



## State of Tennessee

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### Comptroller's Report Examines Professional Development for State Teachers

There is a lack of research data about teacher professional development in Tennessee, according to a new report released today by the Comptroller's Offices of Research and Education Accountability (OREA). The report, titled *Teacher Professional Development in Tennessee – Part 2*, is part of a series on professional development.

Teacher professional development is training that teachers receive to improve their instructional practices. The report describes teacher professional development programs offered through the state's First to the Top (FTTT) initiative as well as professional development policies, programs and practices offered through local school districts. FTTT uses funds from the federal Race to the Top program to improve the quality of education in Tennessee.

Research shows that quality professional development has a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. However, the new report identifies a lack of research data about professional development in Tennessee, including studies that would measure how closely the training targets individual teacher needs and its effectiveness in improving instructional practices. Results from a statewide survey of Tennessee educators may indicate a gap between the training teachers believe they need and what they are currently receiving.

Professional development (also referred to as in-service training) is primarily crafted and administered at the district level, but state policies and initiatives play an important role in creating the overall structure and standards. OREA found professional development policies and practices vary from school district to school district based on the results from a statewide survey of teachers and a review of how school districts spent their portion of federal Race to the Top grant dollars.

According to the report, the state and school districts are spending approximately 31 percent and 32 percent, respectively, of their share of FTTT funding on professional development activities. The report provides a summary of the professional development best practices found in school districts related to their FTTT initiatives and how the new teacher evaluations created as part of the state's FTTT initiatives are being linked to professional development at the local level.

OREA is an agency within the Comptroller's Office that is charged with providing accurate and objective policy research and analysis for the Tennessee General Assembly and the public.

To view the report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>

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