

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) Program Director Council
Minutes
March 27, 2009

Members Present: Judith Branham, Pat Burchell, Jeff Doig, Joan Flanery, Veronica Gayle, Renae Harrison, Susan Jackson, Rodney Johnson, Karen McLeod, Jennifer Napier, Peg Russell, Julie Scoskie, Kristin Tiedeman and Darlene Urban

Guests Present: Bill Bates and Jon Caudill, Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Reecie Stagnolia welcomed members and recognized newly elected COABE board members from Kentucky—Renae Harrison, president-elect, and Charles Ludwig, secretary.

Mr. Stagnolia reported on recent participation by Kentucky staff at the national level. Julie Scoskie and he participated in a National College Transition Network webinar about Jefferson County's EES model. He noted many programs get opportunities to participate at the national level and asked members to inform KYAE so that we are aware of it and can share the information with other colleagues.

He gave a recap of the March 2009 State Directors of Adult Education annual meeting in Washington, DC, which focused on transitions and new career pathways.

He noted many state directors arrived a day early in order to meet with congressional members and staff to create an awareness of and the need for adult education. He was able to meet with Lillian Pace on Congressman Yarmuth's staff and freshman Congressman Brett Guthrie. Congressman Guthrie is the top Republican on the Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee, the House committee from which reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) will flow.

There are mixed predictions from the national level regarding WIA reauthorization. Some feel action will be taken around August 2009 while others feel issues with the economy may take precedence resulting in a further postponement of action. Most indications are that *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce*, the report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy, will be the foundation of the reauthorization legislation.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) did not specifically name adult education in the legislation; however, it is an allowable activity and there are funding possibilities for us at the state level through the Governor's statewide discretionary stimulus funds and at the local level through partnerships with local workforce investment boards.

Secretary Helen Mountjoy, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, convened a meeting of education and workforce partner agencies, including KCTCS and KYAE, to look at the current workforce education delivery system structure not only to enhance collaboration over the next 18 months for activities funded by ARRA, but also how to more effectively work together in the future.

Mr. Stagnolia noted the Office of Employment and Training has begun inviting him to attend the regular One-Stop Directors meetings. This has given him the opportunity to facilitate understanding regarding adult education's role in the One-Stop Centers. Most recently a concern was expressed that adult education is not a rent-paying customer at the One-Stop Centers. He was able to explain

while we recognize the need for and benefit of having an adult education presence in the One Stop Centers, the fiscal realities of a formula-funded system do not always make it possible for a local program to carve out rent from their operating budget.

KYAE and KCTCS staffs are collaborating on ARRA proposals. KCTCS staff will submit a proposal focusing on the Kentucky Employability Certificate (KEC), Kentucky's version of the national career-readiness certificate. KYAE's proposal will focus on developing contextualized curriculum in conjunction with KCTCS instructional staff to combining basic literacy and workforce/technical skills to create career pathways in several areas, such as healthcare, mechanics repair technologies, transportation and materials moving, to help adult education students more seamlessly transition from adult education to KCTCS.

He concluded that many speakers at the State Directors meeting were current or former staff from the education and workforce development national community. A continuing theme was economic stimulus funding opportunities and the need for education systems to ramp up rigor not just for college-readiness, but also for workforce-readiness. He noted, in some eyes, workforce-readiness is actually a higher priority than college-readiness.

All of these factors led KYAE to review our current workforce education programming.

Workforce Education

Jim Thompson reviewed KYAE's workforce education programming history. In 1994, workforce education focused on job task analyses and developing functionally contexted curriculum. There were six regional training and development coordinators. The Adult Education Act of 2000 emphasized the role of adult education to address business and industry needs. He noted we have made some mistakes. We served 1,000 through workforce projects in 1994. Enrollment in short-term workforce projects increased rapidly to nearly 50,000. While the short-term projects provided assistance to the specific business served, it did little to move the educational needle for the Commonwealth. So much time was spent on short-term projects to meet enrollment goals that other adult basic education programming suffered. The quality provisions of the Framework for Adult Education have led local programs to pull back from the workforce education arena to focus more on long-term education initiatives. With the increasing state and national recognition of the importance of adult education's role in workforce development, KYAE is investigating ways to re-energize our workforce education efforts.

Jon Caudill and Bill Bates discussed a successful program operating in Hazard. With the volume of displaced workers in the area, the local One-Stop Manager had a meeting with community and education partners in the area including Hazard Community and Technical College and Big Sandy Community and Technical College to put together a program that seamlessly assists the workers with job fit/job search, adult education and college prep activities.

A dislocated worker without a GED® diploma is eligible to draw unemployment benefits for up to one year while attending an approved basic skills training program for a minimum of 20 hours a week and another two years for college attendance. Those displaced workers with a GED diploma can attend six months of adult education services or other approved training and two years of college and still draw benefits.

