

Idaho Narrative Report 2009-2010

1) Describe successful activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds and describe the extent to which these activities, programs, and projects were successful in implementing the goals of the State Plan.

The state provides required training to ensure adherence to federal and state policies and guidelines, as well as to support and assist programs in improvement efforts. State guidance and monitoring processes ensure consistency across the state in reporting student progress. A three tiered PD evaluation system provides both data and input from the field regarding technical assistance (TA) and professional development (PD) needs.

In order to implement the goals of the Idaho State ABE Plan, Idaho training is tiered to accommodate new teachers as well as experienced teachers and staff.

- 1) Idaho ABE participates in national training opportunities;
- 2) Idaho ABE provides statewide training;
- 3) Idaho ABE promotes regional training through the use of regional training cadres, or trained PD Specialists located in each region. The PD Specialists are able to present or arrange regional training for the many part-time teachers and staff unable to attend state trainings due to limited funding.

Leadership funding is provided to regional programs, through state approved professional development plans, to compensate both full time and part time teachers when training is conducted outside of working hours, and for work on follow-up activities related to the training and program improvement processes. Training venues vary and may include any of the following: face-to-face, study circles, video conferencing (interactive), webinars, and online. All training activities promote practice, inquiry, and dialogue in support of improving learner outcomes. Applied learning is a training objective.

All State activities and projects support the goals stated in the Idaho State Plan, which are as follows:

- Create continuous learning opportunities
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Encourage collaboration and team learning
- Support improved learner outcomes

In the analysis of statewide professional development data, we were able to increase training for ABE/ESL teachers and staff from 178 participants in FY 2009 to 220 in FY 2010. We are beginning to see good results in creating regional training cadres in each region so that more part time teachers can access training. The majority of the 220 teachers who attended training participated in multiple professional development activities during the year. All the teachers met the state's training requirements for full time staff. The State only funds training that is required and tied to regional/state performance outcomes.

National Training

Adult Education Leadership Institute

Idaho was fortunate to have participated in the Adult Education Leadership Institute this past year. This was an effective, hands-on project that assisted us in developing an Idaho ABE Mission and Vision. It also provided us with the tools to begin our strategic planning process in the area of instruction. The Project provided information, activities, presentations, group discussion and feedback in such topic areas as:

- Strategic Leadership
- Collaborative Leadership
- Instructional Leadership
- Creating a Shared Vision
- Systems Thinking
- Social Marketing

The State Director and State Administrative Assistant attended the Institute and have either used, or are in the process of using, the excellent materials received in the Institute to create a clearer ABE message and plan in our state. We also shared some of the leadership information with local program managers in order to help them strengthen their programs and their leadership capabilities.

Leadership Excellence Academy

Idaho completed the second of a two year training program in leadership excellence for local AEFLA grantee managers, provided by the NAEPDC. The state supported local managers in participating in this training for the full two year commitment. We had local participation from each regional ABE program. Seven program managers participated, as well as the state director.

Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL):

Idaho was honored to be invited, and approved to join, the TEAL project for FY 2010-11. We are looking forward to the integration of good writing practice into our instructional strategic planning process and writing curriculum. We have six teachers participating.

Center for Adult English Language Acquisition

The research, training, and assistance provided from CAEFLA have been invaluable to a small state like Idaho who depends upon leadership in the field of ESL. We have benefitted from this program and will continue to use the many resources available to us through this organization.

Statewide Training

Regional Program Manager Training

Idaho administration met with the regional program managers three times during the year to research and plan transitional strategies for adult learners moving into post-secondary education or certificate programs of technical education. A pilot Bridge (I-BEST) project in north Idaho resulted from these meetings and each program now has some type of transitional activity available.

We also worked together on forming a common ABE vision and mission. Regional teachers, staff, collaborative and community partners, were included in the preparation of our mission statement. In the spring, the state director presented the ABE Vision to the college Dean's at the Division of Professional-Technical Education Conference and to the Division staff. We plan to continue moving our message forward into the community in the coming year. At the end of the year, the regional managers and professional development specialists began the process of creating a framework for strategic planning around instructional quality.

