



**Adult Basic Education:
Aligning Adult Basic Education
and Postsecondary Education**

September 30, 2008

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Robert W. Shepard, CHAIR	Harlingen
A.W. "Whit" Riter III, VICE CHAIR	Tyler
Elaine Mendoza, SECRETARY OF THE BOARD	San Antonio
Laurie Bricker	Houston
Fred W. Heldenfels IV	Austin
Joe B. Hinton	Crawford
Charles "Trey" Lewis, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE	Houston
Brenda Pejovich	Dallas
Lyn Bracewell Phillips	Bastrop
Robert V. Wingo	El Paso

Raymund A. Paredes, COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mission of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state's higher education plan, Closing the Gaps by 2015, and thereby provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

Philosophy of the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will promote access to quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access is unacceptable. The Board will be open, ethical, responsive, and committed to public service. The Board will approach its work with a sense of purpose and responsibility to the people of Texas and is committed to the best use of public monies. The Coordinating Board will engage in actions that add value to Texas and to higher education. The agency will avoid efforts that do not add value or that are duplicated by other entities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction	1
Current Organizational Structure of Adult Basic Education and Agency Roles	3
Comparative Analysis of ABE Programs in Other States	5
Comparative Analysis of Funding Mechanisms with Other States.....	7
Current and Future Demand.....	11
Identification of Best Practices	19
Social and Economic Benefits	25
Recommendations	33
APPENDIX A.....	35
<i>General Appropriations Act, HB 1, 80th Texas Legislature, Section 50 (Page III-57)</i>	
APPENDIX B.....	37
<i>A Study of the Current Organizational Structure and Agency Roles in Providing ABE in Texas</i>	
APPENDIX C.....	49
<i>Funding Mechanisms of ABE Programs in Comparison States</i>	
APPENDIX D.....	51
<i>DRAFT: Identification of Best Practices in Adult Basic Education</i>	
APPENDIX E	95
<i>Annual Cost of Adult Basic Education Enrollments</i>	
APPENDIX F	97
<i>Estimation of Adult Basic Education Return on Investment</i>	
REFERENCES	99

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Executive Summary

Section 50 of the General Appropriations Act (House Bill 1) of the 80th Texas Legislature called for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in coordination with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), “to develop and implement immediate and long-range coordinated action plans to align Adult Basic Education (ABE) and postsecondary education.” In developing these action plans, Section 50 identified several issues as important for consideration and study:

- The current and projected future demand for ABE in Texas.
- The types of programs and instruction necessary to serve current and projected future populations of adult learners.
- The social and economic outcomes of providing varying levels of ABE services in Texas.
- A comparative analysis of ABE programs offered in other states.
- Best practices in ABE.
- The current organizational structure and agency roles in Texas in providing ABE.

A research team from the University of Houston studied numerous factors impacting ABE in Texas. Several points emerged from this review:

- Although the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is responsible for ABE in Texas, it contracts out all programmatic services to one organization: Texas LEARNS. While TEA is responsible for monitoring the programs, state leadership is part of the MOU that exists between TEA and Texas LEARNS. The state agency, therefore, may be perceived to have limited its role in overseeing policy and programmatic issues concerning ABE. Furthermore, most of the contact between Texas LEARNS and the agency is handled through the Division of Discretionary Grants in TEA, a fiscal unit within the agency.
- States are required to match federal funds. Unlike most large states, Texas provides the minimum match of 25 percent. In contrast, California provides a match of 88 percent, Florida’s match is 90 percent, and New York’s match is 65 percent.
- Texas ABE programs serve approximately 100,000 individuals each year—an amount that is far below the estimated 5 million people who could benefit from services.

Compared to other states and the nation, Texas faces unique educational challenges that require immediate attention in order for the state to maintain a competitive edge. As examples:

- Over 21 percent of adults in Texas have less than a high school diploma, as compared to 14.8 percent for the nation.
- More than 40 percent of adults who lack a high school education also have less than an eighth grade education.
- There are more than 1.2 million adults in Texas who speak English poorly or do not speak it at all.

Policymakers need to consider the potential benefits to the individual and to the state when making decisions about the state’s ABE program. Based on an economic analysis of *Closing the Gaps by 2015* conducted by The Perryman Group in 2007, if only 100,000 participants in ABE move on to higher education, the state could create 163,680 new jobs that would add

\$31 billion to the gross state product. This would translate into a \$20 billion increase in the state's total personal income.

Using the definition of eligibility from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, adult education should be designed to serve individuals who lack basic skills, a high school diploma or its equivalent, or the ability to read, write or speak English. Under that definition, potential consumers of ABE services range from 4.8 million to 5.5 million in Texas. The numbers are projected to increase slightly every year, barring an unexpected event such as an increase in immigration or a severe economic downturn that could increase demand.

Many adults needing educational services face multiple challenges that can discourage them from completing programs and continuing on to higher education. These include:

- Job responsibilities.
- Childcare.
- Scheduling.
- High cost of fuel, tuition, books, and other materials.

If it is to remain competitive, Texas needs to augment both its commitment to fund ABE programs and to develop the expertise needed to oversee them. Furthermore, these services need to be aligned to the Texas College Readiness Standards (CRS) so that adults who complete ABE programs can seamlessly transition into postsecondary education. The benefits of higher education for Texas include:

- Increased tax benefits.
- Greater productivity.
- Decreased reliance of government financial support.
- Reduced crime rates.
- Improved ability to adapt to and use technology.

In addition, education provides multiple benefits to individuals, including:

- Higher salaries and benefits.
- Employment in more fulfilling careers.
- Improved working conditions.
- Improved quality of life for children.
- Improved health and life expectancy.

The most successful ABE programs address these issues directly. For example, Capital IDEA, a program in Central Texas, provides extensive support, including financial assistance for tuition, books, and childcare, for adults who wish to improve their employability through education. The program works with workforce partners to ensure that curriculum and instruction meet the changing needs of employers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Texas needs to act quickly and decisively to ensure that ABE programs are sufficient to meet the need to enroll more adults in higher education programs and prepare them for the workforce. This report advises policymakers to implement the following recommendations:

1. Continue TEA as the lead agency for ABE services. However, the agency needs to collaborate closely with the Coordinating Board, the Texas Workforce Commission, other agencies, and representatives from employers, colleges, and universities. The Texas Workforce Investment Council serves in a coordinating role for ABE at the state level. However, the inclusion of additional college and university representatives could strengthen the role of postsecondary institutions in the alignment of ABE with higher education. Expansion of postsecondary alignment should continue to address the short-term skills and training needs of business and industry by providing more skilled workers.
2. Expand TEA staff capacity to enhance its ability to provide programmatic leadership for ABE. Currently, leadership is provided under the Deputy Commissioner for School District Leadership and Educator Quality in the Division of Regional Services Division but the agency needs the content expertise necessary to ensure that programs employ best practices in serving the state's diverse population. In addition, program staff must develop and implement rigorous standards for ABE programs. Services providers understand that they will be held to these standards and accountable to the agency.
3. As called for in the National Commission on Adult Literacy report, *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming the Crisis in the U.S. Workforce* (June 2008), Texas should "make postsecondary and workforce readiness the new mission of the adult education and workforce skills system" and include this mission in the long-range action plans for ABE called for in Section 50 of the General Appropriations Act, 80th Texas Legislature. Consideration should be given to merging adult literacy activities with postsecondary education and workforce skills training in the long-range action plans.
4. Align ABE standards to Texas' College Readiness Standards to prepare adult students for college.
5. Implement programs similar to those identified by the Texas Workforce Commission in a September 9, 2008, brief on Adult Technology Training Projects that integrate English language services with preparation for career training or postsecondary education. Postsecondary education or career training should become the "default" option for adults seeking education services. This pilot would take place in a college setting – a community college or four-year institution – to provide career counseling services and offer pathways for entering postsecondary education or career training programs. Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the pilot program would be presented to lawmakers during the 2011 legislative session.

6. Include in the long-range action plans a plan for scaling up ABE services, to include recruitment and outreach strategies. A component of these plans should be a public campaign to motivate adult learners to enroll in ABE programs that are aligned to postsecondary education, as appropriated funds become available. The Texas Legislature should consider increasing funds available for ABE during the 2009 legislative session. Even a modest increase would allow programs to serve more adults.
7. Research and implement other state models of best practices in direct services to serve the diverse adult population in Texas, including a triangulated approach to services. Adults close to completing high school diplomas would be fast-tracked to postsecondary education, perhaps through dual-enrollment in community colleges. Developmental education classes could be combined with those needed to complete a high school diploma. These students could also be enrolled in some college courses at the same time. For these adults, credit recovery programs might allow them to complete a high school diploma quickly, especially if these courses are offered online. In addition, replication of ABE-to-college transition programs like those found in Washington or Kentucky could boost the number of adults completing ABE and continuing their college education. The interagency council should research options for adults who have more severe educational deficits or whose English language skills are very limited. These options would allow these adults to improve their English language skills and acquire other needed skills that create pathways to postsecondary education or career training programs.
8. Determine whether promising high school reform practices could be applied to ABE. Among these practices is the injection of rigor into all high school classes. Studies show that rigor benefits all students, but especially Latinos and African Americans.
9. Ease barriers to ABE by increasing support services, including child care and flexible scheduling.
10. Ensure multi-agency collaboration and an enhanced accountability system to track individual student outcomes.

Introduction

In 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature included a rider (see Appendix A) to the General Appropriations Act* for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The rider directed the agency to coordinate with the Texas Education Agency to develop and implement plans to align adult basic education with postsecondary education.

As a part of this alignment effort, the Legislature also directed the Coordinating Board to collaborate with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission in determining the following:

- The current and projected demand for adult basic education services in Texas.
- The instructional programs needed for current and future populations.
- The social and economic outcomes related to providing varying levels of adult basic education services.

The report was to include a comparison of programs offered in other states. Additionally it would include the current organizational structure and agency roles for providing adult basic education services as well as recommendations for achieving state goals efficiently and effectively.

Researchers at the University of Houston who conducted the study addressed all of the elements identified in the General Appropriations Act. They surveyed the state of adult basic education in Texas, as well as adult basic education in several other states identified by the Coordinating Board. The researchers also validated all data provided by Texas LEARNS – the organization that is contracted by the Texas Education Agency to provide all adult basic education in Texas.

The Coordinating Board developed this report based on the findings by the University of Houston.

*General Appropriations Act, HB 1, 80th Texas Legislature, Section 50 (Page III-57)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Current Organizational Structure of Adult Basic Education and Agency Roles

Adult basic education (ABE) services currently fall under the responsibility of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) within the Division of Discretionary Grants, a fiscal unit of the agency. However, all grant management functions, program assistance, and other statewide support services are contracted out to Texas LEARNS, a component within the Harris County Department of Education. TEA and Texas LEARNS meet on a monthly basis to discuss areas of concern, including compliance issues and program implementation. Texas LEARNS also coordinates with the Texas Workforce Investment Council to plan and evaluate the Texas workforce development system, promote quality services, and advocate for an integrated workforce development system. The duties that TEA specifically assigns to Texas LEARNS include:

- Administration of Adult Education Grants.
- Administration of Adult Education State Leadership Funds.
- Program leadership.

Texas LEARNS provided a copy of a report entitled “A Study of the Current Organizational Structure and Agency Roles in Providing ABE in Texas” to the research team for validation. The team found that the report (Appendix B) accurately reflects the current organizational structure of ABE in Texas.

Nationally, ABE is governed by both state and federal law. Under Texas law, TEA is required to regulate adult and community education in the state by providing technical assistance and monitoring ABE programs to ensure compliance with federal and state statutes and rules. TEA is also charged with ensuring continuous program improvement to ensure that programs are meeting state performance targets. State Board of Education rules included in the Texas Education Code outline the program delivery system governing how TEA provides program assistance, monitoring, and compliance with federal requirements. Federal statute and regulations establish the source of federal support and distribution requirements under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) enacted as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Appendix B outlines in detail the authority and structure for ABE in Texas as follows:

- State Designated Statutory Authority in Texas.
- Federal Statutory Authority.
- State Board of Education Rules for Adult Education.
- Current Structure.
- Agency Coordination.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Comparative Analysis of ABE Programs in Other States

The University of Houston research team compared Texas ABE programs to those offered in other states, specifically those with the highest populations: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Researchers examined several sources of data, beginning with a Texas LEARNS report, which showed that Texas ABE programs ranked below the U.S. average in serving adults who lack high school diplomas. The top performing states ranked well above Texas programs.

Another proxy measure for ABE in Texas was gleaned from a report by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL, 2008). In answering the question “How does Texas measure up?,” the data indicate that “a lower percentage of young adults have completed high school than the U.S. average, and much lower than the top states and the most educated countries.”

The CAEL report concluded that ABE programs serve adults without a high school diploma at a lower rate than the U.S. average and at a much lower rate than the top performing states. Likewise, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs served the adult population lacking English proficiency at a lower rate than the U. S. average and at a much lower rate than the top performing states.

Ten State Comparisons

The Texas Educational Needs Index State Report (Davis, Noland & Kelly, 2006) provides a county-level picture of educational, economic, and population influences on educational policy and planning by answering key questions about the state.

All comparison data are from 2005 – the most recent time period available. The Index examines the following indicators:

- Educational Capacity – Indicators measure the percentages of the region’s adult population with a high school degree, associate’s degree, and bachelor’s degree, and a measure of the educational attainment gap between younger and older members of the workforce.
- Economic Challenges – Indicators measure the counties’ poverty rates, unemployment rates, the existing earning capacity of residents, and dependence upon manufacturing and extraction jobs.
- Population Changes – Indicators assess whether demographic changes impact the need for increased investments in human capital development. Measurements include recent and projected population growth, the percent of the population that is age 19 and younger, the percent of the population ages 20 to 44, and the relative size of an area’s at-risk minority population (African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans).

In comparison to the other states, Texas’ performance ranked poorly in all categories. Texas had a higher unemployment rate, a higher population living below the poverty level, and lower

median family income and per capita personal income levels. Furthermore, Texas reliance on manufacturing and extraction industries for employment was slightly lower (11.2 percent) than the national rate of 12 percent.

The demographic factors suggest that Texas needs to invest larger amounts on human capital development than other states. As compared to the national level, Texas has a higher rate of population growth for ages 64 and under, a higher percent of population ages 0-19, a higher percent of population ages 20-44, and a much higher percent of at-risk minorities ages 0-44. In comparing these demographic characteristics for Texas versus other states, Texas is 53 percent while the U.S. as a whole is 31.1 percent. Additionally, many of the new adult residents to Texas require ESL services, which places greater pressures on ABE programming.

In addition to demographic information provided by the Texas Educational Needs Index State Report, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education provides ABE secondary education completion data that is useful in comparing Texas with other states. Table 1 shows a comparison of rates of completion for two levels of adult secondary education (low – grades 9 and 10; high – grades 11 and 12). Texas has average or better than average rates of completion when compared to other states with similar demographics.

Table 1
Texas Completions Compared to 10 Other States in
Adult Secondary Education (Grades 9-12)

Adult Secondary Education Low (Grades 9-10)		Adult Secondary Education High (Grades 11-12)	
State	Percentage Completed	State	Percentage Completed
Michigan	56%	Ohio	79%
Ohio	53%	Georgia	69%
Illinois	51%	Florida	69%
California	41%	Pennsylvania	59%
New Jersey	37%	North Carolina	47%
Texas	37%	Texas	44%
New York	36%	New York	43%
Georgia	35%	Illinois	31%
Pennsylvania	34%	California	25%
North Carolina	32%	New Jersey	0%
Florida	28%	Michigan	0%

Source: Dean, Mike, U. S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Adult Education Programs, August 2008.

Comparative Analysis of Funding Mechanisms with Other States

Federal Funds

Federal funds for ABE are authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 (AEFLA). As part of the eligibility criteria, states must submit a statewide plan for ABE services and provide at least a 25 percent match for the federal allotment. Unlike most large states, Texas only provides the minimum requirement of matching funds. Other highly populated states like California, New York, and Florida matched the federal allotment at much higher rates: 88 percent, 65 percent, and 90 percent, respectively. The AELFA, also known as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, distributes formula grants to all states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The funds are distributed to local programs throughout each state. Service providers can include school districts, postsecondary institutions, and community-based organizations. Allowable uses of funds include computer literacy, counseling, transportation, and child care. Furthermore, states may dispense up to 10 percent of the funds to literacy programs serving prisoners and institutionalized individuals. Each state is allowed 27 months to spend its allotment.

Although AEFLA is the primary source of ABE funding, it is not the only federal program that targets ABE. Other federal funds are available through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); Even Start; and the Department of Homeland Security's Immigrant Education Program.

In a July 2008 report to President Bush, the Interagency Adult Education Working Group reported that the federal government invested more than \$5.7 billion during Fiscal Year 2007 in programs supporting adult education. The Interagency Adult Education Working Group (Executive Order 13445, September 2007) was charged with identifying and reviewing federal programs focused on improving adults' basic skills and helping them advance to postsecondary education, training programs or the workforce.

The Executive Order called for the Interagency Working Group to identify federal programs that:

- Focus primarily on improving the basic education skills of adults.
- Transition adults from basic literacy to postsecondary education, training programs, or the workforce.
- Provide adult education.

The Interagency Working Group identified 11 federal programs designed to improve adult literacy through basic, secondary, or ESL services. Five different federal agencies provide services and funds for adult education. The programs are identified below:

- Department of Education: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and the Migrant Education High School Equivalency Program (HEP).
- Labor Department: Job Corps, WIA Adult Programs (including Perkins Act), WIA Dislocated Worker Program, WIA Youth Programs, and YouthBuild.

- Health and Human Services Department: John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth (TLP).
- Defense Department: National Guard Youth Challenge Program.
- Justice Department: Federal Bureau of Prisons Industries, Education and Vocational Training Program.

This Interagency Working Group did not include federal programs that serve specific targeted adult populations, such as those administered by the Interior Department for Indian Tribes and those administered by the State Department for territories. The report did not include or calculate the extent of funds expended by the Veteran Affairs Department in implementation of the 9/11 GI Bill or the funds for ABE administered by the Defense Department.

Emphasizing that 40 million American adults lack high school diplomas and an additional 30 million can only perform rudimentary literacy tasks (the numbers have not changed in 10 years), the report of the Interagency Working Group stated that there is an urgent need to coordinate federal ABE programs. According to the report, 21 percent of the adult U.S. population have limited literacy skills, which impede participation in American life. These adults have few opportunities for meaningful employment in industries driving economic growth and property because they lack high school diplomas or their equivalents.

State and Local Funds in Comparison States

The source of state funds for ABE is difficult to determine except for two of the comparison states – Florida and New Jersey. Florida funds ABE from its sales tax and New Jersey from its payroll tax. (See Appendix C for additional details on sources of funding in comparison states)

State ABE directors were able to identify other sources of local funds. Some California programs receive support from the California Endowment. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency has committed \$100,000 to develop systems of support for adults transitioning to postsecondary education and training. Some Ohio programs have contracts with employers and engage in fundraising as well. In Michigan, some programs receive private as well as in-kind contributions (e.g. from churches, nonprofit organizations and literacy councils). In Texas, some programs receive additional funding from the Barbara Bush Grant, the Skills Development Fund, and the United Way Agency.

Texas Funding for Adult Basic Education

Because of the diverse funding options that are available through the federal government, it is difficult to determine how much of the \$5.7 billion in federal funds identified by the Interagency Adult Education Working Group was provided to Texas ABE programs for Fiscal Year 2008. Funds are distributed directly to projects and programs from the various federal agencies. However, Texas received approximately \$45 million of the \$554 million AEFLA Grant program—the largest funding source for ABE.

In addition to federal funds, researchers were able to identify past examples of other funds that have supplemented the general revenue for ABE in Texas:

Example #1: Seaborne ChalleNGe, an initiative of the Texas National Guard and Texas A&M University at Galveston, targets youth aged 16 to 18 who have dropped out of high school. The initiative aims to reclaim the potential of these at-risk youth through education, training and volunteer service. It focuses on providing youth values, skills, education, and self-discipline needed for success.

Example #2: Texas State Technical College-Harlingen; El Paso Community College; and Texas A&M International University in Laredo, among others, have received funds directly from the Education Department's Office of Migrant Education for High School Equivalency Programs.

Example #3: Under Public Law 106-69, funds have been available for foster care youth who have "aged out" of foster care. These are children who need help in transitioning to higher education and jobs. This funding has assisted the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program, which provides youth the knowledge and skills necessary for basic living, money management, and vocational education. This program served more than 4,900 youth in 2003.

Example #4: Under the Labor Department's Job Corp program, Texas has benefited from the establishment of four centers that have existed for more than 10 years. These centers are (1) David L. Carrasco Job Corps Center, El Paso; (2) Gary Job Corps Center, San Marcos; (3) Laredo Job Corps Center, Laredo; and (4) North Texas Job Corps Center, McKinney. These centers have the capacity to serve over 3,000 individuals. They serve economically disadvantaged individuals ages 16 through 24 who need intensive education and training services to become employable, responsible, and productive citizens.

Example #5: San Antonio and Brownsville secured \$1.8 million in 2004 from the Housing and Urban Development Department for youth skills and leadership training. The YouthBuild program, which is now administered by the Labor Department, gives funds directly to local applicants. Current YouthBuild projects exist in San Antonio, Brownsville, El Paso, Austin, and Dallas.

Example #6: Health and Human Services Department funds were used to support projects for youth ages 16 to 21 lacking family support. Educational and vocational skills are provided along with skills to achieve independent living. There have been several projects funded included the Galveston Island Transitional Living Program in Galveston and Stepping Stones, a transitional living program for homeless youth in Austin.

Comparison of Federal and Non-Federal Expenditures

The following table compares federal and non-federal funding levels for ABE among Texas and the 10 comparison states. Texas provides the lowest possible level of state matching funds to those received from AEFLA. While Texas matches 25% of federal funds, other states provide much higher levels of state support.

Table 2
Expenditure Report Comparing Texas to 10
Other States with Similar Demographics

STATE	FEDERAL EXPENDITURES	NON-FEDERAL EXPENDITURES	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	STATE MATCH	2004-2005 ENROLLMENT	TOTAL COST PER STUDENT*	NON-FEDERAL COST PER STUDENT
FLORIDA	\$34,552,472	\$316,769,752	\$351,322,224	90.17%	348,119	\$1,009	\$910
CALIFORNIA	\$82,338,152	\$596,119,411	\$678,457,563	87.86%	591,893	\$1,146	\$1,007
MICHIGAN	\$16,231,786	\$97,463,582	\$113,695,368	85.72%	34,768	\$3,270	\$2,803
N. CAROLINA	\$15,545,681	\$50,974,112	\$66,519,793	76.63%	109,047	\$610	\$467
NEW YORK	\$42,668,072	\$76,188,750	\$118,856,822	64.10%	157,486	\$755	\$484
NEW JERSEY	\$16,976,470	\$28,721,000	\$45,697,470	62.85%	40,889	\$1,118	\$702
PENNSYLVANIA	\$20,730,260	\$20,185,314	\$40,915,574	49.33%	54,274	\$754	\$372
ILLINOIS	\$23,234,560	\$16,227,265	\$39,461,825	41.12%	118,296	\$334	\$137
OHIO	\$18,134,937	\$11,900,138	\$30,035,075	39.62%	50,869	\$590	\$234
TEXAS	\$46,984,325	\$15,661,442	\$62,645,767	25.00%	119,867	\$523	\$131

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Adult Education Programs, 2004 Expenditures, August 2007.

Availability of Funding From Private Sources for Adult Basic Education

Researchers found no sustainable sources of funding for Texas ABE from the private sector. In other states, private donors supported various short-term and specific projects for ABE. The research team was not able to identify reliable sources that could consistently provide funding for ABE in the future.

Adult Basic Education Services for Fee

Currently, recipients of ABE services in Texas are not charged any fees to receive those services. From the survey distributed by the research team to the current ABE service providers in Texas, over 50 percent of the respondents felt that recipients of ABE should pay a reasonable fee to receive services. This option could help sustain the program and pay part of the expenses.

Current and Future Demand

Estimates of Current Demand

As in the rest of the United States, Texas legislators have become increasingly concerned about providing services to adults who cannot contribute to the state's economy because they lack literacy skills and higher education. Adults who have not completed high school or who lack basic numeracy, literacy, or English language proficiency skills are severely restricted in their pursuit of the American dream.

The consequences for not improving ABE are apparent and appalling. A report from the National Commission on Adult Literacy (Jones, 2007) indicates that "at a time when economic competitiveness is determined to a considerable extent by the education levels of a nation's workforce, the United States is at serious risk of losing its edge in this realm." The demand for these services must be established in order to determine what levels of services are needed in Texas. This section examines both current and future demand using several different sources of data.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) defines individuals eligible for services as follows: Section 203(1) of the WIA goes on to define ABE to mean services or instruction below the post-secondary level for individuals

- (A) who have attained 16 years of age;
- (B) who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
- (C) who—
 - (i) lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;
 - (ii) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
 - (iii) are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

One indicator of current demand is the number of Texans lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent. Data about adults lacking high school diplomas comes from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Commission on Adult Literacy (NCAL). The Office of Vocational and Adult Education used data from the 2000 census (updated in 2005) to arrive at a target population of adults lacking high school diplomas at 3.5 million for 2005. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates this population to be at 3.6 million (using the American Community Survey from 2006). The number from NCAL is similar to these two.