The adult education instructional model is similar to the JRA model coupled with a computer skills component and use of WIN curriculum to focus not only on GED attainment and college preparation, but also on earning a KEC. They use managed class days and open lab days to offer programming with individuals grouped by ability to benefit and rotated among subject area. During the first week

96 people attended. Of those retested after 60 hours, 44 showed level gains and several had multiple-level gains. After progress testing, groups are realigned based upon functioning level.

Hazard Community and Technical College has responded to the displaced worker needs by developing Fast Track summer classes for those who are college-ready, and WIA case workers are assisting with the transitions and WIA eligibility determination for college funding.

Billy Crabtree reported on an initiative with the Lake Cumberland Workforce Investment Board and passed on regrets from Daryl McGaha, the architect of the program, who was unable to attend today's meeting. The program has been in place for 15 months. All WIA participants are required to take the TABE D in all three levels. Those functioning below at 9th grade level are told they must actively pursue a KEC in order to earn the WIA training benefit. They must attend a minimum of 30 hours; the time period may be adjusted to reflect the current KYAE assessment policy time requirements between tests to measure progress. The KEC instruction is coupled with GED preparation or other needed adult education instruction. Although participants may not reach goals within the covered training benefit period, the required attendance exposes individuals to learning centers and there is the hope they will continue attending until all goals are reached. Mr. Crabtree noted the program is not available statewide, but rather it is dependent upon the Local Workforce Investment Board decision.

Members asked if KYAE could facilitate implementation of this type of program at the state level. Mr. Stagnolia indicated he would check to see if Billy Crabtree could be allowed to make a presentation on the Lake Cumberland project for possible state replication at an upcoming One-Stop directors meeting.

Kristin Tiedeman reported on Fayette County's OVAE-funded ABE Career Connections program which focuses on developing curriculum in certain high need areas to establish a career pathway. Fayette County's program focuses on nursing, specifically a career pathway for nurse's aides. They are piloting the program at Pine Meadows Nursing Home. Most of the nurse's aides are non-native speakers, who are dedicated and hard working, but who are unable to move up the career ladder due to language barriers and skill gaps. An instructor is based at Pine Meadows 30 hours a week, to offer five classes, focusing first on English as a Second Language then moving onto other basic skills instructional areas. A Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) instructor developed a curriculum workbook for basic skills lessons in reading, writing and math that incorporates the material taught at BCTC for the nurse's aide program, thus exposing students to a "pre-nurse's aide" curriculum which should help the student if they pursue KCTCS training in order to become a certified nursing assistant or other nursing career.

KYAE Regions and Upcoming Meetings

David Walters advised members that due to budget constraints and the inability to fill the vacant Program Support Associate position for the foreseeable future, effective July 1, 2009 KYAE is reducing the number of KYAE regions from six to five. Local Workforce Investment Areas and equitable distribution of number of counties assigned to Associates were considered when the new regional boundaries were established. The current system of six regions remains in effect through June 30, 2009.

KYAE will be hosting several local meetings in June to gear up for the upcoming fiscal year. Due to budget constraints, the meetings will be held at Kentucky State Park facilities and KYAE will no longer be able to provide a working lunch for meeting participants. Since the meeting locations are not centrally located within each region, local program staff will no longer be required to attend a meeting designated for a specific region, but rather may attend the closest location. The "regional"

meeting format is being replaced by informal, town hall style gatherings which will still give local program staff the opportunity to collaborate and discuss issues specific to their local region.

ITTS Project Update

Erika Larson reported that after piloting McGraw-Hill Contemporary's Instruction Targeted for TABE® Success (ITTS) in several local programs, KYAE has entered into an agreement with McGraw-Hill Contemporary that allows KYAE-funded programs to purchase virtual seats at a reduced rate. The purchase covers a seat for one year. Once a student exits the program, the seat may be assigned to another student. KYAE will distribute additional information to local program directors via e-mail. Also, the ITTS representative will have a booth with additional information at the COABE conference.

Budget Update

Terry Pruitt gave a budget update. When the new funding formula was rolled out in FY 2006-07 for implementation in FY 2007-08, 31 counties lost funding due to the change from a formula based upon literacy levels to a formula based upon population without a high school or GED diploma. The 31 counties were funded at 100 percent of the previous year's funding amount, held harmless for the first year, with a reduced percentage of the difference between the current and previous formula amounts held harmless for two successive years – 75 percent in FY 2008-09 and 25 percent in FY 2009-10 to bring the 31 counties into compliance with the funding formula by FY 2010-11. In FY 2007-08, KYAE was assessed a recurring general fund budget cut of \$800,800. The combined 2008 held-harmless amount and budget cut was over \$2 million. KYAE was able to absorb this amount using federal carry forward and other one-time funding sources instead of passing it on to local programs.