AEFLA Grantee Monitoring

Each AEFLA funded grantee was provided an on-site program data review in FY 2010. Student files were reviewed to ensure that assessment policies and goal setting policies were being followed. Data intake processes were reviewed to ensure consistency and quality. Idaho uses the monitoring instrument designed for on-site data program reviews, which can be found on our website at www.pte.idaho.gov. The local programs also submit quarterly data desk audits to the state office for review.

Professional Development Standards Project

Idaho has continued to move leadership activities forward through a diversified model. In order to provide quality activities, Idaho adopted professional development standards that were implemented in 2008-09. The standards adopted are now providing the foundation for successful and meaningful experiences for faculty and staff that helps articulate our mission and meet our common goals.

Idaho PD Standards are as follows:

Standard 1: Orientation for Teachers New to Adult Basic Education

- All teachers new to adult education will have an orientation to teaching in the field of adult basic education within at least the first six months of their teaching. [refer to Association of Adult Professional Developers (AALPD) recommended standard 1. Rationale: Smith & Hofer (2003)].

Standard 2: Professional Development Plans

- At a minimum all FT teachers, and all PT teachers who teach 15 hours or more a week, will have PD plans, and programs should be monitored to see that these are meaningful to teachers and to the program's improvement efforts [refer to AALPD standard 3. Rationale: Smith et al (2003)].

Standard 3: Paid Professional Development Release Time

- Each program should be funded such that all practitioners are paid for participating in professional development. [refer to AALPD standard 4. Rationale: Smith et al (2003)].

Regional Evaluation Project

To measure the effectiveness of leadership plans, Idaho has also adopted a three level-evaluation system of all State funded leadership activities. These evaluations are conducted at the following times: immediately following an activity, 30-days following the activity and 90-days after the activity has been completed. The evaluations are collected regionally by the PD Specialist and reported to the State Office. The purpose of the evaluations is as follows:

- 1) The first evaluation's purpose is to create an opportunity for participants to determine how they will plan to use the information or practices presented in the training and to collect feedback on the immediate effectiveness of the training.
- 2) The second evaluation's purpose (30 days) is to provide feedback on their findings after they have applied information/practices/procedures in the classroom or information, observation, implementation in the program.
- 3) The third evaluation (90 days) examines continued implementation of new practices, collects information regarding supports and barriers to implementing new practices, and finally collects information about what additional training or technical assistance might be necessary or warranted. These evaluations are then reviewed by the State Division of Professional-Technical Education/ Office of Adult Basic Education and used to inform future training needs and plans.

Regional Training

Training Cadre Model

A regional professional development system has been created to provide meaningful opportunities in a flexible manner so that participation is possible for many, if not all, faculty and staff. Over the last few years, we have created a cadre of regional trainers in each AEFLA funded program. Due to limited funding, travel restrictions, and travel expense, training the trainer (PD Specialists) in each region assists us in providing quality training to many of our part-time teachers who may not be able to attend a state training opportunity. These individuals are identified by each local grantee, trained and monitored by the State ABE training coordinator, and all training is approved and evaluated for quality at the state level. This process is a work in progress. We now have training cadres in each region who are trained and meet the state requirements for training.

Regional training by a cadre member follows the content/curriculum guidelines provided by the state to ensure consistency and quality. Training is to be based upon research and evidenced based practice. Leadership funding is provided to cadre trainers to support training and follow-up activity at the local level, including the collection and reporting of evaluation findings. All training provided by the regional professional development cadre is monitored for quality by the state PD Coordinator through the evaluation process described above.

Each regional AEFLA funded program provided training in the following: Goal Setting and Assessment, TABE, CASAS, Distance Education, IMAS, NRS, Reading Study Circle, ESL Study Circle, ESL Low Level Teacher training, New Teacher training and follow-up. Individual regional programs also conduct data quality and data analysis workshops, teaching strategy and lesson planning workshops, and other study circle training or content training based upon the individual needs of the program.