Another indicator of demand for ABE services is the number of Texans lacking the skills to function in society, as measured by the economic performance of individuals. The estimate of individuals living in poverty in Texas (expressed as some percentage of the poverty line), is 1.1 million. In order to avoid double counting the population of individuals who hold a high school

diploma and are living in poverty, the research team used U.S. Department of Education (USED) data to remove those individuals from this count.

The final indicator of demand for ABE is the number of individuals who do not speak English or do not speak it well. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a five-point scale for individuals to rate their own English speaking proficiency, from “not at all” to very well” or “English only.” The estimate for Texas is that 14.5 percent of the population aged six and over – 2.2 million people – speaks English less than “very well.” As in the previous indicator, the research team attempted to calculate a figure that excludes those who are also living in poverty and do not hold a high school diploma. Unfortunately, not all the data were available for these calculations.

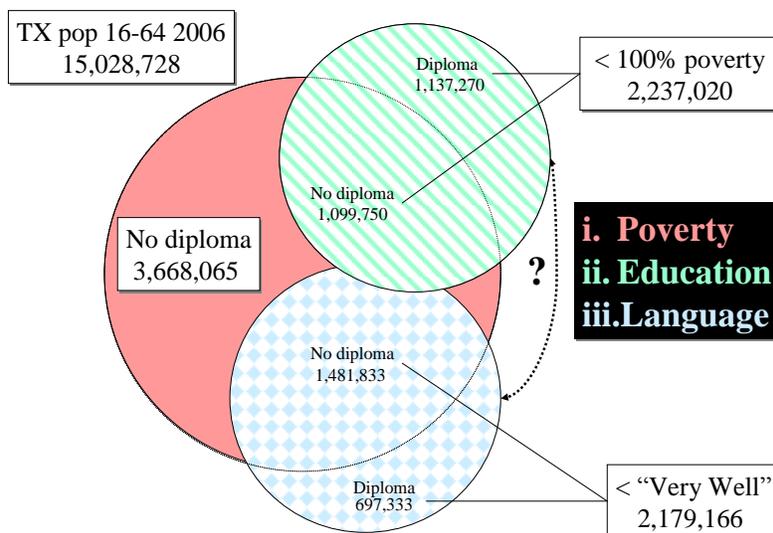
The table below shows the range of individuals who might be eligible for ABE services in Texas using the WIA definition. The relationship among the categories provided in Table 3 is shown in Figure 1.

Table 3
Texas Adults in Workforce Investment Act Categories, 2006

Category	Measure	Number
A. Sec 203.1.C.ii – No secondary diploma	Individuals without secondary diploma	3,668,065
B. Sec 203.1.C.i – Inability to function	Individuals below poverty line with secondary diploma	1,137,270
C. Sec 203.1.C.iii – Inability to speak English	Individuals not speaking English “very well” with diploma	697,333
Minimum	Excluding Category C.	4,805,335
Maximum	Including Category C.	5,502,668

There are no easily accessible data that show the overlap of all three variables illustrated in Figure 1. Therefore, the minimum estimate would assume that all the individuals who had a diploma but who spoke English less than “very well” were below the poverty line and, therefore, already were counted in the previous categories. In that case, no additional individuals would be added for language alone. The maximum estimate would assume just the opposite—that no individuals with a diploma who spoke English less than “very well” were below the poverty line. In that case, 830,274 individuals would be added to the estimate. Clearly neither of these assumptions is true, but the available data do not indicate where in this range the actual number of individuals eligible based on language alone would be.

Figure 1
Relation of Education, Poverty, and Language (Variable Estimate)

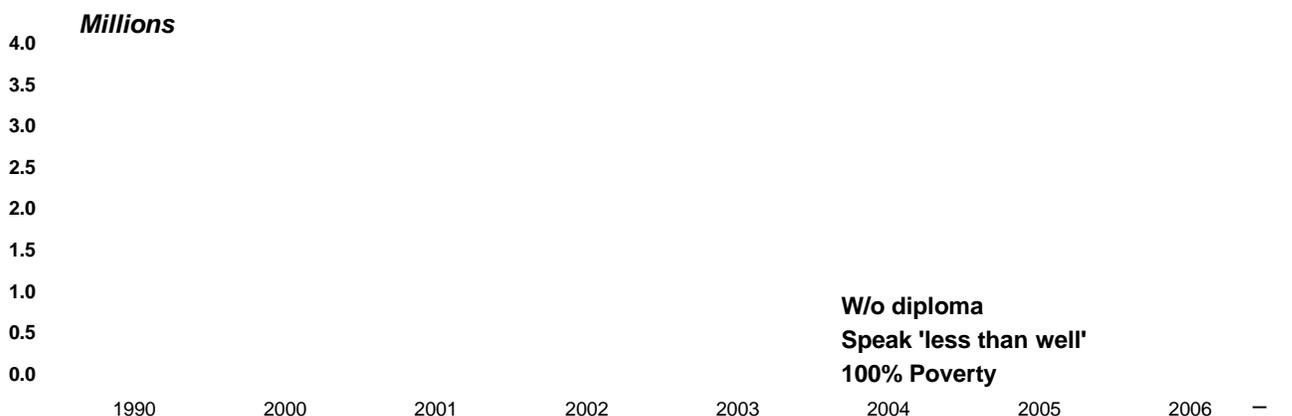


Based on the preceding discussion and analysis, the final estimate for the demand for ABE services in Texas in 2006 was between 4.8 and 5.5 million individuals. Given that approximately 110,000 Texans received ABE services in 2006, the potential demand for ABE services exceeds the delivery by almost 40 times the number currently served. In other words, for every person served in Texas there are over 40 eligible Texans who are not served.

Future Demand for Adult Basic Education Services

The research team used the available historical data to extrapolate future demand for services.

Figure 2
Change in the Variables of Education, Language, and Poverty
Texas Adults 18+



Source: U.S Census, 2006 American Community Survey.

Figure 2 shows the change in three variables (education, language, and poverty) as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006 American Community Survey. These variables have increased only slightly since 2000, thus the future eligible population for ABE programs ought to be somewhat larger than the current eligible population.

Rates of change were calculated using the combined average growth rate (CAGR) for each variable at different points in the time series. The education variable is relatively flat, ranging from 3.4 million in 1990 to 3.7 million in 2006, for a combined average growth rate of 0.4 percent per year (Table 4). In fact, the number in 2000 was higher than the number in 2006. Likewise, the number in 1990 was the same as 2004. Consequently, there are actually three potential growth trends for this variable.

Table 4
Rates of Change for Texas Adults 18 Years and Over
Without a High School Diploma, 1990 - 2006

Period	CAGR
1990-2006	0.4%
2000-2006	-0.7%
2004-2006	3.7%

*Please note that the Periods reported have overlapping years

The number of Texas adults below the poverty line also is relatively flat with a slightly upward trend. The trend peaks in 2005, however, and decreases slightly in 2006 (Table 5). This means the growth rates for the poverty variable could be 1.5 percent, 4.5 percent, and -0.7 percent for the 1990-2006, 2000-2006, and 2005-2006 periods, respectively.

Table 5
Rates of Change for Texas Adults 18 Years and Over
Below the Poverty Line, 1990 – 2006

Period*	CAGR
1990-2006	1.5%
2000-2006	4.5%
2005-2006	-0.7%

*Please note that the Periods reported have overlapping years

The growth rate of the language variable (speaking less than “very well”) as illustrated in Table 6 consistently from 1990 to 2006. The growth rate of that variable is almost certainly between 3.7 percent and 4.7 percent and the rate starting in 1990 (4.3 percent) is probably the best rate to use for projections of this variable.

Table 6
Rates of Change for Texas Adults 18 Years and Over
Who Speak English Less than “Very Well,” 1990 - 2006

Period*	CAGR
GR 1990-2006	4.3%
GR 2000-2006	3.7%
GR 2002-2006	4.7%

*Please note that the Periods reported have overlapping years

There is, however, a discrepancy in these rates. The Texas Workforce Commission indicates that more Texans will be eligible for ABE services in the future. For instance, the Commission noted that the Texas State Data Center’s report for 2007 indicated that “Texas has slipped from 45th to last among states ranked by percent for citizens in 2005—age 25 and older—who have a high school diploma or GED” (Green, 2008). Also, the ENI calculates that more than 50 percent of Texas counties have most critical educational needs, the highest ranking placing Texas fourth from the bottom on the percent of counties at such a level.

Therefore, the determination for future need seems to trend upward. However, these trends hold only if circumstances do not change unexpectedly.

Discontinuities

The projections developed above only hold if there are no unexpected changes in any of the three factors. Discontinuities are abrupt changes that can significantly change the demand for educational services. Discontinuities can be events that occur seemingly at random, with low probability but high impact. These events can have a significant, widespread impact on states, regions or even the entire country (e.g., the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001).

It is difficult to determine the immediate impact of a discontinuity on future needs for ABE in Texas. However, inferences can be made that any given discontinuity might result in dramatic increases or decreases in the demand for ABE services. The discontinuities outlined below are those that might have the greatest impact on demand. The list is by no means exhaustive.

Policy Shifts

Three areas of policy changes at the national level could have a significant impact on demand in Texas.

Immigration Policy

- Shifts in immigration could impact the demand for ABE services especially in terms of ESL programs and services.
- There is already evidence that the rates of illegal immigration into the United States have declined over the last few years due to the weakening of the U.S.

economy and the increased enforcement of immigration laws by the Federal government and the states (*The Economist*, June 26, 2008).

- Congress could pass new legislation that would alter the immigration debate because
 - a policy shift could lead to strict enforcement of undocumented populations leading to a decreased population of eligible (or future eligible) individuals.
 - a policy shift could lead to a naturalization path for a large group of undocumented immigrants.

Workforce Development

Changes in the White House and Congress may lead to increased funding for ABE programs.

Poverty Alleviation / Family & Childhood Development Policy

A national program to alleviate poverty could reduce the number of individuals eligible for ABE.

Economics Factors

There are three areas to examine.

Changes in the Mexican Economy

Texas's Hispanic immigrant population overwhelmingly originates from Mexico. While it is likely that the U.S. will continue to attract immigrants, an increase in economic growth and opportunities in Mexico could dramatically slow the rate of immigration. Alternatively, a collapse of Mexico's economy could lead to a flood of new immigrants and related demand for ABE programs.

U.S. or Global Depression

A sudden collapse in the U.S. or global economy could dramatically increase rates of poverty or change levels of educational attainment.

Collapse of the Texas Economy

A rapid decline in the state's competitiveness could lead to a shrinking tax base and cuts to state support for ABE programs or the education system in general.

Environmental Factors

There are two areas to examine:

Natural Disasters

A series of hurricanes, floods, tornados, or extended droughts could significantly disrupt the state economy or lead to massive migration

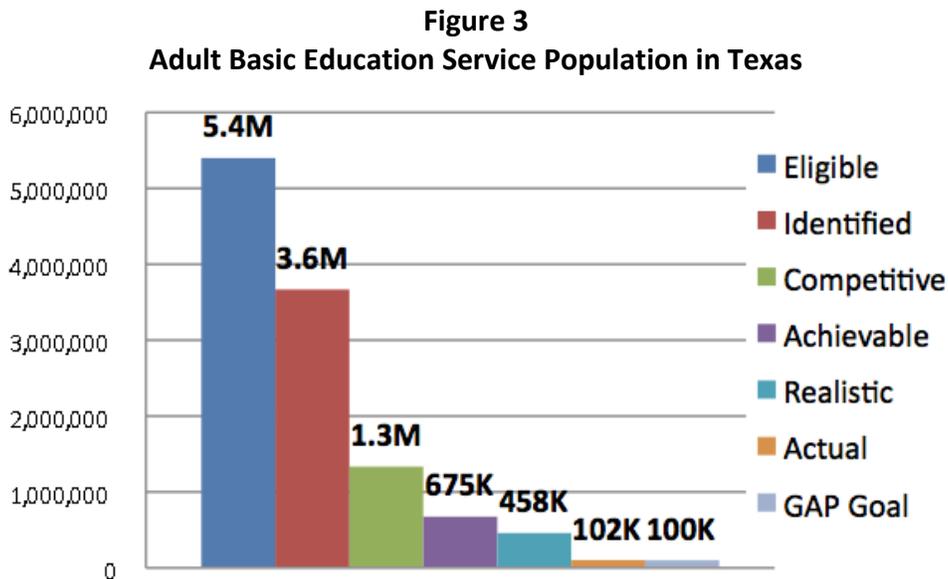
Climate Change

Drier conditions in West Texas could disrupt the economy throwing more people into poverty, potentially driving people out of the state or to other Texas metro regions.

While no one can predict the occurrence of any of these discontinuities, they should be taken into account when estimating the future size of the population eligible for ABE services. At the very least, projections based on the growth rates presented herein should be viewed with caution as there is substantial uncertainty about whether the projected growth rates will continue, particularly for longer periods of time.

Texas ABE Future Demand: Gradations of Possible Participation

Not all eligible persons access ABE services. Figure 3, “Adult Basic Education Service Population in Texas,” depicts gradations of possible participation: a) recently calculated as eligible; b) previously identified; c) thought to be needed for international competitiveness; d) relatively achievable; e) perhaps realistic; f) actually reported enrolled; and g) proposed to meet *Closing the Gaps* goals.



Source: Insight Services, 2008 for University of Houston

In the United States, 23.5 percent of all adults age 18-64 are considered target populations in need of ABE services, which is roughly one quarter of adults. Texas, at 30.3 percent, has the third highest percentage of adults in need of ABE to earn a high school diploma or equivalent, to improve English language skills, or to obtain advanced skills beyond a high school diploma so they may earn a living wage (Jones & Kelly, 2007).

Applying 30.3 percent to the 17,555,200 Texas adult population age 16 and up implies the target population for ABE in Texas could be as large as 5.4 million. This figure is in agreement

with the latest demand estimate, calculated separately as part of this study which concluded that between 5.2 and 5.9 million individuals in Texas are eligible for ABE services, as noted earlier in this section.

As stated earlier in this report, estimates prepared by the Department of Education, Census Bureau, and National Commission on Adult Literacy placed the target population figure at around 3.5 to 3.7 million. The larger estimates result from the additional consideration of needs due to poverty status and poor English language skills. Some overlap exists among target populations as those in poverty often lack language skills or have less than a secondary education.

In *Mounting Pressures Facing the U.S. Workforce and the Increasing Need for Adult Education and Literacy*(2007), Jones and Kelly recommend Texas move 1,333,645 “older adults back into the education system and on track to attaining college degrees” in order to support international competitiveness. If ABE is their entry point, it would require serving 10 times more older adults than the total current enrollment in Texas. Also, it would result in a significant demographic shift within programs, mingling generations with different needs.

Stepping Down the Size

Stepping down the enrollment estimates shown in Figure 3 still requires explanations for four other figures given. The two figures at the bottom of chart reflect established figures—102,000, roughly the current enrollment; and 100,000, the input desired from ABE to help fulfill the *Closing the Gaps* goals. The two figures at the middle of chart were calculated by applying the intake rate (12.5 percent) of Capital IDEA, a model Texas ABE program, to: a) the number of adults in Texas with less than a high school diploma (3.67 million “targeted” by the U.S. Department of Education as the ABE audience), and b) the “eligible demand” approximated at 5.4 million when poverty and ESL populations are added to the number of adults in Texas with less than a high school diploma.

Turnaround Transitions

Statistics support expanding ABE enrollments in Texas to contribute 100,000 participants to *Closing the Gaps*. A General Educational Development (GED) diploma is a measure of adult secondary education completion and a transition to postsecondary programs. Research has shown only 30 to 35 percent of GED recipients obtain any postsecondary education; only 5 to 10 percent obtain at least one year of postsecondary education; and only 3 percent complete an associate’s degree (Murnane, Willett and Tyler, 2000 in MPR Associates Inc., 2007). Applying these statistics to the current 133,000 enrollment (Legislative Budget Board, January, 2007) at most 46,550 would be expected to transition to any level of postsecondary education. Less than 4,000 would be expected to complete an associate’s degree. However, without change, the goal is unlikely to be achieved.

In this climate, with only about one-third of GED completers obtaining any postsecondary education, ABE would need to enroll 300,000 to meet their objective in *Closing the Gaps*, assuming everyone who enrolls actually obtains the GED.

Identification of Best Practices

Researchers were asked to identify best practices in adult basic education. They were tasked with validating data from Texas LEARNS for this purpose and were provided with a draft report since the final had not yet been approved by TEA. As stated in the draft report (Appendix D), “persistence and successful transition to receiving a GED, entering postsecondary or other training, employment, or employment advance,” would appear to be strong indicators for positive outcomes toward identifying best practices.

As mentioned previously, one such promising program in Central Texas is Capital IDEA. This program provides comprehensive support services to adult learners. Capital IDEA also provides resources to help ABE practitioners:

- Identify and replicate programs that would be useful in their communities.
- Develop innovative and collaborative practices.
- Engage alumni to share suggestions for promoting student success.

Quality Program Indicators

The Workforce Investment Act-Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA-AEFLA) core indicators identify quality components standards in the following areas:

- Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language.
- Numeracy.
- Problem solving.
- English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.
- Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Programs that meet the Workforce Investment Act-Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA-AEFLA) core performance indicators related to a) obtaining a secondary school diploma and b) furthering education or career goals provide examples of promising practices. The research team was able to identify two statewide programs that met these measures: “Streamlining the Path” in Washington and “Improving College Transition and Enrollment Rates” in Kentucky. The program in Washington was developed in response to a system that required adults with low skill levels or limited English proficiency spend many years to acquire basic skills even before they began workforce training. The program accelerates learning through integrating adult basic education with English language instruction and occupational training. An important component of the program is that all students are enrolled in college. Prior to this innovation, only 5-10 percent of students from completing ABE programs enrolled in college. Additional information on the Washington program can be found in Appendix D, page 47.

The program in Kentucky was a result of collaboration between ABE programs in Jefferson County and the Jefferson Community and Technical College. The free ABE classes take place on the campus of the college. After completing the coursework, students are eligible to attend college full-time. The program has been highly successful in transitioning adults into higher education and has now expanded into three additional local colleges. Additional information on the Kentucky program can be found in Appendix D, page 48.

The *Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs* (2002) contains guidelines for designing quality programs. A self-review instrument for programs that is included in the book, describes the following in detail: program structure and administration; curriculum and instructional materials; instruction; learner recruitment, intake, and orientation; learner retention and transition; assessment and learner gains; employment conditions; professional development; and support services.

Promising Practices

Some of the most promising practices in ABE involve creating pathways to college. Five college transition models were provided in the report, *Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models*, published by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, (2006). The following approaches are mentioned in the report:

- **Advising Model** – raise student awareness of postsecondary education options and the admissions processes.
- **GED-Plus Model** – accelerate instruction for adult students interested in pursuing postsecondary education.
- **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Model** – reduce the time students entering college spend on ESOL/ESL courses in order to save time and money.
- **Career Pathways Model** – assist individuals with limited education into postsecondary education.
- **College Preparatory Model** – assist students in transitioning into college and reduce the need for developmental education.

Other best practices that are partially or totally supported by WIA-AEFLA include those disseminated by the National College Transition Network (NCTN), an organization that promotes ABE for the educationally disadvantaged worldwide. The network offers some promising practices that can be replicated including: student orientation; transition student portfolio; memoranda of agreement (MOA); preparing students for college-level math; monthly mentor evenings; career planning for success; building relationships with elected officials through program visits; alumni newsletter for transition-to-college programs; wrap-around comprehensive support services; and recruitment. While information on several programs are provided, few of the examples included evaluation data or have, thus far, involved a significant number of students.

The NCTN also publishes Research-to-Practice briefs that recommend ways to promote academic success. These briefs include topics such as: rethinking academic failure to promote success; developmental reading research in postsecondary education; contextualized grammar

instruction; attention deficits; strategies to facilitate reading comprehension; learning communities; and economic benefits of pre-baccalaureate college.

Examples of Promising Practices in Texas

In a September 9, 2008, brief on Adult Training Technology Projects, the Texas Workforce Commission identified several direct ABE services programs across Texas that have promising outcomes for replication in other areas of the state. All the programs identified include community college partners providing postsecondary options for ABE students.

The Alamo Community College District's Westside Education and Training Center (WETC) implemented an integrated bilingual technical training and occupation-specific Vocational English as a Second Language into two programs. The effort is focused on the growing Limited English proficient (LEP) workforce and employer demands for well-trained workers as dietetic food service supervisors and certified nurse aides. "The goal at the WETC is to develop these programs into replicable models that can assist the Alamo Community Colleges in broadening the training options available to San Antonio's diverse workforce" (Adult Training Technology Projects, 2008).

In partnership with the Capital Area and Rural Capital Workforce Boards, the Seton Family of Hospitals, St. David's Healthcare, and the Austin Capital Area Dental Society, Austin Community College (ACC) also developed a Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) project focused on two high-demand occupations. ACC's Administrative Assistant and Dental Assisting programs are being offered concurrently with English as a Second Language instruction to address the need for bilingual staff in these high-growth regional occupations.

While these programs were developed and implemented beginning 2007, early outcomes indicate that these programs are addressing both employer and adult learner needs with postsecondary education by providing the education and training. With additional resources, programs such as these and others focused on the adult English Language Learner could be piloted and, if successful, replicated across Texas with other community college ABE service providers.

Potential Contributions of High School Reform to ABE Practices

Texas, as many other states, has invested heavily in improving high schools to ensure that students graduate and are ready to enter college. Some of the promising practices that have emerged from research in high school reform include injecting rigor into academic coursework. Studies show that higher academic rigor leads to lower demand for developmental classes in college (Kristin, 2005). High academic rigor also leads to better academic outcomes for all students, but especially African Americans and Latinos (CCSRI, 2006).

One program that has been highly successful in serving high school dropouts is Gateway to College (PCC's Gateway to College, 2007). This dual-enrollment program helps students (ages 16 – 20) complete their high school diplomas while taking college courses in community college. The program originated in Portland, Oregon but due to its success, it has now been

replicated in 12 states. Students are provided with high levels of support through mentors, coaches and advisors. Classes are scheduled during the day and evening in order to accommodate the needs of students' work and family obligations.

Two major reforms in Texas that will improve rigor in K-12 include the adoption of a "4 x 4" high school curriculum and the adoption of College Readiness Standards. Each of these initiatives was authorized in summer 2006 by House Bill 1 of the Third Called Session, 79th Texas Legislature. The 4 x 4 high school curriculum means that Texas students will graduate from its public high schools with four years each of English/Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. With the adoption of Texas' College Readiness Standards and the incorporation of those standards into the public school curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, students graduating from Texas public high schools in the coming years will be career and college ready.

This same legislation provided the THECB with the authority to offer higher education summer bridge programs for high school students, recent high school graduates, and others who are not college ready. In order to enroll in entry-level college courses, student entering Texas public institutions of higher education must be assessed and meet specific requirements under Texas law prior to enrollment in college credit courses. Extension of summer programs to individuals receiving ABE services would provide opportunities for those who have completed GED or other secondary education credentials but not college ready.

State-Level Leadership

A recent report from the National Commission on Adult Literacy (2008) points to the pressing need for high level state leadership to coordinate planning across all the different agencies and organizations involved in adult education services. The report mentions recommends four areas that should be covered in states' action plans:

- State plans should be aligned across adult education, postsecondary education, workforce development and economic development.
- The plans should reflect the unique populations of the state.
- The plan should be submitted by the legislative policy and planning board.
- Data should be shared across all agencies.

A state-level planning team should include representatives from business and labor groups. The input of these groups is critical in determining the present and future needs of employers and matching adult education services to these needs.

In Texas, the Governor's Competitiveness Council has challenged state leaders to consider the changing needs of Texas, as competition to attract business and become a global leader in certain industry clusters will increase in the next five to 10 years (Council's *Report to the Governor*, 2008). The Council has identified several critical issues for Texas as it seeks to maintain and strengthen its competitive edge by addressing education and workforce weaknesses and barriers. Specific to ABE, the Council expressed concern that with much of the federal funding for ABE targeted to adult literacy activities, skills training is left wanting. As a result, the Council recommended that Texas "initiate a complementary state initiative that has

the flexibility to merge existing adult literacy programs with skills training.” Accordingly, any additional funding provided by the state for ABE should be used to “promote best practices or proven training programs with industry relevance.”

