

State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services

Meeting Notes
September 22, 2009 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
Burlington County College
Mount Laurel, New Jersey

Welcome and Approval of Minutes – Robert Santare

The meeting was called to order at about 10:15 after the Chair had all attendees introduce themselves.

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2009 meeting was made and approved.

Comments – Robert Santare

A copy of a bill in the NJ State Legislature to create a shared work program was described. The bill would help subsidize wages during a period of economic disruption to prevent layoffs or reduction in employee hours, by providing partial unemployment benefits to effected workers. This would help eligible employers retain a skilled workforce, while lessening the amount of pay reduction for workers and helping them retain their benefits.

Additionally, a handout on the Reemployment Training for Unemployed Residents of New Jersey (*RETURN- to-Work*) initiative recently announced by Governor Corzine was also discussed. This program will reimburse employers for part of new workers wages to offset the extraordinary cost of on-the-job training for qualifying new employees. Companies can receive grants to reimburse cost of up to \$5.00 per hour for up to 12 weeks (maximum total of \$2,400) for newly hired workers who are receiving a salary of at least \$15.00 an hour and remain employed for at least 6 months.

Update: Department of Labor and Workforce Development Literacy Programs – Claudia Merkel-Keller

The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) funded grants to 16 local literacy consortia as well as the NJ Department of Corrections' educational program for FY 2010. A total of \$15,542,600 was awarded. Because the WIA Title II FY 2009 award to NJ was at least 9.9 percent less than the award for FY 2008, the State just received a supplementary grant award from the USDOE in the amount of \$213,795 in a one-time appropriation. A plan is being developed for the use of the supplementary funding.

The LWD is moving forward with the full implementation of the LACES MIS data system which is required under the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS). The implementation with the contractor, LiteracyPro Systems, is progressing smoothly. This will be the first year that LWD will be able to roll up the data to the national level via an MIS system. Data migration will also take place from LACES in the NJ Consumer Report Card.

Professional development activities are ongoing through the efforts of professional development co-coordinator Gerri Brosh as follows:

- TABE training
- Center for Applied Linguistics training
- Best Plus refresher training
- EFF coordination and development of training with the New Jersey Network

Field testing of a new language assessment instrument, the TABE-CLAS-E, is taking place during the course of the 2009-2010 program year in selected sites in Bergen County.

Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey (LVNJ) has successfully completed another training cycle supported by funds through WIA Title II and has submitted a proposal for continuation funding, as well as for funding for their yearly professional development seminar. Elissa Director, the Executive Director, indicated that LVNJ recruited and trained about 1000 volunteers. Training topics included health literacy, computer literacy, and financial literacy. She noted that LVNJ provides literacy tutoring in the Camden County One-Stop to supplement the work of the Workforce Learning Links (WLL) and would like to work with other areas to provide similar services. Ms. Director announced that she will be leaving her post at LVNJ to head up a health literacy initiative.

LWD is looking to field test the TABE- E for English literacy learners.

The College-Yes Program at Essex County Community College has requested a one-year no cost extension from the USDOE and has retained a new evaluator for the project, Dr. Alisa Belzer from Rutgers University Graduate School of Education.

Evaluation and performance data for WIA Title II (program year 2008) were presented.

The State-supported WLL program is moving forward despite severe budget shortfalls. As a result, programming in the WWL has been adjusted to accommodate this budget shortfall, which is due to the economic crisis in the State, as funding to support the WLL comes from the Unemployment Trust Fund.

At present, the draft Administrative Guidelines for the WLL is being reviewed and will shortly be released in final to the field. Additionally, technical assistance to help WLL meet their goals and performance numbers continues. Special efforts have also been targeted to the WLL in the NJ Department of Corrections. Evaluation and performance data for the WLL were also presented.

Currently two Memoranda of Understanding concerning WLL need to be finalized: one between LWD and NJ Network (NJN) to maintain the instructional computer-based programs and a second between LWD and NJ Department of Corrections to operate the Links in correctional facilities.

The second annual New Jersey High School Graduation Campaign Summit will be held on October 6, 2009 at the Hyatt Hotel in New Brunswick. The initiative focuses on keeping youth in school and increasing high school graduation rates.

Eileen Appelbaum from the Center for Women and Work, Rutgers University provided an update of the Building Skills 4 Work project, which is a web-based interactive learning resource that is designed to teach the skill areas identified in the Profile of the National Work Readiness Council. The curriculum is being jointly developed by Rutgers University, the University of Tennessee, and R&D Media Solutions with support from the Nicholson Foundation and the State Employment and Training Commission. Additional funding is being sought to complete the project. Though only some of the proposed modules have been developed, initial feedback from the pilot is positive and additional information will be forthcoming.

Leigh Freeman provided an update on the WLL software and training. She indicated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for a basic literacy instructional content package and that EFF training will be provided for WLL instructors

Review and Discussion: Draft Outline Adult Literacy System Analysis and White Paper – Lansing Davis

At the June 17, 2009 meeting, a subcommittee to review the adult literacy system and the component programs was formed. The current members of this subcommittee are Hal Beder, Elissa Director, Leigh Freeman, Claudia Merkel-Keller and Barry Semple and it is staffed by Lansing Davis. The subcommittee held two meetings. The handout provides an initial rough draft of what the goals of the system should be an extended vision statement for the system, a delineation of the key components of the system, key questions to address in the analysis, and data to collect. A report and recommendations should be the end product, though the subcommittee discussed the possibility of doing two reports, one that provided a succinct analysis and recommendations and a second that provides greater detail. Timelines for the report(s) have not been developed yet.

Members were asked to review the document and provide feedback. It was noted that the first bullet in the document which stresses the importance of coordination among *adult literacy programs and collaboration with the postsecondary system* was key and this can and should begin through the WIB literacy planning process. These plans should outline how components of the system link together to provide a continuum of services to learners and how individuals move through the continuum all the way to transitioning to postsecondary education. It was noted that SCALES had adopted this more expanded goal for adult education: transition to postsecondary education, rather than simply high school completion. Mr. Davis asked the Committee to reaffirm that the long-range goal of the adult education system is successful transitioning to postsecondary education. Members present concurred that this expanded goal was adopted and continues to be an important aim for the system.

There needs to be structure for serving the many low-skilled individuals who have the secondary credential, as well as initiatives that help learners transition from secondary to postsecondary education. WIA Title II is designed specially to serve individuals with less than a high school diploma.

An analysis of the adult literacy system should consider the goals and outcomes of each program type, such as adult high schools, WIA Title II, etc. (as charted in the handout). LWD will provide data for WLL and Title II. We should also chart outcomes based on high school completion, postsecondary transition, and employment. The analysis should also show the correlation between education and skills and welfare, unemployment, and incarceration.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Members and Alternates:

Hal Beder
Patty Friend
Norma Blake
Terri Hughes
Leigh Freeman

Claudia Merkel-Keller
Robert Santare
Elissa Director
Barry Semple
Nancy Fisher

Guests:

Eileen Appelbaum

Sharon Rogers

Staff

Lansing Davis