



University of Idaho

McClure Center for
Public Policy Research

IDAHO AT A GLANCE

Idaho's Title III Consortium for English Learner Students

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INTRODUCTION

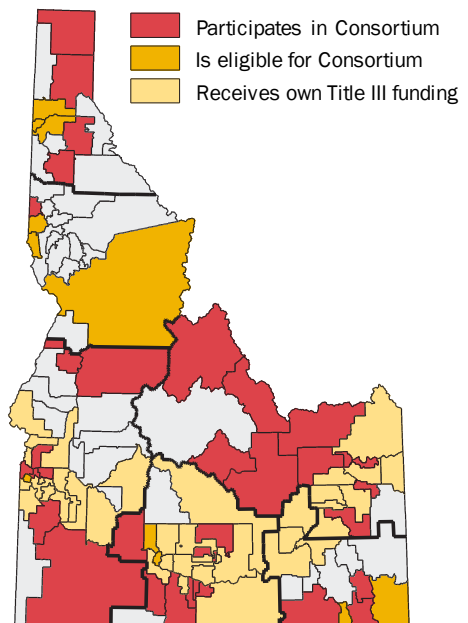
The goal of the Idaho State Department of Education's (ISDE) English Learner Program is to provide Idaho's 16,177 English Learners (ELs) with the language skills they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond. ELs often lag behind their peers academically, because they are learning to speak English at the same time as they are taught other subjects. **As the number of ELs grows in Idaho, finding ways to provide high-quality language acquisition programs across the state is key to improve EL student educational outcomes.**

Research has shown that high-quality English acquisition programs help ELs become more proficient at speaking English and perform better in school.¹ Providing a high-quality EL program depends on having adequate resources and expertise. State funding supports basic EL staffing, professional development and programming. School districts and charters that meet minimum eligibility requirements receive federal **Title III funds** that can be used to **enhance educational opportunities** for ELs and improve student outcomes.

Implemented in 2014, **Idaho's Title III Consortium supports school districts and charters that do not have enough ELs to garner their own federal Title III allocation.** Participating districts receive access to additional professional development and technical assistance to improve language acquisition programs and EL educational opportunities. By the 2016-17 school year, the Consortium **served 44 districts and charters** and increased their capacity to better serve **1043 EL students.**²

By **expanding the reach of federal Title III funding**, the Consortium provides more equitable access to enhanced EL programming, especially in Idaho's rural districts.

**School district participation
in the Title III Consortium
2016-17**



WHO IS AN ENGLISH LEARNER?

An English Learner (EL) is any student whose primary language is not English, whose English skills are not sufficient to be successful in the classroom and who has not yet tested proficient in English. Once a student meets Idaho criteria for exiting from EL services, they are no longer considered an EL. In the 2016-17 school year, 16,177 Idaho students qualified as English Learners (EL).^{2,3}

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REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVING ENGLISH LEARNERS

Title III of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, mandates that state departments of education must support the educational needs of all English Learners, and school districts **must provide equal educational opportunities to every student regardless of English language proficiency.** All states are required to establish and implement statewide processes and procedures for identifying ELs, which all districts and charters must implement. Districts and charters with any identified ELs are obligated to:

- provide EL instruction and services,
- have adequate staff and basic resources,
- assess English language proficiency of ELs annually and
- monitor progress of exited students.

While districts have flexibility in choosing the type of language acquisition program they use, they must provide language support services that are proven effective in increasing language proficiency as required by federal legislation and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).^{3,4}

