

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

## SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SUPPORTED WITH STATE LEADERSHIP FUNDS

During the fiscal year 2008, the Maryland State Department of Education, through the Adult Education and Literacy Services Branch (AELS), provided State Leadership to 34 local program grantees and the state Correctional Education Program. State Leadership activities were designed around Maryland's achievement of the goals of the State Plan for Adult Education, including the negotiated performance outcomes on the Core Indicators of Performance.

The latter half of the fiscal year was marked by significant disruption to programming by the introduction and subsequent adoption of SB 203, which transfers the stewardship of the adult education program, correctional education and the GED testing program from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor. The politically charged environment and resulting uncertainty had a disruptive impact on both state and local programming. Although the state demonstrated success in many areas, the disruption and uncertainty about the future diminished the ability to move forward on activities related to workforce collaborations as well as activities to integrate and leverage resources.

### **Activities of Statewide Significance Promoting the Purpose of the Title**

#### **Increasing Results - High School Diplomas - 3% Increase from 2007**

Maryland continued to play a leadership role in the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) as part of a Tri State Consortium with New York and Connecticut in partnership with CASAS. Maryland organized and hosted the CASAS East Coast Consortium and coordinated and participated in a statewide study of revisions of NEDP competencies. State representatives attended the NEDP/CASAS Summer Institute and participated in quarterly NEDP/CASAS conference calls. Local EDP staffs were trained on the redesigned Diagnostic Phase of NEDP. Maryland will host a conference for the professional association, the NEDP Council in FY 2009. The redesign of the Diagnostics Phase of the EDP enabled clients to move more quickly through the program. This has resulted in an increase in student persistence and graduation.

The total number of all graduates (GED and EDP) in fiscal year 2008 increased to 2,871 representing a 3% increase over FY 07. Of particular significance is a 32% increase in the number of EDP graduates across the state. In one program, EDP enrollment increased by 38% and the number of EDP graduates increased by 57%.

The goGEDgo website and hotline, initiated in FY 2007, drew over 800 email inquiries from individuals seeking a high school diploma, especially for the online GED-I program. During FY08, the toll free information hotline received and responded to 4,177 calls.

#### **Standards Development and Implementation**

The draft of Maryland Adult Teacher Standards and accompanying self-assessment instrument for practitioners, developed from recommendations by the Professional Standards Workgroup, were posted to the Adult Literacy Resource Center Website for public comment. CAELA staff also reviewed and commented on the document as a part of the CAELA State Capacity Building Initiative. Feedback was very positive, however, more emphasis on ESL and language acquisition

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

was recommended. A revision of the standards was drafted incorporating these suggestions. The Maryland Adult Teacher Standards were introduced to the field at the annual Administrators' Meeting and will be implemented in 2008.

Additionally, the Maryland ESL Standards Training Guide was completed and is now available on the Adult Literacy Resource Center website. It will be utilized by state staff and Instructional Specialists to train teachers in local programs. The training guide assures consistency in how standards are implemented across the state and was reviewed as a part of the CAELA State Capacity Building Initiative.

## **Public Awareness**

The state adult education program continued to educate stakeholders about the need for and value of adult literacy as well as the need for increased funding to expand services and reduce waiting lists. The state program created public awareness materials and posted them on the state Adult Literacy Resource Center website and partnered with the state professional association in a media campaign. A state staff member was featured on three radio interviews and in two newspaper interviews supporting increased funding for adult education and promoting existing services. Substantial testimony was provided in the General assembly by stakeholders. The General Assembly appropriated an additional \$500,000 for the adult education program for FY 09.

## **Post Secondary Education and Training Transition**

### ***Regina Milio Scholarships***

The MD State Department of Education, in partnership with the Maryland Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE), awarded nine scholarships to GED graduates. The scholarships assist adult learners who are continuing their education through post-secondary education and training. The scholarships honor the late Regina Milio who was an employee of the Maryland GED Testing Service. Five of the Milio recipients are returning scholars attending four-year colleges and universities. They have maintained a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average. Since 2003, 61 Milio scholarships have been awarded to 42 high school graduates who attended the adult education program in Maryland and achieved a score of 3,000 or higher on their GED tests.

