

State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2011 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Trenton, New Jersey

Welcome and Approval of Minutes- Robert Santare, Chair

The Chair called the meeting to order about 10:00 a.m. He welcomed all attendees and asked them to introduce themselves. Members were asked to review the minutes of the April 27, 2011 meeting for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made and unanimously approved.

Updates: Lansing Davis, Senior Policy Analyst, State Employment and Training Commission

Two SCALES members have retired from the State: Claudia Merkel-Keller, Assistant Director Department of Labor & Workforce Development (LWD) and State Director for Adult Education and Robert Berezny, Manager, Bureau of Adult Education & Family Literacy/GED, Department of Education. Their dedication and expertise will be missed.

LWD has made \$20,000 available to the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) to fund an analysis of the state literacy system and to make recommendations for improving service delivery. The SETC had only a few weeks to develop a work-plan for the analysis, identify an organization to conduct the research, and execute a contract. Montclair State University was selected as the contract grantee to conduct the analysis which will be done under the guidance of SCALES. Once approved by SCALES the report and recommendations will be submitted to the SETC for approval and submission to the LWD and appropriate State government leaders.

Updates: Larry Breeden, Acting State GED Administrator, Department of Education

The GED Testing Services has formed a partnership with Pearson, the educational publishing and testing company to revamp the GED test and administer it exclusively as a computer-based assessment. The new test will be aligned with states' core education standards, measure college and work readiness as well as high school proficiency. The fees for the test will increase and the cost for testing centers to meet the requirements to deliver the test may also increase substantially. New Jersey along with a number of other states has expressed concerns about the increased costs, the new standards, and the computer only delivery system and is considering possible alternative assessments

to measure high school proficiency. It was agreed that SCALES should be included in this discussion.

There will be a meeting at the Department of Education on September 23, 2011 to discuss the new GED and whether New Jersey should consider working with other states to develop an alternate assessment.

Adults may also earn a high school diploma by completing 30 college credits.

Discussion: Literacy Study

The MOU between the SETC and Montclair State University was finalized the end of June. Erik Jacobson will be the principle researcher and lead person from Montclair. The SETC has formed an advisory committee of SCALES members to guide the project. The Committee includes: Hal Beder, Barry Semple, Nancy Fisher, and Department of Labor and Workforce Development representative. This committee will meet least three times with the Eric Jacobson during the project. SETC will convene the meetings of this committee. Montclair will provide a work-plan; will provide updates, preliminary findings/reports and final document to SCALES. The report will include a description of the local delivery system by capacity to serve and level of potential need. Description should reflect WIB areas and pockets of need. It should also identify the presences or lack of key adult literacy program components; such as adult high schools, ABE, ESL, GED, literacy volunteer services, college transitions, county college developmental education/basic skills programs, and work readiness. The report should also include State-level program funding, participation, and outcomes data.

This is a SCALES report. SCALES will guide the process. SCALES will submit a draft report to the SETC and Dr. Jacobson along with Chairperson Santare will present the findings and recommendations to the Commission.

Chairperson Santare read some key issues that Dr. Jacobson wanted SCALES to discuss:

1. The current spending on adult literacy (and ABE more generally) across the various departments. We discussed this on the phone call, and it would be good to get more information about where the data is. This should include things like spending on any education efforts to support re-entry for prisoners. What does the banjo chart look like now?
2. Data or performance reviews of the consortia and the WIB literacy committees. Since this was the last big change by the state, how has the effort been evaluated? This is a key issue in terms of articulation.
3. Information and reviews of recent professional development sponsored by the state.

4. State support for distance learning. Where and how much?

Lansing Davis will develop a questionnaire to send to state agencies to collect information on adult literacy programs they fund. Debbie Heinz, Department of Community Affairs; Terri Hughes, Department of Human Services; and Larry Breeden, Department of Education agreed to be the contacts for responding to the questionnaire for their respective agencies. The Department of State, which has a Faith-based initiative and a Hispanic Center, will also be contacted. This data can be used to revise the banjo chart from the 2003 SCALES report.

Intensity of instruction is an important issue. Learners need access to a sufficient amount of instructional hours per week throughout the year to enable them to make significant educational gains. It takes about 100 hours of instruction to improve one grade level.

The question of referrals and transition from one literacy program to another was raised. Are linkages in place to refer learners between the One-Stop and Literacy Programs other than the Learning Links or the reverse? There is not a strong connection between Title II programs and employment. There is a disincentive to move learners between programs within the Title II consortia because funding and outcomes only attach to the initial provider during a given program year.

WIB literacy plans need to be updated; they were created in 2004.

The adult education system is in crisis. This study must address the inadequacy of funding, providing data on actual funding levels and the level of need for service. The economic impact of literacy levels both on the individual and the state's economy should be addressed. The recommendations should reflect best practices and discuss what the system should look like going forward. County level coordination may be the approach to adopt.

Many libraries indicate that an overwhelming percentage of their time is spent helping job seekers. Thus how can the system better connect with these institutions to better share resources and maximize outcomes.

Computer literacy needs to be emphasized and make sure that computer literacy is incorporated into the system.

Laces can provide you with real time data on programs funded with Title II money.

We should review the following information:

- CAEL 2008 Profile for New Jersey
- GED Profile for New Jersey
- [www.cael.org/Adult Learning in Focus.htm](http://www.cael.org/Adult_Learning_in_Focus.htm)

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development in November may conduct a public hearing related to literacy customized training initiatives.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Members and Alternates:

Hal Beder- Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University

Norma Blake- New Jersey State Library

Larry Breeden- Department of Education

Nancy Fisher- Jewish Vocational Services

Debbie Heinz- Department of Community Affairs

Terri Hughes- Department of Human Services

Julio Sabater- Universal Communications

Robert Santare- Champion Fasteners, Inc.

Barry Semple- Retired

SETC Staff

Lansing Davis- State Employment and Training Commission

La Shana Jackson- State Employment and Training Commission Intern