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ABSTRACT

Literacy and work force preparedness are two of the most important issues facing education today. Findings of nationwide studies show that reading and writing performance of students is inadequate. One of every eight current workers reads at the fourth-grade level or lower. The nation's economic future will be determined by the quality and competitiveness of the work force in a global context. Adult education has a critical role to play in helping thousands of people to participate fully in an increasingly complex and competitive world. For many, adult education is the critical link to economic self-sufficiency and the key to breaking the cycle of illiteracy. The decade of the 1980s was marked by growth in adult education to meet demands for increased and diversified services, coalition building among diverse providers, and the infusion of new resources from both the public and private sectors. The decade of the 1990s must see policy, not programs, driving literacy initiatives. There must be informed goal-setting and long-range planning based on identifiable needs. The challenge to the federal government is to establish national policy that provides leadership, coordination, and research in adult education and literacy to guide state and local efforts. Effective adult education programs are those that enable all students to master basic skills; provide relevant courses to meet student, employer, and community needs; strengthen and expand partnership efforts; and set standards of accountability. (CML)

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ADULT EDUCATION
NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ADULT AND ADOLESCENT LITERACY
JANUARY 13, 1990

BETSY BRAND, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VOCATIONAL AND
ADULT EDUCATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY. I AM VERY HAPPY
TO BE HERE AND CERTAINLY LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH MANY OF YOU
OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

AFTER THE 1988 ELECTION, I FOUND MYSELF IN A UNIQUE POSITION.
FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE THAT ELECTION, I HAD WORKED AS A STAFFER
FOR A SENATOR FROM INDIANA. MY BOSS WHO WAS ABOUT TO ASSUME A
NEW SET OF RESPONSIBILITIES TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD HELP ME AS MUCH
AS HE POSSIBLY COULD TO HELP ME GET PLACED ANYWHERE IN THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ASKED ME WHAT I WANTED TO DO.

UNEQUIVOCALLY, I ANSWERED I WANTED TO GO THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL
AND ADULT EDUCATION (OVAE) IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.
MY REASONS FOR WANTING TO BE IN OVAE WERE AS STRONG THEN AS THEY
ARE NOW, AFTER SPENDING CLOSE TO A YEAR THERE. I SEE LITERACY
AND WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS AS TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES
FACING EDUCATION TODAY.

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JUST THIS WEEK, THE RELEASE OF TWO NATIONWIDE STUDIES CONDUCTED IN 1988 BY THE FEDERALLY FUNDED NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRESS (NAEP) REINFORCED THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY AS A TOP ISSUE. THE RESULTS IN THE READING REPORT CARD, 1971-1988 AND THE WRITING REPORT CARD, 1984-1988 SHOW THAT THE READING AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF 9-, 13-, AND 17-YEAR-OLDS REMAIN VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED SINCE THE LAST ASSESSMENT.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS SHOW THAT SINCE 1980, THE PERCENTAGE OF 9-YEAR-OLDS WHO POSSESS BASIC READING SKILLS -- THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND SPECIFIC OR SEQUENTIALLY-RELATED INFORMATION -- HAS DECLINED FROM 68 TO 63 PERCENT. SEVEN PERCENT LACK RUDIMENTARY SKILLS REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT SIMPLE READING TASKS. AND THAT NEARLY SIX OUT OF TEN OR 58% OF OUR 17-YEAR-OLDS CANNOT READ AT THE ADEPT LEVEL -- WHICH IS DEFINED AS THE ABILITY TO FIND, UNDERSTAND, SUMMARIZE, AND EXPLAIN RELATIVELY COMPLICATED INFORMATION.

IN RESPONSE TO THESE FINDINGS, SECRETARY CAVAZOS CALLED THE READING AND WRITING SKILLS OF AMERICAN STUDENTS "DREADFULLY INADEQUATE." HE CALLED ON PARENTS WHO WISH THEIR CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL TO TEACH THEM TO VALUE READING AND WRITING; "THAT READING AND WRITING ARE NOT ONLY ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS, BUT ALSO THE JOYFUL BEGINNING OF A LIFELONG ADVENTURE."

IN ECONOMIC TERMS, RESULTS SUCH AS THOSE IN THE NAEP REPORTS DO

NOT BODE WELL FOR US. AS AMERICA ESTABLISHES ITS ROLE IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY, OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE, IN LARGE MEASURE, WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE QUALITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR WORKFORCE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT. TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF LIFE WE NOW ENJOY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, OUR NATION MUST MAINTAIN A STRONG COMPETITIVE POSITION. TO MAINTAIN THAT POSITION, WE MUST PRODUCE A WELL-EDUCATED, HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE.