### ***Local Transition Strategies***

Local programs are developing resources and partnerships to promote transition to employment and postsecondary education and training. A variety of transition activities including field trips to college campuses, hosting speakers for staff and students, providing career and educational information packets for diploma recipients and using dedicated staff to connect students with resources have increased the numbers of students meeting their goals to pursue further training or academic credentials.

Fast track GED classes and intensive classes for advanced ESL students have resulted in higher rates of transition to postsecondary options. Students with an employment goal are provided information on One Stop services and encouraged to register with the Maryland Workforce Exchange, the state labor website. Increasingly, local programs are enhancing curriculum offerings with job readiness and career development options.

Montgomery College was one of five programs nationally to receive funding through the Career Connections grant. Program staff participated in webinars, site visits and trainings, met with

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

apprenticeship programs at the college, developed career pathways and developed the first transition class ESOL for Building Trades. ESOL for Healthcare will be developed in FY 09.

## **Professional Development Activities**

In FY 08, Maryland extended its professional development activities to fund a full time state Professional Development Specialist position to coordinate the statewide professional development system. Additionally, Maryland continued to fund and support full- time positions (Instructional Specialists) in each local program to lead local professional development, mentor and coach teachers, observe classroom instruction, conduct local needs assessments for professional development, and to ensure the implementation of best practices at the local level. The IS operate as part of a local leadership team with the local program directors, the local Management Information Specialist (MIS), and the local Intakes Assessment Specialist (IAS).

State level training is focused on the development of this team using a train-the-trainer model. Local training is documented and posted to a state online file sharing system.

The state Professional Development Specialist coordinated statewide needs assessments and training during FY 08. More than 25 state level professional development workshops, seminars and meetings were conducted for approximately 400 participants. This included orientation and foundation training for each of the local leadership team members – local administrators, IS, IAS, and MIS personnel. The state office provided regular technical assistance to these local leadership personnel through meetings, conference calls and list-servs.

An online survey of the professional development needs of Instructional Specialists was used to design orientation for new specialists. A two-hour online course on mentoring teachers was also developed and shared via the listserv. Twelve new instructional specialists participated in this training at the New Instructional Specialist Orientation. A professional development planning session was held for 37 Instructional Specialists.

### ***Leadership Excellence Academy***

Maryland provided a statewide Leadership Excellence Academy as one of three states piloting the Leadership Excellence Academy initiated by the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEDPC) and ProLiteracy. Fourteen local program managers and three correctional education Principals completed the Academy and were awarded the first adult education national certification as Certified Manager in Program Improvement (CMPI). The two-year program assisted program directors to explore, adapt and apply leadership concepts and skills specific to their local adult education programs through workshops, web-based trainings and webinars with programs from other participating states, individually selected interim activities, and submission of culminating projects. Participants engaged their local programs in program assessment, analyzing data and selecting program improvement strategies based on research-based practices. Feedback from the program participants indicated that the leadership course was a valuable opportunity to engage staff in initiating important program improvement practices.

### ***Assessment***

State level training was conducted for assessment for local Instructional Specialists and Intake Assessment Specialists. This included CASAS Foundation training focused on ABE/ASE

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

instruction, ESL CASAS training and Best Plus training, and training on the official GED practice Test and the official GED Tests.

## ***Training in High School Diploma Options***

The National External Diploma Program East Coast Regional Meeting was attended by 43 participants. Additional state training included EDP Assessor Certification and training for the CASAS Competency Revalidation pilot study.

## ***State Staff***

State staff attended national training and conferences as presenters or participants including National Reporting System (NRS), CASAS, TESOL, COABE, National EDP, CAELA, LINCS and the ABE to College Transitions Conference.

