

Workplace Education: Twenty State Perspectives (Overview)

Developed by James T. Parker for the National Commission on Adult Literacy

In 1998 the Workforce Investment Act became law, providing emphasis on service to unemployed adults and incumbent workers. Since then, many states have developed or increased their support for workplace education programs.

This paper describes eight aspects of workplace education programs in 20 states: (1) how workplace programs are funded, (2) levels of effort for the past two years, (3) connections, partnerships, and/or strategic plans implemented by workplace education programs, (4) how states measure outcomes or determine success, (5) the nature of workplace education outcomes achieved, (6) challenges or barriers faced by states, (7) what the states consider to be the key elements of success in their workplace education efforts, and (8) what future policy options states would like to consider.

This policy brief includes: aggregated responses to the eight questions, a set of seven policy options that are informed by the state responses, overall conclusions of the findings, profiles of the 20 states, web-based references and resources, and the project questionnaire.

Suggested policy options:

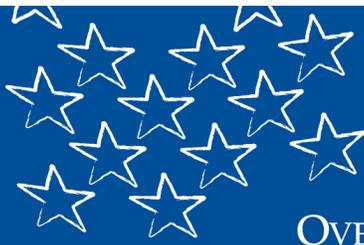
1. Comprehensive state initiatives are critical to program success
2. Statewide professional development is needed to improve services
3. The National Reporting System (NRS) is overdue for reform, and needs to fully support Workplace Education
4. Business return-on-investment (ROI) data are critical for developing partnerships and going-to-scale
5. Dissemination systems are needed to unite the field
6. National collaboration could help the federal government catch up with state leadership
7. The national adult education system also needs a shot of ROI to document program benefits.

Conclusion

Workplace education has real potential for expanding and improving adult education services. States are moving ahead with policy leadership, not waiting for federal leadership to emerge. Many positive initiatives are happening in states, but there are few meaningful mechanisms for discovering or adopting these innovations.

Full report: <http://www.caalusa.org/content/parkerpolicybrief.pdf>

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Reach Higher, AMERICA

OVERCOMING CRISIS IN THE U.S. WORKFORCE

THE FEDERAL CHALLENGE

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ADULT LITERACY

- The U.S. is falling behind in educational attainment and workforce readiness in international comparisons. The U.S. is also the only country among 30 OECD free-market countries where the current generation is less well educated than the previous one.
- 80 to 90 million U.S. adults today, about half of the adult workforce, do not have the basic education and communication skills required to get or advance in a job that will pay a family-sustaining wage, according to the National Commission on Adult Literacy in *Reach Higher, America*.
- Adult education and workforce skills programs currently enroll about 3 million adults annually, leaving out the millions of Americans needed to fill the higher paying jobs that will drive our nation's economy.
- Adults in need of instructional services are beyond the reach of secondary schools.
- Investing in our adult workforce will yield huge returns. For example, if we can encourage even 4 million dropouts to earn a high school diploma by 2020, the net fiscal benefit to federal, state, and local governments would exceed \$25 billion annually (expressed in 2008 dollars).

THE CRISIS: America Must Invest Now In Its Human Capital Infrastructure

As part of any recovery plan to meet the present economic crisis and create the foundation for sustained economic growth, America must invest now in its human capital infrastructure – just as it must invest in its financial and physical infrastructure. Human capital investments are essential to maintain employment and create new jobs, reduce growing unemployment rates, reduce income inequality, and develop the workforce required for new high productivity industries and global competitiveness.

THE NEED: Half the Workforce Needs Basic Skills Upgrading To Qualify for 21st Century Jobs

Among the basic skills needed by half the workforce are: high levels of literacy, math, and English language ability; high school credentials; and the ability to perform a range of essential workplace functions such as problem solving, communication, and team work. Adults who lack these skills are not prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary or job training programs, which are essential for incumbent workers to keep pace with present job demands, for retraining dislocated workers, and for preparing low-skilled potential workers to fill the specialized jobs of the 21st century including those in emerging green occupations. In short, inadequate basic skills are a major barrier to economic recovery and growth, a strong continuing democratic society, and greater opportunity for all Americans.