FUNDING FOR ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

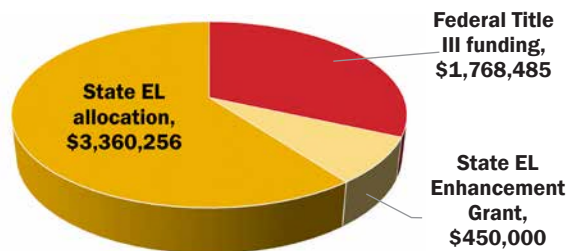
Funding for many educational programs, including EL programs, dictates what can and must be offered. Idaho's English Learner Program is supported by a **mix of state and federal funding**, all of which is distributed to school districts by the ISDE. Sixty percent of Idaho's EL funding comes from a state EL allocation, another 8% comes from Idaho's EL Enhancement Grant program and the remaining 32% comes from federal Title III funding.⁵ School districts are able to use other types of funding (e.g., general education) to coordinate programs to support ELs.³

FEDERAL TITLE III FUNDING. Federal Title III funding is **supplemental to state funding** and cannot be used for core EL programs and related support services for identified ELs. Funding can be used for professional development, delivering a language acquisition program or providing supplemental activities or strategies that include parent, family and community engagement activities.⁶ To receive a federal Title III allocation, Idaho school districts must have an approved State EL Plan and an approved Federal Title III Plan on file with ISDE. School districts must also have a minimum number of EL students to qualify for a minimum \$10,000 Title III allocation based on a federal funding formula. In 2017, **36 school districts** qualified.⁴

STATE EL ALLOCATION. The Idaho State Legislature provides funds

directly to school districts that have EL students and an approved State EL Plan to **cover the basics of EL education.** Most of this funding is used for salaries for EL teachers and support staff (95% in 2014), but a small portion is used for professional development and educational materials. These funds, distributed on a per EL-student basis, supported EL education in **95 districts and charters** in 2016-17.⁷

Funding specifically for Idaho's English Learner programs 2016-17



EL ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM. The Idaho State Legislature also provides funding for a three-year competitive EL Enhancement Grant program. Much like Title III funding, these **grants support supplemental programming.** Districts can apply for an additional EL teacher to support general teachers or serve as a regional coach, or they can apply for funds to support program enhancements. Program enhancements might include parent or community programs, after-school and summer programs or additional professional development, for example. In 2016-17, **12 districts** received EL Enhancement Grants.⁸

IDAHO'S SOLUTION FOR SERVING ENGLISH LEARNERS IN DISTRICTS WITH SMALL NUMBERS

In 2016-17, 58 Idaho school districts and charters with EL students did not meet the minimum requirements to receive their own Title III funding.² These districts receive their state EL allocation to pay for the basic requirements for serving ELs, but they have **few resources and little support to provide additional professional development** for EL teachers or **expanded learning opportunities** for EL students.

To better serve districts with small numbers of ELs, Idaho implemented the Title III Consortium in 2014. The Consortium is a group of districts and charters that join together voluntarily as a single entity to garner a Title III funding allocation. Participating districts and charters receive **technical assistance** provided by two traveling EL coaches, as well as **support for EL program implementation and professional development.** Support

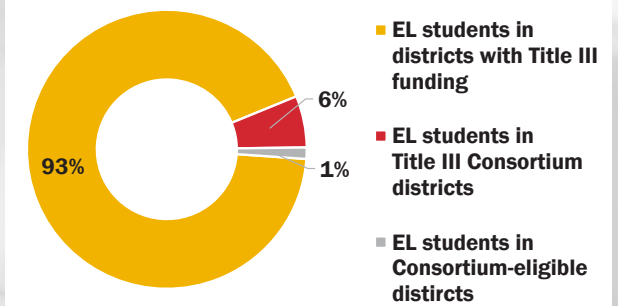
is provided both onsite (twice per year) and through virtual assistance. Each year, Consortium staff gather input from participating districts and charters to help plan and prioritize services and training that best meet their EL needs.^{3,4,9}

THE TITLE III CONSORTIUM IMPROVES EL EDUCATION FOR MANY STUDENTS In 2016-17, Idaho allocated a total of \$1.77 million in federal Title III funding to eligible districts, with \$142,587--or 8.1%--going to the Title III Consortium. Funding for

the Title III Consortium provided the means to improve English language instruction for **1043 Idaho ELs**, equivalent to 6.4% of all EL students.^{2,5}