## **Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance to the 34 local grantees is routinely provided by the state director, the deputy, six state staff, the Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center personnel, and the state data quality consultant. Each of the grantees is assigned to one of the state staff, who provides grant management and technical assistance on an ongoing basis depending on the identified need. Desk monitoring through telephone and email is routinely provided and onsite visits are done as needed. State staff provided additional specialized assistance to programs for family literacy, special needs populations, high school diploma options, English language acquisition, accountability, distance learning and workforce development.

Five sites were visited by a state staff team for on site program monitoring. An additional twelve programs were selected for onsite technical assistance based on performance, change in grantee or key staff, data quality or program improvement needs. Special technical assistance also included workgroups, meetings and special projects.

## **Change in Local Grantee Network**

In response to stakeholder feedback at a Workplace/ESL Listening Session in December 2006, a new grant competition was held in FY 08 to assist community based organizations develop the infrastructure to operate a standards based instructional program that achieves NRS learner outcomes. The Building Capacity Grant, supported by new state funding from the General Assembly, added the Literacy Council of Montgomery County, Maryland Inc. (LCMC) as a new grantee to the state network. The grant focuses on developing the organization's instructional leadership and aligning the program with state standards, state assessment policy, content standards and accountability systems. Grant funds supported hiring, training, and assisting the organization's instructional specialist (IS), intake assessment specialist (IAS) and management information specialist (MIS) as well as professional development.

In addition, a competitive RFP was also released to select instructional service providers for four counties on the Upper Eastern Shore when two local school systems decided not to continue adult education programming. Chesapeake College was awarded a grant to serve four counties including Kent, Dorchester, Talbot and Caroline in FY 09. Extensive technical assistance and

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

training was provided to both grantees to ensure a smooth transition and to assist programs to meet state requirements. All other grantees were continued.

## **Family Literacy**

Technical assistance was provided by the state Family Literacy Specialist to support implementation of grantee Family Literacy programming through conference calls, family literacy data reporting tools and an annual Family Literacy forum, in November 2008. Local family literacy programs developed MOU's with their partnering early childhood community organizations to formalize how the four components of family literacy will be met through the partnership. Training was provided on the NRS Table 8; additional data is now collected to document outcomes related to parents' activities with their children. The state Family Literacy Specialist represented Adult Education on a number of internal Department of Education and external community committees for early childhood development and family involvement initiatives.

## **Distance Learning**

Significant state activities supported the launch of the GED-*i* program in January 2008 as the state's official distance-learning GED preparation curriculum. State staff and the ALRC provided technical assistance in the development of the policies, procedures and staff training for implementation. Frederick County Public Schools, one of the pilot sites for GED-*i*, assumed the role as statewide provider. Students are screened and pretested with CASAS by any of the 34 statewide local grantees. Learners who are able to demonstrate minimum 9<sup>th</sup> grade math and reading skills are referred to the GED-*i* program. A customized learning plan is developed for each student. The average GED-*i* session is approximately 15 weeks. Learners, who complete the course, are post-tested on CASAS by their local program and take the Official Practice Test. In FY 08, 325 students were enrolled in the program and 8 were awarded a high school diploma.

## **Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center (ALRC)**

The Adult Literacy Resource Center provided key technical support and resources to teachers, adult learners, local grantees, and state staff during FY08. The ALRC also provided information and referral to the public. The Center, located at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County (UMBC) which operates an internationally recognized teacher education program, extends its services to the university community, ESOL teachers, specialists, instructors, and researchers. The ALRC provided critical technical assistance to state distance learning activities such as negotiating and purchasing statewide licenses for GED-*i*, Best Plus, and Crossroads Café, providing technical support for state distance learning projects, and the development of distance learning courses for mentoring teachers and for Maryland ESL Content Standards. The ALRC managed and maintained the Center website and provided the platform for and management of five statewide listservs for local grantee personnel. The ALRC created, deployed and analyzed results for online surveys including state waiting lists, training needs for local grantee staff, and training evaluations.