FEDERAL LEADERSHIP: The New Adult Education and Workforce Skills System

To overcome this barrier, the Commission urges the federal government to lead the way in creating a fundamentally reformed Adult Education and Workforce Skills System. Starting now, its missions would be:

- To increase substantially the number of adults who receive basic skills instruction – from 3 million annually at present to 20 million annually by 2020.
- To create seamless pathways of basic skills instruction that allow adults to progress rapidly and efficiently from the lowest levels of proficiency to readiness for enrollment and success in postsecondary education and job training programs.
- To greatly improve the quality of work-related and other basic skills programs – in terms of retention, learning gains, acquiring workplace skills, and accelerated learning.
- To break down barriers and silos across federal, state, and local programs through fostering shared goals, links among programs and planners, and communications.

This System would be funded by an increase in public expenditures of several billion dollars per year beginning in 2009 and reaching \$20 billion (in 2008 dollars) per year by 2020. In 2009, a large infusion of resources should be spent immediately to launch new initiatives in technology for instruction, teacher training, research, and long-term planning, and to expand and improve services in general by hiring more teachers, counselors, and other staff.

A NEW ACT: The Adult Education and Economic Growth Act

To accomplish these goals and create the Adult Education and Workforce Skills System, the Commission calls on Congress to pass a comprehensive new Adult Education and Economic Growth Act (replacing the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act). The major provisions of the Act will:

1. **Develop workforce readiness, increase acquisition by adults of high school credentials, and prepare adults to move along a continuum to enrollment in postsecondary/job training programs as the priority goals** for the adult basic skills programs presently supported by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
2. **Coordinate under the new Act the goals, services, administration, accountability, and resources of employment and training programs presently supported by Title I of WIA (as well as other federal adult education programs aimed at employability such as TANF) with basic skills programs.** All federal programs aimed at workforce development should work in tandem and provide mutual support to meet the nation's human resource needs.
3. **Adopt federal funding formulas that ensure sufficient support and targeting of resources to priority out-of-school populations** and that recognize their needs explicitly. These are immigrants with limited English proficiency and little prior education, incarcerated adults, high school drop outs, displaced and incumbent workers, and caregivers of young children (presently served by family literacy programs).
4. **Create a new program of state grants to implement the missions of the Adult Education and Economic Growth Act and its Adult Education and Workforce Skills System.** To receive these new grant funds, states would be required to submit specific plans for implementing their adult basic/workforce skills programs. These plans would be developed under the direction of governors offices and planning agencies, drawing in workforce development entities such as WIBs, representatives of adult education, employment and training, economic development, postsecondary, vocational and human services, business, and the nonprofit sector. Plans would be based on a comprehensive analysis of their workforce needs and the measures required to meet them. Adult education and workforce development would be explicitly linked to economic development goals.
5. **Establish a nationally-anchored data system in which states are expected to track program enrollments and student progress toward specified outcome goals over a period of several years.**
6. **Create incentives for companies to invest in the basic skills training** and further education of their low-skilled workers – through tax credits or grants.
7. **Develop and deploy technology on an unprecedentedly large scale to help provide basic skills** instruction that will increase dramatically the numbers enrolled, improve the quality of service, and reduce costs.
8. **Provide incentives for states to establish the professional qualifications required by adult education instructors and counselors, implement professional development programs, and increase the number of professionals** needed to keep pace with the growing number of adults served.
9. **Establish a vigorous program of research and development** through the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) to develop better methods for achieving the missions of the System and disseminating findings in user-friendly forms, including technical assistance at the state and program levels. As a key element in this program, **return NIFL to its initial exclusive focus on adult learners.**
10. **Encourage business, labor, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy to support and supplement federal/state programs** to create the needed Adult Education and Workforce Skills System, directly and through contributions to a National Trust dedicated to the purpose.

Ten Resources for Workforce Education Programs

<http://www.caalusa.org/ReachHigherAmerica/ReachHigherExecutiveSummary.pdf>

America faces a choice: We can invest in the basic education and skills of our workforce and remain competitive in today's global economy, or we can continue to overlook glaring evidence of a national crisis and move further down the path to decline. In *Reach Higher, America*, the **National Commission on Adult Literacy** presents powerful evidence that our failure to address America's adult education and workforce skills needs is putting our country in great jeopardy and threatening our nation's standard of living and economic viability. The Commission recommends immediate action to reverse the course we are on. It calls for strong, bold leadership from federal and state government, and it challenges business leaders, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector to become part of the solution.

