

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) Program Director Council
Minutes
December 12, 2008

Members Present: Judith Branham, Pike County; Pat Burchell, Clay County; Joan Flanery, Boyd County; Susan Jackson, WKEC; Rodney Johnson, Russell County; Karen McLeod, Marshall County; Jennifer Napier, Rockcastle County; Peg Russell, Kenton County; Julie Scoskie, Kentucky Association for Adult and Continuing Education; and Darlene Urban, Anderson County.

Guests Present: Missy Brownson, Daviess County, and Cris Crowley, Hopkins and Muhlenberg Counties.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Reecie Stagnolia welcomed members. He noted we have several new members and reported on the morning's orientation session. Attendee introductions were made.

Members were provided with notebooks containing bylaws and other resource materials. Mr. Stagnolia reviewed changes to the bylaws. The group name is being changed to the KYAE Program Director Council to more accurately describe the group's role in advising, counseling, providing external insight and discussing issues related to adult education with KYAE staff. He reiterated the importance of this group's role as KYAE has rolled out new initiatives, most recently the Performance and Accountability model.

He noted previous bylaws limited reimbursable travel expenses to mileage; however, the bylaws now give KYAE the flexibility to look at an individual member's required travel time and allow reimbursement of other travel expenses. He noted KYAE gave members who had more than a two-hour drive the opportunity to stay overnight on December 11.

He introduced guests, Missy Brownson, representing Owensboro Community and Technical College's SkillTrain adult education program, and former Program Director Council member, Cris Crowley, representing Madisonville Community College's ACE2 programs. These programs have active transitions programs, and since the main focus of today's meeting is transitions, they were invited to share their programs' experiences.

Transitioning adult education students to postsecondary education and training is increasingly gaining attention at both the state and national level. Recently the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education held a topical forum on transitions. Discussion included barriers, state policies that facilitate or inhibit transitions, financial issues and the need for a transitions advisor to help navigate the financial aid and application processes.

While we recognize that many of our students' end goal is to earn a GED® diploma; we need to equip program staff with the information, tools and strategies to aid both those students going onto postsecondary education and also to be able to counsel those who have not yet identified postsecondary education and training as a goal on the positive economic and quality of life impacts of postsecondary education.

He reminded members the Council on Postsecondary Education has set both GED graduate and transitions goals for KYAE. The 2020 goal is to raise the number of GED graduates to 15,000 per year and to increase the college-going rate of GED graduates to 36 percent.

A few years ago KYAE funded several transitions pilot projects, with the hope that the pilots could be sustained locally and result in best practices and replicable models; however, results were not always measurable, not all projects were replicable and KYAE did not do a very good job of sharing the pilot information and results.

Today's meeting will focus on how we can ramp-up our transitions efforts and re-engage providers not just to meet our GED graduate and transitions goals, but because we know it is important for our students.

GED® Brief

Marilyn Lyons distributed Research Brief No. 3, GED® Profile for Fiscal Year 2006-07 and 2007-08. The updated Research Brief will be posted on the KYAE Web site.

Kentucky GED Graduates Transitioning to Postsecondary Education

Marilyn Lyons distributed Research Brief No. 4, GED Graduates Transitioning to Postsecondary Education. The Research Brief will be posted on the KYAE Web site. Ms. Lyons reviewed highlights of data for the following categories:

- GED graduates by fiscal year
- college enrollment status (full-time versus part-time)
- gender
- age
- gender and college enrollment status
- age and enrollment status
- mean GED Tests subject scores by fiscal year
- mean GED scores by gender and fiscal year
- mean GED scores by enrollment status
- mean GED scores by age
- mean GED scores by fiscal year and KYAE instruction versus no KYAE instruction

Ms. Lyons shared highlights of her research of other state's transitions efforts.