The Center staffed ALRC operation hours, catalogued 513 new print materials and distributed 3,558 materials through on site and library loan. Nearly 2,800 patrons visited the ALRC to use the resources and borrow materials. The ALRC received and responded to approximately 4,177 hotline calls and 822 email inquiries about adult education classes and the GED Tests. The ALRC

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

also provided technical support such as conference and seminar planning, facilities contracts and management, travel coordination, training stipends, materials preparation, registration, trainer contracting, computer laboratory facilities, and conference space in support of statewide professional development. The ALRC coordinated 21 professional development workshops, trainings and state meetings for 367 participants.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of 34 grantees was performed on a regular basis by state staff in the form of desk monitoring of narrative and fiscal reports, performance measure achievement, as well as NRS data and program data entered into the LWIS data system.

The state Accountability Specialist and the state Data Quality (DQ) Consultant provided ongoing training and technical assistance to local MIS specialists and administrators. The Data Quality Consultant conducted onsite DQ visits, state certification of DQ, review of local DQ plans, grantee consultation on DQ implementation; LWIS manual updates; MIS training; development of new NRS reports; and training and seminars for local Intake Assessment Specialists. In addition, a *Data Quality Desk Audit* was developed for grantees to provide targeted evidence of compliance with the *Data Quality Standards*.

A state Literacy Works Information System Review Team (LWIS RT) with state and local representation met regularly to discuss data base operations, determine data base changes and review performance issues.

## **Coordination with Existing Support Services**

Family Literacy funding was provided to sixteen grantees. Programs coordinate with Even Start, Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Support Centers or Judy Hoyer Early Learning and Education Centers to provide integrated adult education and parenting education to learners enrolled as parents of pre-school or school aged children. Support services to participating parents include transportation, childcare, counseling, food assistance, employment assistance, health referrals/assistance, identification and referrals for special assistance for their children's learning needs. In addition, all programs providing ESL services have partnership MOUs with community agencies. These partnerships provide traditional activities such as providing space, equipment, tutors, volunteers and funding for instruction, and information and referral to other community services. In addition, they also provide substantial support services including transportation, childcare, food, shelter, financial assistance, translation services, FEMA funds, job and immigration counseling, clothes, rental assistance, computer instruction, conversation sessions, special Library collections, and purchase books for learners.

## **Integration of Literacy Instruction and Occupational Skills training /Linkages with Employers**

Maryland has continued to support and promote the integration of literacy and occupational skills at the local level. Examples are described below. The ESOL for Customer Service Curriculum was completed in FY 08 and posted to the Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center website. This contextualized instructional resource, developed through the collaboration between MSDE,

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

Montgomery College, the National Retail Federation and the Sales and Service Center at the One Stop, was designed for the Intermediate level learner. It combines customer service skill content, job readiness, language acquisition, and builds on the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Retail Sales Curriculum. The curriculum aligns with the Maryland Content Standards for adults ESL/ESOL focusing on the listening and speaking skills and CASAS competencies. Funding for the curriculum was provided through the Adult Education Coordination and Planning Project, Maryland State Department of Education, Montgomery College and Montgomery Works. A taped listening segment will be available in FY 2009.

Frederick County Public Schools in partnership with the local WIB, Frederick Community College and Frederick Memorial Hospital continued to develop the bridge program for foreign-born individuals interested in careers in the allied health field. The adult education program recruited learners at the high intermediate level for participation in the class. Class work emphasized intensive language instruction and medical terminology. Eighty-three percent of learners completed the class successfully and transitioned to clinical training at the college.

## **EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE**

Maryland continued its history of annual performance increases in literacy level attainment and diplomas despite the turmoil caused by the effort to change the state agency governance of the program. It is anticipated that the state may not be able to maintain performance at this level in FY 09 as the demands on state staff and local programs have increased with the transition activities.

### ***Increase in Literacy Attainment - 3% increase over FY07***

Learners (Table 4) had a literacy level completion rate of 49% representing a 3% increase over FY 2007. There was a 7% increase in ASE learner completion from 53% in FY '07 to 60% in FY'08. ELL completion rate remained at 46%. For learners with sufficient instructional hours to be post tested (Table 4B), 67% advanced a literacy level.