<http://www.caalusa.org/content/parkerpolicybrief.pdf>

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The aspects are: (1) how workplace programs are funded, (2) levels of effort for the past two years, (3) connections, partnerships, and/or strategic plans implemented by workplace education programs, (4) how states measure outcomes or determine success, (5) the nature of workplace education outcomes achieved, (6) challenges or barriers faced by states, (7) what the states consider to be the key elements of success in their workplace education efforts, and (8) what future policy options states would like to consider.

<http://www.caalusa.org/content/daretodream.pdf>

The papers collected in this report, *Dare to Dream*, represent the thinking and advice of dozens of literacy and education professionals and adult learners. The collection was developed to help inform the work of the National Commission on Adult Literacy. The resource documents offer a rich menu of thoughtful ideas, insights, cautions, and concrete recommendations. These leaders were challenged to "think outside the box" in envisaging an adult education enterprise that might better reach many millions of adults with high quality service, extending well beyond the 3 million or so presently enrolled in publicly funded programs. **See especially the two papers on Workforce Education.**

http://www.shifting-gears.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=64

The Joyce Foundation: Shifting Gears website

States are seeking the best ways to encourage young adults and workers to earn postsecondary credentials that help them advance economically while also meeting employers' critical skill needs. These efforts focus on creating more flexible pathways through basic skills, job training, and college workforce education. About a dozen states are using sector-specific **Career Pathways** partnerships as the framework for these efforts. The best state initiatives create access to college and career pathways at different skill levels, accommodate a variety of students, and work closely with employers to ensure that education and training reflect what is valued in the labor market and help lead to family-supporting careers.

<http://www.jff.org/Documents/WorkReadiness.pdf>

This report summarizes five of the nation's many work readiness certificates, including the **CASAS Workforce Skills Certification**, which are representative of the diverse range of such initiatives in terms of target population, certification requirements, geography, and other factors.

<http://www.work-basedlearning.org/>

The **Work-Based Learning Website** is designed to **provide the research, best practices, tools, tips, and learning communities** to help you design and implement effective work-based learning programs. It is designed to meet the needs of employers, unions, workplace educators and trainers, and officials at the state and local levels responsible for workforce development.

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/briefs/work.html

Adult educators across the country are seeking ways to ensure that foreign-born adults will be successful in gaining English proficiency and in entering and advancing at the workplace. **This brief reviews the three venues in which federally funded instruction to help immigrants become successful at work is offered** – at the workplace, in vocational classes, and in adult English as a second language (ESL) classes. Basic program features and the strengths and challenges of each type of program are described, and recommendations are given for addressing the challenges. This information will help program administrators and teachers select, establish, and improve programs for the adult immigrants they serve.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/wpprofiles.doc>

In 2003, the Institute for Work & the Economy conducted research on programs in workplace education as part of the **Work-Based Learning Project**. Based on this research and additional efforts to identify **practices in workplace education**, six programs have been identified as “noteworthy”, since they demonstrate the following characteristics: Significant quantifiable learner gains that are measured through standardized assessments and related measures for impact on the workplace; Workplace-related instruction; A foundational skills component customized to a specific workplace; and Employer involvement as a full partner.

<http://www.gwdc.org/index.htm>

The Governor's **Workforce Development Council** is Minnesota's State Workforce Investment Board. Guided by the [Workforce Investment Act \(WIA\) of 1998](#) and further defined by Minnesota State [Statute 116L.665](#), the 31 council members are governor-appointed and represent business, labor, community-based organizations, education, local elected officials, local workforce councils, state agencies and the Minnesota Legislature.

http://www.wollnet.org/inbrief_en.htm

The aim of the **WoLLNET Project** is to research, trial and develop a web-based, user-friendly Toolkit to enable employers, providers and unions to **evaluate the impact of workplace basic skills training programmes** on learning, and individual and organisational performance. In particular there will be a focus on evaluating the impact of workplace basic skills training programmes in terms of accident reduction, improved customer satisfaction, retention of employees, improved internal communications, reduced absenteeism, improved health and safety, reduced wastage and the positive impact on meeting other key organisational objectives. Consideration will also be given to measuring the Return on Investment in workplace basic skills training.