IN A NATION WHERE ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES HAVE THE READING, WRITING, AND REASONING SKILLS THEY NEED TO FUNCTION OPTIMALLY IN SOCIETY, AND WHERE ONE OF EVERY EIGHT CURRENT WORKERS READS AT THE 4TH GRADE LEVEL OR LOWER, ADULT EDUCATION HAS A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND COMPETITIVE WORLD.

FOR MANY, ADULT EDUCATION IS THE CRITICAL LINK TO ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE KEY TO BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ILLITERACY THAT OFTEN REMAINS UNBROKEN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

IN SHORT, ADULT EDUCATION TODAY IS UNLOCKING DOORS OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR AMERICANS OUTSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM. IT IS HELPING TO PROVIDE THE UNITED STATES WITH A WORKFORCE CAPABLE OF COMPETING ON A GLOBAL BASIS. THIS ADDS UP TO A TREMENDOUS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OF US. WE HAVE BEEN

ENTRUSTED WITH THE MANAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING OF THIS SYSTEM AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT IT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE RAPIDLY CHANGING DEMANDS BEING MADE UPON IT.

TODAY, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU SEVERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING ADULT EDUCATION AND MY PERSPECTIVE OF THE FEDERAL ROLE.

THE 1980s

THE DECADE OF THE 1980s BROUGHT NEW VISIBILITY TO ADULT EDUCATION AND WITH IT NEW CHALLENGES AND DEMANDS ON THE SYSTEM. IN THE EARLY 1980s PRESIDENT REAGAN ANNOUNCED THE NATIONAL LITERACY INITIATIVE, AND THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR LITERACY WAS FORMED. BOTH WERE SUCCESSFUL IN RAISING AWARENESS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE LITERACY ISSUE. NOT SO LONG AGO, THE FACT THAT TENS OF MILLIONS OF AMERICA'S CITIZENS HAVE SERIOUS BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENCIES WAS UNKNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. TODAY THERE IS A BROAD RANGE OF INTEREST GROUPS THAT HAVE CONVERGED ON THE ISSUE OF ADULT LITERACY INCLUDING BUSINESSMEN, POLICY-MAKERS, THE MEDIA, AND CIVIC AND VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATIONS.

DURING THE 80s, THERE WERE NEW DEMANDS FOR SERVICES IN NON-TRADITIONAL SETTINGS; NEW REQUIREMENTS WERE RAISED BY SPECIAL

POPULATIONS SUCH AS EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE, THE HOMELESS, THE LEARNING DISABLED, THE INSTITUTIONALIZED, AND IMMIGRANTS. ADDITIONALLY, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, LOCAL VOLUNTEER COUNCILS AND INDUSTRY BECAME NEW PLAYERS IN THE DELIVERY SYSTEM.

AS A RESULT OF THESE CHANGES, THE DECADE WAS MARKED BY SPONTANEOUS GROWTH TO MEET DEMANDS FOR INCREASED AND DIVERSIFIED SERVICES, COALITION BUILDING AMONG DIVERSE PROVIDERS, AND THE INFUSION OF NEW RESOURCES FROM BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

DURING THIS PERIOD, THE ROLE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CENTERED LARGELY ON ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OR EXPANDED LEGISLATION ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR INCREASED SERVICES. FUNDING HAS RISEN UNDER THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT FROM

\$ 112.9 MILLION IN FY 87 TO

\$ 134.1 MILLION IN FY 88 TO

\$ 162.2 MILLION IN FY 89.

NEW PROGRAMS WERE AUTHORIZED FOR INNOVATIVE DEMONSTRATIONS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO AT-RISK POPULATIONS IN OUR CHANGING SOCIETY WHICH DEMANDS HIGHER LEVELS OF LITERACY. SOME OF THESE NEW PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- ADULT EDUCATION FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM;
- NATIONAL WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM TO PROVIDE BASIC SKILLS AND JOB TRAINING INSTRUCTION THROUGH

- EDUCATION/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS ALREADY EMPLOYED BUT AT RISK OF LOSING JOBS OR PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES BECAUSE OF LACK OF SKILLS;
- ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS LACKING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS;
 - EVEN START/FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN AND UNDEREDUCATED PARENTS, CREATED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF INTERGENERATIONAL ILLITERACY;
 - LIBRARY LITERACY PROGRAMS WHICH ENCOURAGED THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES IN ADULT EDUCATION THROUGH TRAINED TUTORS WHO COULD EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE LIBRARY DELIVERY SYSTEM; AND
 - STUDENT LITERACY CORPS WHICH ENCOURAGED COLLEGE STUDENTS TO JOIN THE RANKS OF VOLUNTEERS IN PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS.

AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS, PROVIDERS OF ALL TYPES STRUGGLED TO COORDINATE THESE MANY PROGRAM SERVICES THROUGH STATE COUNCILS AND COMMUNITY COALITIONS, AND TO COMBINE A VARIETY OF FEDERAL SOURCES FOR A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES ACCESSIBLE TO THE DIVERSE POPULATIONS THAT NOW SOUGHT THEM.

IN THE LATE 1980s CHANGING WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED TO IMPROVE LITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES AND HAVE ADDED A NEW SENSE OF URGENCY TO LONG-STANDING CONCERNS. IT WAS JUST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS AGO (JUNE 1987) THAT THE HUDSON

INSTITUTE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR RELEASED THEIR HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL REPORT WORKFORCE 2000. THIS STUDY CONFIRMED WHAT MANY OF US INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES HAD COME TO REALIZE -- THAT ALTHOUGH THE WORKPLACE IN AMERICA IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE COMPLEX, THE WORKFORCE IS ALSO CHANGING DRAMATICALLY, THE FULL IMPACT OF WHICH WE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO COMPREHEND.

FIRST, THE WORKFORCE 2000 REPORT ESTIMATED THAT WE SIMPLY WILL NOT HAVE AS MANY WORKERS TO FILL NEW JOBS AS WE HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. THE REPORT ALSO TOLD US THAT WE CAN EXPECT DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE WORKFORCE, RESULTING IN A POTENTIAL MISMATCH BETWEEN THE JOBS THAT ARE AVAILABLE AND THE WORKERS WITH THE SKILLS TO FILL THEM.

WORKFORCE 2000 DOCUMENTED THE DRAMATIC CHANGES THAT WERE TAKING PLACE IN THE WORKPLACE -- DEMANDING A WHOLE NEW SET OF SKILLS AND ALTERING THE VERY FABRIC OF WORK AS WE KNOW IT TODAY. THE HIGH PAYING MANUFACTURING JOBS THAT OFFERED GENERATIONS OF SEMI-SKILLED AMERICAN WORKERS LIFETIME EMPLOYMENT AND GOOD SALARIES ARE BEING REPLACED BY JOBS THAT REQUIRE STRONG BASIC AS WELL AS ANALYTICAL AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.

NO LONGER CAN AN EMPLOYEE EXPECT TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER BY PERFORMING THE LARGELY MECHANICAL, REPETITIVE TASKS REQUIRED BY MASS PRODUCTION PROCESSES. INSTEAD, THE FAST-GROWING JOBS THAT

OFFER FINANCIAL SECURITY AS WE APPROACH THE YEAR 2000 WILL REQUIRE MORE LITERACY, HIGHER MATH, AND BETTER REASONING SKILLS.

WORKFORCE 2000 FLATLY STATED THAT, TO BE COMPETITIVE IN A GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENT ECONOMY, WE WILL NEED A WORKFORCE THAT CAN READ, WRITE, COMPUTE AND COMPREHEND. IN ADDITION, THAT WORKFORCE IS GOING TO NEED A POSITIVE WORK ETHIC, GOOD INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, THE ABILITY TO INTERACT EFFECTIVELY WITH FELLOW EMPLOYEES AND CONSUMERS, AND THE CAPACITY FOR CRITICAL THINKING AND DECISION-MAKING. IN SHORT, WE NEED A WORKFORCE THAT CAN THINK ON THE MARGIN AND MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS UNDER A WIDE RANGE OF STRESSFUL WORK CONDITIONS.

DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANY STRONGER CASE FOR THE NEED FOR HIGH QUALITY ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS. ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS HAVE A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THE BASIC SKILLS THAT WILL ULTIMATELY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE THAT TRAINED WORKFORCE TO COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY.

