



FACT SHEET

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Department of Education *Its Mathematics and Reading Professional Development Program Has Trained Fewer Teachers Than Originally Expected*

BACKGROUND

In 2001 the Legislature approved the Mathematics and Reading Professional Development Program (program), which provides incentive grants to school districts and other local education agencies that choose to send their teachers through standards-based instructional training. At the time of its enactment, the Legislature envisioned that most of the State's reading and mathematics teachers, approximately 176,000 teachers overall, would receive the training over a four-year period. However, due to budget cuts, the Legislature lowered its expectations regarding the number of teachers who could be trained in a given year. Generally, school districts can receive \$1,250 per teacher following completion of the first 40 hours of training and another \$1,250 after completion of the subsequent 80 hours of training. The Legislature recently extended the program through fiscal year 2011–12, expanding its scope to provide professional development training for teachers of pupils who have been designated as English language learners.

KEY FINDINGS

Our review of the program revealed the following:

- More than five years after the program's enactment, most school districts and the State cannot identify which teachers have received standards-based training for their current mathematics or reading assignments, nor can they identify which teachers still need training.
- The Department of Education's (Education) July 2005 report to the Legislature regarding the program is of limited value because the report lacks relevant and accurate data regarding the number of trained teachers who are currently using the training in the classroom, and the report provides no correlation between teacher training and student achievement.
- Only a small percentage of teachers have completed the full 120 hours of training for their current assignments.
- School districts cited several barriers to increased participation in the program, including teacher apathy toward attending program training, concerns about funding, and a lack of training providers in proximity.
- Education has done little to actively promote the program and has disbursed about \$113 million for those who have completed part or all of the training through fiscal year 2005–06 without ensuring the level of program oversight required by statute.
- The State Board of Education relied on the Sacramento County Office of Education to develop criteria for evaluating training providers, create program promotional materials, and facilitate the evaluation of curricula submitted by training providers. Although these contracts and others were exempt from the State's competitive bid process, their performance period predated the Department of General Services' approval.

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