Several states have developed innovative financial strategies for assisting adult students (Biswas, Coitz and Prince, 2008). These states recognize the unique challenges that face adult students seeking financial support to attend college. Students face restrictions in federal financial aid programs, including restrictions on enrollment (cannot be less than half time), student income, and restrictions on the type of programs eligible for financial assistance (aid cannot be used for developmental education). Among the states mentioned, Illinois developed the Monetary Award Program that allows students to receive financial aid if they are enrolled for less than half time. Michigan created a program is specifically geared toward non-traditional students who must be “out of high school for at least two years and enrolled less than full time” (p. 10). Michigan funds the program for the state’s general revenue (\$2.5 million appropriated annually). Pennsylvania recognized that large numbers of students with high school diplomas were not continuing to postsecondary education. The program (\$10 million annually) is funded by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency using earnings from the agency’s student financial aid program.

Implications for Texas

It is not clear from examination of data submitted to the research team that TEA is able to evaluate instructional models and adapt effective models to the needs of Texans who need ABE services. However, it is vital to the economic future of Texas that promising and best practices be aggressively implemented to meet the educational needs of the adult population in Texas.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Social and Economic Benefits

If Texas were to increase national competitiveness by improving the social and economic prospects of more than 1.3 million undereducated adults, it could result in a return on investment of \$40 billion. Currently, Texas' ABE system is serving 133,000 undereducated adults at an annual cost of about \$17 million and an estimated return on investment of \$87 million.

Adult basic education could help add 163,680 new jobs and billions of dollars to the Texas economy by 2030. Adult basic education programs can play a significant role in preparing 100,000 individuals for higher education programs and the workforce. Doing so would require the state to make significant improvements in ABE academic and transition services and would also likely require additional program funding. According to many education specialists, more action and investments are needed to bolster the least literate and encourage individuals to reach for higher opportunities to succeed. The magnitude of costs, however, will likely require strategic compromises.

The Benefits of Education

The benefits of higher education have been explored in detail by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (2005). Table 7 summarizes the economic and social benefits of education for both society and individuals.

Table 7
Benefits of Attaining Higher Education

	For Society	For the Individual
Economic	Increased Tax Revenues Greater Productivity Increased Consumption Increased Workforce Flexibility Decreased Reliance on Government Financial Support	Higher Salaries and Benefits Employment Higher Savings Levels Improved Working Conditions Personal/Professional Mobility
Social	Reduced Crime Rates Increased Charitable Giving/Community Service Increased Quality of Civic Life Social Cohesion/Appreciation of Diversity Improved Ability to Adapt to and Use Technology	Improved Health/Life Expectancy Improved Quality of Life for Offspring Better Consumer Decision Making Increased Personal Status More Hobbies, Leisure Activities

Modified from: *Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College*, Institute for Higher Education, (1998).

Outcomes for Texas

A major economic benefit of higher education is decreased reliance on government, especially in terms of welfare (TANF) dependency. Niskanen (1996) determined that a one percentage point increase in the population with high school or higher education reduces the population living in poverty by about 1.8 percent, and offers the possibility of reducing welfare dependence by approximately four percentage points. Therefore, if Texas adds an additional 150,000 ABE students, the state could reasonably expect to see 411,971 individuals (Webster & Alamayehu, 2007) coming out of poverty and reduce annual basic and state TANF payments by roughly 3.6 million.

Although the more than 100,000 Texans currently enrolled in ABE programs will benefit from the services they receive, those services may not be sufficient to lift them out of poverty. Programs provided under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act address three needs—literacy, secondary-level proficiencies, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Presumably, programs that prepare students to attain secondary credentials (e.g., GED) also prepare them for postsecondary options within Adult Secondary Education programs.

However, unless the curriculum of ESL and ABE programs lead to the completion of a high school diploma and participation in higher education, current enrollments in ABE will only make a minimal difference in alleviating poverty. It is estimated that the current program operating level alleviates poverty for possibly 6,900 individuals annually—a 0.0003 percent reduction in overall state poverty levels (Webster & Alemayehu, 2007).

A study by the Institute for Higher Education Policy for the Lumina Foundation (2005) provides insightful statistics on social economic conditions associated with different levels of education in all 50 states. Table 8 reflects figures reported for effects of educational attainment on personal income, employment, public assistance, health, volunteering, and voter participation in Texas, as compared to the nation as a whole. Most, but not all, ABE participants would fall within the “Less than High School” column.

Data from Table 8 show that more than one in five Texans over the age of 25 – 21.7 percent of that population – have less than a high school diploma and are, therefore, eligible for ABE. Texas outperforms the nation as a whole in only one level of educational attainment: the “some college” category, which includes associate’s degree and certificate programs. Roughly 25.9 percent of Texans fall in this category. That compares with a national average of 25.5 percent. To meet national averages, Texas would need to reduce the percentage of adults with “less than high school” by 6.9 percent and increase attainment of “advanced” degrees by 2.4 percent.

Table 8
Economic and Social Conditions by Educational Attainment
In the United States and Texas

Results for Population Age 25 and Older	Living in	Less than High School	High School Diploma	Some College (includes AS, AA, Certificates)	Bachelor's Degree (BA,AB,BS)	Advanced (includes MA, MS, Ph.D, First Professional)
Education Attained (2004)	US	14.8%	32.0%	25.5%	18.1%	9.6%
	Texas	21.7%	27.8%	25.9%	17.3%	7.2%
Personal Income (2003)	US	\$15,221	\$25,053	\$32,470	\$48,417	\$70,851
	Texas	\$13,919	\$23,712	\$32,212	\$49,167	\$76,746
In Labor Force but Unemployed (March 2004)	US	10.2%	5.9%	4.8%	3.0%	2.6%
	Texas	8.2%	5.4%	5.0%	4.0%	1.8%
Received Public Assistance (2003)	US	2.1%	0.9%	0.9%	0.3%	0.1%
	Texas	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%
Described Health as good, very good or excellent (March 2004)	US	67.3%	82.0%	87.2%	92.6%	92.5%
	Texas	71.6%	81.0%	85.9%	91.3%	91.7%
Reported Volunteering in or through Organization (2004)	US	11.8	20.8	31.0%	36.1%*	*Advanced combined with BA on this measure
	Texas	8.7%	21.6%	32.6%	38.0%	
Voted in November 2000 Election	US	42.1%	56.0%	67.3%	76.3%	82.1%
	Texas	35.7%	51.4%	61.0%	77.7%	81.6%

Source: Reformatted from tables in *The Investment Payoff: A 50-State Analysis of the Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education*, A Lumina Foundation Project, Institute for Higher Education Policy, (2005, February). <http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/InvestmentPayoff2005.pdf>

Texas has several indicators with positive trend lines that may allow the state to shine in the national stage. For example, Texans with less than a high school education are more likely to describe their health as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent” when compared to individuals in the nation at the same education level. Texans with a high school diploma or more also report volunteering at greater rates than their national counterparts. Personal incomes are higher for Texans with a bachelor’s degree, and significantly higher for those with an advanced degree. The state clearly needs to develop a response to take advantage of these positives while alleviating deficiencies outlined below:

- 21.7 percent of adults in Texas have less than a high school education, compared to 14.8 percent in the nation (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2005).
- More than 40 percent of adults in Texas with less than a high school diploma have less than an eighth grade education (Jones and Kelly, 2007).
- There are more than 1.2 million adults in Texas who speak English poorly or do not speak English at all. Less than 5 percent receive instruction in ESL through ABE services. (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics).
- ABE enrollment in Texas has dropped for three consecutive years. Also, the percentage of participants who complete a program has dropped from 43.4 percent to 40.5 percent during that same period (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, National Reporting System, Table 4: Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level, Texas, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07).

Cost/Benefit Analysis

In *Align Adult Basic and Postsecondary Education to Meet State Goals in the Texas Workforce Development System*, the Legislative Budget Board (2007) reported that, “Texas is serving 3.5 percent of the 3.8 million people in need of adult basic education services.” These figures bring the number of adults served by ABE up to 133,000. That represents an increase of 30,635 students over previously reported figures. The same report states that, “For over 100,000 participants each year, the Adult Basic Education program provides a potential pathway into higher education.”

Chief among other worthy objectives, *Closing the Gaps by 2015* established goals to:

- 1) Increase college participation across Texas by 630,000 more students, and
- 2) Award 210,000 undergraduate degrees, certificates and other identifiable student success from high quality programs.

The Perryman Group analyzed the economic benefits of achieving the goals of *Closing the Gaps* in *A Tale of Two States - And One Million Jobs!!* (March 2007). In that publication, they estimated that the state’s return on investment in higher education is \$8.08 for every \$1 invested. Furthermore, The Perryman Group forecasts that by the year 2030, in addition to normal economic growth, Texas can expect to create over one million new jobs, \$194 billion in

gross state product, and \$122 billion in personal income as a result of meeting the goals in *Closing the Gaps*.

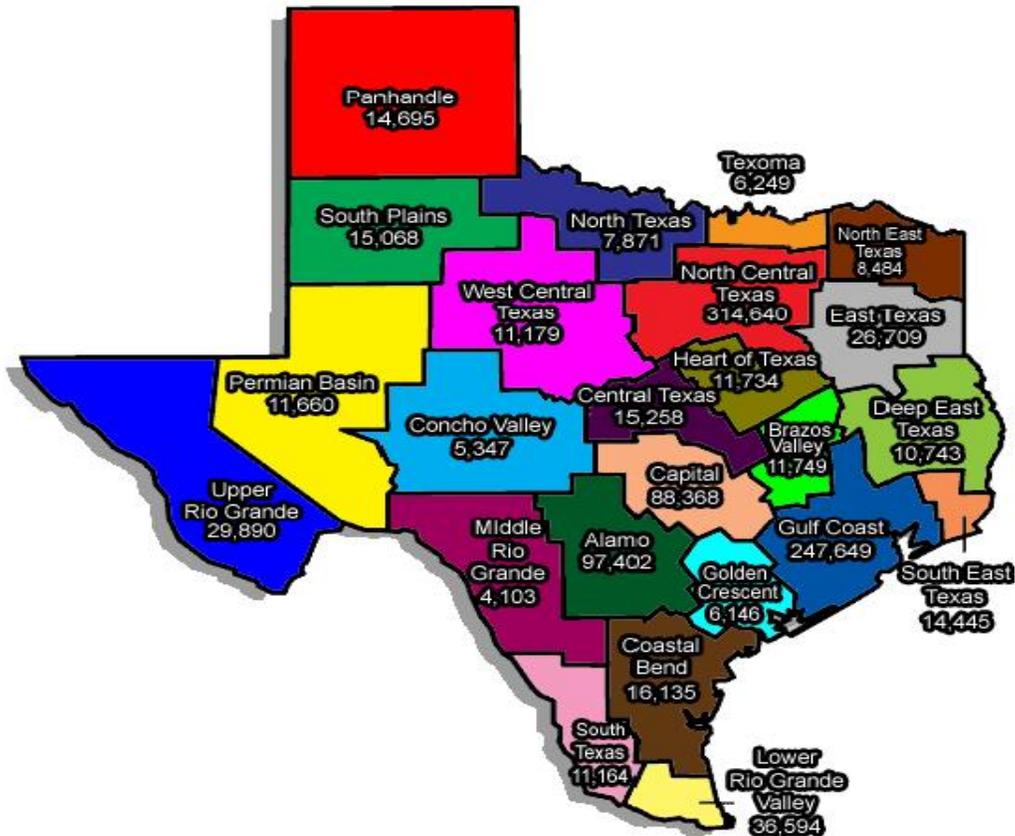
If ABE programs serve an additional 100,000 participants, they would fulfill 16 percent of the total goals for participation outlined in *Closing the Gaps*. Table 9 shows the potential economic outcome of enrolling these 100,000 ABE students in postsecondary education by applying 16 percent to the total economic benefits estimated according to the Perryman Group report. If successful in reaching this goal, ABE could be associated with an increase of \$78 billion in total spending; \$31 billion in gross state product, and \$20 billion in personal income. Statewide, it is estimated that more than 160,000 jobs could be added to the Texas economy as a result of the ABE population becoming a part of the *Closing the Gaps* success.

Table 9
Economic Implications of ABE Moving 100,000 Additional Students into Higher Education to Help Meet the Goals of *Closing the Gaps*
 (Represents 16 percent of economic benefits forecasted for *Closing the Gaps*).

ABE Students Move on to Higher Education	Resulting Jobs Created Statewide	Resulting Total Spending	Resulting Addition to Gross State Product	Resulting Gain to Personal Income
100,000	163,680	\$ 78 Billion	\$ 31 Billion	\$ 20 Billion

The Perryman Group also estimated that serving more adults would provide economic benefits to the region. Figure 4 shows the employment gains in Texas regions associated with *Closing the Gaps*.

Figure 4
Texas Regions Associated with *Closing the Gaps* Employment Gains



Source: The Perryman Group, *A Tale of Two States—and 1 Million Jobs!!* (2007).

The projected gain in terms of cumulative gross product is expected to reach about \$1.9 trillion by 2030 “if the goals embodied in *Closing the Gaps* are achieved” (Perryman, 2007). Adult basic education could contribute as much as \$300 billion to the cumulative gross product if it moves 100,000 participants into postsecondary education.

Not including construction costs, the state’s investment in human capital through *Closing the Gaps* was expected to require an outlay of over \$8 billion dollars over 13 years. This investment breaks down to about \$12,698 per participant (THECB, 2003). Adult basic education may reap some indirect benefits from investments made in *Closing the Gaps* since there are now 27 ABE programs held in community college campuses, where some ABE students continue their education. Further analysis would be required to identify what other resources have been directed toward increasing opportunities for ABE participants to help “close the gaps.”

Appendices E and F offer cost and benefit estimates for a variety of enrollment and investment combinations. However, increasing investment will not produce the desired results if program design issues are not addressed. There has been a significant decrease in ABE students with a goal of transitioning to postsecondary training (Green, 2008, Legislative Budget Board, 2007)

and a documented decline in students enrolled in ABE programs serving the least literate populations. Investments would need to be strategically implemented to reverse these trends.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Recommendations

After an examination of the data and funding of adult basic education in Texas, the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved in ABE, the current and future demand for ABE, and best practices of comparable states in aligning ABE with higher education, the following recommendations are provided for consideration by Texas policymakers.

1. Continue TEA as the lead agency for ABE services. However, the agency needs to collaborate closely with the Coordinating Board, the Texas Workforce Commission, other agencies, and representatives from employers, colleges, and universities. The Texas Workforce Investment Council serves in a coordinating role for ABE at the state level. However, the inclusion of additional college and university representatives could strengthen the role of postsecondary institutions in the alignment of ABE with higher education. Expansion of postsecondary alignment should continue to address the short-term skills and training needs of business and industry providing more skilled workers.
2. Expand TEA staff capacity to enhance its ability to provide leadership for ABE. Currently, leadership is provided under the Deputy Commissioner for School District Leadership and Educator Quality in the Division of Regional Services Division but the agency needs the content expertise necessary to ensure that programs employ best practices in serving the state's diverse population. In addition, program staff must develop and implement rigorous standards for ABE programs. Services providers understand that they will be held to these standards and accountable to the agency.
3. As called for in the National Commission on Adult Literacy report, *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming the Crisis in the U.S. Workforce* (June 2008), Texas should "make postsecondary and workforce readiness the new mission of the adult education and workforce skills system" and include this mission in the long-range action plans for ABE called for in Section 50 of the General Appropriations Act, 80th Texas Legislature. Consideration should be given to merging adult literacy activities with postsecondary education and workforce skills training in the long-range action plans.
4. Align ABE standards to Texas' College Readiness Standards to prepare adult students for college.
5. Implement programs similar to those identified by the Texas Workforce Commission in a September 9, 2008, brief on Adult Technology Training Projects that integrate English language services with preparation for career training or postsecondary education. Postsecondary education or career training should become the "default" option for adults seeking education services. This pilot would take place in a college setting – a community college or four-year institution – to provide career counseling services and offer pathways for entering postsecondary education or career training programs. Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the pilot program would be presented to lawmakers during the 2011 legislative session.

6. Include in the long-range action plans a plan for scaling up ABE services, to include recruitment and outreach strategies. A component of these plans should be a public campaign to motivate adult learners to enroll in ABE programs aligned to postsecondary education, as appropriated funds become available. The Texas Legislature should consider increasing funds available for ABE during the 2009 legislative session. Even a modest increase would allow programs to serve more adults.
7. Research and implement other state models of best practices in direct services to serve the diverse adult population in Texas, including a triangulated approach to services. Adults close to completing high school diplomas would be fast-tracked to postsecondary education, perhaps through dual-enrollment in community colleges. Developmental education classes could be combined with those needed to complete a high school diploma. These students could also be enrolled in some college courses at the same time. For these adults, credit recovery programs might allow them to complete a high school diploma quickly, especially if these courses are offered online. In addition, replication of ABE-to-college transition programs like those found in Washington or Kentucky could boost the number of adults completing ABE and continuing their college education. The interagency council should research options for adults who have more severe educational deficits or whose English language skills are very limited. These options would allow these adults to improve their English language skills and acquire other needed skills that create pathways to postsecondary education or career training programs.
8. Determine whether promising high school reform practices could be applied to ABE. Among these practices is the injection of rigor into all high school classes. Studies show that rigor benefits all students, but especially Latinos and African Americans.
9. Ease barriers to ABE by increasing support services, including child care and flexible scheduling.
10. Ensure multi-agency collaboration and an enhanced accountability system to track individual student outcomes.

APPENDIX A

General Appropriations Act, HB 1, 80th Texas Legislature, Section 50 (Page III-57)

50. Align Adult Basic Education and Postsecondary Education. Out of funds appropriated above, the Higher Education Coordinating Board shall coordinate with the Texas Education Agency to develop and implement immediate and long-range coordinated action plans to align Adult Basic Education and postsecondary education. To increase the number, success and persistence of students transitioning to postsecondary education, these action plans shall address at a minimum:

- a. outreach and advising;
- b. assessment, curriculum, and instruction;
- c. persistence interventions;
- d. state-level accountability systems to monitor performance;
- e. service-provider-level performance measures and program evaluation;
- f. standards to enhance data quality and sharing among state agencies and service providers;
- g. needs assessment of students and service-providers to identify other structural issues and barriers; and
- h. grants (including Federal Funds and Other Funds) to maximize effective use of limited General Revenue Funds.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency shall develop, and agree to, consistent with Texas Workforce Investment Council provisions under Texas Government Code 2308.1016, a revised memorandum of understanding that establishes the respective responsibilities of each agency for the implementation of action plans necessary to successfully transition students enrolled in adult basic education into postsecondary education. The memorandum of understanding shall establish a point of responsibility and identify sufficient resources within each agency for implementation by that agency of the requirements of the memorandum of understanding. The updated memorandum of understanding must be completed by December 31, 2007.

Out of funds appropriated above, the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission shall assist the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in assessing the current and projected future demand for adult education in Texas, the types of programs and instruction necessary to serve current and projected future populations of adult learners, and the social and economic outcomes of providing varying levels of adult education services in Texas. The report shall include a comparative analysis of adult basic education programs offered in other state and shall identify best practices in adult education. The report shall study the current organizational structure and agency roles in providing adult education and make recommendations for achieving state goals efficiently and effectively.

For purposes of this rider, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall be considered the lead agency and shall report on the implementation of these provisions to the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Governor, and the Legislative Budget Board by September 1, 2008.

APPENDIX B

(Except for minimal formatting, the following was reproduced from a document provided by Texas LEARNS without revisions or edits)

A Study of the Current Organizational Structure and Agency Roles in Providing ABE in Texas

State Designated Statutory Authority in Texas

The Texas Education Agency is designated in Section 1, Section 29.252 of the Education Code to regulate adult and community education in Texas. The Education Code combined with the Workforce Investment Act – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act is the current statutory authority over adult education in Texas. In the Texas Education code: Chapter 29, Educational Programs Subchapter H. Adult and Community Education Programs § 29.253. Provision of Adult Education Programs states that-Adult education programs shall be provided by public school districts, public junior colleges, public universities, public nonprofit agencies, and community-based organizations approved in accordance with state statutes and rules adopted by the State Board of Education. The programs must be designed to meet the education and training needs of adults to the extent possible within available public and private resources. Bilingual education may be the method of instruction for students who do not function satisfactorily in English whenever it is appropriate for their optimum development. This was effective as of the 74th Legislature, May 30, 1995. The State Board of Education Rules are in Chapter 89. Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter B. Adult Basic and Secondary Education and the Statutory Authority of the provisions of this Subchapter B are issued under, unless otherwise noted in Texas Education Code, §7.102(c)(16) and §29.253

The Education Code currently in practice is as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 29.252, Education Code, was amended on May 20, 1997 to read as follows:
Sec. 29.252. STATE ROLE IN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION.

(a) The agency shall:

- (1) provide adequate staffing to develop, administer, and support a comprehensive statewide adult education program and coordinate related federal and state programs for education and training of adults;
- (2) develop, implement, and regulate a comprehensive statewide program for community level education services to meet the special needs of adults;
- (3) develop the mechanism and guidelines for coordination of comprehensive adult education and related skill training services for adults with other agencies, both public and private, in planning, developing, and implementing related programs, including community education programs;
- (4) administer all state and federal funds for adult education and related skill training in this state, except in programs for which another entity is specifically authorized to do so under other law;
- (5) prescribe and administer standards and accrediting policies for adult education;
- (6) prescribe and administer rules for teacher certification for adult education;

(7) accept and administer grants, gifts, services, and funds from available sources for use in adult education; and

(8) adopt or develop and administer a standardized assessment mechanism for assessing all adult education program participants who need literacy instruction, adult basic education, or secondary education leading to an adult high school diploma or the equivalent.

(b) The assessment mechanism prescribed under Subsection (a)(8) must include an initial basic skills screening instrument and must provide comprehensive information concerning baseline student skills before and student progress after participation in an adult education program.

SECTION 2. (a) Not later than September 15, 1997, the Texas Education Agency shall complete development of the initial basic skills screening instrument component of the standardized assessment mechanism prescribed under Section 29.252, Education Code, as amended by this Act. Not later than January 1, 1998, the Texas Education Agency shall implement the initial basic skills screening instrument component.

(b) Not later than July 1, 1998, the Texas Education Agency shall complete development of the baseline student skills assessment component of the standardized assessment mechanism prescribed under Section 29.252, Education Code, as amended by this Act. Not later than September 1, 1998, the Texas Education Agency shall implement the baseline student skills assessment component.

(c) Not later than August 1, 1999, the Texas Education Agency shall complete development of the student progress assessment component of the standardized assessment mechanism under Section 29.252, Education Code, as amended by this Act. Not later than September 1, 1999, the Texas Education Agency shall implement the student progress assessment component.

SECTION 3. Not later than September 1, 1998, the Texas Education Agency shall develop a comprehensive management information system to measure the progress of and results achieved by adult education programs by collecting individual student data concerning students in adult education programs, including assessment data. The management information system must be compatible with any related system used by the Texas Workforce Commission.

Federal Statutory Authority

Taking precedence over any state rules, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) enacted as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, is the principal source of federal support for adult basic and literacy education programs. It is the purpose of this title to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services, in order to--

(1) assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;

(2) assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and

(3) assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

AEFLA funds are distributed by formula to states by the federal government using Census data on the number of adults (ages 16 and older) in each state who lack a high school diploma and who are not enrolled in school. States must match 25 percent of the federal contribution with

state or local funds, but many states contribute considerably more. (NOTE: States do not receive more federal funds if the match is greater than the required 25% match.)

States competitively award 82.5 percent of their federal grants to local school districts, community colleges, community-based organizations, and other providers to support adult education programs. Up to 10 percent of the program money is set aside in each state to serve incarcerated and/or institutionalized adults. States retain 17.5 percent of the federal allocation for program improvement activities (12.5 percent) such as professional development for instructors, and administrative expenses (5 percent).

In the WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT, P.L. 105-220 TITLE II--Adult Education and Family Literacy SEC. 203- DEFINITIONS the term eligible provider is defined as:

(5) Eligible provider.--The term "eligible provider" means--

- (A) a local educational agency;
- (B) a community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- (C) a volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- (D) an institution of higher education;
- (E) a public or private nonprofit agency;
- (F) a library;
- (G) a public housing authority;
- (H) a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (G) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and
- (I) a consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (H).

In the WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT, P.L. 105-220 TITLE II--Adult Education and Family Literacy CHAPTER 3--LOCAL PROVISIONS SEC. 231. GRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS the following rules apply to award fund to local providers:

(a) Grants and Contracts.--From grant funds made available under section 211(b), each eligible agency shall award multi-year grants or contracts, on a competitive basis, to eligible providers within the State or outlying area to enable the eligible providers to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities within the State.

(b) Required Local Activities.--The eligible agency shall require that each eligible provider receiving a grant or contract under subsection (a) use the grant or contract to establish or operate 1 or more programs that provide services or instruction in 1 or more of the following categories:

- (1) Adult education and literacy services, including workplace literacy services.
- (2) Family literacy services.
- (3) English literacy programs.