She concluded there are four basic models:

- The Advising Model – raise GED graduates awareness of postsecondary opportunities
- GED-Plus Model – preparation beyond the GED diploma
- Career Pathway Model – contextualized learning
- College Prep Model – tier system

She likes components of all models and thinks KYAE programs could benefit from a combined approach.

Ms. Lyons highlighted transitions activities in a few states:

- Maine – transitions language in state statute – new state funding to adult education providers to focus on transitions efforts
- Massachusetts – developed student preparation handbooks
- Ohio – developed toolkit
- Pennsylvania – Career Gateway
- Texas – state was ordered to do a transitions study
- Florida – GED-PLUS college preparation instruction

B.J. Helton pointed out there is a difference between the Army GED Plus Enrichment Program which is a fast-track GED program to help non-high school graduates obtain a GED diploma for enlistment purposes and the Florida GED PLUS program which couples GED instruction with college preparation instruction.

Ms. Lyons reviewed the National College Transitions Network's Transitions Toolkit which includes tools and strategies as well as links to research. It is extensive and provides a wealth of information.

Ms. Lyons reported a College Access Focus Group, facilitated by Council on Postsecondary Education staff, was held to get input on what the field would like to see in a Transitions Toolkit. Three people on the Program Director Council were involved in that meeting. The following list comprises the items that were the focus group's top recommendations.

- Career-Focused Interest Inventory
- Next Steps Flyer
- FAFSA Video – Step-by-Step Guide
- COMPASS and ACT Tests Information
- List of College Contacts
- Individualized Learning Plan for Future Education
- CLEP Resources
- Links to Postsecondary Class Schedules and Course Catalogs
- Poster of Earning Power Chart
- Inventory of Employers Providing Tuition Reimbursement

Ms. Lyons reviewed the KYAE-funded Transition Pilot Projects

- Central Kentucky Technical College (CKTC) (now named the Bluegrass Community and Technical College) – involved Clark, Fayette and Jessamine counties
 - Clark County – Focus on COMPASS
 - Fayette County – DVD containing a lot of good basic FAFSA and college entrance information for three colleges in area – unable to replicate
 - Jessamine County – print materials
- Gateway Community College – primarily traveling financial aid advisor – talk to students – walk through FAFSA process – time at One-Stop Center to encourage transitioning to postsecondary education
- Jefferson County Public Schools – Educational Enrichment Services (EES) program – partnership with Jefferson Community and Technical College – dual-enrollment option
- Eastern Kentucky University – similar to Morehead State University project – comparison of GED graduates versus high school students entering postsecondary education – entry-level, remediation needs, retention – due to a few data issues, KYAE unable to publish findings
- Morehead State University – print materials at each adult education center, college fair to bring adult education students to campus, recruitment visits to every adult education center
- Murray State University – primarily focused on GED graduates in service area – sent information about Murray State University and conducted college fairs

Of these projects, the Jefferson County EES program is still actively in operation. The DVD produced through CKTC project is still available for use in the three counties. Staff hired with pilot project funds were not retained.

Report out on Transitioning to Postsecondary Education Activities by Program Directors

To further inform KYAE in developing transitions best practices and strategies, participants were asked to report transition activities within their respective programs.

Missy Brownson distributed a handout summarizing the activities of the SkillTrain Transitions Coordinator. The Transitions Coordinator makes presentations to GED students, works closely with the Orientation Specialist to ensure all students are aware of available support, tracks student progress through the adult education program, assists with interest inventories and college paperwork, and gets data match with Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) to see how many students enroll. They project a program-wide attitude that every student is college material.