In FY 2008-09, the amount KYAE covered for the held harmless provision was \$970,050, KYAE's federal funding was reduced \$121,641 due to population shift, the \$800,800 recurring budget cut from FY 2007-08 was still in place, KYAE received another \$699,200 cut in state general funds and KYAE was asked to submit a spending reduction plan for possibly another four percent or \$941,000 cut in state general funds for a total amount of \$3.5 million. KYAE has been able to absorb these amounts with federal carry forward, delaying and reducing projects, salary savings from not filling vacant positions and other one-time sources of funding.

Mr. Stagnolia noted that thus far, KYAE has not had to pass on the cuts to local programs, but each successive round of cuts is harder to manage at the state level. If these tough economic times continue, at some point, the one-time sources of funds will no longer be available and cuts will have to be passed on to local programs.

When asked if KYAE could provide preliminary budget figures to programs by April 15, Mr. Stagnolia indicated we won't know how much federal carry forward funds will be available to offset the spending reductions next year until this fiscal year's year-end invoices are received. We're trying to determine, based upon the information currently available, how much we can feasibly absorb at the state level. He suggested we could possibly provide two amounts, a revised base reflecting the reductions plus a supplemental amount of non-recurring funding, if KYAE is able to manage the reductions at the state level.

He alerted members of the possibility of a special legislative session in the summer to consider further state budget reductions for FY 2009-10 if the current economic forecast doesn't improve.

He noted that this is all the more reason that we need to focus energy to meet federal performance goals in order to be eligible for WIA incentive funds.

AERIN Update

Terry Tackett reported a new field, Total Hours, has been added to the test screen. It reflects the client's total hours of attendance after the last progress test, regardless of whether the individual is served in more than one location. In addition, if a student is enrolled after June 1, the local program will now get to choose whether to count the person in the current year or the next fiscal year. He noted AERIN changes will be discussed at the KYAE June meetings.

There was discussion regarding the June 1 date. Mr. Stagnolia indicated KYAE picked a date that was reasonable for the statewide system, but the program director makes the local decision as to which fiscal year to count the student. While the date isn't perfect for everyone, it does help prevent a late enrollment from negatively impacting program performance, by allowing it to count toward the next fiscal year.

GED Program Update

B.J. Helton gave an update on GED testing numbers. From July 1-March 25, 8,364 individuals were tested, 754 less than the number tested for the same time period last year. The current pass rate is 76 percent, down from last year's nearly 80 percent pass rate. We need to have 2,000 additional GED diplomas earned between March 26 and June 30 simply to meet last year's numbers.

Dr. Helton noted she worked with partner agencies to develop employee training on procedures and paperwork requirements for GED Testing of State Agency Children, Juvenile Justice and the GED Secondary Option program. The educational training videos, PowerPoint presentations with voice over, are available on KYAE's Web site. She encouraged local adult education staff to review, paying particular attention to forms required for audit purposes.

She noted while the number of returned diploma packets are down from 107 last year to 27 thus far this year, it is important that the student address is correct in GED123.org, since that is the system that populates the address fields on the GED record.

She noted an area of concern is social security number entry and the impact it has on the download of GED test scores into AERIN. In the current year, over 200 instances have been reported of GED test scores not matching up with the AERIN record. If a student is registered in GED123.org without a social security number, the social security number field is populated with an access code. This, along with data entry errors, prevents a social security data match in AERIN. It also adds a new test record to AERIN in the name of the individual. Since this is data-entry issue, there is no way for KYAE to run a system update to identify and correct the problem. Once KYAE staff are notified that GED scores didn't download, they must check both the GED and AERIN systems and manually correct the errors. The number of errors seems to be on the rise. She noted 10 were reported in the past week alone.

In addition, if a student receives a GED record with an incorrect social security number on it, they must return the original record along with a copy of the social security card to document the correct social security number before it can be corrected.

Professional Development Update

Joyce Bullock reported on changes being considered for next year including the possibility of no longer requiring completion of an individual plan in PDtrack and eliminating the need to count PDUs. She noted PDUs would still be provided to satisfy local-level continuing education unit requirements.

KYAE is contracting with the Kentucky Center for Mathematics (KCM) to develop professional development for adult education math instructors. KCM will use AERIN data, GED data, needs assessments and results from an online mathematics test for adult education instructors to identify training needs.

Mr. Stagnolia indicated we anticipate much of the next Program Director Council agenda will focus on professional development.

Other Business

Mr. Stagnolia encouraged members to provide feedback regarding workforce education and suggestions of ways to refocus attention in this area. He reiterated that the lines between skills needed for workforce-readiness and college-readiness are beginning to blur, thus the instructional services needed for GED attainment and college readiness are also needed for the workforce education arena.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Members were asked to sign expense vouchers.

The next meeting is May 15, 2009.