Continuous Program Improvement

To promote continuous learning opportunities, the Idaho Professional Development Plan also includes support for on-site technical assistance and staff development, which is guided by the following principles:

- Supports the overall program plan by focusing on a problem or priority that has the potential of improving a program outcome/s. Program improvement plans are submitted using the AIDDE model, which includes program and regional data analysis; regional needs assessment; barrier definition; resources; qualified staff; and evaluation;
- Specific research identified in the development of new program strategies;
- Consideration of multiple professional development approaches (training, mentoring, independent study, study circles, webinars, video conferencing, etc.) and implements an approach that is appropriate and effective in relationship to the defined problem or priority identified for improvement.

AEFLA funded grantees are provided leadership funding to support their site based training activities if their plans are state approved and they meet the state requirement of research based content, one and three month evaluation of research to practice, and activity connected to student outcomes and improved program performance.

2) Describe any significant findings from the eligible agency's evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance.
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Program Overview

Our state enrollment declined very slightly from 7,535 students in FY08-09 to 7,429 students in FY09-10. Our average contact hours increased from 61 to 73, while our average contact hours at post-testing increased from 86 to 116. However, our performance declined in all of our EFLs. We also saw a decline in both our post-test rate and our post-test completion rate over this same period (from 53% to 46% and 75% to 73% respectively).

The decline in the number of students who post-tested indicates that as a state we are having a problem retaining students for post testing. This decline may be somewhat caused by a change in our assessment policy this year which allows for fewer exceptions and more strict enforcement of the 60 hours (70hrs ESL) requirement for post-testing. However, the decline in the number of students who make a gain when post-tested (despite an increased number of contact hours) indicates that retention is not the sole cause of our lower performance this year. If students are receiving more hours of instruction on average, but are making fewer gains when post tested, we obviously need to address both the accessibility and quality of our instructional services. To this effect, we are focusing our efforts around instruction for the remainder of FY10-11, and will work with local programs to address accessibility (such as class schedules, etc) when they submit their plans for FY11-12. We would like to increase the percent of students making gains on their post-tests from 73% to 90% in the next two years.

Performance Overview

In FY09-10 we met two out of eleven of our EFL performance targets: E3 and E4 and saw an overall decline in our actual performance for educational gains. We did not meet either of our employment outcomes, although we missed our *Retain Employment* goal by only 1%. We met both our GED and Post Secondary targets.

Educational Gain

While our ability to meet our targets is affected by a number of factors (such as a spike in performance in FY07-08 leading to much higher targets in FY09-10 than FY08-09), the decline in our *actual* performance over the past two years is more telling and indicates a broader problem.

We attribute this decline in part to the fact that we tightened up the enforcement of our assessment policy, which led to a decline in the post-test rate across the state. However, as mentioned previously, our data indicates that we need to address both the accessibility (post test rates) and quality (post test gains) of our instruction across the board.

As part of our annual reporting process this fall, we asked our local programs to review their longitudinal performance data for the past four years and submit an analysis and improvement plan based on their findings. We asked that programs pick one EFL that has consistently been low, in decline, or below target for the past several years and focus their improvement plan around this level.

In doing a thorough and careful review of the local data analyses and submitted improvement plans, we found that our regional programs were often inclined to jump to conclusions about what was causing low performance, and then made the data (and thus their plans) fit these assumptions. The problem being, that these assumptions were often incorrect, and so the improvement plans would likely prove futile (as may have been the case last year). As a result of this discovery, we have provided extensive technical assistance around data analysis so that our local programs are more adept at identifying root problems and addressing the cause of those problems more effectively.

For example, one program assumed that their low outcome in a certain EFL was caused by problems with retention, while the data showed quite clearly that they really had a problem with making gains, as indicated by a very low completion rate on Table 4b. Upon revisiting this data and reviewing their curriculum, the program realized that they had issues with content alignment in their low performing level and updated their improvement plan accordingly. We hope that by being more conscientious about how we review local reports, and by providing more TA around data analysis, we will help our local programs implement more effective improvement plans that address the real cause of low performance rather than the assumed cause.