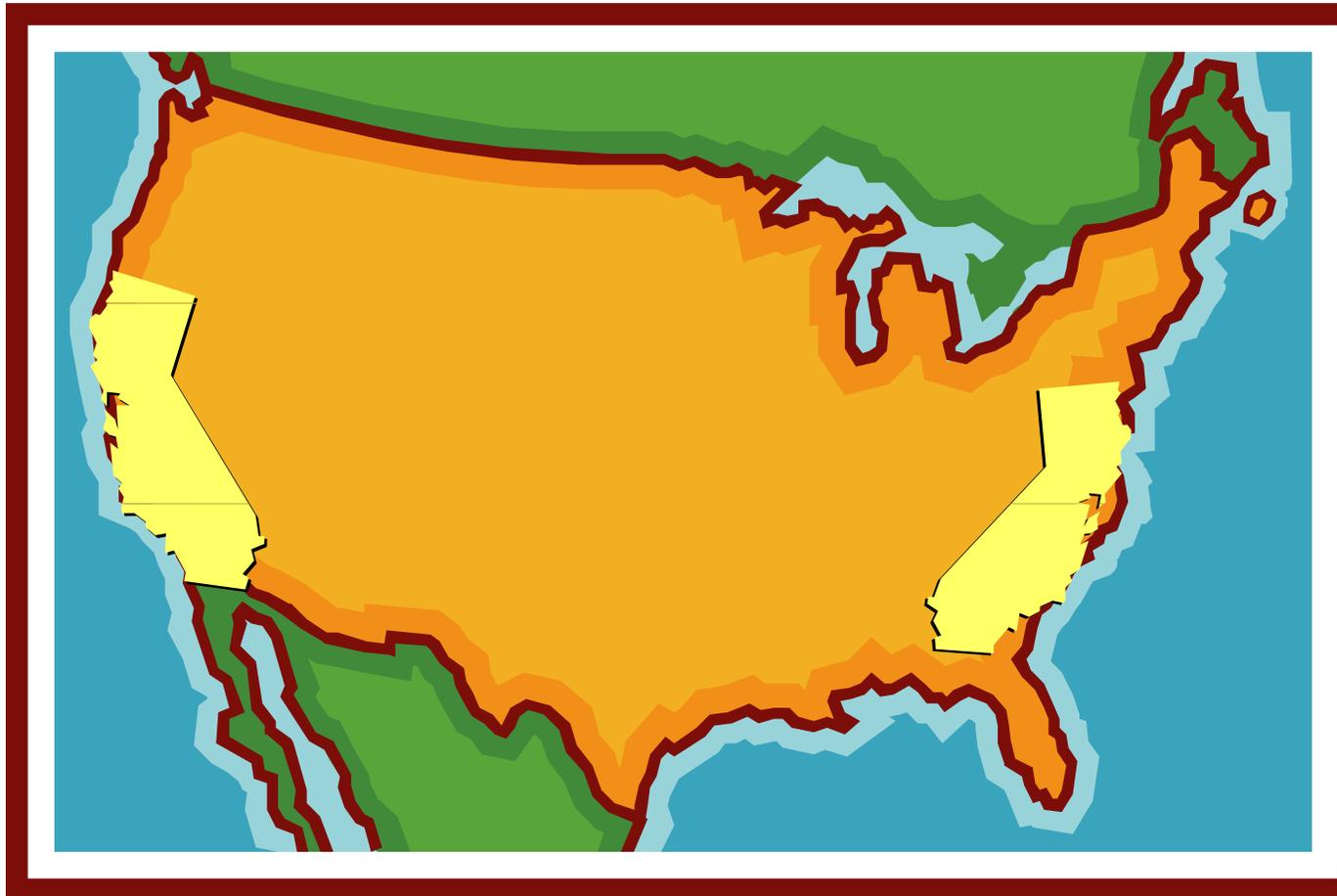
California Economy

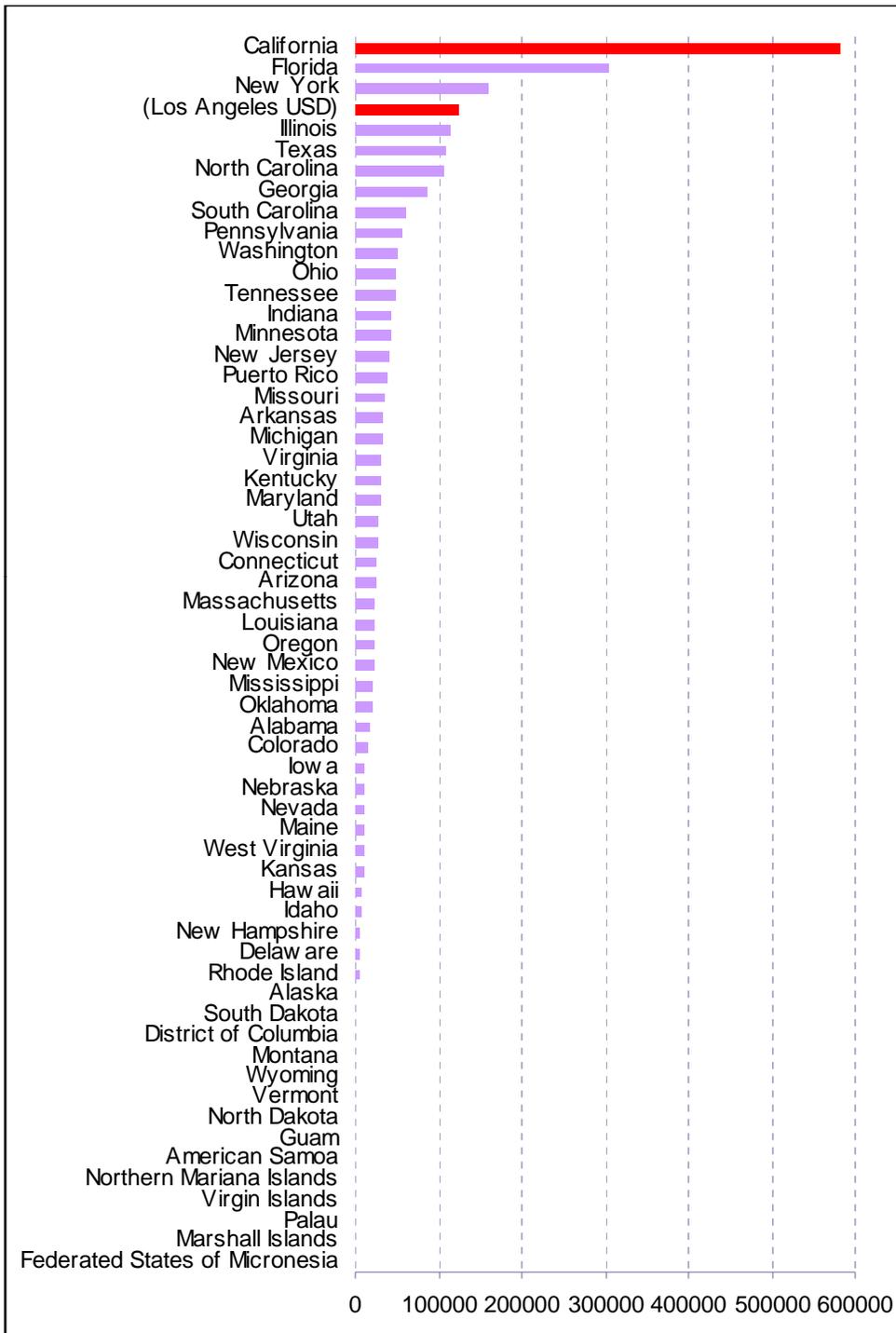
- Population of 38 M
- 5 M with no high school diploma
- Pop. increased 11.5 % since 2000
- \$1.6 trillion economy (8th largest in world)
- \$14 billion deficit (2007-08)
- “Hourglass economy”
- Population growth twice US
- 3.6 M people below poverty line



Source: Legislative Analysts Office “2006 Cal Facts”