A LOOK AT THE 1990s

THERE ARE CRITICAL NEEDS WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED IN THE DECADE AHEAD. THE DECADE OF THE 90S MUST SEE POLICY, NOT PROGRAMS, DRIVING LITERACY INITIATIVES. THERE MUST BE INFORMED GOAL-SETTING AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING BASED ON IDENTIFIABLE NEEDS. THERE MUST BE POLICY DIRECTION AT ALL LEVELS -- NATIONAL, STATE

AND LOCAL TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHALLENGE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL POLICY THAT PROVIDES LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND RESEARCH IN ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY TO GUIDE STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS.

I AM PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO SHAKE WITH YOU TODAY SOME OF THE FEDERAL EFFORTS UNDER WAY THAT WILL PROVIDE THIS LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND RESEARCH.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, PRESIDENT BUSH HAS SHOWN LEADERSHIP BY MAKING THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION A TOP PRIORITY FOR HIS ADMINISTRATION. GUIDING THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS IN EDUCATION ARE FOUR CRITICAL STRATEGIES AMONG WHICH IS THE CONCEPT OF HELPING THE NEEDIEST.

PRESIDENT BUSH IS ALSO PROVIDING GREATER NATIONAL ATTENTION ON LITERACY. FUNCTIONAL LITERACY FOR ADULT AMERICANS WAS LISTED AS ONE OF THE SEVEN PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED AT PRESIDENT BUSH'S EDUCATION SUMMIT WITH GOVERNORS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE LAST SEPTEMBER. AND OF COURSE, THE LEADERSHIP THAT MRS. BUSH HAS SHOWN IN THE AREA OF LITERACY IS WELL KNOWN.

AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL THE EMPHASIS IS ON COORDINATION AND RESEARCH. THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED, THROUGH THE DOMESTIC POLICY

COUNCIL AT THE WHITE HOUSE, THAT A WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION BE FORMED. THE WORKING GROUP IS CHAIRED BY SECRETARY CAVALOS AND ITS FIRST ASSIGNMENT IS THE LITERACY ISSUE.

THE PRESIDENT HAS ALSO ASKED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS THE LEAD AGENCY WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TO DEVELOP JOINTLY A MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVE (MBO) INITIATIVE ON ADULT LITERACY. THE GOAL OF THE MBO IS TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED STRATEGY ON LITERACY FOR THESE THREE DEPARTMENTS WHICH HAVE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LITERACY ACTIVITIES. WE WILL COLLECT CURRENT FEDERAL DATA ON FUNDING SOURCES AND SERVICES, EXAMINE ISSUES IN INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY EXEMPLARY LOCAL PROJECTS.

THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION, LABOR, AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ARE ALSO WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER TO COLLECTIVELY FASHION A DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT WORKS FOR AMERICA. THE COORDINATION ON JOBS (JOB OPPORTUNITY AND BASIC SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM) AMONG ED, HHS, AND LABOR IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE EMPHASIS GIVEN TO INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.

IN THE AREA OF RESEARCH, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS CURRENTLY EXPANDING ITS EFFORTS. THE DEPARTMENT IS REVISING ITS RESEARCH CENTERS, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT THERE WILL BE A GREATER

EMPHASIS ON ADULT EDUCATION, LITERACY, AND WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS IN THE FUTURE. THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION FUNDS THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON ADULT LITERACY, AND THE OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT FUNDS THE NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT LOCATED AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

IN FISCAL YEAR 1990, OUR BUDGET FOR STATE GRANTS UNDER THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT STANDS AT \$160.7 MILLION, AN 18 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE FUNDING LEVEL FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S FUNDING LEVEL AND THE HIGHEST FUNDING LEVEL EVER FOR THIS PROGRAM. WITH AN ESTIMATED 3 MILLION PARTICIPANTS IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN FISCAL YEAR 1989, THIS SIGNIFICANT INCREASE SHOULD ENABLE YOU TO EXPAND YOUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE BASIC SKILLS/BASIC KNOWLEDGE TO MANY OF THOSE IN OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE.

WE ALSO BELIEVE, THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN HELPING YOU TO ACHIEVE OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVES THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. WE NEED TO HELP YOU DEVELOP A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION -- COORDINATING ALL AVAILABLE FEDERAL RESOURCES TO MEET THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS OF A WIDE RANGE OF ADULTS IN OUR VERY DIVERSE NATION.

IN SETTING GUIDELINES FOR ACTION, ONE IMPORTANT STEP THAT WE TOOK THIS PAST APRIL WAS PUBLISHING OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR ADULT

EDUCATION. THESE FOUR PRINCIPLES WERE DEVELOPED IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH FRONTLINE SERVICE PROVIDERS WHO KNOW WHAT STEPS MUST BE TAKEN TO DEVELOP THE EFFICIENT DELIVERY SYSTEM WE ARE GOING TO NEED TO GET THE JOB DONE.