Obtaining and Retaining Employment

Employment data collected for this report was data-matched for quarters ranging from April 2008 through September 2009. The National Bureau of Economic Research determined in their September 2010 report that the recession officially ended in June of 2009, but that they "did not conclude that economic conditions since that month have been favorable or that the economy has returned to operating at normal capacity." While the recession has had a major impact on all states, Idaho has especially struggled with the impact in our more isolated, rural communities. Often these communities have only one primary employer and when that employer goes out of business, the entire community can collapse. Without other prospects for employment, these communities often take a great deal longer to recover than more urban or more economically diverse areas.

In keeping with this information, and as we predicted in last year's annual report, our employment outcomes have declined as the reporting quarters catch up with the changes in the economy. However, now that we have reported outcomes for quarters in the worst part of the recession, we expect to see that outcomes will no longer decline and may even begin to improve for some of our programs in more urban and economically viable parts of the state. To the extent that we can control whether our students get and keep jobs, we hope to see an increase in this outcome as our reporting quarters catch up with the slow economic recovery.

Obtain Employment

Our state did not meet this target this year, and showed a decrease from 36% reported in FY08-09 to 34% in FY09-10. When examining our data over the last five years, it is clear that we have had an increase in the number of students entering our programs with the goal of obtaining employment (616 in FY05-06, 786 in FY06-07, 853 in FY07-08, 1,157 in FY08-09, and 1,878 in FY09-10). As the number of students with this goal increases, our programs must produce a higher number of completers in order to meet our targeted percent. However, with the economic crisis extending into mid-2009, this has remained difficult, and our employment outcomes and reporting quarters reflect this.

Retain Employment:

Our state did not meet this target this year, however, our target was 45%, and we had an outcome of 44%, so we were very close. Granted, our performance declined from 51% last year, and our target was lower this year as a result of low FY07-08 performance. However, we did expect to see a decline in this outcome this year because of a dramatic number of layoffs in our state in pertinent reporting quarters (as mentioned in our FY08-09 annual report).

Obtain GED/HSE

Although we met our target in this outcome, our performance declined from 67% last year to 66% this year. This was quite surprising to us, as almost all of our programs showed high and improving outcomes in this area. In this case the data is quite clear that our declined performance is the result of one specific program. While all of our other programs had GED outcomes at or above 70% this year, our Department of Correction program had a GED outcome of only 47%. As this program is comparable in size to our other six programs, their low performance had a significant effect. If we were to remove Corrections from our count, our state outcome in GED completions would jump more ten percent to 76%.

In light of this problem, we are working closely with the Department of Correction to bring up their GED outcome. We will be monitoring their program more closely and provide technical assistance around goal-setting, data management, and instruction as it pertains to their whole program, but most specifically, the GED.

Post-Secondary Education & Training

Not only were we able to increase our performance in this area from 41% last year to 51% this year, we also exceeded our target of 39% in FY09-10. This is the second year in a row in which we have increased performance and achieved our target.

However, despite the increase in relative performance in the last two years, it is also worth noting that the actual number of students who set and achieve a postsecondary goal has declined. For example, in FY05-06 we had 483 students with this goal and of those, 227 (or 47%) were successful. In FY09-10 we had a completion rate of 51%, but we had fewer students with the goal, and fewer students who were actually successful (343 and 170 respectively). The decline in the number of students with this goal, but the increase of the percent who achieve the goal may be indicative of better goal setting practices at the local programs, but will require a more in-depth analysis at the program level to be certain.

3) Describe how the eligible agency has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Include a description of how the eligible agency is being represented on the Local Workforce Investment Boards, adult education's involvement on the State Workforce Investment Board, the provision of core and other services through the one-stop system and an estimate of the Title II funds being used to support activities and services through the one-stop delivery system.