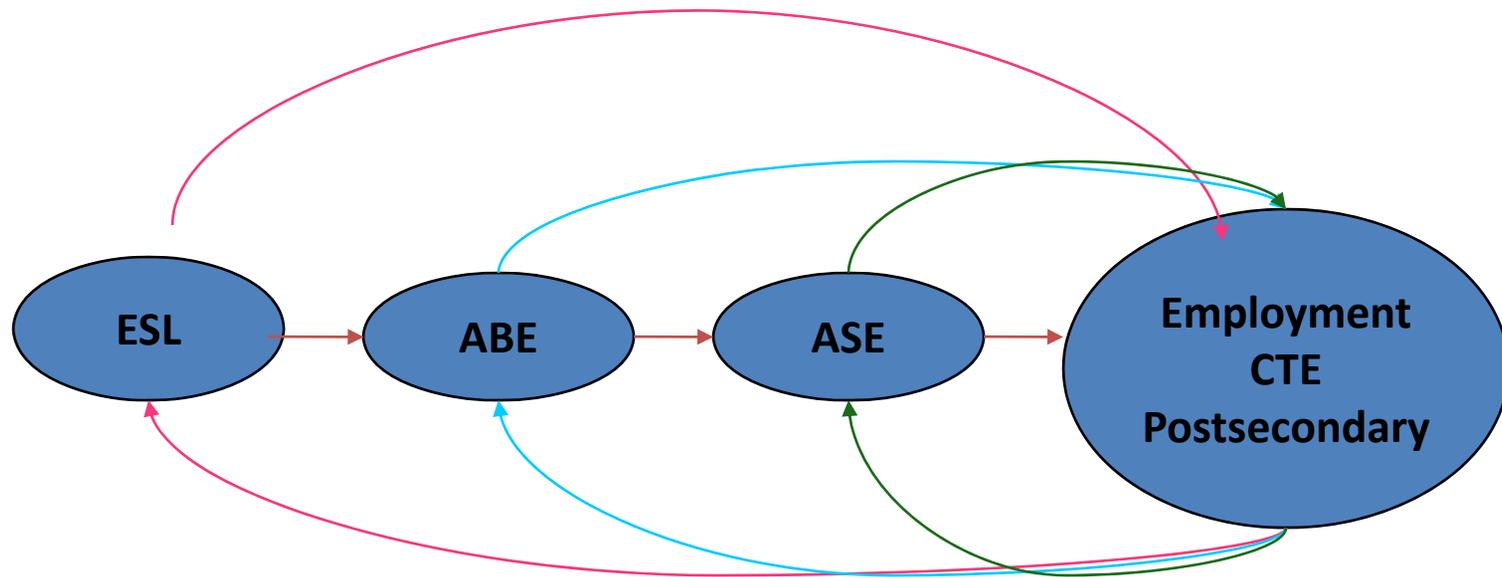
Geography





583,000
Adult
Learners

California Transitions Model



California
Kern High School District
Bakersfield Adult School

ESL, ABE, and ASE learners transition into the workforce or transition to better jobs.

What makes it work?

1. Focus on Student Success – Transition to employment

- Respond to regional/local workforce needs
- Effective Instructional Programs~ high quality curriculum and instruction
- Support Services (safe school environment, student persistence, guidance and counseling, quality facilities, technology systems)

2. Exemplary Staff

- Recruit, hire and retain
- Staff development: PLC's, Study Circles, TIMAC, etc.

3. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Increased communication
- Increase articulation with post-secondary
- Maximize resources
- Participate in public policy (State and local)
- CTE Advisory Committee
(LWIB, Kern Economic Development, County Board of Supervisors, City Council, District Office, Local Business and Industry, Educational systems (K-12, Adult Education & Community College))

4. Accountability

- Measurable data outcomes, evaluation, continuous improvement
- Data driven decisions

California
Kern High School District
Bakersfield Adult School

Challenges:

1. Fiscal Management

- State Budget
- CTE program “costs”
- Leveraging Resources

2. System alignment and coherence

- Articulation
- Align programs and curriculum
- Middle school-K12-adult ed-community college career pathways

**A TEAMING APPROACH:
WASHINGTON STATE'S INTEGRATED BASIC EDUCATION SKILLS TRAINING (I-BEST)**

Washington State is piloting an integrated approach to serving non-native English speaking students seeking workforce training. In the spring of 2004, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' (SBCTC) Offices of Adult Basic Education and Workforce Education began a demonstration project at ten community colleges called Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST). The I-BEST approach creates classroom teams of English as a second language (ESL)/adult basic education (ABE) instructors and professional-technical instructors, who co-teach an integrated course of language and vocational skills training at the same time.¹

The program was designed to reach students with limited English proficiency seeking the skills that lead to higher wage and higher skills jobs. Like many other states, the state of Washington is experiencing an influx of non-English speaking immigrants. Between 1990 and 2000, the adult population of non-English speakers more than doubled, growing from 117,000 to 261,000.² State and national research conducted by the SBCTC revealed that low-skilled adults often begin their educational process in either ESL or ABE courses, and few make the transition to workforce skills training programs that allow them to reap the benefits of higher wage and higher skills jobs. The intention of the ten demonstration projects was to test "traditional notions that students must first complete all levels of basic education before they can begin workforce training."³ All of the demonstrations included an ESL component.

