

# **State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services**

## **Meeting Minutes**

April 27, 2011 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)  
Burlington County College Enterprise Center  
Burlington, New Jersey

### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes – Robert Santare, Chair**

The Chair called the meeting to order at about 10:05 a.m. He welcomed all attendees and asked them to introduce themselves. Members were asked to review the minutes of the November 16, 2011 meeting for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Updates: SETC – Lansing Davis, Senior Policy Analyst, State Employment and Training Commission**

The Health Care Workforce Council has formed an Educational Taskforce. As Robin Widing had mentioned at a previous SCALES meeting, the SETC would like to have a member from SCALES participate on the taskforce to provide input on what services are available for low skill adult learners to improve their basic skills and participate in health care workforce training. Nancy Fisher expressed interest and indicated she would talk with Lansing Davis after the meeting.

Robin Widing will retire from the SETC effective April 29, 2011. The new Executive Director is expected to start the second week of May. SCALES should encourage the Executive Director to attend its next meeting.

### **Update: WIA Title II and Workforce – Claudia Merkel-Keller, Assistant Director, Department of Labor & Workforce Development**

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) through its Office of Workforce Readiness & Literacy recently submitted the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act State Plan Extension Request for FY 2010-2011 to the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), US Department of Education. State Plans are required for States to receive allotments under WIA Title II. Last year OVAE approved a one-year extension of operating plan for New Jersey, but that extension will expire on June 30, 2011.

A preliminary set of performance benchmarks have been negotiated with the US Department of Education for the 2011-2012 program years. These proposed performance levels have been lowered to be more realistic. After its review, the Department will advise LWD as to the status of the performance levels. The LACES data system allows programs to better measure their performance on a continual basis and enhance their ability to focus on program improvement. LACES also gives the state the ability to monitor program and state level performance on a consistent basis.

The revised plan will indicate that New Jersey will announce a continuation of the original year one contract (July 1, 2010 –June 30, 2011) of the competitive Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) to eligible recipients. This continuation will constitute the second year of the two-year grant availability with the second year contingent upon the availability of funds and the assessment of performance of all partners. The year two contract timeframe is from July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012.

The plan revision will be submitted to the Governor, and any comments made by his office will also be submitted to OVAE.

The WIA Title II grant award for 2010-2011 was \$15,673,270. At present there is uncertainty about the level of funding which is anticipated for the 2011-2012 program year.

The Workforce Learning Link Program faces significant cuts for program year 2011-2012. Shortly, the State allocations will become available and the funding will be allocated via formula based on census information and demographic variables developed by demographers from LWD's Division of Labor Planning and Analysis.

Claudia Merkel-Keller indicated that she would prepare a chart which portrays various funding sources for LWD managed literacy programs, the legislative intent of those funding sources, the performance outcomes sought and the funding to support the legislation.

**Update: Adult High Schools – Robert Berezny, Manager, Bureau of Adult Education & Family Literacy/GED, Department of Education**

Dennis Bone hosted a meeting on adult high schools. In addition to Mr. Bone the following individuals attended the meeting: Arcelio Aponte, President, NJ State Board of Education; Marie Barry, Director and Robert Berezny, Manager, NJ Department of Education; Harold Wirths, Commissioner and Richard Constable Deputy Commissioner, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Judy Savage, Executive Director, NJ Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools; and Hal Beder, Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University.

The group discussed the importance of adult education both for adult learners who want to improve their skills and earn credentials and young adults who have left the school system. Also discussed was the key role adult high schools had played in serving adults and young adult. The lack of data on adult high schools has been a problem and makes it hard to build a case for their value. Bob has been charged to collect data on Adult High Schools.

**Update: Adult High Schools – Hal Beder, Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University**

The meeting was a positive step because it brought together a small group of key stakeholders to discuss adult high school closings and strategic planning for the literacy system. Participation by the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development as well as a representative from the Department of Education

points to cross agency concern for adult education. Likewise the involvement of the President of the State Board of Education reinforces that body's continued concern about adult education. The meeting created elevated the discussion about the crisis in adult education. The system needs to be redesigned and long-term funding commitments need to be secured. The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and his Deputy will see if funding is available to support an analysis of the literacy system and development of a strategic plan.

### **Discussion: SCALES Focus for 2011**

Regular Title II allocations for the next fiscal year will be flat funded (approximately \$15 million to New Jersey). The additional adult education funding allocation that some states received last year, New Jersey included, is not expected this year. There will also be a reduction in State Supplemental Literacy dollars – derived from the unemployment trust fund – which support Workforce Learning Links. Some Title II funding may be needed to maintain these programs. Additionally, LACES, the adult education accountability and data reporting system, and professional development initiatives are also supported by Title II. As a consequence, Title II consortia may see a 5% cut to their allocations from LWD. Funding cuts will significantly impact adult education system in FY 2012.

New Jersey Department of Education code now allows districts to charge tuition. Some districts are dropping out of Title II consortia because the elimination of adult high school funding.

We need a five-year strategic plan for adult education that addresses development of a state-based county-level delivery system that provides multiple options for learners to meeting their goals, support the state workforce investment agenda, and ensures accountability through data collection and reporting.

Three motions were made, seconded, and passed by the Council:

1. The first priority of SCALES for this year should be to support restoration of Adult High School funding and to support continuance of the higher level group convened by Dennis Bone to discuss the Adult High School situation. The motion was passed unanimously.
2. SCALES should conduct an analysis of adult education funding in New Jersey to see how it is being spent, how it is being distributed, and what its impact is.

During the discussion on this motion the following issues were raised:

- Community Colleges get a significant percentage of the Supplemental Workforce Literacy Funds, but are not subject to rigorous accountability and performance standards.
- There needs to be an accounting of how much money is spent statewide for adult education? How is the money distributed and to whom? What

type of programs and services are being offered as a result of the funding? What is the impact of this funding on programs and students?

- The State needs a head of adult education, an adult education Czar to oversee all programs.

The motion was passed with one opposing vote by Barry Semple, who indicated that data collection should not be a goal of SCALES, but a mechanism for making informed decisions.

3. SCALES should monitor, and as appropriate, support the recommendations of the Adult Literacy Group convened by Dennis Bone. The motion was unanimously passed.

Members asked that Lansing Davis invite New Executive Director of the SETC to next SCALES meeting.

Meeting ended at 12:05.

**Members and Alternates**

Hal Beder- Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University  
Robert Berezny- Department of Education  
Norma Blake- New Jersey State Library  
Elissa Director- Health Literacy Consultant  
Nancy Fisher- Jewish Vocational Services  
Patty Friend- Department of Corrections  
Terri Hughes- Department of Human Services  
Claudia Merkel-Keller- Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Julio Sabater- Universal Communications  
Robert Santare- Champion Fasteners, Inc.  
Barry Semple-retired

**Guests**

Sharon Rogers- Burlington County College  
Keisha Smith-Carrington, Department of Education

**Staff**

Lansing Davis- SETC