Cris Crowley reported Madisonville Community College (MCC) has replicated parts of the process developed through the Murray State University pilot by identifying a single point of contact for GED graduates and having the financial aid advisor come to each center. They have developed an internal Transitions Toolkit focusing on COMPASS. Instructors need to understand requirements before assistance can be given to students. The Toolkit includes:

- COMPASS Placement Score Chart
- COMPASS TABE Concordance Tables: Reading, Math and Writing – Although it can't be used in AERIN, doesn't mean it has no value.
- COMPASS Prep Plan – Student takes COMPASS. If a student needs help to improve scores, they enroll in the ACE2 Gateway to Academic Progress (GAP) program for tutoring. Students are given TABE test, since it targets academic weaknesses to identify where instruction needed before COMPASS re-test. Instruction/Preparation involves self-study, tutoring and computer lessons. Student assessed again to determine if ready to re-take the COMPASS.
- COMPASS Re-test Policy – MCC Placement Testing Policy allows a student to re-test one time without remediation. If a student continues to achieve scores indicating need for remediation, two options are available before allowed to re-test: 1) enroll in Gateway to Academic Progress (ACE2 program) and complete a minimum of 12 hours of remediation in the basic skill area; or 2) enroll in developmental education.
- COMPASS Curriculum and Test Explanation – Lets students know what to expect and both students and instructors know student academic needs.

She also provided statistics on ACE2 and GAP students who enrolled at OCTC. They report above 80% retention of students transitioning to OCTC, and most students were able to skip developmental education.

Susan Jackson reported WKEC has a dual-credit enrollment option with West Kentucky Technical College and Henderson Community College. Students can earn credit for developmental education classes--CLEP out of developmental education and get a college credit. They use materials developed in the Murray State University Transitions Pilot Project. Murray State is the closest four-year public institution to the WKEC region. There are no community colleges located in WKEC counties (closest 40-mile drive). WKEC has location on Murray State Campus. WKTC talking about offering onsite GED 101 Introduction to College, and WKEC hopes to get it held in the learning center.

Darlene Urban reported Anderson County has no formal transitions program or a staff person assigned specifically to address transitions issues. They have a strong relationship with Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC)-Lawrenceburg Campus. One of the biggest stumbling blocks for students transitioning to postsecondary education is fear and being overwhelmed with the process. Staff take students to campus, walk them through the application process and introduce them to appropriate BCTC staff. She noted it is important that staff know current processes in order to effectively assist students.

Jennifer Napier reported there is no community college in Rockcastle County, so most students focus their attention on Somerset Community College and Eastern Kentucky University. Postsecondary education options are discussed during orientation. As a student progresses academically, provides information, such as ACT test dates, FASFA forms, as well as, general assistance with the college-entry processes. She noted for their students getting academically prepared isn't as challenging as how to overcome personal barriers that impede college attendance and retention, so the program focuses on helping students overcome barriers.

Julie Scoskie reported Jefferson County has had a formal transitions program and partnership, Educational Enrichment Services (EES) with Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) for five years. It was one of the KYAE-funded Transitions Pilots. She distributed a handout summarizing the EES program, a Jefferson County Transitions to Success brochure, and statistics documenting the impact and results of the EES program. When comparing retention rates of the original 262 EES students from Fall 2003 versus all first-time Fall 2003 JCTC students, the retention rate of EES students still enrolled in Fall 2006 as well as Fall 2007 was higher. In addition, this group has earned 66 credentials--eight associate degrees, nine diplomas and 49 certificates.

Jefferson County has a transitions coordinator.

She noted a transitions partnership with a postsecondary institution can help both partners more effectively share resources and helps students financially by allowing them to skip development education. She noted if a program provides dual credit, the time and resource commitment requirements need to be balanced so as not to out-weigh community needs. While the transitions student meet NRS enrollment definitions, community needs are important, too.

Karen McLeod reported Marshall County follows a transitions advisory model. They address academic preparedness by requiring a higher GED OPT test-readiness score (480 average) before a student is allowed to take the GED Tests. They discuss postsecondary options during orientation and explain that a GED diploma is the first step. They provide information as student progresses academically and keep informational materials on hand.