(c) Direct and Equitable Access; Same Process.--Each eligible agency receiving funds under this subtitle shall ensure that--

- (1) all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts under this section; and

(2) the same grant or contract announcement process and application process is used for all eligible providers in the State or outlying area.

(d) Special Rule.--Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this subtitle for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 203(1)¹, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy services. In providing family literacy services under this subtitle, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for activities other than adult education activities.

(e) Considerations.--In awarding grants or contracts under this section, the eligible agency shall consider-- (1) the degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals for participant outcomes;

(2) the past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families, and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under section 212, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with the lowest levels of literacy;

(3) the commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills;

(4) whether or not the program—

(A) is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains; and

(B) uses instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension that research has proven to be effective in teaching individuals to read;

(5) whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice; (6) whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers;

(7) whether the activities provide learning in real life contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

(8) whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;

(9) whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;

(10) whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

¹ WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT, P.L. 105-220 TITLE II--Adult Education and Family Literacy Section 203 (A) and (B)

(11) whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and

(12) whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs.

Texas Education Agency statutory authority is given in the provisions in Subchapter B issued under Texas Education Code, §7.102(c)(16) and §29.253, unless otherwise noted and in Texas Administrative Code - State Board of Education Rule-Title 19, Part II, Chapter 89 - Educational Programs, Subchapter H. Adult and Community Education Programs, Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter B. Adult Basic and Secondary Education.

State Board of Education Rules for Adult Education

The delivery system described in the State Board of Education Rules is as follows:

§89.27. Program Delivery System.

(a) There shall be a statewide system of adult education cooperatives/consortia for the coordinated provision of adult education services. To the extent possible, service delivery areas shall be large enough to support a program meeting the requirements of §89.23 of this title (relating to Essential Program Components) and to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services.

(b) Eligible grant recipients may apply directly to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for adult education and literacy funding. Eligible grant recipients are encouraged to maximize the fiscal resources available for service to undereducated adults and avoid unproductive duplication of services and excessive administrative costs by forming consortia or cooperatives and using fiscal agents for the delivery of services.

(c) Grant applicants who will serve as a fiscal agent for a cooperative/consortium must consult with other adult education and literacy providers in the cooperative/consortium in developing applications for funding to be submitted to TEA.

(d) Each fiscal agent shall be responsible for:

(1) the overall management of the cooperative/consortium, including technical assistance to consortium members, on-site visits, staff qualifications and professional development, and program implementation in accordance with the requirements of this subchapter;

(2) the employment of an administrator for the cooperative/consortium;

(3) development of written agreements with consortium members for the operation of the adult education program; and

(4) expenditures of funds for the conduct of the project and making and filing composite reports for the consortium.

(e) Nonconsortium applicants must also provide evidence of coordination of existing adult education and literacy services in the area proposed to be served and maintain an advisory committee.

Source: The provisions of this §89.27 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 5690.

Current Structure

Texas Education Agency has followed these federal and state provisions and currently funds are awarded to 56 eligible providers for Adult Basic Education projects under AEFLA using the 82.5% federal and matching state funds available. In addition, out of English Literacy Civics federal appropriations, an additional 56 grants were awarded competitively. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193) under the Social Security Act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds, were awarded to 54 programs to serve TANF recipients, former TANF recipients, and those avoiding TANF assistance. TEA has awarded 25 Even Start Family Literacy Grants under P.L. 107-110 Section 1235, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. These grants are under the authority of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and require coordination with an Independent School District and other partners.

The series of consortiums that resulted from the competitive process work cooperatively across the state to provide adult education services to every school district in Texas. The allocation formula in statute is as follows:

Texas Administrative Code State Board of Education Rule-Title 19, Part II, Chapter 89. Adaptations for Special Populations Subchapter B. Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Statutory Authority: The provisions Subchapter B issued under Texas Education Code, §7.102(c)(16) and §29.253, unless otherwise noted.

§89.29. Allocation of Funds.

(a) Annually, after federal adult education and literacy funds have been set aside for state administration, special projects and staff development, state and federal adult education fund allocations shall be developed for each county and each school district geographic area. Allocations shall be computed as follows.

(1) Twenty-five percent of the funds available shall be allocated based on the best available estimates of the number of eligible adults in each county and school district geographic area within each county.

(2) Seventy-five percent of the funds available shall be allocated based on student contact hours reported by each school district geographic area and for the most recent complete fiscal year reporting period.

(3) A school district geographic area's student contact hour annual allocation shall not be reduced by more than 10% below the preceding fiscal year's contact hour allocation provided that:

(A) sufficient funds are available; and

(B) the school district geographic area's contact hour performance used in calculating the allocation was not less than that of the preceding fiscal year.

(4) If public funds, other than state and federal adult education funds, are used in the adult education instructional program, the program may claim only the proportionate share of the student contact time based on the adult education program's expenditures for the instructional program.

(b) Supplemental allocations may be made at the discretion of the commissioner of education from funds becoming available for local allocations during the program year.

Source: The provisions of this §89.29 adopted to be effective September 1, 1996, 21 TexReg 5690.

A map of the Adult Education Cooperatives that has resulted from the competitively awarded programs is shown on the following page. On the following page is a graphic showing the aforementioned Acts, Statutes and Rules and how they flow from the US Department of Education through TEA to the local provider (Chart 1)

Texas Adult Education Programs 2007-2008

- 01 ABILENE ISD
- 02 ALICE ISD
- 04 AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 05 BEAUMONT ISD
- 06 BEEVILLE ISD
- 07 BROWNSVILLE
- 08 CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE
- 09 CLEBURNE ISD
- 10 COLLEGE OF THE MAINLAND
- 12 CORPUS CHRISTI ISD
- 13 DALLAS ISD
- 14 EL PASO ISD
- 15 FORTWORTH ISD
- 17 COMMUNITY ACTION
- 18 HARRIS COUNTY DEPT. OF EDUCATION
- 19 HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 20 HOWARD COLLEGE – BIG SPRINGS
- 22 KILGORE COLLEGE
- 24 LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 27 MIDLAND COLLEGE
- 28 NAVARRO COLLEGE
- 29 NORTH EAST ISD (ONLY)
- 30 NORTHEAST TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 31 NORTH HARRIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 32 NORTHSIDE ISD (ONLY)
- 33 ODESSA COLLEGE
- 35 PARIS JUNIOR COLLEGE
- 37 PORT ARTHUR ISD
- 38 REGION I (EDINBURG)
- 39 VICTORIA COLLEGE
- 40 REGION IV (HOUSTON)
- 41 REGION V (BEAUMONT)
- 42 REGION VI (HUNTSVILLE)
- 43 REGION IX (WICHITA FALLS)
- 44 REGION XVI (AMARILLO)
- 45 REGION XVII (LUBBOCK)
- 46 REGION XX (SAN ANTONIO)
- 48 HOWARD COLLEGE – SAN ANGELO
- 49 SEGUIN ISD
- 50 GRAYSON COUNTY COLLEGE
- 51 SOUTHWEST TEXAS JUNIOR COLLEGE
- 54 TEXARKANA ISD
- 55 TRINITY VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 57 DENTON ISD
- 58 MC LENNAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 59 WEATHERFORD ISD
- 60 WHARTON COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE
- 61 YSLETA ISD (ONLY)
- 62 SAN ANTONIO ISD (ONLY)
- 63 SOCORRO ISD
- 64 TEMPLE COLLEGE (TEMPLE ISD, BELTON ISD, ROGERS ISD, TAYLOR AND GEORGETOWN ISD)
- 65 ANGELINA COLLEGE
- 66 PANOLA COLLEGE
- 67 TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE
- 307 AUSTIN LEARNING ACADEMY

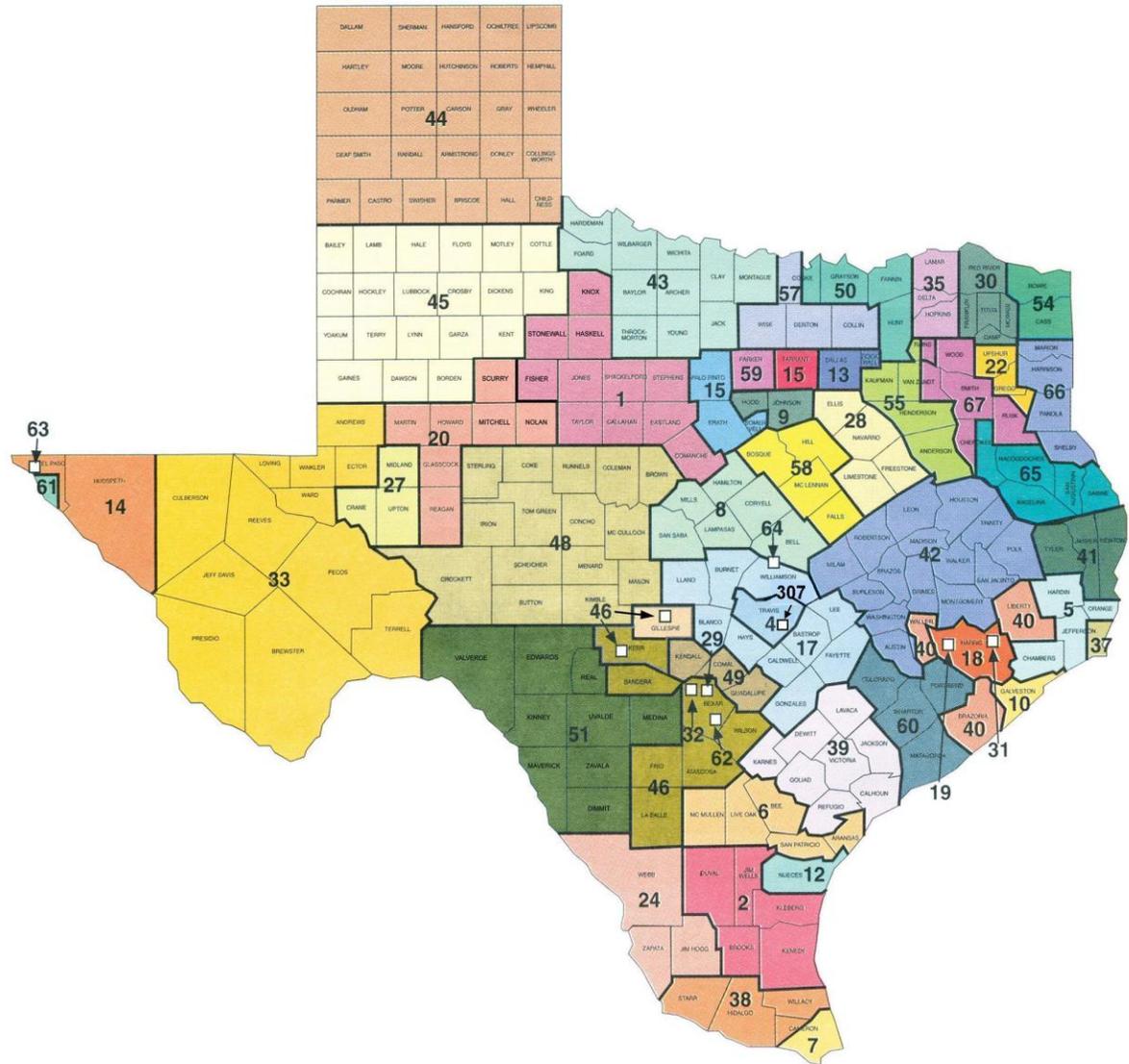
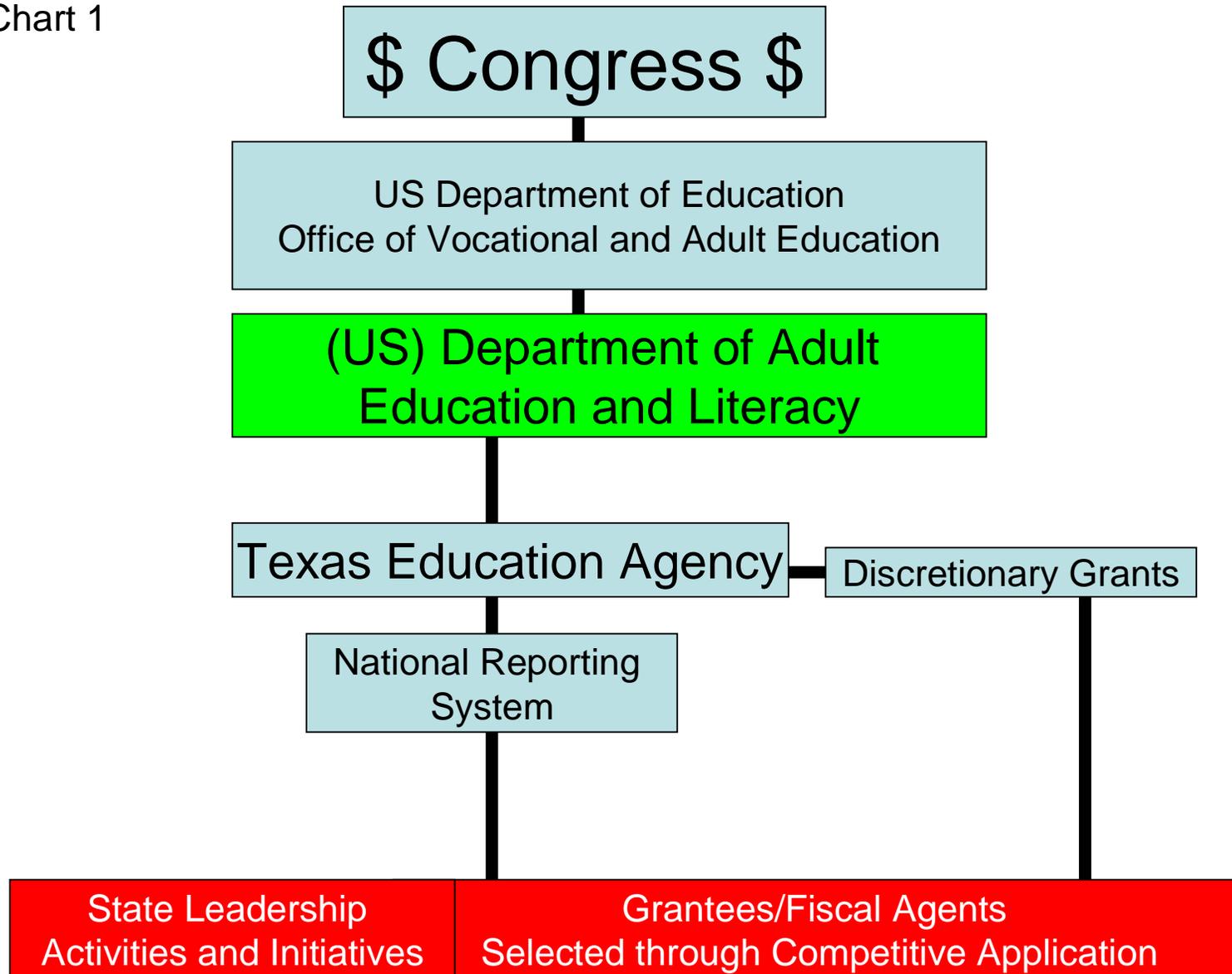


Chart 1



Under the authority aforementioned, the Texas Education Agency provides technical assistance and monitoring of the funded programs to ensure compliance with federal and state statute and rule, and to ensure continuous program improvement based on programs meeting state performance targets.

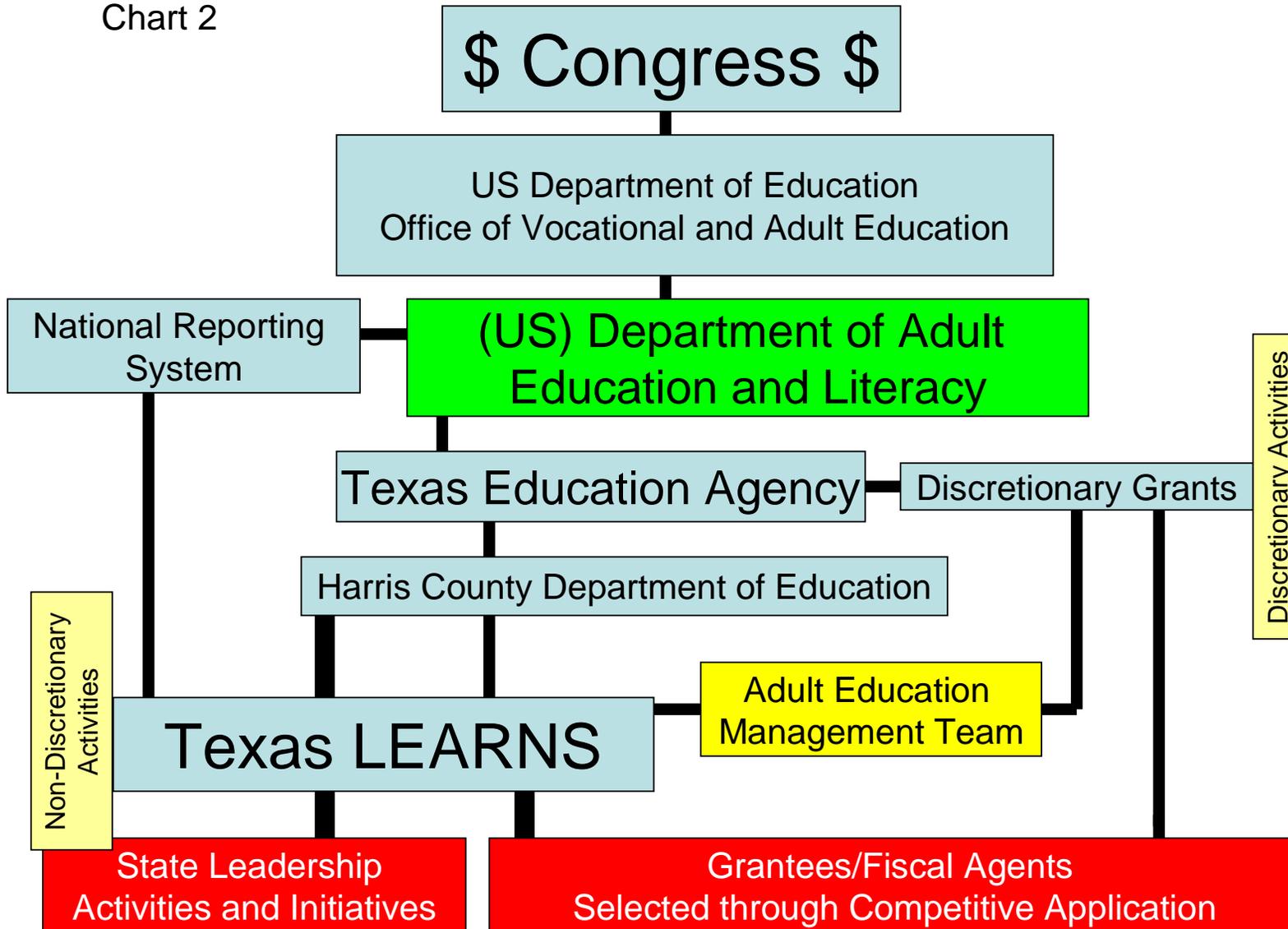
In the summer of 2003, the Commissioner of Education of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was tasked with severe legislative cutbacks equaling cutting approximately 250 Full Time Equivalencies or FTE's. One of the Commissioner's main tasks was to maintain and focus on program quality, improvement, and efficiency. In regards to adult education, the commissioner turned to a local provider with a systematic structure and historical record of positive outcomes and achievements of and for adult learners. The TEA, the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) Board of Trustees, and Harris County School Superintendent approved a contract to provide between TEA and HCDE to task HCDE with providing the state wide adult education program non-discretionary administrative functions. Through this process, Texas LEARNS, the state office of Adult Education and Family Literacy was created and housed at the HCDE. In the process, TEA retained all discretionary functions.

Texas LEARNS, while under HCDE, is its own entity in that it maintains its own budgets for programs, innovative initiatives, and administration with the use of Federal and State Funding. It should be noted since TEA retains all discretionary functions, the TEA oversees and maintains all adult education fiduciary grant awards for adult education in order to maintain a level of transparency since HCDE is an adult education grantee from TEA. Texas LEARNS is completely independent from HCDE local adult education service provider.

Texas LEARNS administers 56 adult education programs statewide, as well as 56 EL Civics projects, 22 family literacy providers. Under these there are more than 1000 classrooms providing English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English Literacy/Civics (citizenship candidates) and family literacy services. In addition, Texas LEARNS was given the charge to provide technical assistance to adult education and family literacy programs funded under WIA Title II, ESEA Title I, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193) under the Social Security Act, and the Even Start Family Literacy Programs. Texas LEARNS created 8 regions for management purposes and assigned a Grant Services Manager (GSM) to each region. The GSM negotiate non-discretionary grant activities and notify TEA of any non-compliance issues. In addition, Texas LEARNS was charged with providing teacher training and technical assistance. Texas LEARNS recommended to TEA to fund 8 regional teacher training centers - GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas) Centers (one per region). In addition, Texas LEARNS has redesigned the adult education management information system to be more user friendly and to match the federal reporting requirements in the National Reporting System; created an electronic desk review process to identify local programs performance issues; implemented a teacher credentialing process; developed and implemented content standards for instruction; developed an industry specific workplace literacy curriculum in three industries (manufacturing, healthcare, and sales and service); participated in numerous US Department of Education Technical Workgroups; and developed an local administrator leadership academy with credential.

The following chart shows the addition of the Texas LEARNS project. (See Chart 2)

Chart 2



Agency Coordination

Texas LEARNS and TEA have a standing Adult Education Management Team which meets monthly. This committee consists of TEA personnel and Texas LEARNS personnel: TEA Director of School District Services (also serves as the main contact for Texas LEARNS and project manager), two TEA employees from Grant Administration. From Texas LEARNS the committee is made up of the Texas LEARNS Director, two Assistant Directors, one Grant Services Manager, and the Texas LEARNS Interagency Specialist. This team meets to discuss compliance issues, program implementation and any items that need specific TEA direction or action. The minutes are maintained for the review of the TEA internal auditor. In addition, expenditure reports are filed by HCDE accompanied by a narrative description of activities.

Texas LEARNS coordinates with the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) and serves as a resource to the TWIC System Integrations Technical Assistance Committee (SITAC). TWIC, through the Office of the Governor, and appointed members who provide “strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce development system; promotes the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce for Texas; and advocates the development of an integrated workforce development system that provides quality services.”

A Tri-Agency Partnership Committee consists of members of the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and TEA/Texas LEARNS meets to implement workforce related Adult Basic Education strategies. TWC and local workforce development boards coordinate with adult education provider to handle job skills training and job placement (The federal Workforce Investment Act Title II prohibits federal adult education funds from being used for job skills training).

Texas LEARNS also works closely with The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to promote and work towards a seamless transition of adult education students to post secondary education, including community college, technical colleges and four-year universities. This partnership works to match data to find out the next steps adult learners are taking in their education, as well as exploring possibilities and working to address the significant and ever increasing number of developmental education students. Coordination is also continuing on the implementation of Rider 77/50 for the study of adult education.