ALTHOUGH, I KNOW SOME OF YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE BASIC PRINCIPLES, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRIEFLY RESTATE THEM TO GIVE YOU A SENSE OF THE DIRECTION THAT WE AT THE DEPARTMENT ARE HEADING IN.

FIRST, WE ARE URGING THAT BASIC SKILLS BE MASTERED BY ALL STUDENTS. BASIC SKILLS INCLUDE READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS, WORK MATURITY, LIFE COMPETENCY, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS. MANY EMPLOYERS AND EDUCATORS ALSO INCLUDE COMPUTER LITERACY, KNOWING HOW TO LEARN, AND WORK ETHICS AS WELL. ALTHOUGH MASTERY OF THESE SKILLS MAY BE A CHALLENGE, THE GOAL IS AN IMPORTANT ONE.

IN ORDER TO MEET THIS GOAL WE RECOMMEND A BASIC SKILLS ACTION PLAN WHICH INCLUDES:

- DIAGNOSING EACH LEARNER'S NEEDS AND STRENGTHS;
- PROVIDING EACH LEARNER FREQUENT PROGRESS REPORTS;
- MAKING SURE THAT BASIC SKILLS ARE APPLIED IN MEANINGFUL WAYS; AND
- PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH A BASIC SKILLS PERFORMANCE REPORT AT THE END OF THE COURSE.

SECOND, WE RECOMMEND THAT COURSE CONTENT BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE LEARNER, THE LABOR MARKET, AND COMMUNITY NEEDS. SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS, WE BELIEVE, ARE THOSE THAT FULFILL NEEDS -- NEEDS OF THE STUDENT, NEEDS OF FUTURE EMPLOYERS, AND NEEDS OF OTHERS WITH WHOM THE STUDENT WILL LIVE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE INTERGENERATIONAL PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ACTION PLAN IN THIS AREA INCLUDE:

- INVOLVING COMMUNITY AND LABOR MARKET LEADERS IN PLANNING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMS;
- DEVELOPING A REVIEW PROCESS TO ENSURE PROGRAMS ARE RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL LABOR MARKET AND COMMUNITY NEEDS (PERHAPS A COMMUNITY TASK FORCE);
- ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS;
- PROVIDING A VARIETY OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES TO MEET THE NEEDS AND STYLES OF ALL STUDENTS; AND
- DEVELOPING CURRICULUM AND DELIVERY TECHNIQUES ON AN ONGOING BASIS AS NEEDED.

THIRD, WE STRESS THAT PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS SHOULD BE EXPANDED AND STRENGTHENED. PARTNERSHIP POSSIBILITIES ARE NUMEROUS AND SHOULD INCLUDE COORDINATION WITH AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE A WIDE VARIETY OF SOCIAL SERVICES. EXAMPLES INCLUDE STATE AND LOCAL WELFARE PROGRAMS; JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS, CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS, LIBRARIES, BUSINESS, AND INDUSTRY. PARTNERSHIP'S WITH THE K-12

EDUCATION SYSTEM CAN ALWAYS BE STRENGTHENED. FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS ARE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS DELIVERING RELEVANT SERVICES.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ACTION PLAN FOR EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE:

- SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS;
- EXAMINING THE POTENTIAL FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS;
- INVOLVING OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES IN THE DELIVERY/COORDINATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES;
- SHARING RESOURCES WITH OTHER AGENCIES; AND
- LETTING PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT AND TAKE CREDIT FOR YOUR PROGRAM.

FINALLY, WE MAINTAIN THAT PROGRAMS MUST HAVE A SYSTEM THAT ENSURES ACCOUNTABILITY. AS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS INVEST MORE OF THEIR RESOURCES IN ADULT LEARNING, PROGRAMS MUST MEET GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS. WITHOUT A WELL-DEVELOPED SYSTEM OF ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY, INCREASED AND CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS MAY NOT BE ACHIEVED.

THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT REQUIRES EACH STATE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ADULT PROGRAMS. THIS MEANS THAT ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO TARGETED POPULATIONS SERVED, STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS, RELEVANT

CURRICULUM, AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT.

