California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

memo-tlsb-cctd-apr19item02

# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 12, 2019

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Adult Education in California: An Overview

# Summary of Key Issues

The State Board of Education (SBE) is the State Education Agency (SEA) with regards to all federal education programs in California. In 2014, the President signed the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law, which was a reauthorization of the federal Workforce Investment Act. Governor Brown convened all state agencies and departments to develop a State Unified Plan, which the SBE approved at its January 2016 meeting (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/agenda201601.asp>). Among the four titles of WIOA, Title II is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). CDE administers Title II AEFLA on behalf of the SBE and is the largest adult education provider in the United States of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA, Title II: AEFLA).

The tradition of adult education in California can be traced to the early beginnings of the state. The first recorded adult school was sponsored by the San Francisco Board of Education in 1856. Evening classes were taught in the basement of St. Mary’s Cathedral. Then, as now, many adult students were immigrants. In those days, most students were from Ireland, Italy, or China. Subjects taught included elementary-level academic subjects and vocational subjects, such as drafting and bookkeeping. By 1970, the evening adult schools in San Francisco had enrollments of more than 1,000 students and were a permanent part of the school system. *Meeting the Challenge: A History of Adult Education in California.* 2005.

Over the past 163 years, adult education in California has grown to over 700,000 students receiving services through adult education offered in kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) adult schools, non-credit courses at California Community Colleges, County Offices of Education (COE) including COE jail, state prisons, employment centers, community-based organizations, Regional Occupational Programs, workforce development boards and library literacy programs.

According to the US Department of Education 2013 report, *Tapping the Potential: Profile of Adult Education Target Population,* millions of Californians lack basic education and literacy skills. A significant percentage of the population lacks English literacy skills and basic education to secure employment, obtain citizenship, pursue postsecondary or higher education, and participate in their children’s education. The following section quantifies the literacy needs into four primary areas based on the report:

* High School Diploma (HSD) or High School Equivalent (HSE): Approximately six million California adults do not have an HSD or HSE even as California's graduation rate continues to improve. The current graduation rate is 83.8 percent. Conversely, the dropout rate has fallen below 10 percent. Although graduation and dropout rates have improved, significant achievement gaps among student subgroups persist.
* English Speaking Ability: More than 3.5 million California adults “do not speak English well or at all.” More than one-fourth of the national non-English-speaking population resides in California, and more than 2.3 million of that group lack a high school credential.
* Labor Force: Approximately three million California adults without high school credentials are unemployed or not in the labor force. The need for workplace readiness skills is significant. Many job candidates lack job-readiness skills required in the workplace, such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
* Economic Impact: A projection of California’s economy shows a trajectory of steadily increasing demand for a highly educated workforce. However, with the recent recession and budget constraints, the state remains challenged in meeting this demand.

Adult education programs are in place to fill these literacy needs in California. The programs that make up the adult education system in California are supported by two specific funding sources each with their own requirements.

* The largest fiscal support for adult education programs ~~across the state~~ is the State California Adult Education Program (CAEP). This state funding source is the result of the 2015 Budget Act (Assembly Bill 104), and was known for many years as the Adult Education Block Grant. The name was changed in July 2018 to the CAEP. Funding for CAEP in 2018–19 was approximately $521 million dollars.
* WIOA, Title II: AEFLA federal funding supplements adult education in California with approximately $100 million.

## California Adult Education Program (CAEP)

The CAEP is under the administration of the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The CAEP is set up in 71 regional consortia, organized by the 71 California Community College Districts. There are 450 enrolled CAEP members which include: community college districts, school districts, COEs, or any joint powers authority consisting of community college districts; school districts; COEs; or a combination of these, located within the boundaries of each adult education region. Each consortium is required to develop a three-year plan and provide annual updates to the CAEP office. The three-year plan must include:

* An evaluation of the educational needs of adults in the region, entities that provide education and workforce services to adults in the region, and a description of the services provided.
* An evaluation of current levels and types of education and workforce services for adults in the region.
* An evaluation of the funds available to the members of the consortium, including funds other than those apportioned for the CAEP.
* Actions that the members of the consortium will take to address the educational needs identified for individuals in the region.
* Actions that the members of the consortium will take to improve the effectiveness of their services.
* Actions that the members of the consortium and other interested parties will take to improve integration of services and to improve transitions into postsecondary education and the workforce, including actions related to all of the following:
* Placement of adults seeking education and workforce services into adult education programs.
* Alignment of academic standards and curricula for programs across entities that provide education and workforce services to adults.
* Qualifications of instructors, including common standards across entities that provide education and workforce services to adults.
* Collection and availability of data.
* A description of the alignment of adult education services supported by this program with those described in other education and workforce plans providing services in the region, including plans pertaining to the building of career pathways and the employment of workforce sector strategies and those required pursuant to the federal WIOA, Title II: AEFLA.
* A description of the ways in which each of the members contributed to the development of the plan.