I-BEST is not considered appropriate for students with very low levels of English proficiency. Typically, I-BEST students were chosen from students scoring a three or higher (of a possible six) in English language proficiency on the Washington State Competency System. The average I-BEST student scored a four.⁴

The I-BEST approach includes having two instructors in the classroom at the same time. I-BEST also seeks to support students through advising, tutoring, and mentoring, and to eliminate some of the obstacles faced by its students, including child care and transportation.⁵ I-BEST administrators stress that an essential component of the I-BEST approach is substantial and intentional planning before, during, and after the program.

¹ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Research Report No. 05-2, December 2005. Accessed June 22, 2006, <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Data/rschrpts/Resh05-2-I-BEST.pdf>; Seim, Aimee. "Ed Program Helps Reach Migrant Workers." *Columbia Basin Herald*, March 21, 2006. Accessed June 22, 2006, <http://www.smfws.com/art03212006d.htm>.

² Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Research Report No. 05-2, December 2005, Page 3. Accessed June 22, 2006, <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Data/rschrpts/Resh05-2-I-BEST.pdf>.

³ Ibid., Page 1.

⁴ Ibid., Pages 4-5.

⁵ Seim, Aimee. "Ed Program Helps Reach Migrant Workers." *Columbia Basin Herald*, March 21, 2006. Accessed June 22, 2006, <http://www.smfws.com/art03212006d.htm>.

Faculty must plan the curriculum, faculty and administrators must work together to coordinate student support services, and rigorous assessment must be built in.

“With a focus on re-designing ESL education, colleges shifted from the traditional focus of primarily teaching ESL in the context of family and citizenship to teaching students how to learn language and college study skills within the context of and along with workforce education in the student’s chosen occupation. The workforce education content was the context for learning, practicing and mastering English. The focus on communication skills was no longer on the social aspects of a student’s life, which has traditionally been the focus of ESL instruction. Instead, it focused on work with specific language competencies for application in an employment environment (i.e., communication with the employer and co-workers, and occupation-specific language).”—Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2005⁶

I-Best demonstration projects offered programs including commercial driving, nursing, early childhood education, and help desk operation. A goal of the program is to ensure that I-BEST programs are a part of professional-technical programs that extend to at least one year of college training and result in a credential, as research has shown that those goals result in the most significant gains in the labor market.⁷

I-BEST is new, but results from the demonstration projects have been noteworthy. When compared to traditional ESL students at the same proficiency level studying during the same time period, students in the I-BEST program earned five times more college credits and were 15 times more likely to complete workforce training.⁸ Over the same period of time⁹:

- Forty-four percent of I-BEST students completed skills training (18 percent of I-BEST students received a training credential and another 26 percent “reached other recognized skills attainment levels”)¹⁰.
- Three percent of the comparison group of ESL students also completed workforce training (1 percent received a credential and 2 percent completed non-credentialed programs)¹¹.
- On average, I-BEST students earned 12 workforce and 10 college-level credits.

⁶ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Research Report No. 05-2, December 2005, Page 3. Accessed June 22, 2006, <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Data/rschrpts/Resh05-2-I-BEST.pdf>.

⁷ Ibid., Pages 4, 10.

⁸ Ibid., Page 2.

⁹ Ibid., Page 6.

¹⁰ Email from Tina Bloomer [tbloomer@sbctc.ctc.edu] to lara_couturier@brown.edu. “Re: I-BEST Question.” June 22, 2006. Please note: the report entitled *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training* had a small error on page 6, which did not match the data presented in the table on page A-2. Correct data was confirmed via this email.

¹¹ Email from Tina Bloomer [tbloomer@sbctc.ctc.edu] to lara_couturier@brown.edu. “Re: I-BEST Question.” June 22, 2006. Please note: the report entitled *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training* had a small error on page 6, which did not match the data presented in the table on page A-2. Correct data was confirmed via this email.

- On average, the comparison group of ESL students earned 2 workforce credits and 3 college-level credits.

Though the ESL training for I-BEST is customized to meet the specific needs of the workforce training program, the evaluation of the program suggests that I-BEST students made English skills gains at the same rate as their ESL counterparts. I-BEST students will need follow-up ESL training, but the I-BEST approach creates a foundation upon which to build. Three of the demonstration projects linked the I-BEST training pathway to longer workforce programs. However, data on student pathways beyond I-BEST into further training or the workforce is not yet available.