Rodney Johnson reported the Russell County program is housed at the One Stop Center and KCTCS is located there as well. The physical environment eliminates problems in directing to financial aid and scheduling, because students simply walk down the hall. As students progress academically, they hold information sessions with KCTCS about student loan and financial aid option. He noted retention and successful completion are bigger problems than simply transitioning to postsecondary education. They use professional judgment based upon student's academic progress and efforts to determine which students are offered transition support services. They are cultivating partnerships with local KCTCS developmental education classes by holding writing, reading and math labs that are offered outside of the developmental education class schedule as optional support services to adult students functioning below the 12th grade level. He indicated a need to follow Jefferson County's model to better sell what adult education can do to help students be better prepared for success in college.

Peg Russell reported Kenton County has an outreach counselor focusing on transitions. The Gateway Urban Center mirrors the college experience. It houses adult education, developmental education and general education classes. All students have the same access to an outreach counselor, financial aid and other student support services, regardless of whether enrolled in adult education, developmental education or general education classes. Adult education students are issued student ID cards giving them access to free public transportation. Staff are cross-trained and provided with the same textbooks as used in college courses. Staff are required to take the COMPASS and must understand the test and the scores. Adult education students take the

COMPASS free of charge. Adult education runs on the same clock hours as the college and schedules mirror a college session terms and class schedules. Many of her faculty are SACS accredited so they are able to offer classes that provide developmental education credit at no cost to the student, saving student financial resources. The program has received inquiries from Northern Kentucky University about possible collaboration to help raise admissions scores at the institutions.

Judy Branham reported that Pike County has 13 or 14 class sites. While not a formal partnership, they do collaborate with the Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC). They have an instructor on campus, which facilitates assisting students with college entrance paperwork, who has taken the COMPASS, knows and understands the scores and works with all staff. Students are routinely referred by BSCTC for remedial services. They hold financial aid workshops at each class location. They assist students in making appointments with BSCTC and with application requirements.

Pat Burchell reported that Clay County does not have a formal transitions process, but students are encouraged to pursue postsecondary opportunities and provided with information. She noted the learning center will be moving into the local ECU building and they are excited about the opportunity the location will have on working toward a seamless transition to postsecondary education and they hope to use the fact a student may be enrolled at ECU and still remain in the local area will be a good draw.

Joan Flanery reported the Boyd County program has focused efforts on building relationships and networking with various Ashland Community and Technical College (ACTC) offices. During student orientation, they “plant the seed” about postsecondary options. Boyd County participated in the Morehead Transitions Pilot Project. They display information about both postsecondary certificate and degree programs, since in the local area there is a demand for certain technical skills workers, such as certified welders, that have excellent earnings potential. They have access to financial aid officers. They promote the financial impact of postsecondary education and training on potential earnings, publicize the Byrd Scholarship, use of KHEAA’s Web site, do interest inventories with students and have a corner of the center devoted to financial aid.

Students are advised that the GED diploma is a good first step, but it will not prepare them for college level math. They offer a Fast Track Algebra course, a two-week college preparation course. Other college prep classes include a four-week grammar, critical thinking and writing course. Three staff have taken the COMPASS. If a student is referred to adult education by ACTC to work on improving COMPASS scores and they work for a minimum of twelve hours, they get to re-test free; otherwise, the re-test fee is \$20. Staff are collaborating with developmental education math teachers regarding 055 and 065 coursework so that adult education math coursework can be tailored to those standards.

Budget Update

Reecie Stagnolia provided an update on the state budget. He noted KYAE had been recently asked to put together a four percent spending reduction plan, based upon projected revenue shortfalls. He pointed out that KYAE was exempted from the earlier 4.5 percent cut, like some other education entities. Thus far, we have been able to manage the cuts internally by reducing or delaying projects, using short-term, non-recurring, one-time funding sources, and salary savings from unfilled vacancies. Of 13 vacancies at the Council on Postsecondary Education, four of them are in KYAE.

He noted there are similar stories across all state agencies. As strongly as we believe in the value of and need for adult education, others are just as passionate about their agency missions. The State Budget Office tries to protect education entities from budget cuts, but there is only so much

that can be exempted, because other agencies also have essential services and cannot absorb all required cuts. We're doing the best we can and hope things turn around.

