**Adult Education Advisory Meeting**

**Thursday, March 11-12, 2021**

**AALRC Building**

**1:06 pm**

**Called to Order** Chairman Barbara Hamilton called the meeting of the Arkansas Adult Education Advisory Council to order.

**Attendees**

*Members* present: Bill Ritter, Barbara Hamilton, Marsha Taylor, Dr. Debbie Faubus-Kendrick, Dorissa Kaufman, Tammie Lemmons, Nancy Leonhardt, Carol Birth

*State Staff* present: Dr. Trenia Miles, LaJuana Delph, Bridget Criner, Andy Moysh, and Dianne Doyle

*Guests:* Casson Brock, Jennifer Black, and LaRhonda Fulcher

Previous minutes were distributed and approved prior to today's meeting.

**WAGE™ Restructuring Update (LaJuana Delph)**

LaJuana Delph provided an update on the restructuring of the WAGE™ program.

All activities done over the last year coincide with the three goals set forth by the Restructuring Committee which included staff from the local Adult Ed programs, state leadership, and business/industry partners. The goals include: Establishing new workforce training opportunities for opportunities, redesign current state WAGE™ certificates to align with the needs of business and industry, and identify funding streams and partnerships to support workforce training.

WAGE™ is a function of adult education and no longer a standalone program. At this time 27 of 37 programs have started or about to begin the pilot phase.

Programs have staggered start dates for the implementation of WAGE™ Level 1 and 2 and will identify two industry sectors for WAGE™ Level 2 certificates to begin within their programs.

Team Leaders have been identified to help programs with the onboarding process and implementation of WAGE™.

Local Directors and program staff have participated in the following trainings:

* Workforce Preparation & Development Training Program Assessment
* Leadership & Team Development
* Business & Industry Engagement
* Implementing Workforce Preparation Partnership Strategy.

There are currently 252 students enrolled in Workforce Prep; all but 2 programs in the pilot have at least 5 students enrolled.

Any student regardless of educational level can participate in Level 1. Scale score 535 is required to earn a Level 2 WAGE™ certificate.

Dr. Miles stated a sixth career cluster in Information Technology may be added at a later date. There is a plan by the state to help pay for Level II certificates (required trainings) thru SNAP E&T, AALRC, TANF funds, etc.

**Implementing Workforce Development & Training in Adult Education**

Adult Education’s focus has shifted towards workforce development. Dr. Miles stated the benefit of going through the WAGE™ program is having a more standardized process and equipping students with the necessary basic skills and training to enter into employment. Dr. Miles’ goal is to eventually gain state and national approval for the WAGE™ program.

Dr. Miles is considering a test out option with Computer, Work, and Money Essentials if the student can score high enough on the pre-assessment. This will help cut down on the amount of time to complete Workforce Prep. A final decision will be made at a later date.

Dr. Miles stated we need buy in from all adult education staff in order for WAGE to be successful. Teachers and staff have to be on board.

Dr. Miles is working on building and expanding relationships with partner agencies to help with funding. The changes that are being implemented are a benefit to our students and will help solve the problem of IET--paying for services.

**Transition of WAGE™ Certificates (Delph)**

July 1, 2021-All programs will offer Workforce Prep

3/19 Last day to submit signature for certificates

4/6 Adult Centers Level 1 Phases 1-5

5/14 Last day to start WAGE™ Employability

6/1 Workforce Prep Final Modification

6/1 Last day state will process WAGE™ certificates. Accredible will be used to process certificates under the new requirements.

6/15 Final Curriculum Level II submission

WAGE™ Certificates: 2018-19--221 (Had to process 200 certificates late)

2019-20: 2,028

2020-21: 266 certificates processed (July 1 to present)

**LACES-Posttest/Early Posttest (Dr. Miles)**

Bridget Criner provided an update on the Early Post-testing process and challenges:

**Process & Response Time**

* Forms are located on the Adult Education website under Information and Forms
* Incomplete forms are being sent in. Early Post Waivers should be completed in its entirety.
* Expect a 48 hour turn around for post-test waiver decisions. Forms should be signed by the director and should be typed.
* Reminder: 8% of program enrolled students can early post-test

**Percentage of MSG’s**

* 143 Early Post-Tests
* 22 w/EFL gains (15.4%)
* Look at student who have fewer than required number of hours and think about what is the intensity and duration of student’s attendance that would lead to an assumption that the student needs an early post-test. Are informal assessments conducted? In class work?

Dr. Miles advised that manual outcomes should be used when social security numbers are not entered because there will not be a data match and if the student is self-employed, military, working or attending school out of state, or attending a private school.

Barbara Hamilton stated SAU Tech’s Institutional Research Department conducted a data match for SAU Tech Adult Education using the Clearinghouse. Dr. Miles stated she may research the cost of using Clearinghouse for future use.

**Quarterly Report (Dr. Miles)**

Dr. Miles asked the committee what they thought of the new Quarterly Report. Consensus from the group was the new quarterly report takes less time to complete. One of the goals of the quarterly report is to lower the number of missing data such as missing social security numbers.

**GED Stats (Dianne Doyle)**

* Caucasian Students- 87% pass rate
* African American- 53 % pass rate
* Students need to complete demographics sections on MyGED.com to provide accurate data. 91% did not answer the demographic questions.
* Minority students are not completing/passing the GED. Why is this population not performing at a higher rate?
* 16/17 year olds are carrying the state with a 92.3% pass rate.
* School districts are refusing to release 16-18 yr. olds to attend Adult Education.

**Distance Learning**

Dr. Miles inquired about distance learning processes from the field.

Barbara replied most of her instructors are DL certified; however, instructors are still trying to find a balance with face to face and online instruction. Most students are coming in but are transitioning to DL. The concern is whether DL is really working (students who only attend via distance learning).

