

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) Program Director Council
Minutes
August 28, 2009

Members Present: Joan Flanery, Veronica Gayle, Renae Harrison, Rodney Johnson, Karen McLeod, Peg Russell, Judith Branham, Susan Jackson, Kristin Tiedeman and Darlene Urban.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Reecie Stagnolia welcomed members. He reviewed the agenda and encouraged member feedback reiterating that the Council members are an important communications link between KYAE and local programs.

Managed Programs

Marilyn Lyons reported there were 47 applications to participate in the managed program pilot with 35 applications approved. Ms. Lyons distributed an informational copy of the Newport Adult Learning Center Managed Enrollment Communications plan drawing members' attention to the staff assigned roles. She also shared a copy of the City Colleges of Chicago's beginning literacy 0-1.9 math course syllabus that Janice Crane, Jessamine County Adult Education, referenced at a recent managed program meeting.

Joan Flanery, Peg Ramsey and Renae Harrison discussed their programs' experiences participating in the managed program model and all agreed results have been positive.

AERIN Update

Terry Tackett reviewed changes made to the AERIN system to accommodate managed locations and managed classes. He reiterated the need for data to be entered in a timely manner, since students cannot be enrolled into a managed class once the class has ended. Planned future enhancements include the ability to print a student class schedule.

He noted KYAE has dedicated funds for AERIN redesign in order to migrate it to a higher technology platform. KYAE also hopes to hire a report writer to focus on AERIN reports.

Budget Update

Terry Pruitt reported the State Auditor's Office had no financial findings for the most recent round of local program audits. The Auditor's office did find minor issues in programmatic areas, such as failure to document student attendance in hard copy files and regarding inventory records; thus, KYAE plans to focus emphasized attention on local program contract and reporting requirements.

Mr. Pruitt reviewed the history of adult education funding cuts as well as the amount of funds KYAE covered separate from the core services base to offset funding reductions some counties incurred as a result of the funding shift when KYAE transitioned to a funding formula based upon U.S. Census data rather than Literacy Levels. Although KYAE's grant funding program has been exempted from some of the recent state budget cuts, the combined total amount KYAE has been able to manage at the state level rather than passing on the cuts to local programs is \$8.4 million. KYAE was able to do this through utilizing one-time funding sources and postponing or scaling back initiatives.

It was noted that although the KYAE grant funding program was exempted from some budget reductions, the Council on Postsecondary Education's operating budget was not exempted. Thus far, the agency has been able to manage these cuts with office efficiency initiatives as well as salary savings by not filling positions when they become vacant.

Just as the KYAE state office has had to become more efficient, local programs must also become more proficient. The managed program model allows for efficient usage of staff and other resources by staffing in hours where there will be a full complement of students.

Mr. Pruitt also reviewed the two components of the performance funding model – program performance and student performance. He noted that KYAE knows the results of the FY 2008-09 program performance; but the student performance requires a data match which is pending.

Ms. Harrison noted that providing service to the corrections population negatively impacted Hardin County's program performance due to the frequent transfer of state inmates and the resulting inability to retain them long enough to enroll, provide service, and post-test to record progress before they are transferred. David Walters indicated KYAE is aware of this issue and is working to find a way to limit the impact on a program's performance when dealing with this transient population. KYAE is committed to providing educational services to local jails, but the local jailers must be able to provide the local program with adequate facilities and access to inmates in order for the local program to provide service.

Mr. Stagnolia reported that KYAE is considering a recalculation of the funding formula. The current formula is based upon the number age 18 and older without a high school or GED® credential. Since very few students over age 64 avail themselves of KYAE services, the agency is considering a recalculation of the base funding formula using ages 18-64 without a high school or GED credential. If this decision is made, there will be some winners and some losers depending upon the county population in this category and the resulting funding shift, and KYAE would plan to provide supplemental funding to those counties that have reductions in order to phase in a new funding formula.

There was discussion centered around the impact of younger students, ages 16-18, on adult education classes. It was noted that the numbers are increasing and they are entering at lower functioning levels, thus taking more time to get them ready to take the GED Tests. In addition, some are bringing behavioral problems into the adult education classrooms. Various strategies for handling behavioral issues were discussed. Members asked KYAE to recognize that the demographics of the population being served by local programs are changing.

Program Data

Terry Tackett gave a report on FY 2008-09 program data. He reminded members that one of the reasons for change outlined in the Framework for Adult Education was the declining number of enrollments for 12 or more hours. In 2000, Kentucky had approximately 37,000 students enrolled for 12 or more hours. This number declined with the state averaging 31,000 enrolled for 12 or more hours each year through FY 2007-08. Since implementation of the Framework, there has been an increase in the number of enrollments for 12 or more hours. In FY 2008-09, 40,235 were enrolled for 12 or more hours, the highest number recorded for this category. In addition, there were 19,355 educational level gains.