Apportionment funding for the CAEP supports the following program areas:

* Elementary and secondary basic skills, including programs leading to an HSD or HSE.
* Educational services for immigrants in citizenship, English as a second language, and workforce preparation.
* Entry or reentry into the workforce.
* Development of knowledge and skills to assist elementary and secondary school children to succeed academically in school.
* Adults with disabilities.
* Career technical education (CTE) that are short term in nature and have high employment potential.
* Preapprenticeship training activities conducted in coordination with one or more apprenticeship programs approved by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards for the occupation and geographic area.

Of the approximately $521 million dollars for the CAEP, 88 percent of the funding supports programs offered through K–12 adult schools.

## Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

The CDE provides adult literacy services to one-fifth of adults enrolled in the WIOA, Title II: AEFLA program in the United States. The adult education program addresses literacy needs of individuals by providing adults with the skills and knowledge necessary to:

* Gain employment or better their current employment.
* Obtain an HSD or HSE certificate.
* Attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training.
* Exit public welfare and become financially self-sufficient.
* Learn to speak, read, and write the English language.
* Master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school.
* Become U.S. citizens, exercise their civic responsibilities, and participate in a democratic society.

The CDE administers the WIOA, Title II: AEFLA grant in three-year cycles, which include a competitive process through a Request for Applications in the first year, followed by annual progress reports in the two subsequent years. In 2017–18, the CDE awarded 197 grants to local education agencies offering programs through a K–12 adult school, COEs, community colleges, community-based organizations, library literacy programs, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and California Department of Developmental Services. The CDE disburses WIOA, Title II: AEFLA funds through a pay-for-performance system based on National Reporting System (NRS) core measures to determine how much funding a local provider will receive. The CDE uses learning gains, attainment of an HSD or HSE certificate and transition to postsecondary or training benchmarks as a basis for determining federal grant funding. Agencies can earn the following benchmark payments per student for student achievement within the program year:

* Completes an NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL). An EFL is determined in one of three ways
  + Comparing a participant’s pretest with the participant’s posttest, using a test approved for use in NRS.
  + Awarding Carnegie Units or credits in an adult high school program (enough to move to 11th- or 12th- grade status according to State rule).
  + Enrollment in postsecondary education or training after exit.
* Attains an HSD or HSE certificate.
* Attains outcomes in English Language (EL) Civics Citizenship Preparation, Civic Participation, and integrated EL Civics.

In order to support the agencies receiving funding under the adult education system in California, specific limited-term CAEP funding has been provided for professional development and technical assistance to the field. In 2017–18, the contractor, Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) CAEP Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) facilitated responses from professional development partners for 12,313 technical assistance requests, hosted 72 statewide webinars for 3,871 attendees, and facilitated 87 in-person workshops for 2,650 attendees. Evaluation scores by over 2,000 attendees rated the professional development received as good or excellent at a 93 percent or higher level on a scale of 0–100 percent. The budgetary support for the SCOE TAP will end December 31, 2019.

As required by section 222 of the WIOA, Title II, AEFLA the SEA is required to use not less than 82.5% of its funds on grants and contracts under section 231. Accordingly, the state may not retain more than 17.5% for state administration and state leadership. The cap for administrative expenses is 5% and for grant state leadership activities is 12.5%. The CDE through AEO ~~l~~everages WIOA, Title II: AEFLA state leadership dollars to fund contracts with the California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS), and Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN). These contracts, funded through the leadership activities portion of the WIOA, Title II: AEFLA grant, provide a variety of services to support the WIOA, Title II: AEFLA providers. The CDE uses 11.5% of the grant for leadership and 5% for administration.

The CALPRO is responsible for designing, implementing, and operating a large-scale, statewide professional development project for all WIOA, Title II: AEFLA funded agencies. The CALPRO provides opportunities for California adult educators to interact through the year and learn collectively in a group setting about evidence-based instructional practice. Evidence-based instructional practices are instructional approaches, practices, or methodologies that are derived from evidence. Such evidence is often a derivative of empirical research, resulting in reliable, trustworthy, and valid substantiation suggesting that a program or practice is effective and that all proofs or facts that support such a program or practice are scientifically based.Professional wisdom, based on educators’ individual experiences and consensus, also provides a source of evidence.

The CASAS is responsible for providing a standardized assessment and accountability system for all levels of the Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English Language Acquisition programs and accountability data to the state. The CASAS reading, listening, and math assessments which are approved by the U.S. Department of Education and are based upon instruction on the approved State standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and the College and Career Readiness Standards, help place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, target instruction, and certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education. The CASAS provides additional special standardized assessments for EL Civics including Reading for Citizenship and the Government and History Test and Citizenship Interview Test for citizenship preparation. In addition, CASAS has worked with a field-based team to develop performance-based assessments that measure student attainment of civic objectives for Civic Participation. Many Civic Objective and Additional Assessment Plans include integrated education and training models combining workforce preparation activities and occupational skills training with literacy activities.