APPENDIX C

Funding Mechanisms of ABE Programs in Comparison States

(Information Provided by ABE State Offices)

State	Estimated Funding Percentages	Federal Funding Mechanism	State Funding Mechanisms
California	7.4 % Federal 92.6% State	WIA Title II The Carl Perkins grant is a federal program that gives money to adult schools for their career tech programs Some schools receive WIA Title I funding	There is no specific ear-marked source of adult education funds. Once the legislation was passed, the amount has been negotiated annually as part of the state budget. Agencies also receive private grants from private donors, California Endowment, for example. Do not keep record of local funding
New York	33% Federal 67% State	WIA Title II	Employment Preparation Education Welfare Education Program Do not keep records of local funding
Florida	7 % Federal 93 % State	WIA Title II	State funds are line items in the state budget, from the general revenue funds (sales tax primarily)
Illinois	40% Federal 60% State	WIA Title II	General Revenue, Tax base

State	Estimated Funding Percentages	Federal Funding Mechanism	State Funding Mechanisms
Pennsylvania	48.1% Federal 51.9% State	The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Even Start Federal incentive money was received in 2005-06. It was used to develop systems to support adults' transitioning to postsecondary education and training We did have federal incentive money in 2005-06. We used it to develop systems to support adults' transitioning to postsecondary education and training.	Under State Act 143 of 1986. The original legislation provided funds for provision of adult education consistent with what was provided with federal funds. Additional state funds were added and ear marked for family literacy. In the 2007-08 year, an additional \$4.9 million was added to our state funding for the sole purpose of increasing the impact of our programs, no additional students just greater outcomes Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, which oversees postsecondary grants and loans, committed \$100,000 to develop systems to support adults transitioning to postsecondary education and training The overall budget is negotiated annually as part of the state budget

State	Estimated Funding Percentages	Federal Funding Mechanism	State Funding Mechanisms
Ohio	55 % Federal 45% State	WIA Title II	General Revenue Fund (line item in the Department of Education budget) Examples of local funding are business contracts, and fund raising Some programs also get money from Department of Social Services and Department of Labor (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – TANF)
Michigan	43.8% Federal 56.2 % State	WIA Title II, AEFLA, Dept of Human Services (Juvenile Programs), Department of Corrections (General Funds)	Sections 107 of the State School Aid Act The overall budget is negotiated annually as part of the state budget Some programs receive private and in-kind donations from churches, Literacy Council
Georgia	50% Federal 50% State	AEFLA	Tax Revenue
North Carolina	11.8 Federal 88.2% State	Title II WIA - approx 15 million	70 million comes from the state The state money only goes to the 58 community colleges and 25 community based organizations. Local community based organizations and some local community colleges also get local funding and/or private donations ABE office does not keep records of local funding or private donations.
New Jersey	67% Federal 33% State	Title II WIA	State ABE funding comes from the UI Trust Fund (payroll tax)

APPENDIX D

(Except for minimal formatting, the following was reproduced from a document provided by Texas LEARNS without revisions or edits)

DRAFT

Identification of Best Practices in Adult Basic Education

What are the best practices in adult basic education? Identifying best practices in adult education is a recurrent effort with the limited scientific researched based data available in adult education. As a result of the lack of research, the long-standing common “rule of thumb” that veteran adult educators have used to determine if a particular practice is “working” is to measure the practice against student persistence in the adult education program. There is an old saying among seasoned adult educators: *students vote with their feet*. In other words, if participants stay in the program, the practice is working to meet their goals and needs, if they leave in greater than average numbers, it's not working. There may be some truth in this simplistic saying, but we also know that there are many proven and promising practices with positive outcomes. Some of those practices that were found to be the most promising are described in this report.

It is important to note that adult education program attendance is mostly voluntary. There are no compulsory attendance rules for adults as there are for school-aged children. In a few cases, parolees, persons on probation or under court order may be required by a judge or other authority to attend, and special populations like Temporary Assistance to Needy Families recipients may be required to attend to maintain benefits, but the majority of adult education participants enrolls and attends voluntarily. In addition, most adult education programs across the nation and in Texas are at no cost to the participants, and materials are provided by the program thus no monetary investment by the participant. So the question remains what interventions or practices work the best to “keep adult education participants engaged and attending?”

Numerous reports were reviewed and considered to prepare this report. The specific examples focus mostly on persistence and successful transition to receiving a GED, entering post secondary or other training, employment, or employment advancement. The report is sectioned into three parts: (1) examples of national practices with promising results (2) a checklist of quality program indicators and (3) best practices in Texas.

Section 1: Examples of Best Practices in Adult Education from Across the Nation

Best practices in adult education leads to programs that can meet the core indicators of performance identified in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). This section will focus on:

(ii) Placement in, retention in, or completion of, post-secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

(iv) Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

The examples of best practices identified below have promising results in reference to the core indicators listed in WIA- AEFLA for placement in, retention in, or completion of post secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement and receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

One practice described below is from Washington State and the other is from Kentucky. Both are the results of “thinking outside of the box.” Both meet the needs of the eligible population beyond the traditional classroom. Both require additional resources supplied from outside of WIA-AEFLA funds. Both descriptions are from the recently released report: *Reach Higher, AMERICA OVERCOMING CRISIS IN THE U.S.WORKFORCE*. This report is from the National Commission on Adult Literacy and was released in June 2008.

Washington State: Streamlining the Path

Faced with a system that required years for low-skilled workers and non-English speakers to learn basic skills before beginning workforce training, leaders of Washington’s State Board of Community and Technical Colleges created a program in 2004 called Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST). I-BEST prepares students for high-skill, high-wage jobs by integrating adult basic education with occupational/ vocational training. ESL students comprise about 50 percent of the enrollment. Students are dual-enrolled in the adult education and community college systems. Class offerings range from one-quarter courses, to one-year certificate programs, to longer courses that lead to a college degree. Before I-BEST, 5 to 10 percent of adult basic education (ABE) students went on to postsecondary education. Today, all I-BEST students are immediately enrolled in college as part of the program. In 2006–2007, 50 I-BEST programs were in place at 27 of Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges. Every college in the state is expected to have at least one approved I-BEST program by the end of 2007–2008. Due to its success, the I-BEST program is now included in the governor’s budget request, and incorporated in the State Workforce Board’s strategic plan as a workforce development opportunity. The state’s Department of Corrections also has requested a pilot version for state prisons.

Kentucky: Improving College Transition and Enrollment Rates

Six years ago in Louisville, KY, the leaders of Jefferson County Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education (JCPSACE) and Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) realized they could attract and serve more students by working together. Their cooperation produced Educational Enrichment Services (EES), an innovative program that eases and encourages adult learners' transition to college. JCTC refers students who need remediation to the free EES adult education classes, which are taught on the college campus. Students are able to access remedial education while remaining in a college environment and taking other developmental and/or college credit courses. Once students successfully complete their EES classes, they can move on to college full time. More than 6,000 students have participated since the collaboration began in 2002. Retention rates have consistently exceeded 80 percent—and nearly half of students skip a semester or more of remedial coursework. In academic year 2006–2007, JCTC students taking adult education classes in lieu of developmental coursework saved a total of \$397,653 in tuition. Of the original 262 EES students who enrolled in fall 2003, 97 students (37 percent) were still enrolled in the fall of 2007, compared to 16 percent of all first-time students from the fall of 2003. By 2007, EES students had earned eight associates degrees, nine diplomas, and forty-six certificates. The success of the effort is due largely to monthly meetings between JCPSACE and JCTC leaders, and to the development of specialized curriculum written with the input of developmental faculty. The constant communication and shared data allow the partners to continuously refine EES offerings. Other community organizations—including the workforce investment board, social services, government, the business community, and faith-based organizations also provide support to the effort. Today EES has expanded to include three other local universities—and has been recognized as a program of distinction by the National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System has recommended that every community college in Kentucky replicate the transitions partnership demonstrated in Jefferson County.

In addition to the Washington State and Kentucky models, other best practices found across the nation have been identified and are briefly described below. These were found on the National College Transition Network (NCTN) website and are in some cases funded partially or wholly by WIA-AEFLA funds. Each brief description below is copied from the NCTN website. If connected to the Internet while reading an electronic copy of this report the reader may use the hyperlink to read the details for each practice. To read the details click on the hyperlink and it will direct you to the NCTN website. The NCTN website address is: www.collegetransition.org

The National College Transition Network (NCTN) is a project of World Education's [New England Literacy Resource Center](#). World Education, Inc. is a nonprofit organization founded in 1951 to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged around the globe. The NCTN supports ABE staff, programs, and state agencies in establishing and strengthening ABE-to-college transition

services through technical assistance, professional development, collegial sharing, advocacy and increased visibility for this critical sector of the adult basic education system. The NCTN brings together the various efforts of educators, professional development providers, policy makers, and researchers concerned with effective college transitions to postsecondary education for GED, ASE, and ESOL graduates and other non-traditional learners.

The Network's membership is national and covers a range of institutions representing schools, colleges, prisons, community-based organizations and workplaces. The basic membership is free and gives members access to a wide variety of resources:

- original publications on promising practices and research to practice that support evidence-based assessment, instruction and counseling
- suggestions for program development and design options
- updated list of professional development opportunities
- annotated links to research, funding, and policy resources
- members' directory and moderated listserv
- eNewsletter with resources updates

This section features brief descriptions of promising practices developed by teachers, counselors, program coordinators and others who serve adult ABE students in transition to postsecondary education. To see full descriptions, open the hyperlink. At the end of the descriptions, a full version of the information for one of the practices is listed as an example of the type of information found on the website for each practice.

Promising Practice 1: [Orientation](#)

This practice is contributed by Joan Keiran, Coordinator, Cape Cod Community College/SUCCESS College Transition Program, Hyannis, MA. It describes how the SUCCESS program created a two-day orientation process to help develop a sense of community and trust in the classroom that support student persistence and includes specific teacher and student activities.

Promising Practice 2: [Transition Student Portfolio Model](#)

This practice is contributed by Patricia Fina, Instructor, Community Learning Center (CLC), Cambridge, MA. It describes the CLC's move to an all-portfolio format for their CLC Bridge Program including, checklists for portfolio contents on college preparedness, computer activities, math and writing assignments.

Promising Practice 3: [MOAs](#)

This practice is contributed by Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, President of Dorcas Place Adult & Family Learning Center in Providence, RI. It describes how she institutionalized the collaboration with their college partner through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

Also see: [The Dorcas Place MOA in the NCTN Policy Section](#). [Word document]

Promising Practice 4: [Preparing Students for College-level Math](#)

This practice is contributed by Pam Meader, current president of the Adult Numeracy Network (ANN) and experienced math teacher at Portland Adult Education in Maine. Pam shares several hands-on strategies that address math phobia and introduction to algebra.

Promising Practice 5: [TTC Monthly Mentor Evenings](#)

This practice is contributed by Gylean Trabucchi, Mentor Coordinator at Project RIRAL in Rhode Island. It describes, in detail, how RIRAL sets its transition student mentoring program in motion.

Promising Practice 6: [Career Planning for SUCCESS](#)

This practice is contributed by Joan Keiran, Coordinator, Cape Cod Community College/SUCCESS College Transition Program, Hyannis, MA. It describes, in detail, a career awareness PowerPoint activity for students and places it in the larger context of career development.

Promising Practice 7: [Building Relationships with Elected Officials through Program Visits](#)

This practice is contributed by Dr. Brenda Dann Messier, President of Dorcas Place Adult and Family Literacy Center in Providence, RI. As you will read, inviting elected officials to your program is just one part of a strategy to advocate for your program and adult education.

Promising Practice 8: [Creating an Alumni Newsletter for Transition-to-College Programs](#)

This practice is contributed by Pat Fina, Community Learning Center, Cambridge, MA. It describes the benefits of staying connected with alumni, both for the student and the program, as well as the steps for creating an alumni newsletter for your college transition program.

Promising Practice 9: [Wrap-Around Services](#)

This practice is contributed by Janie Mendoza, Capital Idea, Austin, TX. It describes the comprehensive support services that the College Prep Academy provides to its students. The services also include a weekly meeting with an assigned Career Counselor.

Promising Practice 10: [Recruitment](#)

While participating in transition component makes a lot of sense for adults going to college, it is not always an easy sell. This practice is contributed by Don Sands, Executive Director of X-Cel Inc. in Jamaica Plain, MA, describes how X-Cel expanded a relationship with a community partner to reach more students interested and ready for transition.

Integrating research into practice is an important method used by practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to improve the field of education. This section of the NCTN Web site is dedicated to disseminating emerging research from a variety of sources through a user-friendly format.

Read NCTN's newest Research to Practice Brief.

Research to Practice 1: Attributional Retraining: Rethinking Academic Failure to Promote Success

This Research to Practice brief, created by the NCTN staff, defines attributional retraining and gives concrete examples of how to apply the theory in the classroom or counseling environment to support student academic success and persistence in college.

Research to Practice 2: What Can We Learn From Developmental Reading Research in Postsecondary Education?

This research review, contributed by Deepa Rao, Coordinator of the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project, looks to the methods used in the college environment and what is known about “strategic readers.”

Research to Practice 3: Contextualized Grammar Instruction for College Transition Students

This research review, contributed by NCSALL Fellow Kathryn Di Tommaso, reviews the research on effective grammar instruction. Research has shown that rote teaching of grammar rules is not an effective teaching method. This brief provides a conceptual framework for discussion of contextualization and numerous classroom examples.

Research to Practice 4: Attention Deficits in College Transition Students

This research review is the second contributed by NCSALL Fellow Kathryn Di Tommaso. It covers recent research on adults with attention deficits and the essential study skills students need to develop in order to be effective learners in college.

Research to Practice 5: Strategies to Facilitate Reading Comprehension in College Transition Students

This research review, by Kathryn Di Tommaso, discusses recent research on the strategies used by good reader. Learn about the many strategies you can teach your students so that they are ready for one of the biggest challenges of college -- reading complex material.

Research to Practice 6: Learning Communities: Promoting Retention and Persistence in College

This research review, by Deepa Rao, describes types of learning communities and how they support retention of students in college, including nontraditional students. The brief includes links to a variety of learning communities and resources with suggestions for developing a learning community in transition programs.

Research to Practice 7: The Economic Benefits of Pre-baccalaureate College. What Can We Learn from W. Norton Grubb?

This summary of two journal articles gives detailed information about the economic benefits of certificates and associate degrees. In helping the NCTN prepare this brief, Dr. Grubb – noted University of California Berkeley professor, summed up his message this way: “The student needs to earn a credential, in the right occupation area, AND find related employment for all this to payoff.”

Capital IDEA (The full description of the Capital IDEA best practice is copied below from the NCTN website. A similar outline is used to describe each practice listed above, and a full description is available for each practice listed.)

Contributed by

Janie Mendoza

jmendoza@capitalidea.org

Capital Idea

College Prep Academy

P.O. Box 1784

Austin, TX 78767

<http://www.capitalidea.org/index.html>

512-457-8610

Program Context

Capital IDEA assists disadvantaged adults with incomes below 200 percent of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines to enable them to acquire basic, life, and technical skills needed to enter high-skill, high-value occupations. The Capital IDEA concept originated in the late 1990's when the congregations and schools of Austin Interfaith noticed that the rising cost of living was putting increasing pressure on ordinary families. Breadwinners were taking on extra jobs, and still not making enough to make ends meet. They had neither the time nor money to afford the tuition, childcare, and other expenses needed to train for higher-wage careers. At the same time, employers found themselves short of workers in many skilled occupations. When these community and business leaders recognized that their problems were related, a conversation started, and Capital IDEA was formed.

The College Prep Academy is a 12-week, full time educational program co-sponsored by Austin Community College and Capital IDEA. The Academy consists of classes designed to increase participants' academic skills in Math, Reading and Writing in order to successfully complete the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test and prepare them for college. Capital IDEA also offers ESL and GED classes for people whose goal is to attend college but do not yet have the skills needed for the College Prep Academy. All services (ABE, GED, ESOL) are provided, no matter what level, for college bound students who test above a 5th grade level in reading and math. Capital IDEA contracts with Austin Community College to provide the academic instruction component of the program and all academic classes are held on the ACC campus.

Rationale and Background of the Practice

People in our community have many barriers to college and not all of them are financial. Most are first generation college goers and college was not a concept that they were brought up to consider. Their families don't know how to answer their questions about college, guide them through the application process, or build their confidence in their abilities to succeed in college.

Our Counselors are almost like surrogate families, providing the support and guidance that people need to build confidence in their ability to navigate the system and succeed in college.

Most of our students have children and childcare is so expensive that it becomes a real barrier to education. We provide childcare vouchers during class hours for students who are parents and will provide them for as many years as it takes someone to graduate from college as long as they are actively enrolled and attending. In some situations, we have even provided childcare for a few months after graduation to help with the job search.

Description of the Practice

Capital IDEA provides comprehensive support services, referred to as *Wrap-around services*, to every student enrolled in the program until they graduate from college or enter employment. These wrap-around services include:

- Weekly class meetings with a Career Counselor
- Weekly (at minimum) individual contact with a Career Counselor
- Full tuition
- All books and materials provided
- Childcare voucher for hours spent in classes for students actively enrolled
- One-time emergency assistance with rent or other expenses on a case-by-case basis
- Referral and vouchers to more intensive clinical services, e.g. mental health, when necessary
- Transportation assistance, as needed on a case-by-case basis

The Career Counseling is the heart of our program. Each student is assigned a career Counselor depending on the chosen career path. The Career Counselors are very specialized -they have to learn everything they can about the fields of study they cover and know about the curriculum, skill requirements, and work opportunities in order to assist students with their career goals. The Career Counselors are focused on helping students stay in and succeed in school. Currently, a staff of 10 Counselors works with 650 enrolled students, giving each a caseload of 60-70 students.

Career Counselors meet weekly with individual students, usually face-to-face. The Counselors park themselves on campus so that they get some time face-to-face with students. If this isn't possible, then they are in regular contact through email.

Career Counselors hold weekly group sessions called VIP (*Vision, Initiative, Perseverance*) meetings. These meetings are 1-1.5 hours per week and attendance is required. During these meetings, Counselors teach college readiness and career awareness skills and also coach students on communication and life skills, like conflict resolution. Counselors develop their own lesson plans for group work, responding to whatever issues come up, depending on the needs of the students.

The assigned Career Counselor continues to work with each student until graduation. A few months prior to graduation the students also begin to meet with the Placement Coordinator who helps them prepare for the job search and coaches them through the process. There is also an Employer Coordinator who develops and maintains relationships with area employers and serves as a job developer.

The Capital IDEA Counselors also encourage students to take advantage of the services available at the college. However, only walk-in counseling is available at the college so the students don't benefit in the same way that they do from working closely with the same Counselor over the course of their time in school. In addition, the Capital IDEA Counselors are skilled in dealing with the issues that are specific to the student population served.

What steps would a program or practitioner need to replicate this practice?

The program was designed in response to community needs, so it's important to determine precisely what the needs are among community members and area businesses. Capital IDEA has a broad base of support because the founders assessed community and business needs and developed very strong partnerships as a result. These partnerships with community organizations, human service providers, and businesses are key to our ability to provide comprehensive support services to students. We are also able to find people jobs because we learn directly from employers which skills and training people need to succeed in the sectors where jobs are available.

What staff and skills were required?

A program like ours needs to have Counselors who can be very supportive and also firm and directive. Counselors need to have the determination and drive to see their students through and not to let them fall through the cracks. This requires a great deal of patience and the ability to recognize warning signs when someone is falling off course.

We don't have any structured allocation of professional development hours for our staff, but professional development is very much supported and encouraged and now tuition reimbursement is available. Counseling staff members do a lot of self-training, attend seminars, bring in speakers and do whatever it takes to keep themselves up to date on the fields that our students are preparing to enter. We have to be continually learning.

Staff feels very supported and counseling staff share resources with each other and problem solve collaboratively. Counselors don't stand alone but work with colleagues and no one has to recreate the wheel.

What do you consider to be innovative about your practice?

Both the services we provide and the way that our staff works are innovative.

The level of counseling that we provide and the way we pair students with Counselors is unique. We match students with Counselors based on their career interests and they work together throughout the entire educational process. We provide a lot to students and also ask a lot of them in return. We have every student sign an enrollment agreement form so they are

clear from the beginning about what we provide and what we expect from them. For example, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, counseling sessions, and VIP meetings and if they are absent from more than two VIP sessions or training classes, they have to meet with the Capital IDEA Director to continue enrollment in the program. They are also expected to complete all the classes required for their occupational career path and to earn a grade of B or better.

When participants graduate from the program, they are also expected to give back to the community in a tangible way, through volunteering or donating to a non-profit, or developing their own community project. There is a Capital IDEA Alumni Association that recruits alumni as tutors, mentors, and members of the Capital IDEA speakers' bureau. To learn more about the activities of the Capital IDEA Alumni Association, see <http://www.capitalidea.org/alumni/>

As a staff, we work hard at staying up to date technologically. This helps Counselors maintain records and files and enables Counselors to stay in touch with students. Our day-to-day work life is also very good. We work in a nice building that is downtown and very accessible to public transportation. A great working environment really helps morale when Counselors feel that they are respected and supported in doing such hard and demanding work. We also have strong leadership that is willing to change and try new things if something isn't working.

Challenges

Like any startup, it takes time to gain recognition and to raise and sustain the funding, but this is beginning to happen. At first, we encountered mistrust from students because the program and services seem too good to be true. Now that we have a proven track record, word is spreading, and this is not such an issue.

Cost and Funding

On average, it costs about \$6000/year per student to provide all of the educational and support services included in the program. Funding comes through a broad mix of city, county, federal and private funds.

Evidence of Impact and Effectiveness

Our retention rates are quite high, in the last 3 college prep cycles (Spring 2006 - Spring 2007):

- completion rates ranged from 75-100 percent.

Student pass rates for the math portion of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) are also quite high, in the last 3 college prep cycles:

- 64-86 percent met the minimum score of 230 and placed directly into college-level courses

- 82-100 percent met the Texas Success Initiative¹ minimum math score of 207, which enables them to take 2 prerequisite classes while they are enrolled in a developmental education course to improve math scores
- 67-73 percent achieved the minimum reading score of 230 and were eligible for college-level courses
- 57-77 percent achieved the minimum writing score of 220 and were eligible for college-level courses

What might be the implications for programs and practitioners in our field?

The collaboration between government, business, church, educators, and community organizations has been key to our success. Everything that we do is a collaboration - recruitment, identifying high demand careers, developing curriculum, and fundraising. Our work also crosses political boundaries and we have generated support from all ends of the political spectrum.

How scalable do you think the practice is?

The Wrap Around services model to support academic success and career advancement is very scalable, although it is expensive. But each community is different, so the specifics of the program and the educational, training and career paths would vary.

1. The Texas Success Initiative (formerly TASP) is a state-legislated program designed to improve student success in college through diagnostic assessment of basic skills and developmental instruction. <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/tsi/>

Section 2: Quality Program Indicators for Adult Education Programs

Identifying best practices in adult education leads to programs that can meet the core indicators of performance identified in the Workforce Investment Act which regulates adult education programs across the nation. The core indicators are:

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT, P.L. 105-220 - TITLE II--Adult Education and Family Literacy - SEC. 212. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.

(A) Core indicators of performance.--The core indicators of performance shall include the following:

(i) Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.

(ii) Placement in, retention in, or completion of, post-secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

(iii) Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

This section will focus on the demonstrated improvements in literacy skill-levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills. The following checklist is taken from a study completed in 2002 by a national organization called Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The study is about the components of a quality English as a Second Language (ESL) education program for Adult Education. Although the study focused on ESL programs for adults, it is applicable to adult basic education programs in general.

The study answers the question: What are the components of a quality adult education ESL program by defining quality components from a national perspective. Using program indicators in eight distinct areas, the standards can be used to review an existing program or as a guide in setting up a new program. Of particular importance are items in two sections: *Instruction* and *Employment Conditions*. The following *Instruction* related items have core importance in adult education.

A. Instructional activities adhere to principles of adult learning and language acquisition. These principles include the following:

- 1. Adult learners bring a variety of experiences, skills, and knowledge to the classroom that need to be acknowledged and included in lessons.*
- 2. Language acquisition is facilitated through providing a non-threatening environment in which learners feel comfortable and self-confident and are encouraged to take risks to use the target language.*
- 3. Adult learners progress more rapidly when the content is relevant to their lives.*
- 4. Language learning is cyclical, not linear, so learning objectives need to be recycled in a variety of contexts.*

B. Instructional approaches are varied to meet the needs of adult learners with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Examples of these approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- grammar based*
- participatory*
- competency based or functional context*
- content based*
- whole language*
- project based*

Additionally, teacher turnover in adult education is a constant challenge. Due to limited resources, the vast majority of the instructional and support staff is part time. The following

item found under *Employment Conditions* could not be applied our found in many existing adult education program. Most adult educators do not receive any benefits.

VII. Employment Conditions

A. The program supports compensation and benefits commensurate with those of instructional and other professional staff with comparable positions and qualifications within similar institutions.

If the following Indicators are established in an adult education program the likelihood of “best practices” increases dramatically. The best practices described in Section 1 and Section 3 expound on indicators listed below. Any reference to “adult ESL” programs may be replaced by the reader with “adult education” to include all adult education programs.

The checklist is from Part 4 of the book Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs, TESOL, 2002.

Information summarized from Part 4 - Program Self- Review Instrument

I. Program Structure and Administration

- A. The program has a mission statement, a clearly articulated philosophy, and goals developed with input from internal and external stakeholders.
- B. The program has an administrative system (e.g., board of directors or advisory group and bylaws) that ensures participation of internal stakeholders, accountability, and effective administration of all program activities. (The system will vary according to whether the program is autonomous or affiliated with a larger institution or organization.)
- C. The program has sound financial management procedures to collect and maintain fiscal information, guide program budgeting, ensure continuity of funding, and meet reporting requirements.
- D. The program has an accountability plan with a system for record keeping and reporting that is consistent with program policies and legal and funding requirements.
- E. The program fosters and maintains linkages and clear communication with internal and external stakeholders.
- F. The program has a procedure for ensuring confidentiality in communication with internal and external stakeholders.
- G. The program provides equipment for daily operations and efficient record keeping.
- H. The program uses facilities and resources appropriate for adult ESL instruction, meeting the needs of learners and instructional staff. If a program is part of a larger institution, facilities meet standards equivalent to those of other programs.
- I. The program provides courses of sufficient intensity and duration with flexible schedules to meet varied learner and community needs in convenient locations within the constraints of program resources.
- J. The program maintains a learner-teacher ratio conducive to meeting learning needs and goals.

