

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD – RI
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 24, 2006**

MINUTES

Members Present: Jack Warner, Joseph MarcAurele, Mario Bueno, Robert Nangle, George Nee

Members Absent: Armeather Gibbs, Robert Paniccia

Others Present: Johan Uvin, Sandra Powell, Jane Nugent, Judy Titzel, Kip Bergstrom, Dennis Champange, Janet Isserlis, Lisa Soricone and Navjeet Singh/Commonwealth Corporation

Staff Present: Michael Koback, Mavis McGetrick, Marsha McDowell

With a quorum present, Chair J. Warner called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM.

A motion was entered to approve the Adult Education and Literacy Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2006.

VOTE: R. Nangle moved to approved, seconded by J. MarcAurele. All approved.

Chair J. Warner stated that the meeting would begin with an overview of what had transpired since the committee's last meeting, and then a preview would be given on what is expected to be accomplished this year. J. Uvin was asked to report on the main accomplishments which occurred over the summer. He stated that the Governor's Adult Literacy Task Force Report included a set of recommendations regarding the development of content standards for Adult Education in Rhode Island. Content standards are one way of defining what it is participants should know and be able to do, as a result of participation in programs.

During the last fiscal year, an Expert Group was put together to begin to work with practitioners in the state to develop these content standards. A draft set of standards for the Math, ESL and Reading areas have been drawn up. These standards will be endorsed by this committee by the end of the year and then by the full Governor's Workforce Board (GWB). The GWB will submit the standards to the Board of Regents for approval. A pilot project will be launched soon so these standards in the Math, ESL and Reading areas will be further refined as the teachers are trying them out in the classrooms. A critical role will be played by the Professional Development Center which will be announced very shortly. The primary focus of the activities of the Professional Development Center in year one will be to ensure all practitioners have the opportunity to learn about these standards for use in their classroom.

The second accomplishment was the selection of an operator for the Professional Development Center. Due to State Purchasing rules, J. Uvin was not at liberty to say who the vendor was, but is quite confident that the vendor chosen has a number of partners which will allow them to provide support to the practitioners in the field that is needed. Following the formation of standards and professional development, assessment would be the next area for concern. At this point in time, the state's assessment policy is driven by the Federal policy for assessment. What has been chosen are a limited number of standardized steps from the list that the Federal government approves to do pre and post testing in the programs. To make sure that the tests and assessments that are in place have at least a relationship with the content standards, the assessment policy may need to be updated. The plan is to submit both the content standards and the assessment policy at the same time for endorsement.

Another accomplishment was the establishment of an accountability framework. 13 work groups or mini think tanks were formed to generate good ideas in terms of how to make the Adult Education and Literacy system more effective. The accountability work group is at the early stages of beginning to articulate some recommendations. They are scheduled to have an initial set of recommendations by the end of the calendar year.

Chair J. Warner explained the Inter-Agency Demonstration Project. The purpose of the project is to link various providers, for example DLT One-Stop Centers with Adult Literacy Programming and the community college for a kind of vertical progression. Other providers would be brought to the table also, with the objective to discuss how services could be delivered in a more comprehensive way. A region that needs and is ready for this kind of integration would be chosen. The department is currently looking at regions around the state.

J. Uvin stated that when the Literacy grants end in June of 2007, there is a great opportunity to organize a multi year competitive request for proposals. It also presents an opportunity to view this as a consolidated grant process, so that as many resources as possible can be pulled from where adult education is an allowable activity. A Request for Proposal is being developed for release sometime in January. July 1, 2007 would be the start-up date.

J. Uvin gave background on the presentation to be given by the Commonwealth Corporation on a study they conducted on Integrating Adult Basic Education and Occupational Training: Review of Research and Practice. He stated that as a result of the support by the Economic Policy Council to the Governor's Adult Literacy Task Force, there was a notion that good information based on rigorous research was needed about models that worked, particularly models that integrated Adult Education with training or workforce development. As part of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Economic Policy Council, a number of studies were launched. The presentation today is on one of the studies.

Navjeet Singh, Vice President of Research and Evaluation introduced Lisa Soricone who gave the Presentation. She stated that Rhode Island should strive for a system that functions: “as a ladder which adults could use to move from basic education to credentialed education or job training and then into good jobs. The rungs of the ladder – the ABE system, the community college system, and the job training systems - would work together to provide support to people and to smooth hand-offs.”

Recommendations: Short-term

Coordination and integration at the program level

1. Support the development of sector-focused career pathways
2. Coordinate workforce and educational systems to produce these outcomes

Recommendations: Intermediate-term

Focus on developing linkages among systems engaged in adult basic education and occupational training activities.

Recommendations: Long-term

Integrate adult education and occupational training, supported by data systems that allow tracking across multiple systems.

Three studies which were done nationally that support integration:

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies

Evaluation of the Job Corps

Evaluation of the Center for Employment & Training in San Jose

Benefits of Integration

- Increases motivation of learners to persist because it makes the link between instruction and the learners’ employment goals more evident
- Offers economic benefits in less time
 - takes advantage of learning during work hours
 - short time frame and location at or near work increase likelihood that low wage workers can participate
 - Efficiently targets the mix of skills needed for economic success.

Chair J. Warner thanked Ms. Soricone for the presentation and announced that the next meeting of the committee would be in December.

With no other business on the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha McDowell