The OTAN provides technology integration training, online curriculum and online courses to support the use of instructional technology to deliver curriculum. OTAN hosts a yearly technology symposium, manages the state Technology and Distance Learning Plan for adult education agencies, and assists in expanding the ability of adult education providers to (1) communicate with one another and their adult learners through multiple methods; (2) develop digital leadership skills; and (3) provide capacity-building services to adult education agencies.

## Data

Data for the CAEP from the 2017–18 program year confirms that 481,263 students received 12 or more contact hours of instruction within the same program year. These students are considered participants. An additional 305,363 students received at least one hour of instruction in an adult education program at a CAEP member institution or a consortium partner.

Demographically, adult learners served in the CAEP represent the diversity of California. The largest ethnic groups served include Hispanic (59 %) and Asian/Pacific Islander (16 %). The majority of CAEP students are female (60 %). Adults aged 25–44 are the largest group served by the CAEP and specifically, adults over 24 years of age constitute 73 percent of all the CAEP students served.

In the 2017–18 program year, 129,221 students enrolled in ABE, ASE, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and demonstrated a measurable skill gain (MSG). In 2017–18, 74 percent of the EFLs recorded were reported for students enrolled in K–12 adult schools and 24 percent were reported for students enrolled in community college noncredit programs. Of students enrolled in ABE, ASE, or ESL adult education programs in 2016–17, 34,290or approximately 10 percentenrolled transitioned into adult education CTE programs or into community college credit coursework in the 2017–18 program year.

Participants in adult education find employment and increased wages after exiting. Based on the California Employment Development Department, wage file data match found 85,573 adult learners were employed in the second quarter after exit of the 2016–17 program year. More importantly was the earnings increase realized by learners after participation in adult education. Based on a comparison of their earnings two quarters before entry and two quarters after exit, students realized a wage increase of 39 percent. The annual median earnings for adult learners in the year after exit was $20,120.

Under WIOA, Title II: AEFLA implemented in 2016–17, states were required to report enrollment and MSGs by periods of participation (PoPs). PoPs is a change and is based upon a period of 90 days of continuous enrollment. In 2017–18, of the 307,478 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting, 142,422 (46.3 percent) achieved at least one EFL gain, including 15,461 learners who obtained an HSD or HSE. The total number of POPs for the 2017–18 program year was 318,794 and the total number of POPs with MSGs was 144,349 (45.3 percent). The overall national percentage for POPs with MSGs in 2017–18, program year is 45.9 percent. California (46.9 percent) exceeded the overall ESL national percentage (45.5 percent) for POPs with MSGs. In 2017–18, California also exceeded the national performance in ABE EFLs three, four, and five.

The persistence rate (students who continually enroll) achieved in 2017–18, was 69 percent, exceeding the California state goal of 50 percent. More than 60 percent of the learners who persisted completed an EFL.

## Recent Monitoring from US Department of Education

In September 2018, staff from the US Department of Education, Office of Career Technical and Adult Education, conducted a monitoring visit of the CDE AEO. They monitored for compliant use of WIOA, Title II: AEFLA funds. On February 28, 2019, Superintendent Thurmond received a letter with the results of the monitoring visit. The letter includes four Noteworthy Practices, five Findings and Required Actions, and two Recommendations.

The findings are related to the need for data sharing agreements with both the EDD and the California Community Colleges Chancellors Office, identification of state requirements versus federal requirements, the need to apply demonstrated effectiveness as a screening tool, and ensure the support of leadership funds and local administrative funds are used according to grant requirements. Demonstrated effectiveness means that the applicant is able to show they have the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities and have a way to present the results of their prior work.

Noteworthy practices help to reinforce the work of the CDE AEO. These practices include the use of State Leadership funds to support grantees, innovation intake practices, coordination with California State and Local Workforce Development Boards, and a comprehensive monitoring system.

The two areas of recommendation include 1) encouragement to continue the innovative technological approach for the collection of supplemental data, and 2) the development of procedures to monitor and report expenditures on infrastructure costs negotiated by designated one-stop partner programs.

The adult education system in California is committed to all assisting adult learners in reaching their fullest potential whether it be to learn English as a Second Language, earn a high school diploma, workforce skills, or develop civic engagement skills to enter the workforce or seek additional education/training.

# Attachment(s)

* California Adult Education Annual Performance Report: Federally Funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II Programs Program Year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 (34 pages). This attachment is available via the World Wide Web at <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/research-and-evaluation/california-state-reports-and-research-briefs/california-annual-wia-ii-performance-report>.