

Vermont Narrative Report 2008-2009

Leadership

Leadership funds support professional development and state staff salaries related to professional development. The FY09 Adult Education & Literacy Professional Development Calendar was once again a collaborative effort of teachers, program managers, provider organizations, the Professional Development team and state AEL staff. All training reflected the continuing state priority to encourage practitioners to use the EFF Framework and competently apply the standards-based approach to instruction and assessment. In keeping with what the research says about effective staff development, a combination of multi-day, single day and customized workshops was offered. This year, the focus was on instruction, assessment, data entry and analysis, technology, and building and upgrading the professional development system.

The reporting year is the fifth year of a single statewide grant for the provision of adult education and literacy services. The statewide grantee shares responsibility with the AEL Team at the Department of Education for professional development services. During this period, the system has enjoyed the benefits of a full-time Professional Development Coordinator. In addition to a full, year-round calendar of professional development workshops designed to meet a variety of training needs, a week was also set aside for the pursuit of professional development activities designed and implemented at the local level. During the reporting year, 100% (152 individuals) of the field staff participated in at least one professional development activity supported by Leadership funds.

Core Indicators of Performance

Vermont began building a common accountability and continuous improvement system for Adult Education & Literacy eight years ago. The first step, a management information system, was designed to provide internet-based individual student records containing inter-relational data on demographics, goals, educational plans, skill assessments, service participation, and outcomes. FY06 was the first year that all providers were required to enter data directly into the new system (Data Works) which went online on September 06, 2005. In FY07 it became apparent that the available data reports were not universally perceived to be reliable and helpful. Also, adjustments to some data fields made longitudinal comparison challenging. In the latter part of FY07 an effort was launched to address these issues by first clearly identifying data reporting needs. With that information in hand, a library of revised and new reports was established and progress continues toward full implementation. Trust in the reliability of the data system has been enhanced and there is evidence that the use of the data system as a management tool has increased.

There continues to be a need to increase the number of students who qualify for the federal report. In FY09, approximately 32% of students served qualified for inclusion, an improvement from the previous year. During the reporting year the total population increased, as did the number qualifying for the federal report. Three of the four ABE categories showed increased numbers, the exception being Beginning Literacy. The two ASE categories showed decreased numbers. Four of the six ESL categories showed decreased numbers, the exceptions being Low Beginning and High Beginning. Overall, there was a 4% decrease in the federal report population. There has been a decrease of 15% in the number of ESL students who qualify for the federal report. Average attendance hours for all students in the report are just over 58, a slight increase.

Integration

Through the development of ten full-service centers and linked satellites, as required by the statewide grant, students have access to a statewide system. Centers serve as points of access, enrollment, and coordination for a wide range of adult education and literacy services, including:

- *intake and enrollment;
- *goal setting;
- *learning plan development;
- *assessment;
- *instruction;
- *tutoring;
- *credentialing (GED, Adult Diploma, High School Completion);
- *workplace skills development; and
- *transitions assistance.

Staff from throughout the State serve on Local Workforce Investment Boards. Partnerships, both formal and informal, exist throughout the system linking adult education to the workplace, secondary education, and post-secondary education. The newest partnership, which has continued to evolve during the reporting year, is with secondary education.

The High School Completion Program was in its third year of operation during the reporting year. It requires partnership between adult education providers and high schools for the purpose of developing graduation education plans for participating students. One result of this process has been a much improved relationship between the partners. High schools now have a better idea of what adult education is able to offer. Adult education is benefiting from the expertise residing in the secondary system. In other words, effective practice is being shared and students in both systems are the beneficiaries. While services delivered through this program are reimbursed with State funds, Title II funds have made it possible to develop the infrastructure necessary for its rapid implementation.

EL/Civics

During FY09 EL/Civics grants supported efforts at three learning centers. While every center provides some level of ESL services, these three represent the areas with the highest concentration and greatest need. Statewide, 312 students were served through these programs.

All programs reported continuing work on standards-based contextualized curriculum related to parent, worker and citizen roles. All programs reported that ESL instruction at the intermediate and advanced levels now occur almost exclusively in the context of American culture and civics with introductory American history and government woven into both the low and high beginning levels.

Conclusion

Vermont is a rural state with a small population, and challenging travel conditions. Availability of services to students, delivery of professional development opportunities, and managerial functions are all made more difficult by the physical environment. However, these realities also make it possible to be more innovative and move more quickly to effect improvement.