Although the state has had an increase in the number of students enrolled 12 or more hours and making educational level gains, there is not a corresponding increase in the GED numbers. The

GED numbers have decreased by nearly 1,000 in the past year. English as a Second Language (ESL) numbers are up, but corrections and family literacy numbers have declined.

Council members were asked why they think the numbers have declined and to brainstorm for strategies that may be undertaken to help increase the numbers. To further probe the issue, KYAE staff posed a few questions.

If a student comes to the program and asks just to take the Official GED Practice Tests (OPT) test, are there programs that won't allow it? Are some programs holding students back from OPT testing until they spend a minimum of 12 hours in the program in order to get an enrollment count or until they meet the required length of time required between pre- and post-testing in order to get credit for level gains? If so, are these decisions driven by the state's enrollment goal? There were differing opinions regarding this topic. Consensus was the enrollment goal does impact the decision on whether to allow someone to simply take the OPT test; however, most felt the decision was made on a case-by-case basis depending upon either a formal or an informal assessment of a student's educational functioning level.

Is the state's GED test-readiness regulation a barrier and does it negatively impact GED numbers? Generally, the test-readiness certification wasn't viewed as a barrier; however, differing opinions were voiced regarding the OPT re-test policy.

It was anecdotally noted that students are coming into adult education programs at lower functioning levels and, thus, require more instructional time before they are test-ready.

It was suggested with the current economy, more people who already have a high school diploma but who are academically deficient are being referred to adult education programs through the state's displaced worker program.

In regards to declining family literacy numbers, it was noted, in 2007, we had family literacy services in 120 counties which dropped to 90 counties in 2008 and to 69 counties in 2009. Consensus regarding declining family literacy numbers is that it is hard to meet all indicators, it is very time intensive, and in many cases, fiscally it requires too many resources for too few students.

ESL numbers have increased. Consensus regarding increased ESL numbers is the state of the economy reinforces the need to learn English in order to gain or retain a job.

As previously discussed, corrections numbers are down due to limited access at facilities and frequent transfer of state prisoners before educational gains can be achieved and/or measured. It was discussed that possibly some of the decline could be an AERIN coding issue. If service is provided at a half-way house, it would be considered corrections.

There were various ideas on state-level initiatives that might be tried to increase numbers. Various ideas were discussed with most revolving around some type of marketing campaign to emphasize the value of education to students and to create an awareness of adult education services. In addition to focusing efforts on GED attainment, members discussed the need to message the importance of more intensive study as necessary for our students to be college and workforce ready.

Mr. Stagnolia reminded members that the Council of Postsecondary Education has established a GED key indicator for KYAE, thus today's discussion was valuable in helping KYAE to understand and explain declining GED numbers and to develop strategies to reverse this trend.

Professional Development Model Implementation

Joyce Bullock updated members on implementation of the new Professional Development model. All of the course syllabi are on PDtrack. Some courses require pre-work. All require a pre-test, ongoing instruction, classroom project, online activities and a post-test. Some require face-to-face meetings and coaching visits in addition to the other activities.

KYAE used survey results to determine both how many cohorts to offer and where to offer the trainings. The underlying theme of this year's courses is management programs/classes.

A change to the model following the last Program Director Council meeting was that part-time staff would be required to take one online course instead of two, unless the part-time staff person is new in which case they would also be required to take the Orientation to Adult Education online course. It was noted that Erika Larson revamped the Orientation to Adult Education online course and reduced the estimated completion time to 5-6 hours.

There was discussion regarding tuition reimbursements. It was noted that tuition reimbursement is from a separate fund and is not part of a program's professional development allocation. Members were encouraged to review the KYAE policy manual for guidelines.

When asked what happens if a program runs out of professional development funds before meeting the requirements, KYAE staff noted that contractors were required to use locations around the state to reduce the travel requirements related to attending face-to-face sessions. In addition, there should be a cost savings in professional development travel expenses at the local level, since part-time staff now participate in online courses rather than face-to-face trainings.

Other Business

Reecie Stagnolia presented certificates of appreciation to the following members whose terms end in September 2009 and thanked them for their many contributions: Joan Flanery, Veronica Gayle, Renae Harrison, Rodney Johnson, Karen McLeod, and Peg Russell. He also recognized Julie Scoskie who was unable to attend today's meeting.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Members were asked to sign expense vouchers.

Next Meeting: December 4, 2009