Note: Standard K is in the Standards for Curriculum and Instructional Materials; Standard L is in Standards for Instruction; Standard M is in Standards for Assessment and Learner Gains; and Standard N is in Standards for Employment Conditions and Staffing.

O. The program has a planning process for initial program development and ongoing program improvement that is guided by evaluation and based on a written plan that considers targeted community demographics, retention patterns, learner needs, resources, local economic trends, and educational and technological trends in the field.

P. The program has a technology plan that is aligned with program goals and learner needs. The plan addresses the use, acquisition, and maintenance of technological resources and the training of program personnel.

Q. The program has a plan for outreach, marketing, and public relations to foster awareness and understanding of the program.

II. Curriculum and Instructional Materials

A. The program has a process for developing curriculum that is based on a needs assessment of learners and includes participation and input from other stakeholders.

B. The curriculum reflects the mission and philosophy of the program and is compatible with principles of second language acquisition for adult learners.

C. The curriculum includes goals, objectives, outcomes, approaches, methods, activities, materials, technological resources, and evaluation measures that are appropriate for meeting learners' needs and goals.

D. The curriculum specifies measurable learning objectives for each instructional offering for learners and is appropriate for learners in multilevel classes.

E. Curriculum and instructional materials are easily accessible, up to date, appropriate for adult learners, culturally sensitive, oriented to the language and literacy needs of the learners, and suitable for a variety of learning styles.

F. The program has an ongoing process for curriculum revision in response to the changing needs of the learners, community, and policies.

III. Instruction

A. Instructional activities adhere to principles of adult learning and language acquisition. These principles include the following:

5. Adult learners bring a variety of experiences, skills, and knowledge to the classroom that need to be acknowledged and included in lessons.
6. Language acquisition is facilitated through providing a non-threatening environment in which learners feel comfortable and self-confident and are encouraged to take risks to use the target language.
7. Adult learners progress more rapidly when the content is relevant to their lives.
8. Language learning is cyclical, not linear, so learning objectives need to be recycled in a variety of contexts.

B. Instructional approaches are varied to meet the needs of adult learners with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Examples of these approaches include, but are not limited to, the following:

- grammar based
- participatory
- competency based or functional context
- content based
- whole language
- project based

C. Instructional activities engage the learners in taking an active role in the learning process.

D. Instructional activities focus on the acquisition of communication skills necessary for learners to function within the classroom, outside the classroom, or in other educational programs.

E. Instructional activities integrate the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), focusing on receptive and productive skills appropriate to learners' needs.

F. Instructional activities are varied to address the different learning styles (e.g., aural, oral, visual, kinesthetic) and special learning needs of the learners.

G. Instructional activities incorporate grouping strategies and interactive tasks that facilitate the development of authentic communication skills. These include cooperative learning, information gap activities, role plays, simulations, problem solving, and problem posing.

H. Instructional activities take into account the needs of multilevel groups of learners, particularly those with minimal literacy skills in their native language and English.

I. Instructional activities focus on the development of language and culturally appropriate behaviors needed for critical thinking, problem solving, team participation, and study skills.

J. Instructional activities give learners opportunities to use authentic resources both inside and outside the classroom.

K. Instructional activities give learners opportunities to develop awareness of and competency in the use of appropriate technologies to meet lesson objectives.

L. Instructional activities are culturally sensitive to the learners and integrate language and culture.

M. Instructional activities prepare learners for formal and informal assessment situations, such as test taking, job interviews, and keeping personal learning records.

IV. Learner Recruitment, Intake, and Orientation

A. A quality ESL program has effective procedures for identifying and recruiting adult English learners. The procedures include strategies for collecting data on community demographics that identify the populations that need to be served, particularly those at the lowest level of literacy and knowledge of English.

B. The program uses a variety of recruitment strategies.

C. The program takes steps to ensure that culturally and linguistically appropriate recruitment and program information materials and activities reach the appropriate populations in multiple languages as needed.

D. The program evaluates the effectiveness of its recruitment efforts and makes changes as needed.

E. The program has an intake process that provides appropriate assessment of learners' needs, goals, and language proficiency levels; an orientation process that provides learners with information about the program; and, if needed, a procedure for referring learners to support services within the program or through other agencies and for accommodating learners waiting to enter the program.

V. Learner Retention and Transition

A. The program supports retention through enrollment and attendance procedures that reflect program goals, requirements of program funders, and demands on the adult learner.

B. The program encourages learners to participate consistently and long enough to reach their identified goals. This may be accomplished by adjusting the scheduling and location of classes and by providing appropriate support services.

C. The program accommodates the special needs of learners as fully as possible.

D. The program contacts learners with irregular attendance patterns and acknowledges learners who attend regularly.

E. The program provides learners with appropriate support for transition to other programs.

VI. Assessment and Learner Gains

A. The program has a comprehensive assessment policy.

B. The program has a process for assessing learners' skills and goals for placement into the program, documentation of progress within the program, and exit from the program. This includes appropriate assessment of learners with special learning needs.

C. Assessment activities are ongoing and appropriately scheduled.

D. The program has procedures for collecting and reporting data on educational gains and outcomes.

E. The program provides appropriate facilities, equipment, supplies, and personnel for assessment activities.

F. The program identifies learners' needs and goals as individuals, family members, community participants, workers, and lifelong learners.

G. The program assesses the language proficiency levels of learners in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The assessments may also identify learners' literacy skills in their primary language and any learning disabilities.

H. The program uses a variety of appropriate assessments, including authentic, performance-based assessments; standardized tests; learner self-assessment; and assessment of nonlinguistic outcomes (e.g., perceived improvement in self-esteem, participation in teamwork activities). Standardized assessment instruments are valid and reliable, based on studies with the targeted adult-level population.

I. The information obtained through needs assessment is used to aid administrators, teachers, and tutors in developing curricula, materials, skills assessments, and teaching approaches that are relevant to learners' lives.

J. Assessment results are clearly explained and shared with learners, to the extent permitted by assessment guidelines, in order to help learners progress.

K. Assessment activities document learners' progress within the ESL program toward advancement to other training programs, employment, postsecondary education, and attainment of other educational goals.

L. Results of assessment provide information about educational gains and learner outcomes and provide the basis for recommendations for further assessment (e.g., special needs, literacy considerations).

M. The program has a process by which learners identify and demonstrate progress toward or attainment of their short- and long-term goals.

N. The program has a process by which learners demonstrate skill-level improvements in listening (L), speaking (S), reading (R), and writing (W) through a variety of assessments.

O. The program has a process by which learners demonstrate progress in nonlinguistic areas identified as important toward meeting their goals.

VII. Employment Conditions

A. The program supports compensation and benefits commensurate with those of instructional and other professional staff with comparable positions and qualifications within similar institutions.

B. The program has in place policies and procedures that ensure professional treatment of staff.

C. The program supports a safe and clean working environment.

D. The program recruits and hires qualified instructional staff with training in the theory and methodology of teaching ESL. Qualifications may vary according to local agency requirements and type of instructional position (e.g., paid instructor, volunteer).

E. The program recruits and hires qualified administrative, instructional, and support staff that have appropriate training in cross-cultural communication, reflect the cultural diversity of the learners in the program, and have experience with or awareness of the specific needs of adult English learners in their communities.

F. The program recruits and hires qualified support staff to ensure effective program operation.

VIII. Professional Development

A. The program has a process for orienting new ESL administrative, instructional, and support staff to the ESL program, its goals, and its learners.

B. The program has a professional development plan, developed with input from staff and stakeholders. The program acquires appropriate resources to implement the plan, including compensation for staff participation.

C. The program provides opportunities for its instructional staff to expand their knowledge of current trends, best practices, uses of technology, and research in the field of second language acquisition and adult literacy development.

D. The program provides opportunities for administrators and project evaluators to become knowledgeable about effective teaching strategies in adult ESL and current trends in the field of adult ESL.

- E. Professional development activities are varied, based on needs of the staff, and provide opportunities for practice and consistent follow-up.
- F. The program provides training in assessment procedures in the interpretation and use of assessment results.
- G. The program encourages faculty and staff to join professional ESL and adult education organizations and supports staff participation in professional development activities of the organizations.
- H. The program supports collaboration among adult ESL teachers, instructional personnel in other content areas, K–12 English and ESL teachers, support service providers, workplace personnel, and representatives of programs to which students transition.
- I. The program has a process for recognizing the participation of staff in professional development activities.
- J. The program has a process for the regular evaluation of administrator, instructor, and support staff performance that is consistent with the program’s philosophy. The process is developed with input from staff.
- K. The program provides learners with opportunities to evaluate program staff anonymously. The tools are user friendly and allow for variety in learner proficiency levels, backgrounds, cultural diversity, and special needs.
- L. The program provides opportunities for all staff members to develop performance improvement plans.

IX. Support Services

- A. The program provides students with access to a variety of services directly or through referrals to cooperating agencies.
- B. The program provides a process for identifying learning disabilities in English language learners and incorporates appropriate accommodations and training of staff, either directly through the program or indirectly through referrals to cooperating agencies.

Section 3: Best Practices in Texas

Texas has incorporated several federally funded statewide leadership activities/initiatives. Some of these initiatives we recommended and supported by the US Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), and other were state-driven. Texas LEARNS, the state office of adult education, is charged with providing technical assistance and administering the state leadership projects for adult education programs. The initiatives described in Section 3 attest to that charge. All of the following programs have been implemented by Texas LEARNS, the Texas Office of Adult Education and Family Literacy and/or its partners. The projects described below include:

1. Adult Education Credential Project for Teachers and Administrators
2. Adult Education Response to Senate Bill 1, Rider 82 (79th Regular Session); since referred to as Texas Industry Specific for English Second Language (TISESL).

3. AEGIS (Adult Education Guidance Information System) – Electronic Desk Review
4. Content Standards Development and Implementation for Texas Adult Education
5. CREDITs – Data-base for Credential Project
6. Distance Learning
7. Leadership Excellence Academies: *Connecting Local Adult Education Leaders to Ideas, Research, and Innovation*
8. Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative
9. Math Initiative
10. Report Card Initiative
11. Shop Talks – Best Practices in Workforce Literacy
12. Special Learning Needs Initiative
13. TCALL (Texas Center for Advancement of Literacy and Learning)
14. Teacher Training Centers-Project GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas)
15. TEAMS (Texas Educating Adult Management System) – Management Information System for Adult Education Reporting
16. Texas Education Agency GED Unit and Adult Education Official GED Practice Test Pilot
17. Texas Family Literacy Resource Center
18. The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas
19. TEA-Texas Department of Criminal Justice Partnership Initiative and Agency Memorandum of Understanding
20. TESPIRS (Texas Even Start Program Reporting Information System)- Management Information System for Even Start Reporting
21. WorkforceLitTex Listserv

Adult Education Credential Project

The Texas Adult Education Credential Project's goal is to develop and implement an optional credentialing process for adult educators in Texas. The program models the best features of effective adult education. It is:

- soundly grounded in an accepted foundation of theory and practice
- delivered in flexible formats
- an instrument of empowerment--allowing and encouraging adult education practitioners to take control of their own professional development.

The Texas Adult Education Credential raises the bar of professionalism for adult educators. To serve the needs of future adult students, adult education practitioners require and deserve systematic, standardized and meaningful professional development. The Texas project is one of the most innovative adult education professional development projects underway anywhere in the nation.

Funding for the Texas Adult Education Credential Project is provided by the Texas Education Agency via Texas LEARNS. The project is operated by The Education Institute, College of Education, Texas State University - San Marcos, a member of the Texas State University System.

Adult Education Response to Senate Bill 1, Rider 82 (79th Regular Session); Since referred to as **Texas Industry Specific for English Second Language (TISESL).**

The legislative language is as follows:

82. Development of Workplace and Workforce Literacy Curriculum. Out of Federal Funds appropriated above in Strategy A.2.5, Adult Education and Family Literacy, the Commissioner shall allocate an amount not to exceed \$850,000 in fiscal year 2006 for the development of a demand-driven workplace literacy and basic skills curriculum. The Texas Workforce Commission shall provide resources, industry-specific information and expertise identified as necessary by the Texas Education Agency to support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

The following is a chronological summary of activities in response to Rider 82's mandate that the Texas Education Agency/Texas LEARNS develop demand-driven workplace literacy and basic skills curricula for adult learners:

May 2005: Texas LEARNS initiates study to identify Texas industries that provide entry level as well as career advancement opportunities for adult learners. Industries must have been identified as part of a sector of market growth in at least one major region of the state. Dialogue with the Texas Workforce Commission continues as data and reports are reviewed.

August 2005: Report to Texas LEARNS summarizes study findings, including recommendations for responding to Rider 82. After review by and additional input from the Texas Workforce Commission of the study's findings and recommendations, Texas LEARNS releases the summary report, *Charting a Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Adult Basic Education Needs of the Limited English Proficient* (actual release February 2005).

October 2005: Texas LEARNS prepares to facilitate adaptation and/or development of demand-driven, industry-related curricula appropriate for use with Texas' adult English language learners. Development of staff training modules for adult education program administrators and instructional staff also begins.

November 2005 – February 2006: Discussion/negotiations/planning with El Paso Community College, Seguin ISD, and Trinity Valley Community College to develop modular responses to workforce-related instructional needs of adult learners with limited English proficiency for three industry clusters – healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service. Preliminary development activities begin.

February 2006: Regular meetings of the Workforce Literacy Resource Team (WLRT) are scheduled to include representation by the Texas Education Agency, Texas LEARNS, Texas LEARNS' contractor/ liaison for Rider 82 responses, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and a local workforce development board (Alamo WorkSource). Texas LEARNS requests that TWC identify and invite employer representatives to join the WLRT.

March 2006: Curriculum development teams meet to discuss approach to curriculum development, formatting and organizational issues. Industry skills standards are reviewed and discussed.

April 2006: Texas LEARNS hosts and participates in National Workplace Peer Conference in Houston, sharing update on Rider 82. Texas LEARNS presents at National Conference of the Commission on Adult Basic Education and solicits input from adult educators in session, "Connecting Professional Development to the Workplace".

April 2006: SHOP TALK series begins and is posted online. Series focuses on issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting the educational needs of Texas' emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers. A particular focus: promising practices by adult education programs responding to the needs of local employers and employees.

April - May 2006: Identification of and communication with pilot sites for Rider 82 curricular responses. Piloting scheduled to occur in various regions of the state, in both urban and rural/semi-rural settings. Eligibility criteria for pilot sites are established.

May – August 2006: Soft launch of healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service curricular modules in Socorro ISD (El Paso) and Seguin ISD (New Braunfels/Seguin).

June 2006: Texas LEARNS represents Adult Education in Webinar hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training, “Tapping into the Pipeline of Limited English Proficient Workers”.

August 2006: Trinity Valley Community College completes draft of “how to” component for adult education program administrators seeking to develop/strengthen bridges between adult and post secondary education and training initiatives.

August 2006: Texas LEARNS purchases Sed de Saber units to be piloted in adult education programs addressing workforce-related needs of workers in hospitality and food services (partnership with SER National Jobs for Progress, recipient of U.S. DOL grant).

August – Fall 2006: Revisions to curricular modules for sales and service, healthcare, and manufacturing are made in preparation for second soft launch in October.

September - December 2006: Technical assistance visits by Texas LEARNS contractor to identify professional development needs of adult education programs. Modular approach is used to respond to technical and instructional needs of programs preparing to deliver workforce-related adult basic education.

October 2006: Texas LEARNS serves on steering committee to inform development by the Texas Workforce Commission of a resource guide for local workforce development boards providing services to the limited English proficient.

November 2006: Texas LEARNS enters into agreement with Sed de Saber and SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc. to pilot a technology-based English language program designed specifically for adult Hispanic workers. Pilots to be launched through 14 adult education programs in 8 Texas cities (Brownsville, Fort Worth, Corpus Christi, Houston, Dallas, Lubbock, El Paso, San Antonio).

January – May 2007: Drafts of curricular responses to Rider 82 are further revised. Sales and Service modules are prepared for April 2007 pilot at two sites. Development continues on Manufacturing and Healthcare modules in response to soft launch and to balance integration of language learning and workforce development.

February 2007: Texas LEARNS meets with six adult education programs participating in pilot initiatives. El Paso Community College schedules pre-pilot training*, and Texas A&M University’s Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) designs and prepares for third party data collection and evaluation. GREAT Center representatives participate in the training sessions and provide technical support to local pilot initiatives.

March 2007: Release of Handbook # 1: Planning and Implementation Tips for Adult Basic Education Program Administrators. This is part of Texas LEARNS’ response to Rider 82, Charting

a Course: Responding to the Adult Basic Education Needs of the Texas Workforce. Handbook # 2 focuses on instructional issues and will be released later in the spring of 2007.

April – August 2007: Two pilots for each of the three industry clusters (sales and service, healthcare, and manufacturing,) are initiated incrementally in six adult education programs across the state: ESC Region 1 (Lower Rio Grand Valley); Harris County Department of Education (Houston/Coastal); Northeast Texas Community College (Mt. Pleasant); El Paso and Socorro Independent School Districts (El Paso); and Seguin ISD (Central Texas).

April – October 2007: Curricular responses to Rider 82 are piloted. Data is gathered, report is prepared, and revisions are made in response to input/feedback (instructors, learners, employers) from pilot initiatives.

December 2007: Revisions to curricula are collected, and deliverables are sent to Texas LEARNS for distribution to adult education programs across the state in July 2007.

Note: A unique feature of adult education's response to Rider 82 is the requirement of linkages with business / industry, technical training, and job sourcing services to ensure individuals' full access to a continuum of career path opportunities.

*Curricular responses to Rider 82 are designed to be delivered by trained instructors in local adult education programs. 3/2007

At the request of state leadership, the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) at Texas A&M university assisted with the El Paso Community College (EPCC) pilot of the Rider 82 curriculum. This pilot consisted of three industry-related curricula (Sales and Service, Healthcare, and Manufacturing) each consisting of four modules. Each module had five lessons. Each lesson had four components: English as a Second Language (ESL), math, technology, and employability. It was anticipated that most programs would complete one module (5 lessons) in approximately 50 hours. The overall goal of the 200 hour industry-related curricula was to assist students with learning job related English for employment sectors that are growth industries in their communities.

The research question guiding this pilot was: By using the industry-related curricula, can students in NRS levels 2 and 3 learn English and obtain background knowledge about certain industry clusters? To answer this question, the TCALL research staff gathered information from administrators, teachers, and students from five pilot sites in Texas. Adult literacy programs in McAllen and El Paso piloted the Healthcare curriculum. The Manufacturing curriculum was piloted in Seguin. Adult literacy programs in Mt. Pleasant and Houston piloted the Sales and Service Curriculum. A total of seven teachers and approximately 80 students participated in this pilot.

To determine the effectiveness of the industry-related curricula on the acquisition of basic skills within a work context (English, math, technology, and employability), the TCALL research staff

developed various evaluation instruments and interview questions. The data from this research project included:

- Teacher lesson evaluations
- Teacher overall evaluations
- Student lesson evaluations
- Conference calls with teachers
- Conference calls with program administrators
- Conference calls with students

With the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study, the TCALL research staff was able to answer 'yes' to the research question. Students in NRS levels 2 and 3 at these pilot sites learned English and obtained background knowledge on certain industries by participating in the Rider 82 Industry-specific curricula.

Texas LEARNS continues to explore ways to assist Texas in tapping the potential of this segment of its workforce and ensuring that these individuals gain entry to the pipeline of gainful employment. Adult education in Texas plays a pivotal role in the state's ability to increase its economic competitiveness and widening the benefits of prosperity. Its successful response to the state legislative mandate, Rider 82³, to develop industry-related curriculum for adult learners has yielded the following:

- 30 products available for dissemination that introduce adults with limited English language proficiency to the language, literacy, and employability skills entry level workers need to be able to succeed in the workplace. The products focus on three industry sectors: healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service;
- Two guides developed to assist adult education program administrators and instructional staff in the planning and delivery of workforce-related instruction (*Charting a Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Adult Basic Education Needs of the Texas Workforce, Handbooks 1 & 2*);
- Opportunities for volunteer programs to receive specialized technical support in exploring partnerships and instructional options for workforce-related instruction.
- On-going development of learning strategies that address the work domain as part of the *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks*;

The TISESL curriculum has been published and copyrighted by the Texas Education Agency and in mid-July 2008 will be fully distributed to Texas adult education providers.

AEGIS (Adult Education Guidance Information System)

The Adult Education Guidance Information System (AEGIS) is web-based desk-monitoring computer application that supports the Texas LEARNS Grant Services Managers in confirming program compliance for grants administered by the state office.

AEGIS performs the following functions:

- Collects data entered by local service providers/fiscal agents
- Compares data reported by fiscal agents to thresholds for acceptable performance on indicators mandated by law or developed by administrative staff
- Assesses risk in program performance
- Identifies discrepancies in data
- Displays desk review results quarterly for grantees and Grant Services Managers (automated process triggered by Grant Administration Manager)
- Flags programs for investigation
- Alerts staff to potential problems
- Tracks status on corrective actions
- Stores information entered by grantees and Grant Services Managers, including issues, notifications, and improvement plans

Texas Adult Education Content Standards Development and Implementation

Texas LEARNS has drawn on national standards-based framework in developing the *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks*. The USDE developed *Equipped For the Future (EFF)* framework is linked to the three primary roles that motivate adult learners to continue their education: their roles as **family members, workers, and community members**.

The common foundation for adults seeking career path opportunities and gainful employment is a desirable outcome shared by adult education as well as business and industry:

Basic Workplace Skills	Basic Workplace Knowledge	Basic Employability Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reads with Understanding •Listens with Understanding •Writes Clearly & Concisely •Speaks Clearly & Concisely •Observes Critically •Use Technology •Locates and Uses Resources •Applies Mathematical Concepts for Reasoning & Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Applies Health & Safety Concepts •Understand Process & Product •Demonstrates Quality Consciousness •Understands finances •Works within Organizational Structure & Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Works in Teams •Solves Problems •Makes Decisions •Demonstrates Effective Interpersonal Relations •Demonstrates Self-Management Strategies
Lifelong Learning Skills (Knows How to Learn, Manages Change, & Applies New Skills & Knowledge)		

Adult educators increasingly teach language and basic skills as a means to an end - to help prepare students for success in the workforce and their communities and to prepare parents to be role-models for their children. While many practitioners already integrate workforce and life skills into their curricula through learner-centered instructional strategies and classroom management techniques¹, the growing need demands additional attention.

When the National Association of Manufacturers surveyed its membership in 2005, nearly half of its members indicated that fifty percent of their employees lacked basic employability skills (attendance, work ethic, timeliness). Forty-six percent of those responding to the survey reported inadequate problem-solving skills among their employees, and 36 percent raised concerns about insufficient reading, writing, and communication skills.

Since 2001, a number of adult education practitioners in Texas have been hard at work to propose the standards that accurately describe what adult learners should know and be able to do as a result of instructional content and delivery, as well as to develop the statements of how well learners need to be able to demonstrate levels of proficiency. An initial endeavor was to adapt, adopt, and implement Florida's Department of Education Adult Basic Education Curriculum Standards. This endeavor yielded the Texas Standardized Curriculum Framework (TSCF).

In early 2004, Texas LEARNS, the administrative oversight of Texas' adult education programs, funded the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) at Texas A&M University to (1) gauge the adoption and implementation efforts of TSCF across Texas and (2) convene a taskforce to assess TSCF in its current form and recommend future directions for Texas LEARNS as they considered adopting standards statewide. TCALL, in turn, formed the Texas Adult Education Standards Project (TAESP) and assigned staff members to the project to accomplish the charges set forth by Texas LEARNS. The following phases describe what TAESP has achieved to date and plans to undertake in the future.

Phase I (January 2004 - August 2004)

In March 2004, the TAESP staff conducted a survey of adult education teachers and administrators with a working knowledge of TSCF. The goal of the survey was to acquire from practitioners data regarding:

- advantages/disadvantages of TSCF,
- users' perceptions of how TSCF should be used,
- its impact on instructional planning and delivery,
- users' concerns about time and effort, and
- availability and/or development of instructional materials responsive to the standards and benchmarks of TSCF.

The data acquired from the survey was presented to a taskforce of adult education practitioners from across the state in July 2004. The taskforce was directed to:

- examine progress to date on the development of adult education standards in Texas,
- discuss reactions to using the standards by local program staff members,
- explore, in small groups, future directions for further standards development, and
- develop a schedule for field-testing the revisions recommended by taskforce members.

After reviewing the feedback acquired from the taskforce meeting, several questions emerged: What are adult learners' needs? Does TSCF adequately address these needs? What changes

are needed to align TSCF and learners' needs? To answer these crucial questions, which are fundamental to standards development and implementation, the TAESP staff moved to the second phase of the project—conducting focus groups and taskforce meetings.