The SBCTC is now working on spreading I-BEST to other colleges in the state. To do so, it is creating a design for I-BEST programs, issuing planning grants, and running training institutes. Programs eligible for I-BEST are strictly defined, approved, and monitored. For example, programs must be in demand in the local workforce, and they must meet at least one of the following:

- “Contained within a currently approved professional-technical program at least one year in length or an approved professional-technical associate degree program;
- Results in high wage employment with jobs available for program graduates at a minimum of \$14.00 per hour in King County and \$12.00 per hour in the rest of the state; and/or
- Articulated with an approved program (i.e., certified nursing assistant to licensed practical nurse) where completers are given preferential status.”¹²

New funding to the colleges has not been provided for I-BEST. However, because of the costly nature of having two instructors in the classroom at the same time, the presidents have approved an enhanced FTE model wherein the colleges will “generate 1.75 FTE for I-BEST classes within the college’s current state FTE allocation.”¹³

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/oal/default.asp>

¹² Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. *Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, I-BEST: Program Guidelines and Planning Process*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, December 2005, Page A-1. Accessed June 22, 2006, http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Workforce/docs/I-BEST_Prog_Guidelines_and_Planning_Process.doc.

¹³ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. *Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, I-BEST: Program Guidelines and Planning Process*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, December 2005, Page 1. Accessed June 22, 2006, http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/Workforce/docs/I-BEST_Prog_Guidelines_and_Planning_Process.doc.



BAS Bakersfield Adult School



Career & Education Center 2007-2008 Report Card

Mission Statement

The mission of the Bakersfield Adult School is to enrich the lives of our students by providing opportunities for lifelong learning and achieving personal success.

Staff

Principal: Susan Handy
Certificated 139
Classified 105
Total Employees 244

Students

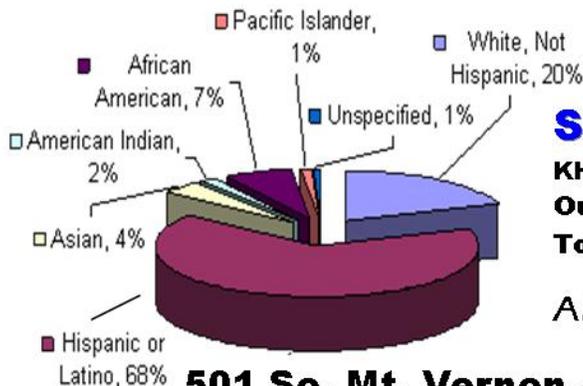
Students 29,262
Males 38%
Females 62%
Average Age 35

Age Range	% Enrolled
18 - 24	33%
25 - 39	38%
40 - 54	20%
55 - 69	4%
70 +	5%

Academic Performance

High School Graduates 405
GED passers 381
Vocational Certificates Issued... 2,522
Pharmacy Technician Completers .. 38
Nurse Assistant Completers 116
Medical Assistant Completers 53
LVN Graduates 15

Ethnicity of Students



501 So. Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, Ca 93307

661.835.1855

A Real School with Real Results



Success Story



Lauren graduated from our Nurse Assistant Program. As a CNA, she successfully completed the prerequisite course work for the Vocational Nurse Program. Lauren is currently working as an LVN at Glenwood Gardens in Bakersfield.

Sites

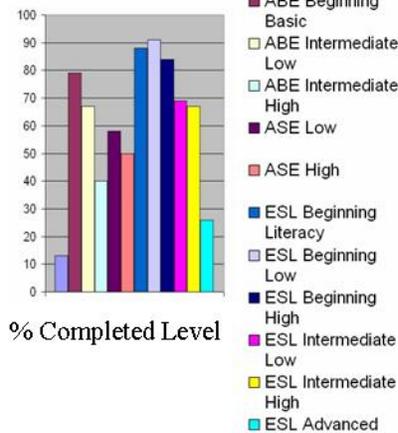
KHSD Sites 9
Outlying Sites 19
Total Sites 28

ADA CAP 3,865

Program Information

Enrollment

English as a Second Language/Citizenship (ESL)....28%
Career and Technical Education (CTE)..... 9%
Adult Secondary Education (ASE) 9%
Parent Education..... 1%
Older Adults 4%
Adult Basic Education (ABE)..... 6%
Adults with Disabilities..... 1%
Adults in Corrections.....18%
Health and Safety.....24%
Enrollment numbers include students enrolled in Independent Study (ASE) or Distance Learning (GED, CIT, ESL)



State of the Art Business Lab



Grand Opening Spring 2008