Tammie stated some students are picking up work, but they are having a hard time documenting the work they are doing.

Barbara noticed students were taking 1 or 2 months to complete work; she advised her instructors to give out only a week’s worth of work and schedule a deadline to have students return their work.

Dr. Debbie Faubus-Kendrick said her numbers have been challenged due to COVID.

Dr. Miles asked if we were noticing a difference in student performance for DL across educational level? Are they making gains?

Dorissa said DL takes a bit more time regardless of the level just because its new to the student and most students like one-on-one. A lot of their classes are blended which consists of one-on-one and online, and it’s been working out. COVID has had an impact on their overall numbers.

Dr. Miles asked what percentage of students have children they have to assist during the day with classwork? Barbara replied that she doesn’t think that’s an issue because if this was the case, TANF numbers would be much higher.

Dr. Miles stated enrollment normally drops during spring break. This may not be the best time to recruit new students unless you can guarantee a gain. If new students are served, programs should consider entering them as Non-NRS so they don’t count against the program. Data should be entered in a timely fashion so programs can make informed program decisions.

Dr. Miles stated OCTAE has not decided if states will receive a reprieve this year due to COVID. Hopefully, this will be the case since the circumstances are beyond human control.

There are a lot of unemployed students and education may not be a priority. Dr. Faubus-Kendrick recruits students at the local DWS office who are waiting in line for services. LaJuana said one of the main issues with unemployment is that clients don’t know how to open an email, retrieve information, and upload a document. Some people may need to upgrade job skills, and this would be a great opportunity for Adult Ed program to assist these clients.

**TABE Remote Testing/Proctoring (Dr. Miles)**

TABE offers a remote testing/proctoring option. DRC has a 3rd party vendor they use to proctor TABE exams. Programs can use a staff person to proctor the test.

Eventually, we would like to offer the GED online from start to finish as an option for adults.

**Update on Funding (Bridget Criner)**

ABE funds will be the same as last year. Total amount of state funds is unknown at the present time. Hopefully, it will not be as late as it was last year before awards are sent to local programs.

Federal funding is $5,885,448 which is a little less than last year. We have 27 months to spend federal funds.

ICE/Leadership: $222,353.00

Correctional: $467,205.34

D&E: $4,204,848.03

Snap E&T: No increase. Funds will remain the same.

TANF is being expanded to include more counties. Out of School Youth will be a focus this year for programs that have a high OSY population. Programs in the OSY pilot will be able to hire a Job Development Coordinator who will assist clients with work experience and developing partnerships with business/industry to serve as work experience locations. The salaries of the participants working at various locations will be reimbursed through the TANF grant.

Dr. Miles stated teachers/career coaches paid with TANF funds must serve TANF eligible students. Other students may be enrolled in the class; however, it must also include TANF students.

**Feedback on E&E/Follow-up Measures (Dr. Miles)**

Over the past few years, E&E has been based solely on measurable skill gains. Arkansas was given two years to establish benchmarks regarding follow-up outcome measures. Previously, E&E was based on MSG’s and the following outcome measures: employment, post-secondary education, and GEDs. Percentage of those numbers were added together and if programs made at least an 80%, E&E was met. This fiscal year, follow-up measures for next fiscal year were negotiated. The challenge is calculating E&E which will now include MSG’s and the following outcome measures:

* Entering Employment 2nd -41%,
* Entering Employment-4th qtr-46%
* Median Earnings ($3996)

It is important to find a way to calculate E&E, and a major concern is the impact it will have on programs. The challenge lies in programs who may have an outlier in an area which would make their percentages astronomical, even if they are not meeting other benchmarks.

Current calculations show half of the programs met E&E and half didn’t. If the formula is kept as is, then more programs won’t make E&E.

Considerations include: Removing median income earnings. Another possibility would be if programs met a certain percentage of benchmarks and increase that percentage over time.

Calculations are ongoing to try to determine a calculation that is fair to all programs in all areas of the state.

**Concerns from the Field (Hamilton, Dr. Miles, Criner)**

* Confusion regarding where to enter credential outcomes in LACES. Dr. Miles stated the state office will work on providing detailed information on where this information should be entered and will be sent out to the field. Dr. Miles also clarified that ServSafe and OSHA 10 are not considered an IET.
* Consider giving credit for Workforce Prep since it is a requirement, and there has been a lot of work going into it. Dr. Miles stated Workforce Prep is really for the students, and we don’t want to get in the habit of attaching funding to everything. Providing funding for Workforce Prep will put some programs at a disadvantage due to size. Programs will not receive credit for the Workforce Prep certificate; however, they stand to gain in other ways such as entering employment and increased median earnings.
* When implementing policies consider the difference between school districts and community colleges. School districts and colleges may not have the same guidelines for teacher evaluation or IET partnership considerations. Dr. Miles stated that IET doesn’t matter where you are located and exceptions can’t be made based on where you are. This is a federal requirement of all grantees receiving Title II funds Training component is purposely designed to connect with a partner.
* Programs should use the evaluation forms required by their LEA. The teacher evaluation sent out by the state was for programs who are not using any type of evaluation instrument. It is not a required form to use, but as an option.

**Advisory Council Nominations/Vacant Positions (Hamilton)**

New members: Jenna Robbins, ASU Mountain Home, Northeast Rep

LaRhonda Fulcher, Central Region Rep--Secretary

Jennifer Black, Southwest Region Rep

Motion passed to accept new officers by committee.

**Other New Business**

Next meeting is scheduled for held May 13-14, at the AALRC/virtual. Meetings are open to all adult education staff, but only committee members are reimbursed for transportation and accommodations.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.