



K-12 Public School Classified Employees

June 2022

Background

Educational support professionals are part of the foundation of Idaho's public school system. Formally known as classified employees, these professionals transport students, prepare lunches, manage finances and human resources, and maintain the facilities and IT infrastructure. Today, over 18,000 individuals work as 55 different classifications of educational support professionals within Idaho school districts and charter schools.

The state allots 0.375 educational support professional positions per support unit.¹ This allotment, set in Idaho Code §33-1004(5), has not changed since 1994. For fiscal year 2022, the state gave schools \$23,216 for each allotted employee. Schools may hire additional educational support professionals above their allotted amount or pay above the state compensation rate, but they do not receive supplemental funding for these costs.

While the allotment formula has not changed since 1994, the study request mentions that school operations have changed since then. Legislators cited an increased need for IT professionals and a growing demand on school business managers as examples of the evolving role of educational support professionals. We were asked to review whether the formula for funding educational support professionals meets the current needs of Idaho schools.

Legislators also asked whether state funding for educational support professionals has kept pace with the actual cost of employing these positions. We were asked to look at how Idaho's funding compares with other states for similar positions and how the pay for various classifications of educational support professionals compares to similar positions throughout Idaho and in other states.

Scope

This evaluation will focus on the following objectives:

- Discuss how responsibilities, classifications, and numbers of educational support professionals at Idaho schools have changed and describe what has driven these changes
- Identify major limitations, shortcomings, or barriers schools face with employing or retaining educational support professionals
- Analyze the amount spent on educational support professionals annually by districts and charter schools, on both a total amount and a per support unit basis
- Discuss the changes in state money appropriated per allotted educational support professional to changes in the total salaries received by these professionals over time
- Compare the salaries of educational support professionals in Idaho's schools compared to those in neighboring states and to similar professions throughout Idaho
- Identify what Idaho and neighboring states have done to stay competitive in hiring and retaining educational support staff

Projected completion date: 2023 legislative session

1. The state calculates support units by dividing the average daily attendance of a district by an attendance divisor set in Idaho Code. A support unit roughly translates to one classroom of students with the attendance divisor changing based on the size of a district and the grade level of a student.