In 2016-17, the Consortium made it possible to secure federal funding to **enhance and improve language acquisition programs** in 44 participating school districts and charters that would not have received this funding on their own. Another 14 school districts were eligible but did not participate.²

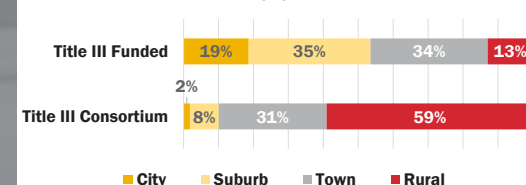
Percentage of EL students, by school district's access to Title III funding 2016-17



Consortium participation has increased each year. **Starting in 2018-19, all school districts that do not receive their own Title III funding will be eligible** to join the Consortium even if they do not have any EL students. Joining the Consortium will allow these districts to access services as soon as they have an EL student instead of having to wait until the next school year.³ Idaho is not the only state with a Title III Consortium; California, Louisiana, New Jersey and Virginia use the same model, as do many others.

MOST EL STUDENTS IN TITLE III CONSORTIUM DISTRICTS ARE IN IDAHO'S SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS. While EL students served by the Title III Consortium are scattered across the state, only 10% attend school in districts in Idaho's larger cities and their suburbs. The remainder attend districts in small towns (31%) and rural areas (59%). This is in contrast to Title III-funded districts, in which only 13% of EL students attend school in rural districts.^{2,10} The Title III Consortium has increased resources and capacity to serve a large number of EL students, especially in rural parts of the state where resources for program enhancement are limited.

Percent of EL students by Title III status and school locale code, Idaho 2016-17



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OF IDAHO'S TITLE III CONSORTIUM

Idaho's Title III Consortium **expands the reach of federal Title III dollars** to districts with small numbers of ELs, especially in the state's rural districts and charters. The ISDE's intended outcomes for the Consortium include:

- **Better identification of ELs,**
- **Better prepared teachers** (both EL and general education) and support staff,
- **Quicker response** to support ELs when a district or charter is new to having ELs and
- **More collaboration** among staff from local, state and federal programs that serve ELs to better meet students' identified needs.³

The aim of the Consortium is to **increase districts' capacity and knowledge about best practices for serving ELs** statewide.³ Access to EL coaches, professional development and technical assistance increase EL support for Consortium districts. The goal is to improve districts' ability to provide an EL learning environment that **increases students' English proficiency, academic achievement and chances of success** in postsecondary education and the workplace.



“Being a part of the Consortium has proven to be indispensable in helping me navigate the ins and outs of running an [EL] Program [and] providing a network and resources for my students, as well as the district K-12 staff who work with our ELs. I can see no downside to what it has to offer!”

- **EL Teacher and Coordinator,**
Moscow School District, Moscow, Idaho

SCHOOL LOCALE DEFINITIONS

CITY DISTRICTS have an urban area with at least 50,000 people.

SUBURBAN DISTRICTS have a population density of at least 500 persons per square mile and are next to an urban area with at least 50,000 people.

TOWN DISTRICTS have an urban area of 2500-49,999 people.

RURAL DISTRICTS may have urban areas, but are smaller than 2500 people.

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SOURCES

¹ Maria Millard, 2015, State funding mechanisms for English language learners, Education Commission of the States

² Idaho State Department of Education, Consolidated State Performance Report: Part I, 2016-17

³ Idaho State Department of Education, communications with the State EL and Title III Coordinator

⁴ Idaho State Department of Education, State EL Guidance for School Districts

⁵ Idaho State Department of Education

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

⁷ Idaho State Department of Education, 2014 Legislative Report: Limited English Proficient

⁸ Idaho State Department of Education, English Learners (EL) Enhancement Grants Request for Proposals (RFP) 2017-2019

⁹ Idaho State Department of Education, Idaho Consolidated State Plan, 2018

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, School Locale Codes



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