If KYAE receives the four percent cut this fiscal year, we hope to manage this internally; however, we face real challenges down the road, if further cuts are made.

Transition Issues Breakout Sessions

Members participated in breakout sessions to brainstorm and strategize around the following topics to help inform KYAE's transitions efforts.

1. What barriers do adult students face in transitioning to postsecondary education? What are additional barriers faced by learners? What are possible solutions?
2. How do you build and sustain strong partnerships with postsecondary institutions?
3. How do you prepare students for postsecondary education, "plant the seed?"
4. What materials/resources/trainings would be helpful for you to have in order to create and maintain a transition process to postsecondary education?

Information captured from the breakout sessions is compiled in a separate document.

Assessment Exceptions Policy

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education conducted a federal monitoring visit of Kentucky's adult education system that included visits at both the central office and several learning centers. This led to a request for a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) regarding KYAE's assessment policy.

During the last two years, KYAE was allowed to participate in an two-year "assessment exception policy" pilot on the required time between pre-test and post-test for NRS assessments. KYAE programs were allowed to fill out exception forms to use shorter time periods between pre-test and post-test, than those recommended by the publishers and required by NRS policies. After the first year of the pilot, OVAE was not pleased with the number of exceptions reported; thus KYAE programs were no longer allowed to complete a checklist; but rather the exception form had to include a written statement that reflected the teacher's professional judgment as to why the exception should be allowed. There was a 38% increase in exceptions reported.

OVAE instructed KYAE to move toward compliance with publisher's recommended time periods for post-testing as approved by OVAE. KYAE asked to explore further options and discussed local program assurances that students are making gains in a shorter amount of time and reports that it is hard to retain students for the recommended 50 hours of instruction between TABE pre-test and post-test. OVAE indicated the recommended length of time between pre-test and post-test is to ensure a student is actually making learning gains and that the gain doesn't reflect a "practice effect" due to the short time period between tests.

KYAE was allowed to implement the assessment policy change to extend the time period between pre and post by increments.

- January 1-June 30, 2009, TABE post-testing shall occur after completion of an instructional period of no less than 30 hours, but with a goal of no less than 50 hours. Instructors will be required to submit exception forms for each student post-tested between the 30-50 hour range during this six-month period.
- Effective July 1, 2009, TABE post-testing shall occur after completion of an instructional period of 50 hours. The only time TABE post-testing may occur prior to the 50 hours is when all three of the following conditions are met:

1. Student must be assessed and enrolled in Low Adult Secondary Education or higher upon entry in to the program.
2. Student's stated goal in AERIN is either to obtain a GED diploma or to transition to postsecondary education.
3. Student has 30-49 hours of instruction.

All other KYAE-approved assessments must be administered according to the test publishers' recommended timeframes for post-testing as approved by OVAE.

Mr. Stagnolia stated this change is difficult, but it is possible to manage. He asked members to help colleagues understand the mandated change and to urge them to focus their energy on retention strategies that will enable us to meet the NRS requirements.

We have seen an increase in the average hours of attendance over the past three years – from 49 to 58 to 62.

It has been suggested that programs use TABE as an interim level test, so programs should consider using something other than TABE to measure interim progress to keep students motivated before officially post-testing.

He suggested programs consider promoting the advantages of getting a Kentucky Employability Certificate in addition to a GED diploma and to promote the need for instruction beyond a GED diploma for college readiness. He assured programs KYAE will continue to work with programs on other retention strategies.

Other Business

Julie Scoskie reminded participants about the February 2009 KAACE Legislative Luncheon and the April 2009 COABE Conference that is being held in Louisville.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Members were asked to sign expense vouchers.

The next meeting is February 13, 2009.

Addendum to Minutes

The February 13, 2009 meeting was postponed to March 27, 2009.