### ***Increase in Diploma Attainment - 3% increase from FY07***

In FY 08, the state saw a 3% increase in high school diploma attainment with 86% (2,871 learners) earning a Maryland high school diploma by assessment on the GED Tests or the National External Diploma Program. As previously mentioned, the EDP program outcomes increased by 32% statewide as a result of the NEDP's redesigned Diagnostics Phase. Of all graduates from both the GED Tests and the NEDP, 58% were ages 16 – 25.

### ***Postsecondary Education and Training***

Maryland performance declines somewhat on this measure. Data on learners entering post secondary education and training continues to represent an under reporting of actual performance. There was a significant drop in the recording of learners' goal for further education and training, even when there was clear evidence that learners did enter training. This depressed the representation of state performance this fiscal year. In addition, state level data is not available from the Maryland Higher Education Commission until after the reporting period for the fiscal year. In addition,

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

## *Employment Outcomes*

State performance in retaining employment remained level in FY 07; performance in obtaining employment decreased by 2%. Maryland's economy experienced a decline during this fiscal year, which affected outcomes; the unemployment rate increased by 1.3% from FY 07. The building trades and construction as well as the hospitality industry, which are two of Maryland's largest industry sectors, have been increasingly affected by the recession. In addition, we have observed that fewer local programs are reporting SSN#s and the state agency has fewer records to match against the Department of labor Unemployment Insurance Wage database.

## *Matched Literacy Level Assessments - Stable*

The state pre-post match remained at 71% in FY 08. Programs continue to benefit from the role of the Intake Assessment Specialist in providing a focused process for intake, goal setting, orientation and assessment as well as the implementation of a statewide-managed enrollment policy.

## *Enrollment Trends*

In Fiscal Year 2008, Maryland's Adult Education programs enrolled 30,882 learners. While this represents a 5% decrease in enrollment from FY 07, it is still above the FY '06 enrollment of 30,047 learners. Although programs received level funding, increased operating costs have resulted in fewer classes being offered. Additionally, programs have fully implemented managed enrollment with the result that students are staying in classes for longer periods and there are fewer available seats for new enrollees. The state continues to maintain an average waiting list of approximately 5,000.

The enrolled population remained relatively unchanged in literacy levels, age, and gender from FY 07. ABE learners continue to comprise the highest portion of enrollment at 44%. ASE enrollment declined slightly from FY 07, but has declined by 3% over the last three years. The ESL population remained stable at 42% of all enrollments, but has increased 3% over the last 3 years. (Enrollment percentages do not equal 100 due to the rounding effect.)

## *Learner Persistence - 8% increase from FY07*

Average contact hours rose from 73 to 80 in FY 08, and increase of 8% from FY '07. This increase reflects positively on the role of the state focus in professional development on implementation of research-based strategies for learner persistence, implementation of the Intake Assessment Specialist position in each local grantee program and the impact of managed enrollment.

## **INTEGRATION WITH OTHER ADULT EDUCATION CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

During FY08, the Maryland entered into a significant period of change with the passage of SB 203, which will transfer adult education, correctional education and GED Testing services from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), effective July 1, 2009. The existing State MOU continues to guide partnership among WIA agencies. Adult education leadership funds continue to help support GWIB activities. The Superintendent of Schools and the Assistant State Superintendent for Career Technology and Adult Learning serve on the GWIB Board and Subcabinet. Unfortunately, work



# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

previously begun on adult education and workforce collaboration initiatives has not continued under the new leadership at DLLR.

Locally, adult education programs are utilizing the state Career Development Toolkit and other resources to develop job readiness resources for students. Career information, goal setting, resume and cover letter preparation and interview skills are key components of the classes. The collaborative efforts begun in the previous fiscal year between adult education programs and their workforce partners continue to be implemented in some local jurisdictions.

