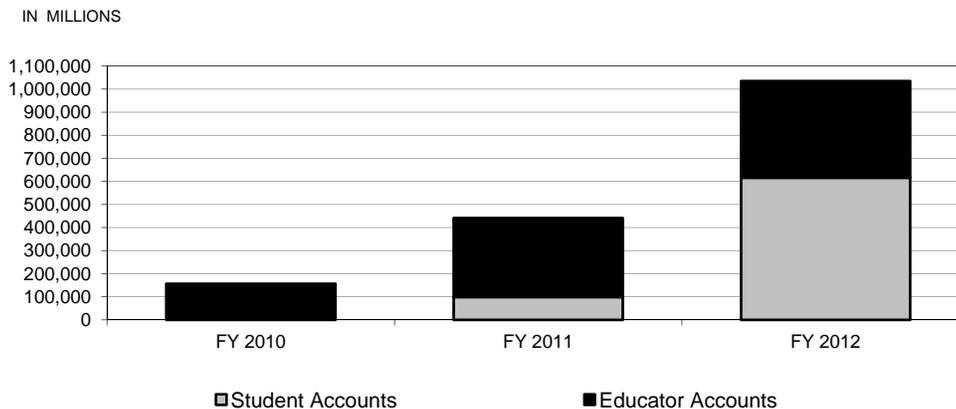
The primary state resource for educator professional development is Project Share. Project Share is a web-based platform operated by TEA that includes a collection of professional development opportunities for educators in an interactive learning environment. Project Share utilizes existing and new professional development resources and builds professional learning communities where educators can collaborate and participate in online learning opportunities. TEA works with RESCs and institutions of higher education to develop the content available on Project Share. Educators can receive credit for the CPE work completed on the website, with no fees or other charges to educators or their districts.

In addition to professional development opportunities, Project Share also has resources for students to access supplemental instruction in English, math, science, and social studies courses and makes additional online practice available to students beyond the traditional school day.

Project Share began registering educators in fiscal year 2010 and has grown consistently since that time, surpassing one million users in August 2012. Fig. 1 shows the number of users of Project Share between fiscal years 2010 and 2012. Project Share began with CPE material for educators teaching the state's curriculum and has expanded to resources for English Language Learner educators and other professionals that work within the schools. Currently, Project Share has more than 60 online professional development courses, over 50 collections on iTunes U, and career and technical education professional development courses for mathematics or science.

TEA has funded Project Share with discretionary transfers from other programs with appropriations directed for similar purposes. In the 2010–11 biennium, TEA funded Project Share with \$4.9 million in appropriations directed through Rider 42, Student Success Initiative, for online professional development. In the 2012–13 biennium, Project Share was funded with \$8 million in appropriations directed through Rider 53, District Awards for Teacher Excellence for an educator mentor program.

**FIG. 1
NUMBER OF PROJECT SHARE USERS**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency.

The Educator Mentor Program provides mentor stipends to experienced teachers to mentor novice teachers. A novice teacher is defined as a teacher with zero to two years of experience. Although mentor stipends are an allowable use of certain funds received by districts participating in the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program, state funds for mentor stipends are primarily distributed through the Educator Mentor Program. Prior to the 2012–13 biennium, TEA was appropriated \$30 million per biennium for the Educator Mentor Program; while in the 2012–13 biennium, TEA was appropriated a total of \$10 million for the educator mentor program. TEA opted to distribute \$8 million of the appropriation to Project Share, \$1.5 million to RESCs for mentor stipends under the Educator Mentor Program, and \$0.5 to the Texas A&M University System for their online mentoring system, Performance-based Academic Coaching Teams (PACT). PACT mentors pre-service teachers currently working towards their teacher certification through online facilitated conversations and online content which allows the pre-service teachers to progress at their own pace. Through the contract with the Texas A&M University System, PACT was made available to all pre-service teachers and provides online resources, a campus mentor, and a university professor as an e-mentor.

The Teacher Institute Program operated by Humanities Texas holds professional development institutes and workshops throughout the state. Humanities Texas hosts the Teacher Institute Program in conjunction with universities and cultural institutions in Texas which focuses on topics within the state’s social studies and language arts curricula. First funded in the 2010–11 biennium with \$2 million, Humanities Texas received \$1 million in grant funds from TEA for the Teacher Institute Program in the 2012–13 biennium

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