Phase II (September 2004 - June 2005)

To determine the needs of adult learners in Texas, the TAESP staff conducted focus group interviews throughout Texas during Fall 2004. Ninety-six adult learners enrolled in adult education programs and 75 adult education practitioners were interviewed. The findings helped to support the decision made by the TAESP staff and Texas LEARNS that TSCF would be replaced by new content standards and renamed the Texas Adult Education Standards (TAES). Writing teams would be formed to develop the standards and/or benchmarks.

EFF Standards Adopted (April 2005)

In April 2005, adult education practitioners who participated in the focus group interviews and/or in the July 2004 taskforce workshop were invited to a follow-up workshop. At this workshop, the findings from the focus group interviews were presented and the participants engaged in discussions on the elements and characteristics of content standards, to include the content standards of *Equipped for the Future (EFF)*. Because the focus group findings indicated that *EFF's* standards would address the needs of the adult learners in Texas, the group agreed to adopt the following five *EFF* standards:

- Listen Actively,
- Speak So Others Can Understand,
- Read With Understanding,
- Convey Ideas in Writing, and
- Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate.

Writing Teams Formed (June 2005)

Discussions were also held at the April 2005 workshop regarding the elements and characteristics of writing teams, the groups who would be charged to develop the benchmarks for the five *EFF* standards. At the end of the workshop, the writing team application was presented and the participants were encouraged to apply and/or nominate other adult education practitioners.

By June 2005, three writing teams—listening/speaking, reading/writing, and math—were formed consisting of 26 adult education practitioners from all across Texas. They met for the first time in June during a 2-day workshop and volunteered to work on one of the three teams. The listening/speaking team was assigned the standards *Listen Actively* and *Speak So Others Can Understand*; the reading/writing team was assigned the standards *Read with Understanding* and *Convey Ideas in Writing*; and the math team was assigned the standard *Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate*.

Phase III (July 2005 – June 2006)

Four major activities occurred during this phase: (1) the draft benchmarks were developed, (2) a controlled field test was conducted, (3) external reviewers evaluated the benchmarks, and (4)

the draft benchmarks were modified as a result of the controlled field test and external reviews.

Benchmarks Developed (July – November 2005)

The writing teams came together three times in the Bryan/College Station area between July – November 2005 and developed the draft benchmarks for the standards they were assigned. In November, they completed the draft benchmarks and deemed them ready for the controlled field test.

Controlled Field Test (January – March 2006)

Twelve adult education teachers, again from all across Texas, implemented the benchmarks in a controlled field test. These teachers were either writing team members or worked closely with the writing team members during the field test. The goals were to collect preliminary data from teachers on how effective the benchmarks were in the field and what types of professional development would be needed in order to implement the benchmarks.

External Reviews (January – March 2006)

While the controlled field test was in progress, three nationally-known external reviewers also evaluated the benchmarks for rigor, clarity, measurability, manageability, applicability, gaps, and the presence of bias. One reviewer evaluated the listening and speaking benchmarks, another evaluated the reading and writing benchmarks, and the third evaluated the math benchmarks.

Data Collection and Analysis (March – May 2006)

After the completion of the controlled field test in mid-March, the TAESP staff analyzed three types of data: data from the telephone conference calls conducted throughout the field test to assess how it was coming along, the evaluation forms completed by the field test participants, and the data from the face-to-face interviews of the field test participants. Useful findings resulted from the controlled field test.

Modified Benchmarks (May 2006)

The TAESP staff presented the findings of the controlled field test, along with the reports of the external reviewers, to the writing team members when they convened in the Bryan/College Station area in May 2006. These findings guided the teams in determining if and how to modify the benchmarks into a more refined set ready for the statewide field test in Fall 2006. The new English as a Second Language (ESL) level descriptors that were recently released by the National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education were also presented to the writing teams for aligning the listening and speaking benchmarks to the new NRS ESL level descriptors.

Reading/Writing Benchmarks Aligned for the ESL Learners (June 2006)

The listening/speaking and reading/writing teams came together for a 1-day meeting in June 2006 to align the reading and writing benchmarks for the ESL learners. This activity was conducted to ensure that the reading and writing benchmarks will address the needs of both ABE/ASE and ESL learners.

Phase IV (July 2006 – June 2007)

The TAESP staff members have completed all of the nine goals set for this phase. The completed goals are: (1) recruited participants for the statewide field test, (2) conducted the train-the-trainer workshops, (3) provided professional development to the statewide field test participants, (4) implemented the statewide field test, (5) recruited additional standards specialists, (6) modified the benchmarks and delivered the final product of the completed benchmarks to Texas LEARNS, (7) compiled learning activities, (8) conducted a refresher standards specialist training, and (9) unveiled the standards and benchmarks and provide professional development during the statewide conference *Texas...ReachingNewStandards*.

Recruitment of Statewide Field Test Participants (June – July 2006)

In preparation for the statewide field test, teachers and volunteer teachers were recruited between June and July 2006. Those who were interested in becoming a field test participant were asked to submit an application packet. Of the 66 applicants, 55 teachers were selected using these criteria: (1) fair representation of all eight Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas (GREAT) regions, (2) teacher status, and (3) applicant rationale for wanting to become a field test participant.

Train-the-Trainer Workshop (July 2006)

One feedback we repeatedly received from the participants of the controlled field test was the need for professional development on how to teach with standards and benchmarks. To address this issue, we recruited and trained 16 standards specialists, who in turn would provide the necessary professional development to the statewide field test participants.

Professional Development for Field Test Participants (July – August 2006)

The standards specialists and TAESP staff held 1-day professional development sessions for the field test participants in five cities to cover all eight GREAT regional areas: Austin (Central), El Paso (Far West and West), Houston (Coastal), Richardson (North and East), and San Antonio (South Central and South). The 1-day session was mandatory and a requirement to continue as a field test participant. Of the 55 teachers who were selected to become field test participants, seven did not attend the session, and thus could not continue as field test participants.

Statewide Field Test and Modified Benchmarks (August 2006 – April 2007)

Between August 2006 and February 2007, the TAESP staff implemented the statewide field test, collected various forms of data, and analyzed the data. The writing teams came together in the Bryan/College Station area during February 7-9, 2007 and modified the benchmarks based on the findings of the statewide field test. The resulting benchmarks were delivered to Texas LEARNS in April 2007, unveiled at the statewide conference *Texas...Reaching New Standards* in June 2007, and will be ready for statewide implementation in Fall 2007.

Recruitment of Additional Standards Specialists (January – February 2007)

To facilitate implementing the finalized standards and benchmarks throughout Texas, additional standards specialists were recruited from the pool of 44 field test participants who

successfully completed the statewide field test. Field test participants interested in becoming a standards specialist were asked to submit an application. Sixteen field test participants submitted applications and all were selected as standards specialists. Therefore, the new total number of standards specialists is now 32.

Compilation of Learning Activities (September 2006 – May 2007)

Since September 2006, the TAESP staff members have been compiling learning activities and this effort continued until May 2007. The two sources of the learning activities are: (1) the field test participants, who were asked to submit three learning activities as part of the statewide field test, and (2) the field of adult literacy education. The TAESP staff members will review each learning activity to ensure it is aligned with the finalized benchmarks. The resulting collection will be available online and in CD format, and will be distributed at the statewide conference *Texas...Reaching New Standards*.

Refresher Standards Specialist Training (June 2007)

The first and second groups of standards specialists came together for a 1-day refresher training on June 2 that was held at the Educational Service Center, Region 20 in San Antonio. In addition to the standards specialists, each GREAT center participated in this event by sending up to two trainers. The purpose of this 1-day training was to prepare the standards specialists for the statewide conference *Texas...Reaching New Standards* since they are leading or co-leading the professional development sessions during the conference. The workshop also provided an opportunity for the GREAT center trainers to preview the standards and benchmarks and to become familiar with the approaches to teaching using them.

Statewide Conference: [Texas...Reaching New Standards \(June 2007\)](#)

The finalized standards and benchmarks were unveiled and professional development on how to teach using the standards and benchmarks was provided at this statewide conference held at the Austin Convention Center in downtown Austin, Texas, June 24-26, 2007.

Overall Timeline

January 2004 – August 2004 (Phase I)

- Conducted a survey of adult education teachers and administrators with a working knowledge of TSCF.
- Presented the findings to a taskforce of adult education practitioners from across the state.

September 2004 – June 2005 (Phase II)

- Adopted standards.
- Formed writing teams.

July 2005 – June 2006 (Phase III)

- Developed benchmarks.
- Conducted controlled field test.

- Conducted external reviews.
- Collected and analyzed data from the controlled field test.
- Modified benchmarks.
- Aligned reading/writing benchmarks for ESL learner needs.

July 2006 – June 2007 (Phase IV)

- Selected statewide field test participants.
- Conducted standards specialist workshop.
- Conducted professional development for field test participants.
- Implemented statewide field test, analyzed data, and modified benchmarks.
- Recruited additional standards specialists.
- Compiled learning activities.
- Conducted refresher standards specialist training.
- Held statewide conference to unveil standards and benchmarks.

Synopsis of Standards-based Adult Education

This section provides a brief synopsis of standards-based adult literacy education by attending to these four questions: (1) what are the goals of standards-based adult education; (2) how do standards affect learners, teachers, and programs; (3) what are the implications for flexible, locally driven curriculum and instruction in standards-based system; and (4) what will happen to TSCF. Most of the content in this segment is from *A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards*, a document prepared jointly by the American Institutes for Research and U.S. Department of Education. Published in August 2005, this document is available online at:

http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/ReferenceFiles/Guide/Adult_Education_Process_Guide.pdf. {PDF document} [Adobe® Acrobat® Reader](#) From this point on, this document will be referred to as the *Process Guide*.

What are the goals of standards-based adult education?

According to the *Process Guide*, developing content standards “is a valuable process for (1) negotiating the range of knowledge and skills that learners should have, (2) measuring learners’ knowledge and skills, and (3) developing curriculum with a clearly articulated instructional approach and maintaining a strong delivery system” (from page three of the *Process Guide*). The guide lists the following points as goals for developing and implementing standards and they are included here verbatim (also from page three):

- Raise expectations for all learners and communities;
- Engage stakeholders in building a common set of goals and vocabulary;
- Improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment to consistently reflect best practices within the disciplines and within the field of adult learning;
- Enhance professional development to support instruction;
- Hold teachers accountable for providing appropriate and high quality education and for strengthening assessment practices;

- Articulate adult education goals and possibly align them with those from other departments, agencies, and organizations; and
- Raise awareness and visibility in the community and, thereby, increase commitment to the programs and the learners served.

How do standards affect learners, teachers, and programs?

Content standards describe “what learners should know and be able to do. Instructors use content standards to plan instruction, and learners use standards to set learning goals. Standards help instructors and learners develop plans that keep them focused and engaged. ... Standards-based education provides a structured approach for state adult education agencies and local programs to create a system that explicitly links standards, assessments, and instructional delivery” (from the *Process Guide*, page one).

What are the implications for flexible, locally driven curriculum and instruction in a standards-based system?

The adopted EFF standards and the associated TAES benchmarks do not prescribe a specific curriculum. Instead, instructors and programs are encouraged to develop lesson plans and learning activities using the TAES benchmarks as a reliable and valid guidepost.

1. Study Circle on Preparing Adult English Language Learners for the Workforce, November 2007, CAELA Guide for Adult ESL Trainers

2. Policies to Promote Adult Education and Post-Secondary Alignment, Strawn 2007, Center for Law and Social Policy. Prepared for the National Commission on Adult Literacy

3. Senate Bill 1, 79th Regular Session, May 2005

Credits

The Credential Information Tracking System (CredITS) is a web-based electronic computer application used by Texas LEARNS staff and regional administrators throughout Texas to organize and track the efforts of adult educators to complete course requirements toward credentials. The system supports Texas LEARNS in its efforts to standardize professional development and ensure program quality for educators specializing in adult education.

Each Adult Education teacher opts to pursue a credential and attend training provided by or approved by GREAT Center (GREAT Center) Administrators. Administrators or fiscal agents assign each participating staff member to the appropriate credential training model and monitor training progress. Texas LEARNS staff members coordinate the program statewide.

Distance Learning

The Texas LEARNS initiative for distance learning is a USDOE approved method of instruction delivery supported by the University of Michigan's [Project IDEAL](#), a national consortium of states supporting distance education delivery for adult learners. The USDE- OVAE, approved Texas's policy and reporting requirements for adult learners enrolled in distance education programs, effective July 1, 2007.

In anticipation of this decision, Texas LEARNS formed a distance education committee with statewide representation to develop state policy that would provide guidance for distance education providers and comply with federal policy.

In brief, state policy:

1. Defines distance education as a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period.
2. Distinguishes between direct contact hours and proxy hours.
 - Direct contact hours are hours where the time and identify of the students can be verified through a sign-in sheets or similar documentation (e.g.—face-to-face instruction or a Webinar).
 - Proxy hours are hours where exact time spent of various activities cannot be directly verified but are calculated, based on an approved distance education curriculum and a specific model for estimating time.
3. Requires that each student enrolled in a distance education curriculum have at least 12 direct contact hours to meet NRS requirements.
4. Requires use of an approved distance education curriculum.
5. Requires that assessments used for establishing baselines and post-tests be administered in person by an experienced proctor.
6. Requires teachers to follow the same assessment policy for distance education students as other students. Both direct contact hours and proxy hours can be counted toward assessment benchmarks.
7. Instructs instructors to set up distance classes separately in TEAMS so that both direct hours and proxy hours can be tracked.
8. Requires instructors and program administrators to complete DL 101, a course providing professional development for distance education, prior to implementation of distance classes.
9. Requires programs to input data for distance education students in TEAMS and also the Distance Student Tracker, a national database sponsored by Project IDEAL for distance education students.

DL 101, an online course providing professional development for teachers and administrators of distance education, is provided by the regional GREAT Centers.

Leadership Excellence Academies: *Connecting Local Adult Education Leaders to Ideas, Research, and Innovation*

The National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) and ProLiteracy America joined forces in 2006 to launch a professional development initiative for local program managers. The two organizations began piloting the first cluster in a national certification and professional development series for local program managers. Participants are engaged in a year-long professional development experience that focuses on topics related to program improvement.

The pilots included local adult education managers from Arizona, Maryland and New York. In 2007—2008, NAEPDC and ProLiteracy invited a select number of interested states, which included Texas to participate in the leadership excellence academies.

National Leadership Excellence Academy

- Joint initiative of National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) and ProLiteracy America (PLA)
- Two-year professional development series designed for local program administrators
- Leads to national certification in Program Improvement

Responsibilities

- Participate in three 6-hour workshops
- Participate in two 1-hour online courses
- Participate in three 1-hour Web casts
- Complete and submit interim activities, culminating learning project and evaluations

Time required

- Approximately 60 hours of time (4 hours a month) between September 2007 and December 2008

Benefits

- Apply learning gained during participation in the National Leadership Excellence Academy toward Texas Administrator Credential
- Become one of the first program administrators to earn national certification
- Receive new tools and strategies to strengthen your program's performance
- Receive training by experienced leaders in the adult education field
- Potential for future work as a training consultant
- Professional designation after your name (CMPI-Certified Manager of Program Improvement)

Leadership Academy Topics

- Using Self-Assessment to Identify Strengths and Needs
- Integrating Research into Program Practice: A Look at Teaching and Learning Research
- Using Data to Guide Program Management

Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative

Through the Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative, the Clearinghouse Project at TCALL and Texas LEARNs collaborates with Literacy Texas (formerly known as Texas Association of Adult Literacy Councils or TAALC) to support program and professional development for community-based literacy programs and volunteers not currently receiving federal funds for training. That support includes funding of expenses to attend conferences and other trainings such as Bridges to Practice. It has also included funding of ProLiteracy program accreditation fees for community-based literacy programs identified and recommended by Literacy Texas leadership.

Outcomes and Products

Some highlights include:

- Between July 2005 and June 2006, support was provided for participation of local volunteer program tutors or leadership to attend the following:
 - Bridges to Practice Training: 126 participants
 - TAALC Annual Conference: 87 participants
 - El Paso Adult Language and Literacy Conference: 5 participants
 - COABE National Conference: 39 participants
 - ProLiteracy National Conference: 18 participants
 - New Directors' Training: 18 participants
- Between July 2005 and June 2006, five local programs were supported to obtain ProLiteracy local program accreditation.
- Between July 2006 and June 2007, support was provided for participation of local volunteer program tutors or leadership to attend the following:
 - Bridges to Practice Training: 53 participants
 - TAALC Annual Conference: 120 participants
 - Training of Tutor Trainers: 43 participants
 - TALAE Conference: 20 participants
 - ProLiteracy National Conference: 10 participants
 - Adult Education Standards Conference: 8 participants
 - Literacy Ministries Conference at Baylor University: 8 participants
 - Other conferences or professional development events: 17 participants

This professional development training is an ongoing effort.

Math Initiative

The state Math initiative is a national GED Mathematics Training Institute in which the findings of an analysis conducted by the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) were revealed. The analysis pointed out the four most commonly-missed areas of the GED mathematics test—

- Geometry and Measurement
- Reading and Interpreting Graphs and Tables
- Application of Basic Math Principles to Calculations
- Problem Solving and Mathematical Reasoning

To target these four problem areas and raise scores on the GED mathematics test across our state, Texas LEARNS and staff from the Texas A&M University-Kingsville South Region GREAT Center, formed The Texas Adult Basic Education Statewide GED Mathematics Institute. It consisted of two three-day training sessions in which master trainers are given the tools necessary for improving math instruction and who, in turn, will be able to train their peers throughout the state of Texas.

The master trainers received materials that included sample questions from each problem area and an analysis of common errors that cause students to miss the mathematics questions. They are equipped to share with other GED math teachers how to identify the skill gaps, share specific ideas on how to incorporate those skills into classroom instruction, and also provide resources such as math websites and videos of lessons created by the master trainers and the Multimedia Department staff of Cy-Fair College in Cypress, Texas. This training is available for every Adult Education program statewide and can be requested through each region's GREAT Center.

Report Card Initiative

Texas LEARNS with assistance of the National Reporting System (NRS) and the US DOE has developed a comprehensive report card designed to showcase individual program performance and compare with state and national averages. Training is provided to programs to complete the report card with the goal to offer programs a chance to build public support for adult education, inform students and others about program quality, and highlight efforts in program accountability. Additionally, implementing the report card will benefit programs by providing a ready source of information about local and state performance over time, assist in addressing the challenges programs face, and inform programs of any needed improvements. The report card not only serves as a catalyst for program improvement but also a performance evaluation tool. A state-wide report has also been created to gauge state performance.

Shop Talks

Shop Talks, alluded to above under Adult Education Response to Senate Bill 1, Rider 82, is a series of informative releases from Texas LEARNS that has two purposes: to address issues, concerns, and questions raised by adult educators, employers, and local workforce development personnel; and to build awareness and expertise in meeting the educational needs of Texas' emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers. These publications have proven to be a popular additional resource for stakeholders.

Special Learning Needs Initiative

A considerable amount of adult learners are thought to have undiagnosed learning disabilities that may have hindered them from being successful in the K-12 learning environment. Realizing this, Texas LEARNS has instituted the Special Learning Needs Initiative.

The first year of the Special Learning Needs Training called "*Effective Instruction for All Adult Education Students Including Those with Special Learning Needs*" successfully produced 33 adult educators who are now called Special Learning Needs Resource Specialist. The training was taught by nationally recognized consultants in the field of learning disabilities, Neil Sturomski and Nancie Payne. The Special Learning Needs Training Institute provided 90 hours of intensive training which will enable the Resource Specialist to use their training in the classroom to practically help adult education students with disabilities and special learning needs along with the many barriers and challenges faced by the adult student population.

Year Two, which begins in September 2008, will include another 40 adult education teachers along with 8 to 10 Train-the-Trainers from Year One. These trainers will be given hands on instruction as they in turn train another 40 adult education teachers statewide during the program year at their local program. With the completion of Year Two, Texas Adult Education will have 120 Special Learning Needs Resource Specialists and 8 to 10 statewide trainers. Beginning in Year Three, the regional adult education professional development centers (GREAT Centers), will begin to provide this training to all adult education teachers statewide and continue this endeavor until all adult educators have been trained.

TCALL (Texas Center for Advancement of Literacy and Learning)

The mission of TCALL is to provide leadership and service to those meeting the literacy needs of adult learners and their families. As the state literacy resource center, TCALL provides knowledge, services, information, resources, and research opportunities for the fields of adult and family literacy. In addition, TCALL supports the fields' pursuit of excellence by anticipating and responding to their needs and national trends, and enable practitioners to connect with each other as well as with state leadership by providing a central communication hub.

Current Funded Projects Include:

- The Texas Adult and Family Literacy Clearinghouse
- Technical Assistance for The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas

Our Research Activities Include:

- Adult & Family Literacy Clearinghouse Impact Study
- Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning Needs Assessment
- Data Analysis for Rider 82 Workplace Literacy Curriculum Pilot

Previous Projects Have Included:

- Evaluation of the First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas
- Evaluation of Adult Education for the Homeless in Texas

- Directory of Adult Literacy Providers
- EL Civics Education in Conjunction with Brenham ISD
- Various Workplace Literacy projects
- Community Network Development Project
- Evaluation of Even Start Family Literacy Programs
- The Use of Research by Adult Literacy Practitioners
- Project Persist:
Evaluating Learner Persistence, A Participatory Action Research Study with Texas Adult Education Program Directors
- Reach Out and Read Assessment Project
- The Texas Adult Education Standards Project

Teacher Training Centers-Project GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas)

The Project GREAT Adult Education and Family Literacy Regional Centers of Excellence are Texas LEARNS' answer to the professional development needs of adult education and family literacy practitioners in Texas. Eight (8) Project GREAT Centers are funded as federal State Leadership activities by the Texas Education Agency and Texas LEARNS, one in each of eight service regions in the state. The centers are managed by the grantees in collaboration with the state office of Adult Education (Texas LEARNS), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the region's adult education directors. The purpose of this program is to provide the operation of professional development programs to improve the quality of instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Title II, Workforce Investment Act.

TEAMS (Texas Educating Adult Management System)

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), an online tool accessible through the Internet, is used to maintain information about adult education programs throughout the state. Data collected is used for Federal reporting requirements, as well as identifying successful programs or those that may improvement.

Texas Education Agency GED Unit and Adult Education Official GED Practice Test Pilot

Volunteering adult education programs and GED Testing Centers in Texas participated in a pilot project to administer the Official GED Practice Test to walk-in GED exam takers. The GED is open to persons beyond compulsory education, i.e., the same population that is served in adult education. Adult education enrollment is not required before taking the GED exam. Between 40,000 and 80,000 persons are administered an official GED test annually in Texas. The passing rate statewide is below the national average.

In Texas, adult education enrolls approximately 15% of the population who take the GED exam in adult secondary education classes with approximately 85-88% passing rate. The GED Official Practice Test is recognized by the American Council on Education's General Educational Development Testing Service™ as a valuable tool in predicting if a person will pass or fail the

GED exam. The Texas GED pilot established a requirement that every person who walks in to a GED testing center to take the GED be required to take the Official GED Practice Test and exhibit a passing score before being allowed to take the GED exam. Below is a synopsis of the pilot project. The pilot took place over three years in various parts of the state with volunteering adult education programs partnering with volunteering GED Test Centers.

1. The GED pilots are in response to the low statewide passing rate of adults on the GED.
2. States with considerably higher passing rates have implemented the practice of sending GED test takers to adult education programs for “pre-assessment.” This practice has shown dramatically higher passing rates.
3. Last year Texas administered more than 80,000 GED tests with less than a 50% passing rate.
4. TEA has asked Texas LEARNS and the GED Unit at TEA to work together to increase the passing rate of GED test takers.
5. TEA has proposed three-month pilots during which volunteering GED testing sites will make it mandatory for anyone who wants to take the GED to be pre-assessed by an adult education program.
6. Adult Education programs already administer pre-assessment of adult education students before sending students to take the test.
7. Adult Education programs may provide the following to potential test takers: orientation for adults interested in enrolling in adult education classes; all or part of an appropriate assessment that predicts how well the student will do if he/she take the GED; and assessment.
8. Adult Education programs also have developed local procedures for students who enroll because they have recently taken the GED and failed either all or part of the test. These procedures include assessment (pre-test), placement into a preparation class, and post assessment to determine if the student is ready to re-take the GED. (Note: GED testing sites require students to wait 6 months before they re-test or they must provide proof from a certified teacher or certified program that they are ready to re-take the test before the six month waiting period is over.) Thus the local procedure includes some type of signed documentation such as a form, a letter, or a memo that the student presents to the testing center to re-test before the six months is over. All adult education programs have some type of procedure in place to address this need.
9. Adult Education collects basic information to be turned into Texas LEARNS monthly.
10. The cost of this three month pilot is the responsibility of the volunteering adult education programs in the service areas closest to the volunteer GED testing sites.

Anticipated costs include staffing, testing materials, space, test security, and program administration. TEA has made these expenses a priority in redistributing de-obligated Adult Education funds.