Montgomery County continues to enroll ESOL students in an integrated ESL and occupational skills program at the Sales and Service Learning Center. During FY'08, 85% of the registered learners completed the course. The Support for Education and Employment programming provides counseling to participants focused on obstacles to employment, future job goals, and further education. Students participating in the ESOL for Customer Service class also take the National Retail Certification examination in as a completion requirement. The National Retail Federation has provided students with additional test time as an accommodation for second language learners. During FY'08, 19 students passed the examination.

In FY 08, adult education program listings were updated on the website and the Maryland Workforce exchange for WIA qualified training providers.

## **ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES SUPPORTED WITH EL CIVICS FUNDS**

Twenty-three grantees received EL Civics funds, serving a total of 6,148 learners. This represents a 24% decrease in reported learners from FY '07 and is an under reporting of actual services. Staff changes in two of the largest local ESL programs resulted in inaccurate reporting. The ESL Specialist has provided extensive technical assistance on the use of EL Civics funds and the recording of primary goals for learners supported with EL Civics funding during FY 07. Programs will also receive additional technical assistance and interim monitoring of their data to address the reporting issue.

### **Crossroads Café**

This partnership with the Maryland Library Association and Maryland Public Libraries, begun in 2006, continues to extend the availability of EL/Civics content using Cross Roads Café in local libraries. Collaborations between partners in four local programs served 98 learners during FY'08.

### **Developing and Disseminating Curricula**

#### ***ESL Content Standards***

Maryland continues to update and disseminate the ESL Content Standards. Following participation in the OVAE Standards in Action project and professional development in unpacking standards, the standards were revised. They now also include unit and lesson planning. The revised ESL Content Standards are posted on the ALRC website.

#### ***ESL Content Standards Course***

The online version of the course is expected to be piloted in FY 09. This interactive resource will be used to train new instructional staff in local programs.

# Maryland Narrative Report 2007-2008

## *EL/Civics Toolkit*

A guide was developed for local programs on developing EL Civics curriculum. This is posted to the Adult Literacy Resource Center website. As local programs develop curriculum, it is suggested that all EL/Civics instructors take EL/Civics Online: Integrating EL/Civics into Adult Education Classes. The EL/Civics Online is a collaborative project of the U.S. Department of Education/Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services/Office of Citizenship (USCIS). The EL/Civics Toolkit uses the Standards in Action Pilot activities to unpack CASAS competencies and align skills for implementing instruction that aligns with the Federal Register of November 17, 1999.

## *ESOL for Customer Service Curriculum*

As mentioned above, this contextualized curriculum for Intermediate level ESL learners, which was developed during the state participation in the OVAE AECAP project, was completed in FY 08. It was posted to the Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center website and disseminated at the national conference, which concluded the AECAP projects.

## **Technical Support for English Language Learners**

Maryland participated in the OVAE Standards in Action project. Two local programs were selected to pilot for Standards in Action project. Extensive Content Standards professional development was provided by the state Professional Development Coordinator for the participating programs and the instructional specialists in unpacking standards, aligning assessments, aligning texts, unit planning and lesson planning. Statewide assessment training was revised to include the unpacking activity which demonstrates the connection between assessment, instruction and standards. As a result of the pilot project, the ESL Content Standards were also revised to include the unpacking standards activity.

Instructional Specialists were encouraged to attend the local USCIS meeting to learn about the online course for EL/Civics instructors. A toolkit, available on the Maryland Adult Literacy Resource Center website, was developed by the state Professional Development Specialist for local programs use to assist teachers in developing appropriate EL/Civics curriculum.

## **Other WIA Funded Initiatives**

### **MGETS**

A continuing initiative supported by WIA Incentive funds the completion of Phase 1 of MGETS development in FY 08. The Maryland GED Testing System (MGETS) computer data system is used by Maryland GED Testing Office to support the day to day activities of the GED Testing office and is used to extract monthly state outcomes for the adult education programs' learners who take the GED Tests. The system has also made monthly reports of outcome data available for local programs. If additional funding is secured for portal development, features of the system such as automated fee and application processing, scheduling, results reporting, and transcripts will provide a foundation for online access through the web by candidates and local programs.