

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD – RI
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY MEETING
OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
FEBRUARY 9, 2006**

MINUTES

Members Present: Jack Warner, Mario Bueno, Armeather Gibbs, Joe MarcAurele, George Nee, Robert Paniccia

Members Absent: Robert Nangle

Staff Present: Mavis McGetrick, Johan Uvin, Marsha McDowell

Others Present: Judy Titzel, Karen Voci

With a quorum present, Chair J. Warner called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM. He directed the committee's attention to the Problem Statement paper distributed by J. Uvin at the beginning of the meeting. Approximately 180,000 adults (16+ and not enrolled in school) in Rhode Island do not have a high school diploma or equivalent and/or have very limiting English language literacy skills according to 2000 U.S. census data. Yet, less than 10,000 adult learners are enrolled in adult education centers throughout the state each year.

Chair Warner stated that Rhode Island ranked 12th or 13th in the country for working age adults 25 to 65 who hold bachelor degrees or higher, but we rank fifth out of the New England states.

Mr. Nee pointed out that only 10,000 adult learners were enrolled in adult education centers and that figure needed to be raised. Chair Warner stated that if a system is designed well, when an adult decides that he or she needs education in order to improve his/her prospects in life and in work that person should be able to go somewhere and in a very reasonable amount of time be served. Unfortunately, our Adult Education system doesn't work like that here. You may be on a waiting list for months, if you even know where to go.

Other points discussed were that some type of clearinghouse was needed so that if a program at one center were filled, the client could be referred to another center where there was an opening. A comment was that some agencies may not be as prepared in terms of capacity and what kind of programs they deliver. There are some good programs that could use additional help in building more capacity and or creating other programs in other places, but they can't be identified. The programs need to go where the clients are. This is the key to whether or not they are going to participate in the service. If the client has to travel across the state for a service, that is a problem. The programs, wherever they are, should all be consistent so that everybody is learning the same thing.

Discussed also was that there were pockets of best practices and standards which needed to be connected along with tangible sites where people could go to be assessed. Using the community college as an anchor to assess and refer clients was suggested. The programs that are currently operating are not doing outreach because they don't have the capacity. Consensus was that the quality and capacity issues needed to be worked on now, along with the creation of a good database.

Chair J. Warner suggested that J. Uvin draft a revised problem statement incorporating committee members' comments and e-mail it to the committee for finalization. What is seen in the problem statement is that there are quantity issues, the ability to serve the needs of the population who don't entirely understand that they need the service, and therefore don't step forward, because the system in place is unable to help them; then there are a series of quality issues that need to come together.

The committee then discussed the first four steps to build capacity and improve quality for FY06 under the Sequence of Needed Reforms.

- Content standards – what is it that people should know and be able to do;
- Program standards - there will be a random sample to work with this year;
- Management Information System –a bidders conference will be held and a web based system will be in place by this summer;
- Professional development center – work will begin with other agencies to develop the center.

Ms. Gibbs commented on J. Uvin's ability to keep those agencies that were funded along with those that were not in the loop so that all will have a part in building a good system. At some point, if you build a good system there are going to be agencies that fall out because they can't for whatever reason meet the capacity needs, and it won't be a surprise for those agencies that participated. To consistently keep that loop of inclusion is really going to be a key in the end.

M. Bueno felt that the organization itself should be looked at relevant to the 10% cap for administration. Under the current funding process there are funds to support the program but not the organization. Chair J. Warner felt that if you expand the administrative capacity of each agency, then you have to examine how many of your total dollars are going into administrative support versus delivery of services. He stated that you have to address how many providers are needed to deliver on a system especially if each agency has administrative overhead; how much administrative overhead do you really want to create in the system.

The consensus was to endorse the broad strategy for the Sequence of Needed Reforms. Discussion then centered on whose approval would be needed to accomplish the reforms, and what role the committee has in this process. It was the feeling of the members that the Adult Education and Literacy Task Team through the Governor's Workforce Board – RI discuss the issues in detail and endorse or make recommendations. The Board of Regents, as the main policy making body regarding educational issues, would ultimately

give approval of the content standards and forward them to the Governor. The Sequence of Needed Reforms will be presented at the next Governor's Workforce Board meeting and endorsement requested.

A motion was entered to approve the Adult Education and Literacy Minutes of November 16, 2005.

VOTE: J. MarcAurele moved to approve, seconded by R. Paniccia. All approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha McDowell