

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI  
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 14, 2008  
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Jack Warner, Joseph MarcAurele, Mario Bueno,  
Paul MacDonald, Robert Nangle, Robert Paniccia  
Members Absent: Armeather Gibbs, George Nee  
Others Present: Johan Uvin, Jill Holloway  
Staff Present: Michael Koback, Nancy Olson, David Francis, Maureen Mooney

With a quorum present, Chair J. Warner called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

A motion was entered to approve the Adult Education and Literacy Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2007.

**VOTE:** J. MarcAurele moved to approve, seconded by R.Nangle. All approved. The motion passed.

**Chairman's Report**

Chair Warner welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the topic of certification levels in the adult literacy system. He indicated the importance of a review of the certification process in order to assist adult education participants with work and career opportunities. He acknowledged the work already accomplished in adopting standards, setting performance expectations and creating system alignment. This work has resulted in the assessment of learning outcomes that are in accordance with content standards. He indicated that it is now time for the committee to have a discussion on adult education certification.

**Three-Tiered System of Adult Education Certificates**

Chair Warner turned the meeting over to Dr. Johan Uvin who provided an overview of the development of the proposal for the certification process. He reported on the activities of an accountability workgroup that was established to identify the specific recommendations. Resulting is a three tiered system of certification that measures the skills of participants at the basic, intermediate and advanced level.

J. Uvin reported that a major consideration in the development of this certification process originated from the participants themselves. The importance of benchmarks in providing measures for skill levels and improvements was identified. J. Uvin noted the importance of input and discussion from this committee to move forward with the certification process.

It was noted that questions on the topic of certification were emailed by Armeather Gibbs who was unable to attend the meeting. These questions were distributed to committee members for discussion.

J. Uvin noted that the RI Department of Education (RIDE) would be in need of revising its assessment policy to reflect the certification process when implemented. He also indicated that the accountability framework needed to be updated to include the attainment of these certificates as performance/outcome measures. In addition, J. Uvin indicated that RIDE would be requesting endorsement and resources for a curriculum project that would integrate adult education and college readiness standards into adult secondary education programs. This would serve to assist participants with GED testing as well as enrollment in non-developmental college courses.

J. Warner provided a frame of reference to better understand the concept of college readiness as it relates to adult education programs. He noted this level of college readiness should not be confused with full college readiness which means having the basic skills necessary to begin college learning without taking remedial courses. The remedial courses do not count towards graduation but assist in developing basic reading, writing and math skills. Generally GED recipients often need remedial coursework when they arrive on college campuses.

J. MarcAurele commented that the GED is currently related to a certain level of competency. He noted the importance of reconnecting with business to determine their needs for entry level employees and to identify the necessary skill base. He also noted that some industries require different skill levels. He encouraged Dr. Uvin to brand these certifications in a way that would address the needs of the business community. J. MarcAurele indicated his willingness to assist in this effort from a business perspective.

Bob Nangle agreed with this concept and suggested tying this effort to an hourly wage as an incentive, recognizing the importance of a pay structure.

In response to questions from M. Koback on the assessment portion of the certification process, J. Uvin proposed that the assessment policy might change with the advent of a 3 tiered certification system. He explained that the current policy was based on a nationally approved list of standardized tests including one for ESL and one for skill development. He noted that from testing results, significant skill gains are identified. Two other educational measures include the attainment of high school credentials and a transition to post secondary education.

M. Koback pointed out the need for further discussion of the assessments of various systems if we are moving towards an integrated system. He noted the importance of people moving effortlessly through this system to avoid retesting. J. Uvin indicated this type of discussion would be very valuable.

M. Bueno indicated the need for further discussion on the standards affiliated with each level of certification. Drawing on his experience at Progeso Latino, he emphasized the importance of meaningful benchmarks in order for participants to understand the progression from level to level, specifically in the area of language acquisition. He noted the tremendous gap that exists between the GED and the ACCUPLACER test.

*(Note: The purpose of ACCUPLACER test is to provide useful information about academic skills in math, English, and reading. The results of the assessment, in conjunction with academic background, goals, and interests, are used by academic advisors and counselors to determine course selection.)*

J. Uvin agreed there are significant gaps that exist with these tests and indicated that the advanced certificate could assist in bridging this gap since it addresses the importance of college readiness.

J. MarcAurele noted that his perception of the GED was that it was benchmarked as an equivalent of a high school education. He indicated the importance of working on the proposed certifications and GED benchmarks to establish standards that would place participants at a level where they are college ready.

J. Uvin agreed that this need to establish standardized assessments is crucial in order for participants to achieve the established benchmarks. He noted the certification process would be instrumental in changing the way adult secondary education programs are viewed. He also recognized that a passing score on the GED is not a helpful assessment anymore. J. Uvin did report that new GED requirements are being considered for release in 2011 and may include Algebra II and pre-calculus as benchmarks in the testing process. He was encouraged that the GED community is responding to the increased academic expectations for this testing.

J. MarcAurele concluded the discussion by summarizing the concepts relating to the benchmarks for the certification process. He noted the importance of the progressive system, educating participants on the benchmarks of their progression from level to level and the involvement of the business community in the identification of the standards.

Chair Warner noted that the agenda indicates a vote to charge RIDE with the development of a specific proposal for this three-tiered system of adult education certificates. After a brief discussion, committee members decided that Dr. Uvin would move forward with the certification proposal and that he would provide updates to the committee as this moved forward.

### **Progress Report: Are Our Efforts Paying Off?**

J. Uvin introduced Jill Holloway, Executive Director of the Professional Development Center to the Committee members. He then presented the "Adult Education Reform Status Report" to the committee. The full report is on file.

Chair Warner asked if any further business was to come before the committee. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn.

**VOTE:** A. Gibbs moved to adjourn, seconded by R. Nangle. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney