

State Literacy for Adult Literacy Education Services
January 16, 2013
10:00 A.M.
Department of Labor and Workforce Development Building – 4th Floor
Trenton, New Jersey

MINUTES

Welcome and Introduction – Hal Beder, Acting Chair, State Council for Adult Education Literacy Services

The meeting was called to order by Hal Beder, who welcomed all attendees and asked them to introduce themselves. After the introductions, Dr. Beder asked for a moment of silence in memory of Robert Santare, SCALE Chair, who died on December 25, 2012. Lansing Davis then noted that Mr. Santare had been Chair since 2009 and was committed to improving the literacy system both at the State and local levels. As a business owner, he was an advocate for helping the workforce develop the skills needed to maintain employability and he recognized that literacy was a foundation skill. He even had a representative from his company attend EFF training so they could bring the concepts back to his company. He was a member of the State Employment and Training Commission and the Burlington County WIB – which at one point he chaired. He also served on the WIB's literacy committee.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2012 meeting was made and second. Lansing Davis indicated that the minutes had been corrected to show that Larry Breeden had attended the meeting. The amended minutes were passed by a unanimous vote.

Adult Literacy Report – Lansing Davis, State Employment & Training Commission

Lansing Davis provided background and an overview of the adult literacy report titled *Investing in New Jersey's Adult Learners*. Prior drafts of the report along with preliminary findings and recommendations have been presented to the Council and the SETC previously.

With funding from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), the SETC in June 2011 entered into an agreement with Montclair State University to conduct an analysis of the gap between the need for adult literacy services in New Jersey and the capacity of the literacy system to meet that need. As part of the agreement, Montclair State was directed to work with an advisory group from SCALES that would help determine the specific work plans, review progress and preliminary findings, and work with Montclair to develop a set of recommendations. A final draft report would be sent to SCALES for their approval.

The analysis consisted of reviewing previous reports, examining data, considering information presented during Stakeholders meetings, and surveying State agency officials and local providers. The actual analysis looked at the need for adult literacy services, access to those services, intensity of those services, and articulation of program and services to meet learners needs and help them progress.

A motion to accept the report and recommendations was made and seconded. Based on input received from LWD, Lansing Davis offered revised language for recommendation number four in the report. A motion to revise the recommendation was made and second. There was discussion about the appropriateness of the proposed change. Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner suggested that the language be revised to indicate that the recommended professional development focus should build on previous activities. Based on this suggestion, a motion to revise the recommendation was passed unanimously. Lansing Davis was directed to work with Professor Erik Jacobson and Assistant Commissioner Mary Ellen Clark to make the revision.

There was additional discussion that included emphasizing the importance of referral and transition planning to help learners address their skill needs.

The motion to accept the report and recommendations was passed by a unanimous vote, but contingent on the revision to recommendation number four.

SETC Recommendations: Work Plan and Goals – Michele Horst and Lansing Davis, State Employment & Training Commission

Michele Horst talked about the importance of a work plan to take the next steps to implementing the recommendations in the report. Lansing Davis reviewed the draft goals, and he indicated that the work plan outlines the action steps to implementing the plan.

The following were among the issues raised during the discussion about the goals and work plan:

Private foundation funding should be solicited to support planning and change initiatives with a focus on transitioning learners to work and postsecondary education and training. Other states and areas have been successful in attracting this type of support. The State Library has resources that provide information on foundations.

We need to develop a business plan that provides a sequence of activities that will drive system change.

There are decisions being made about the GED and possible other tests options for earning a high school credential. Because these decisions will have a major impact on the adult literacy system, SCALES should be part of the discussion. Larry Breeden indicated that the Department of Education has scheduled meetings with two test developers, ETS and McGraw Hill, to discuss the possibility of using other tests as well as the GED to demonstrate high school proficiency. This would create multiple pathways to earning a high school diploma. Elease Greene-Smith will represent LWD at these meetings. It was agreed that she will brief SCALES on these meetings. Members expressed the need for ensuring that any additional tests are standardized, valid assessments of high school proficiency, aligned with the common core standards, accepted by employers and the postsecondary community, and administered through a secured process.

There are 18 Adult High Schools listed on the Department of Education's website. They can now charge students fees.

Barry Semple indicated that the relationships between WIBs and their WIA Title II consortia range from open to closed. Analysis done in 2007 by a SCALES subcommittee that he chaired

showed that in some areas there was little joint planning or collaboration between the WIA Title II program and the Workforce Investment Board (WIB). This may still be the case.

Assistant Commissioner Mary Ellen Clark in commenting on Goal 5, *Ensuring performance accountability across the system*, expressed concern that WIA Title II programs have consistently not met their federal performance metrics. She indicated that this should have been addressed in the literacy report and would like SCALES to provide input on how to ensure that going forward the State achieve all federal metrics. Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner volunteered to come to the next SCALES meeting to discuss metrics. Nancy Fisher commented that goals need to be realistic and expressed concern on how specific performance targets are determined. Funding needs to support goals. It was also noted that the State needs to drill down below the consortium level to review the performance of individual programs within each of these partnerships.

Another related comment addressed the importance of crafting a vision and philosophy for the system and tying expectations, outcomes and funding to them. We also need to analyze services, dollars spent, and outcomes based on the various subpopulations being served. Members also raised the issue of setting service priorities to better drive investments to meet learner needs.

Michele Horst summarized the action steps that should be a takeaway from this meeting:

- Revise the language for recommendation number 4 in the report (Lansing Davis, Erik Jacobson and Mary Ellen Clark)
- Flush out the goals (Lansing Davis and Michele Horst)
- Identify the resources needed to move the goals forward (Lansing Davis and Michele Horst)
- Brief SCALES on meeting about high school proficiency test options (Elease Greene-Smith)

Lansing Davis will work with the acting Chair Hal Beder to set a 2013 meeting schedule for SCALES.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

**State Literacy for Adult Literacy Education Services
Attendees January 16, 2013**

Hal Beder- Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University
Larry Breeden- Department of Education
Mary Ellen Clark- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Lansing Davis- State Employment and Training Commission
Hugh DeHaven- Department of Corrections
Aaron Fichtner- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Nancy Fisher- Jewish Vocational Services
Betsy Garlatti- Higher Education
Kirstin Giardi - Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Elease Greene-Smith- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Michele Horst- State Employment and Training Commission
Terri Hughes-Department of Human Services
Erik Jacobson- Montclair State University
Kathleen Peiffer- State Library
Julio Sabater- Universal Communications
Barry Semple- Retired