

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) Program Director Council
Minutes
December 4, 2009

Members Present: Jim Berger, Judith Branham, Pat Burchell, Jennifer Griffith, Eva Henderson, Susan Jackson, Jennifer Leedy, Betty Myrick, Kristin Tiedeman, Paula Trickett, Darlene Urban, and Diana Waddle.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Reecie Stagnolia welcomed members. Since there were several new members, introductions were made. He noted the group meets quarterly and typically the agenda will focus on one or two topical areas so that adequate time can be devoted to them. He reviewed the agenda, encouraged open dialogue and reiterated the important role program directors play at the local level. He noted that his recent involvement in a leadership institute for state adult education directors underscored the importance for KYAE to help equip program directors with the skills needed to lead programs.

Technology

Members viewed the *Did You Know 3.0* video by Karl Fisch and Scott McLeod which was created for the Future of Adult Education in the New Digital World Summit.

Barry Burkett, Franklin County Adult Education, joined the group remotely to make a presentation regarding Franklin County's recommendations for incorporating technology into the classroom and student's life in order to prepare students for the 21st century.

KYAE sought feedback on three primary questions. The questions posed by KYAE staff and the top responses are listed below.

1. What types of training should be offered by KYAE to prepare educators to integrate technology into the ABE/ASE framework?
 - It was suggested to embed technology into professional development institutes to model use in instruction. It was also suggested that KYAE consider holding a separate institute devoted to technology.
 - Technology demonstrations provide great exposure, but program staff need hands-on opportunities and training on how and when to use it. In addition, staff need to be able to explain to students why it should be used for it to be meaningful and beneficial.
 - New technology cannot be imposed on instructors. Instructors must be exposed to it and excited by it for technology use to be effective.

2. What barriers exist at the local level that makes it more challenging to utilize technology with students?
 - Funding is inadequate to continually upgrade equipment.
 - Some staff are intimidated by new technology and are reluctant to use it.
 - There is a lack of planning time for instructors to prepare lessons with technology embedded.
 - Some staff do not know how to effectively embed technology into instruction.

3. How can emerging and existing technology options be utilized to better prepare students for 21st century life and work?
 - Although technology is constantly changing, students and staff need to be exposed to it to learn basic transferrable skills—such as how to open, run and close programs, how to locate help screens/tutorials, and how to perform a search on the Internet. Although a certain program or application may become obsolete, the basic skills learned will help staff and students successfully navigate newer forms of technology.
 - Students need to gain confidence in use of technology and increase skills.
 - Students need to know technology vocabulary/jargon in order to succeed in college and the workplace. Many entities have online application processes.
 - There is a need to promote more communication via technology from staff to students, e.g., newsletters, Facebook.

Reecie Stagnolia indicated KYAE would review information captured during break-out sessions and will work to integrate technology into the agency's professional development efforts.

In regards to the lack of planning time identified as a barrier to technology usage, Mr. Stagnolia pointed out that in a managed program model, planning time can be built into the schedule.

KYAE continues to look at the managed program pilot numbers. When comparing Kentucky pilot county performance from last year to this year, enrollment has almost doubled. This contradicts national trends which report an enrollment decline when moving from an open-entry model to a managed program model. Members agreed enrollment can be impacted by more than one variable such as the recent economic downturn.

Mr. Stagnolia reminded members of the state's declining GED® numbers. Members again suggested that students are coming to local centers at lower functional levels; thus, it is taking more time for them to reach goals.

Diana Waddle mentioned a troubling local statistic—a GED pass rate of 50 percent—which made her question the value of the 50 hours of instruction between pre- and post-testing. B.J. Helton reminded members that the TABE is not an accurate measure of GED success.

Members asked if KYAE had given any thought to changing to another assessment for Kentucky, such as GAIN. Mr. Stagnolia indicated the Office of Vocational and Adult Education would soon be releasing an updated list of approved assessments. It is anticipated Wonderlic's GAIN assessment would be on it. The GAIN assessment is progressive in nature; as the student works through the assessment, it gets progressively harder. Unlike the TABE, GAIN has no locator and does not have multiple forms.

Kristin Tiedeman noted that some states use GAIN as their COMPASS standard; therefore, it might be a better measure of effective transitioning to postsecondary education.

Members were reminded that assessment tests are intended for different uses. TABE gives a grade-level equivalent. COMPASS is used to assess success in college. .

Mr. Stagnolia advised members that KYAE has established an internal work group to review TABE, GAIN, CASAS and other assessment options. He noted assessment vendors are beginning to recognize the need to develop instructional materials keyed to assessments and more curriculum vendors are beginning to recognize the need to align curriculum to assessments.

Other Business

Reecie Stagnolia reviewed implementation of KYAE's new Professional Development (PD) Model and asked for feedback. He noted KYAE is challenging local staff with the PD model requirements, and we won't apologize for the rigor of it, but we want to be reasonable about it as well.

There was discussion regarding PD institutes located closest to a program being filled too quickly. If staff are required to travel to other regions to participate, it increases travel costs for local programs and ultimately for KYAE.

When the institutes were initially planned, KYAE used a matrix based upon PD survey results; however, it's been discovered that not everyone answered the questionnaire. KYAE has been working with PD contractors to add additional institute dates to address these issues and is working to get next year's PD calendar out earlier to facilitate local planning.

Kristin Tiedeman likes the intensity of the institutes and reported seeing changes implemented in the program. She expressed concern regarding lack of flexibility for ESL instructors/practitioners and asked KYAE to consider pre-approved alternative options if the PD offerings weren't relevant.

Darlene Urban gave high marks to the algebra institute and reported being impressed with the quality of instructors and materials used. In addition, the fact the institute instructor is a former local adult education instructor was valued, because the instructor knows how to make the course content relevant to adult educator needs.

It was pointed out that the developmental education faculty teaching the reading and writing institutes are also former local adult education instructors.

KYAE has already begun meeting with PD contractors to review feedback received at recent regional meetings and from other sources and to develop next year's PD offerings and calendar.

The lack of a state-wide adult education conference was mentioned, since conferences provide local adult education staff with networking opportunities and exposure to what others are doing. Mr. Stagnolia noted KYAE is holding a program director leadership institute in the spring which will give program directors a state-level networking opportunity. In addition, KYAE is hosting regional meetings on a more frequent basis to provide local staff with networking opportunities while being mindful of reducing travel expenses. The regional meeting format is more intimate and much less expensive than a state conference format.

Reecie Stagnolia noted that KYAE has been very fortunate that the Governor and state budget leaders recognize the critical importance of adult education and the impact we can have on adult college and career readiness and have thus exempted KYAE from some of the recent budget cuts. While that is good news, programs need to remember that KYAE did receive earlier budget cuts. While KYAE has been able to fill the gap of previous cuts using carry-forward funds and other one-time funding sources, once those one-time sources are gone, local budgets will drop down to the reduced base funding level, so we need to continue to focus energy on creating more efficiencies.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Members were asked to sign expense vouchers and the meeting adjourned.