Results

The results of the GED pilot project were positive, but the pilot project was not made mandatory statewide due to the lack of resources to fund the costs associated with testing non-enrolled GED test takers. Some locales have continued the requirement to take the Official GED Practice Test with good results.

Texas Family Literacy Resource Center

The Texas Family Literacy Resource Center (TFLRC) is a statewide initiative of Texas LEARNS. TFLRC has been funded through federal Even Start funds under the No Child Left behind Act by the Texas Education Agency. Texas LEARNS created TFLRC to provide a center for statewide professional development and technical assistance for family literacy projects. In addition to increasing the professional development opportunities available to family literacy programs, TFLRC provides guidance and technical assistance for family literacy projects on a day-to-day basis, works to increase coordination between Even Start programs and Adult Education Programs and coordinates research and policy for family literacy projects in Texas.

Not only are family literacy coordinators responsible for guiding staff as they offer quality instruction for both adults and children, but they also must assure program integration; coordination and collaboration with partner agencies and programs; and fiscal viability. Although it is not reasonable to think that Even Start Coordinators be experts in each component, it is ideal that they are well versed in the underlying principles of family literacy.

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) in its training guide, *Program Administration in Family Literacy: Even Start*, outlines the importance of developing an action plan for program management. NCFL poses the following questions to assist coordinators in developing this action plan. How will our program:

- address all 15 Program Elements as required by law?
- meet the federal expectations for intensity and duration, and integration of all four components?
- prepare for the next state evaluation and meet or exceed state performance indicators?
- build stronger collaborations with existing partners and reach out to new partners?
- find, recruit and prepare families for Even Start success?
- delegate responsibilities to best manage the program?

Another important aspect of program quality is staff development. Ongoing staff development will ensure that program staff is connected to the best research, resources and practice in order to meet student needs in the classroom. Professional development planning for programs is a vital key to managing a quality family literacy program.

Professional Development Needs Assessment

The Texas Family Literacy Resource Center believes that family literacy educators should articulate *their own* needs for professional development as opposed to having others assume they can articulate for them. Family literacy educators participating in professional development *are* adult learners, and adult learning theory tells us that adults are more involved in learning when they have a say in what and how they will learn (Lytle, Belzer & Reumann, 1993; Vella, 1994; Wrigley & Guth, 1992).

In order to provide a successful environment for professional growth and development, teachers should be involved in designing and implementing professional development experiences. In order to begin to gather the data to know what those experiences should look like, the Texas Family Literacy Resource Center created the *Texas Family Literacy*

Professional Development Needs Assessment.

The needs assessment contained sections for each family literacy component: adult education, parent education, early childhood education, interactive literacy activities, and home visits. In addition, the needs assessment contains sections for program administrators and also contains a technology section for all family literacy educators.

The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas

The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas grant is a program of the Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy. Since 1996, the Initiative has awarded grants totaling over \$3 million to 129 family literacy programs around the state. Eligible applicants include schools, community colleges, universities, charter schools, prison programs, Head Start and Even Start programs, community-based organizations, and libraries. The money for this Initiative is raised at the Barbara Bush Foundation's annual fundraisers, A Celebration of Reading, held in Houston and Dallas.

The grants are awarded to family literacy programs that focus on reading instruction for both parents, and their children, and provide structured time for parents and children to read and learn together. It is often said that the home is the child's first school, the parent is the child's first teacher, and reading is the child's first subject.

Texas LEARNS and the Texas Family Literacy Resource Center support the efforts of the First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative with professional development.

TEA-Texas Department of Criminal Justice Partnership Initiative and Agency Memorandum of Understanding

The TEA and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) have renewed a memorandum of understanding regarding services provided by adult education to recent state prison parolees. Language from the MOU includes:

Statement of services to be performed:

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and the Texas Education Agency shall set forth the respective responsibilities of both agencies in implementing a continuing education program to increase the literacy of releasees.

The objective of this program is to offer releasees choices and opportunities, within the realm of educational services to remain outside of prison and achieve maximum integration in the community. The following are guiding principals to accomplish the objectives of this MOU:

- the releasee will achieve more success outside of prison if a support system is in place to promote educational growth;
- the releasee may be less likely to become a repeat offender if he/she pursues an education; and
- the releasee must be encouraged to recognize the need for increasing his/her educational level to remain in the free world and learn to function as a productive citizen.

Participation:

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice will:

- establish a continuing education system to increase literacy for releasees in the District Resource Centers;
- establish a system whereby TDCJ will inform adult education cooperatives of the process and requirements for continued education of releasees;
- provide adult education cooperatives with assessment and educational profile information that will facilitate student placement in appropriate programs;
- coordinate with adult education cooperatives in implementing a system for identification of student needs and barriers, student referral, outreach activities and releasee's compliance with educational requirements;
- identify resources that assist adult education cooperatives in expanding services for releasees; and
- participate in training necessary to develop the capacity at the local level to access and interact effectively with adult education service providers.

The Texas Education Agency will:

- coordinate with the TDCJ to inform local parole offices of services available through the adult education cooperative system in which local school districts, junior colleges, and education service centers provide instructional programs throughout the state;
- assist TDCJ in identifying barriers to provide adult education services to released offender;

- assist local adult education programs in developing capacity to serve the released offender population;
- coordinate with TDCJ in establishing a referral process between local parole offices and adult education cooperatives whereby releasees will be referred to adult education programs;
- assist adult education cooperatives in providing services to releasees in adult education programs on a first-come, first-served basis and to the extent the funds and classroom space are available;
- assist local education adult education cooperatives in communicating and coordinating with local parole offices on prospective students awaiting referral to education programs, availability of services, identification of financial resources, and other educational programs available for released offenders;
- coordinate with the TDCJ in the development of proof program objectives and collecting data to establish performance standards for released offenders;
- coordinate with TDCJ in providing training to assist local parole officers with the coordination of adult education services to released offenders; and
- monitor program quality and compliance of local adult education programs serving released offenders.

This partnership and MOU effective September 1, 2007 is a renewed effort from the original partnership established in 1995. The MOU will undergo review before August 31, 2011. In 2006-2007, 701 parolees enrolled in adult education classes statewide.

TESPIRS (Texas Even Start Program Reporting Information System)

The Texas Even Start Program Information Reporting System (TESPIRS) supports the reporting requirements of the Texas Learns Even Start program. Local providers of Even Start services complete online forms to provide quarterly and annual reports. The state coordinator uses these reports to prepare state and federal reports required by the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act under No Child Left behind, and the Legislative Budget Board. Local providers of Even Start services can use the reports feature of TESPIRS as a tool for program improvement. Texas LEARNS administers the application and maintains the application in collaboration with TEA.

WorkforceLitTex Listserv

This TEA/Texas LEARNS and TCALL-sponsored discussion list was developed in collaboration with Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The purposes of this list are:

- To facilitate local collaborative planning and partnerships between ABE directors and the workforce development community

- To exchange best practices and to foster and encourage collaborative efforts within the Tri-Agency Partnership

The target audience of this email discussion list includes interested parties in the adult education, workforce development and higher education communities, employers and respective staff from each. The original intention of the list serve was to allow adult educators and local workforce development board staff to learn and understand each other's professional language and to describe best practices in each context.

Conclusion

Describing the best practices in the field of adult education is challenging due to the volume of information that has surfaced since the 1960's when adult education was first signed into federal legislation. As mentioned in the introduction, veterans of adult education continue to measure the success of an intervention and label it as a best practice by the old *students vote with their feet* mentality. Deducing what constitutes a "best practice" is not easily discernable. Different variables that vary from state to state and program to program, including programs size, lack of continuity of state laws, rules, and policy, populations targeted and served, drastically varying state funding levels, public attitudes and perception, community involvement, demographic trends and shifts, and a multitude of other variables all make it difficult to summarize what works best for adult education programs and adult learners. What has proven to be effective in one state or program can vary significantly to another.

What can be said is that consistent collaboration among government officials, businesspersons and Corporate America, churches, educators, and community organizations is the key to success and appears to be the key to creating and maintaining a best practice in adult education. In addition, qualified staff, leadership, respective agencies' support, and innovative thinking dedicated to helping the less advantaged, illiterate and academically struggling adults are all crucial. In addition, qualified instructors and counselors are imperative to get promising results. Texas maintains a competitive edge in the field of adult education, not through the limited financial resources and the minimal adult learners served as a result, but through proven partnerships striving to improve the educational level of Texas citizens and the citizens of our nation.

Endnotes

NOTE: Endnotes were not included in the report provided by Texas LEARNS

APPENDIX E

Annual Cost of Adult Basic Education Enrollments

Annual Cost under different ABE enrollment and investment scenarios

	Number of Adult Education Students Enrolled Under Different Scenarios				
	Most Current (LBB)	2006-2007 plus Closing GAP Gain	DOE Target Likely to Enroll	Eligible Likely to Enroll	Needed for Competiveness
State Investment per Student	133,000 ^z	202,365	458,508	675,000	1,333,645 ^x
Current \$131 ^y	17M	26M	60M	88M	174M
Move-up \$453	60M	91M	207M	305M	604M
U.S.Average \$629 ^y	83M	127M	288M	424M	838M
1-UP \$1,500	199M	303M	687M	1.0B	2.0B
Blended \$2,500	332M	505M	1.1B	1.6B	3.3B
Idea \$6,000	798M	1.2B	2.7B	4.0B	8.0B

^x Jones and Kelly, (2007).

^yState-Administered Adult Education Program Fiscal Year 2004 Expenditures (July 1, 2004 –September 30, 2006), U.S. Department of Education, OVAE, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, August 2007.

^z Legislative Budget Board (staff), 2007.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

APPENDIX F

Estimation of Adult Basic Education Return on Investment

ROI under different ABE enrollment and
assuming all ABE students transition to higher education

Estimates assume a \$5 to \$1 Return on Investment (ROI \$5:1)		Number ABE Students Enrolled Under Different Scenarios				
		Most Current	2006-2007 plus Closing Gap Gain	Dept of Ed Target, Likely to Enroll	Eligible, Likely to Enroll	Needed for Competiveness
		133,000 ^z	202,365	458,508	675,000	1,333,645 ^x
Non-Federal Investment Per Student	Current \$131 ^y	87M	132M	300M	442M	873M
	Move – up \$453	301M	458M	1.0B	1.5B	3.0B
	U.S. Average \$629 ^y	418M	636M	1.4B	2.1B	4.1B
	1-UP \$1,500	997M	1.5B	3.4B	5.0B	10B
	Blended \$2,500	1.6B	2.5B	5.7B	8.4B	16B
	Idea \$6,000	3.9B	6.0B	13B	20B	40B

^x Jones and Kelly, (2007).

^yState-Administered Adult Education Program Fiscal Year 2004 Expenditures (July 1, 2004 –September 30, 2006), U.S. Department of Education, OVAE, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, August 2007.

^z Legislative Budget Board (staff), 2007.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REFERENCES

- Austin Community College, Office of Institutional Effectiveness (ACC, OIE) (January 28, 2003). "Effectiveness Update: Adult Education Effectiveness Measures Report for Academic Year 2002-2003." Retrieved August 2, 2008, from Austin Community College.
<<http://www.austincc.edu/oiepub/pubs/effectiveness/abe%2002-03.pdf>>
- Baum, W., & Payea, K. (Revised 2005). "Education Pays 2004: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society." Trends in Higher Education Series. Retrieved August, 2008, from the College Board.
<http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/press/cost04/EducationPays2004.pdf>
- Biswas, R.R., Choitz, V. & Prince, H. (2008). "Pushing the Envelope: State Policy Innovations in Financing Postsecondary Education for Workers Who Study" Washington, DC: Jobs for the Future and the National Council for Workforce Education. Retrieved September 3, 2008 from <http://www.jff.org/Documents/BTPushingEnvelope.pdf>
- Capital IDEA (2008 July). Phone conversations with director, data specialist, and community contacts of Austin Capital IDEAL.
- Deviney, F, & Cavazos, L. (May 16, 2006). "The High Cost of Dropping Out: How Many, How Come? How Much?" A Texas KIDS COUNT Special Report. Retrieved July 2008, from the Center for Public Policy Priorities. <[http://www.cppp.org/files/10/TKC_Report\(S\)%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.cppp.org/files/10/TKC_Report(S)%20-%20FINAL.pdf)>
- Davis, H., Noland, B., & Kelly, P. (February 2006). "ENI Educational Needs Index, Texas Educational Needs Index State Report." Lumina Foundation for Education. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from <<http://www.educationalneedsindex.com/admin/pdfs/TX.pdf>>
- Florida Department of Education (2002). Administrator's Guide to Florida's School Counseling and Guidance Framework (Comprehensive Program). Retrieved July 30, 2008, from <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/pdf/admin_guidance.pdf>
- Florida Department of Education (2004-2005). "Adult Education At a Glance." Retrieved July 30, 2008, from <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/pdf/booklet_at_a_Glance05.pdf>
- Florida Department of Education (2000). "Florida's Program Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy 2000-2008." Retrieved July 30, 2008, from <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/plan_adult.asp>
- Friedman, T. L. (2007). *The World Is Flat*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Picador--Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. 660 pp.
- Gottlob, B. (2007). "The High Cost of Failing to Reform Public Education in Texas." Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation, the National Center for Policy Analysis, and the Hispanic Council

for Reform and Educational Options. Retrieved July 30, 2008, from
<http://www.justicebychoice.org/pdf/high_cost_study.pdf>

Governor's Competitiveness Council (July 2008). "Council's Report to the Governor." Retrieved September 25, 2008, from
http://governor.state.tx.us/files/gcc/Councils_Report_to_the_Governor.pdf

Green, A. (2008). "Facing the Facts: A Literacy Forecast for Texas." Texas Workforce Commission. Retrieved July 2008, from
<http://www.texasworkforce.org/svcs/adultlit/facing_facts.pdf>

Green, A. (1998). "Project-Based Learning and the GED." Retrieved July 29, 2008, from the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL).
<<http://www.ncsallnet/?od=408>>

Gugliemino, L.M. (2002). "GED Teacher's Handbook of Lesson Plans." Retrieved July 30, 2008, from <<http://www.floridatechnet.org/GED/lessonplans/Lessons.htm>>

Hill, K., Hoffman, D., & Rex, T. (2005). "The Value of Higher Education, Individual and Societal Benefits (with Special Consideration for the State of Arizona)." Arizona State University, School of Business Productivity and Prosperity Project (P3).

Institute for Higher Education Policy (1998). "Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College." Washington, D.C.: The New Millennium Project on Higher Education Costs, Pricing, and Productivity.

Institute for Higher Education Policy. (2005). "The Investment Payoff: A 50-State Analysis of the Public and Private Benefits of Higher Education." Washington, D.C.: Lumina Foundation.

Jones, D., & Kelly, P. (2007). "Mounting Pressures Facing the U.S. Workforce and the Increasing Need for Adult Education and Literacy." National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) for the National Commission on Adult Literacy.

Khatiwada, I., McLaughlin, J., Sum, A., & Palma, S. (December 14, 2007). "The Fiscal Consequences of Adult Educational Attainment." Boston, MA: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University for National Commission on Adult Literacy.

Kirsch, I., Braun, H. & Yamamoto, K. (2007). "America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future." Educational Testing Service. Retrieved July 2008, from
<http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf>

Kristin, S. (2005). "Effective High School Reform: Research and Policy That Works." National Council of State Legislators: Washington, DC. Retrieved on August 23, 2008, from
<<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/EffectiveHSReform>>

Legislative Budget Board Staff (January 2007). "Align Adult Basic and Postsecondary Education to Meet State Goals in the Texas Workforce Development System." Texas State Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Selected Issues and Recommendations (Submitted to the 80th Texas Legislature). Retrieved from [http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Performance%20Reporting/TX Govt Effective Efficiency Report 80th_0107.pdf#Page398](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Performance%20Reporting/TX_Govt_Effective_Efficiency_Report_80th_0107.pdf#Page398)

Levesque, K., Laird, J., Hensley, E., Choy, S.P., & Cataldi, E.F. (2008). "Career and Technical Education in the United States: 1990-2005." (NCES 2008-035). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences.

Lumina Foundation for Education (February 2006). "Educational Needs Index, State Report, Texas." Retrieved July 28, 2008, from <http://www.educationalneedsindex.com/admin/pdfs/TX.pdf>

Lynch, L.M., & Black, S.E. (1995). "Beyond the Incidence of Training: Evidence from a National Employers' Survey, Working Paper No. 5231." Appendix D. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from <http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/persisting>

"Migration: A Turning Tide," *The Economist*, June 26, 2008. Retrieved July 2008, from http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11614062

MPR Associates, Inc. (2007). "Adult Basic Education to Community College Transitions Symposium, Proceedings Report. Berkley and Washington: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

Murdock, S.H. (May 10, 2004). "Population Change in Texas, Implications for Human, Socioeconomic and Natural Resources in the 21st Century." A presentation. Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research, College of Business, University of Texas at San Antonio.

Murnane, R.J., Tyler, J.H., & Willett, J.B. (1997). *Estimating the Impact of the GED on the Earnings of Young Dropouts Using a Series of Natural Experiments*. NBER Working Papers, National Bureau of Economic Research.

National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEC) (2008). "State Profiles: Texas and Washington." Retrieved July 2008, from State CTE Profiles at http://www.careertech.org/state_provile/show/Washington

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2007). "Report on Higher Education Inequality. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from <http://higheredinfo.org/raceethnicity?#>

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2007). "As America Becomes More Diverse: The Impact of State Higher Education Inequality—Texas State Profile." Retrieved July 2008, from the NCHEMS Information Center for State Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis at http://higheredinfo.org/raceethnicity/Texas_State_Profile.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics. Various Statistics. U.S. Department of Education and Institute of Education Sciences. Washington, D.C. Retrieved July 2008, from <http://nces.ed.gov/>

National Commission on Adult Literacy (2008). Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce. Washington, DC: National Commission on Literacy. Retrieved September 3, 2008 from <http://www.nationalcommissiononadulthoodliteracy.org/ReachHigherAmerica/ReachHigher.pdf>

National Commission on Adult Literacy (2007). "Dare To Dream: A Collection of Papers from a Resource Group of 102 Education and Literacy Professionals." Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy.

National Workplace Literacy Program (1998). "Exemplary Products Produced by National Workplace Literacy Program Demonstration Projects, 1995-1998." Retrieved July 25, 2008, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/eericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b?80/17/4c/11.pdf

Niskanen, William A. (1996). "Welfare and the Culture of Poverty." The Cato Journal, 16(1). Retrieved July 30, 2008 from <http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj16n1-1.html>

Perdue, D. (June 2008). "Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce." National Commission on Adult Literacy (NACL). Retrieved July 2008, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-perdue/reach-higher-america-over_b_111640.html

Portland Community College (January 27, 2007). "PCC's Gateway to College Rewarded with Additional \$3 Million from Gates Foundation". Retrieved on September 3, 2008 from <http://www.pcc.edu/news/NewsRelease.cfm?BrowseBy=display&NewsNo=07-4jh>

Project IDEAL Support Center (2005). "Working Paper No. 8, Exploring Distance Education Curricula for Adult Learners." Retrieved July 20, 2008, from Improving Distance Education for Adult Learners (IDEAL): <http://www.projectideal.org/pdf/WorkingPapers/WP8ExploringDistanceCurricula2005.pdf>

Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs (2002). Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

TANF Warrant History, Texas (January through May 2008). "Texas TANF and Food Stamps Enrollment Statistics. TANF Cases and Recipients for the Benefit Month." Retrieved August, 5, 2008 from Texas Health and Human Services Commission:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/TANF_FS.asp>

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (2002). "Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs." Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Telephone calls and/or email contacts:

R. Brandt, (personal communication, July 2, 2008)

T. Bestor, (personal communication, July 3, 2008)

R. Whitfield, (personal communication, July 6, 2008)

D. Jones, (personal communication, July 7, 2008)

J.R. Taylor, (personal communication, July 7, 2008)

J. Foster, (personal communication, July 9, 2008)

D. Duthie, (personal communication, July 13, 2008)

J. Stevens, (personal communication, July 14, 2008)

D. Pottmeyer, (personal communication, July 14, 2008)

S. Newcomb, (personal communication, July 22, 2008)

C.M. Keller, (personal communication, July 29, 2008)

Texas Center for Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) (May, 2008). "Co-op" map of Fiscal Agents of Adult Education." Retrieved August 2008 from <<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/provider/aepmap/providermap.htm>>

Texas Education Agency (no date). "TEAMS Quick Reference Document." Retrieved August 2008, from Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS): <<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/adult.aces.html>>

Texas Education Agency. (2005). "TEAMS Tutorial." Retrieved August 2, 2008 from Adult Management Information Systems: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/adult/TEAMS_Tutorials.html>

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (May 7, 2003). "Cost/Benefit Analysis of Closing the Gaps, Final Report." Division of Finance, Campus Planning, and Research. Austin, TX.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) "Closing the Gaps, The Texas Higher Education Plan." The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Austin, TX.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (April 2008). "RFP Adult Basic Education State Report." Austin, TX.

Texas LEARNS (July 7, 2008). "Adult Education Responds to Workforce Needs." Retrieved August 2008, from <<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/docs/aerespondworkfrc.html>>

Texas LEARNS (July 7, 2008). "State Policy Document for Distance Education." Retrieved July 30, 2008, from Distance Learning Initiative: <<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/initiatives/distlearn.html#list>>

Texas LEARNS (June 2008). "3 Year 50 States Comparison" Adult Education Data. Houston, TX. Texas LEARNS.

Texas Workforce Commission (September 9, 2008). "Adult Technology Training Projects." Austin, TX.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (October 2006). "Are High Schools Failing Their Students? Strengthening Academic Rigor in High School Curriculum." Retrieved August 2008 from

http://www.centerforcsri.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=386&Itemid=5

The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning. (2008). "Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data." Retrieved August 2008, from <http://www.cael.org/pdf/publication_pdf/State_Indicators_Monograph.pdf>

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2006). "Measuring up 2006 The State Report Card on Higher Education—Texas." Retrieved on July 29, 2008 from The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. <<http://measuringup.highereducation.org/reports/stateprofilenet.cfm?myyear=2006&state>Name=Texas>>

The Perryman Group (March 2007). "A Tale of Two States – And One Million Jobs! An Analysis of the Economic Benefits of Achieving the Future Goals of the 'Closing the Gap' Initiative of The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board." Waco, TX. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Support of the Commission for a College Ready Texas. <<http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1345.PDF>>

U.S. Census Bureau

American Fact Finder

1990 Census Survey, Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) and Summary Tape File 3 (STF3)

2000 Census Survey, Summary Tape File 1 (SF 1) and Summary Tape File 3 (SF-3)

<<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet>>

2001-2006 American Community Survey,

<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuld=datasets_1&_lang=en&_ts=>

U.S. Census and American Community Survey Methodology,
<<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/tp67.pdf>>

U.S. Census Bureau. Annual Population Estimates 2000 to 2007. Retrieved August 2, 2008 from
<<http://www.census.gov/popest/states/NST-ann-est.html>>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (USED, OVAE). (July 2008). *Bridges to Opportunity Federal Adult Education Programs for the 21st Century, Report to the President on Executive Order 13445*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved July 2008 from
<<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/eo13445.pdf>>

U.S. Department of Education (2008). "Condition of Education 2008, Section 5: Contexts of Postsecondary Education." Retrieved August 2, 2008 from National Center of Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008031_5.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education (2007). "The Condition of Education 2007. Participation in Adult Education, Indicator 10 (NCES 2007-064)." Retrieved August 2, 2008 from National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.edu.gov/programs/coe/2007/pdf/10_2007.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education (June 2007). "Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education." Retrieved August 2, 2008, from National Reporting System:
<<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/ImplementationGuidelines.pdf>>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (USED, OVAE). (2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07). "National Reporting System for Adult Education." Retrieved August 2, 2008, from National Reporting System: <<http://www.nrsweb.org>>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (USED, OVAE). (2008). "National Reporting System for Adult Education." Retrieved August 2, 2008, from National Reporting System: <<http://www.nrsweb.org>>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (USED, OVAE) Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL). "Profiles of the Adult Education Target Population" Prepared by RTI International. Information from the 2000 Census, Revised – December 2005. Retrieved from <<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/census1.pdf>>

Webster, B.H., & Alemayehu, B. (2007). "Income, Earnings, and Poverty Data from the 2006 American Community Survey." U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Report, ACS-08. Washington. Retrieved from: <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-08.pdf>>

Zafft, C., Kallenbach, S., & Spohn, J. (2006). "Transitioning Adults to College: Adult Basic Education Program Models." Cambridge: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), World Education, Inc., Harvard Graduate School of Education.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Website:
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

Division for P-16 Initiatives

PO Box 12788
Austin, Texas 78752

Judy Loredo, Ph.D.
Assistant Commissioner

Evelyn Levsky Hiatt
Deputy Assistant Commissioner

For More Information:

College Readiness Initiatives

Lynette Heckmann
Director

Lynette.Heckmann@thecb.state.tx.us