IN TURN, ADULT EDUCATORS AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS MUST ENSURE THAT PROGRAM STANDARDS OF EFFECTIVENESS PROVIDE MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY. THESE COULD INCLUDE: MEASURABLE ATTAINMENT OF BASIC SKILLS OF STUDENTS; STUDENT AND COMMUNITY EVALUATIONS OF THE PROGRAM; RETENTION RATES; TIME ON TASK; AND ATTAINMENT OF THE GED.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ACTION PLAN TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY INCLUDE:

- DEVELOPING STANDARDS THAT MEASURE AND EVALUATE THE PROGRAM;
- USING THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM TO IMPROVE DECISION MAKING; AND
- SHARING PROGRAM GOALS AND STANDARDS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

IN SUMMARY, EFFECTIVE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE THOSE THAT:

1. ENABLE ALL STUDENTS TO MASTER BASIC SKILLS;
2. PROVIDE RELEVANT COURSES TO MEET STUDENT, EMPLOYER, AND COMMUNITY NEEDS;
3. STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS; AND
4. SET STANDARDS OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

WE DO KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES IN

THE FIELD. MANY OF THE SESSIONS YOU WILL ATTEND OVER THE WEEKEND WILL HIGHLIGHT THESE EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS IN FAMILY LITERACY, WORKPLACE LITERACY AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.

MOST OF THE GOOD IDEAS SURFACE FROM THE FIELD, AND WE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEED TO WORK WITH YOU TO LEARN WHICH ARE THE BEST PROGRAMS, AND THEN SHARE THOSE PROGRAMS WITH OTHERS. CURRENTLY, WE HAVE PLANS TO IMPROVE OUR CLEARINGHOUSE SO THAT WE CAN BE A BETTER RESOURCE FOR ALL OF YOU. I WOULD ALSO ASK FOR YOUR HELP IN LETTING ME OR OTHERS IN MY OFFICE KNOW OF ADDITIONAL WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN PROVIDE IMPROVED SERVICES TO YOU.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO STAY IN CLOSER TOUCH WITH THE COMMUNITY, I WILL BE CALLING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS IN ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY TO MEET WITH THEM ON A REGULAR BASIS. THAT GROUP, I AM SURE, WILL PROVIDE ME WITH EXCELLENT GUIDANCE.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL SEE A STRONGER FEDERAL PRESENCE AND STRONGER FEDERAL LEADERSHIP.

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT ILLITERACY IS INTERGENERATIONAL AND MUST BE TACKLED FROM MORE THAN ONE SIDE -- WE MUST SEE LITERACY FROM THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE, PROVIDING A MUCH IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT FULFILLS ITS PROMISE THAT EVERY CHILD WILL BE PREPARED FOR SCHOOL, THAT HE OR SHE WILL GRADUATE FROM HIGH

SCHOOL, AND THAT HE OR SHE WILL GRADUATE WITH THE LITERACY SKILLS NEEDED TO FUNCTION IN TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S SOCIETY.

AND THE PROBLEM NEEDS TO BE TACKLED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ADULT -- THE MOTHER, THE FATHER, THE GRANDPARENTS, THE WORKERS IN OUR HOSPITALS, INDUSTRIES, STORES, AND THOSE NEWLY ARRIVED IN AMERICA. WE MUST REACH OUT AND FIND THOSE PEOPLE THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF THEIR BASIC SKILLS AND FIND A WAY TO MAKE THEIR EDUCATION RELEVANT. WHETHER IT IS THROUGH A FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM THAT TEACHES A NEW MOTHER HOW TO READ AND HOW TO READ TO HER CHILD, OR WHETHER IT IS A WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM THAT GIVES A WORKER THE SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM SUCCESSFULLY AND ADVANCE TO A HIGHER WAGE OR A PROMOTION.

UNFORTUNATELY, OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS FAILED MANY PEOPLE, MANY TIMES.

THE NAEP REPORT CARDS ON READING AND WRITING INDICATE THE SYSTEM MAY STILL BE FAILING DESPITE RECENT ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION.

WITHOUT A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF PEOPLE AND FAMILIES, WE WILL NEVER ATTAIN OUR SOLUTION. ILLITERACY IS AS TIGHTLY INTERWOVEN INTO AS MANY OF OUR SOCIAL ILLS AS YOU COULD NAME. WE MUST ADDRESS THE PROBLEM, AND IT MUST BE ADDRESSED NOW.

YOU HAVE MY COMPLETE SUPPORT IN ALL OF YOUR EFFORTS AND I HOPE
THAT TOGETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND IMPROVE
THE LITERACY AND THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.