In FY 2005, the State of Idaho sought a waiver to apply for 20 CFR 661.300(f), which permits a state board to carry out the roles of a local board in a single local area to a statewide regional planning area. The waiver allowed the state to address ETA's strategic priorities and to further reforms envisioned in the Workforce Investment Act. To maximize resources available for service delivery the state continued to use the Workforce Development Council as the local workforce board throughout the state. This saved the WIA program in the state approximately \$1.5 million dollars by removing the administrative overhead of maintaining six regions throughout the state. Since then, these former administrative funds have been utilized as program funds allowing for more participants to be served, which has been a boon in light of the continually diminishing funding the WIA program receives in the state. This change has also fostered the sharing of data and information across regions and eased movement of customers from region to region.

With the ABE transfer of agencies in 2008, our representative on the WDC changed from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Director of the Idaho Board of Education. The Director of The Division of Professional-Technical Education and the State Adult Basic Education Coordinator serve on the Executive Staff Committee for the council.

The Division of Professional-Technical Education/Adult Education has a signed Memorandum of Understanding in cooperation and collaboration with the Workforce Development Council. This MOU describes how the various funding streams and resources will be utilized to better serve mutual customers through an integrated system of service delivery. Core and other services are provided at comprehensive sites known as *Idahoworks* Career Centers and satellite sites called *Idahoworks* Career Connection sites.

Along with the WDC, the Division of Professional-Technical Education/ABE participates in the state's One Stop initiative. The local ABE programs all coordinate with their regional one-stop partners and Adult Basic Education is fully represented in all press release materials, both print and web-based. The One-Stop Management Team provides a data cross-match to local programs and includes calculations based on shared clients.

The WDC has added new members this past year to reflect the growing need for expertise from business and industry to support and grow jobs in Idaho. Business, along with education and other partners, continue to address the need for more skilled workers in Idaho and the creation of more self-supporting jobs for adults who are entering and completing post-secondary degrees and technical training certificate programs. The Department of Labor and the WDC are focused on a sector strategy approach in the field of health, manufacturing, and technology.

In addition, many site-based program managers serve on quick response teams (Commerce and Labor, technical colleges, and ABE) during plant closures to assist workers facing lay-offs and displacement. ABE at both the state and local level collaborates with a large number of institutions and entities to serve the citizens of the state. These include, but are not limited to, school districts, faith and community-based organizations, businesses, libraries, and family literacy programs.

4) Describe successful activities and services supported with EL Civics funds, including the number of programs receiving EL Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.

Statistical highlights

English Literacy and Civics instruction was provided to 1013 adults in Idaho this past year. Four of the six regional ABE programs submitted extension proposals for EL Civics funding, and all of Idaho's dedicated EL Civics funds were spent on direct services. State data shows very few adults in this target population residing in the northern part of the state of Idaho; therefore, there are no EL civics instructional programs provided in these two regions. Traditionally, less than fifty (combined) ESL adults are served in the AEFLA funded programs in the two northern regions of the state.

About 500+ students in the EL Civics program successfully completed a level and about 20 students obtained their Citizenship. Idaho has a number of private organizations that provide citizenship preparation, strictly designed for test success, for a fee. We have done a lot more recruitment regarding our no-fee EL Civics programs across the state this past year; however, we still find many adults who feel that when they pay a fee they are receiving higher quality preparation, and the private agencies do a lot of marketing with this premise in mind. Nevertheless, we have a strong EL Civics program that serves our population with a well integrated curriculum of English language learning and citizenship preparation. Instruction also includes lessons and activities in American government, history, and civic engagement.

Successful Activities and Services Supported with EL Civics Funds:

The eastern part of the state emphasized recruitment this year as an improvement strategy and their numbers did increase. By partnering with the non-profit Catholic Charities Foundation their EL Civics evening classes went from being the smallest instructional classes in their region to the largest. The eastern Idaho programs use modified lessons from *Crossroads Café* and *On Common Ground* along with other government and history lesson plans that include more specific citizenship preparation. This program has also done a good job of serving an unreached ESL population of parents of elementary school students in a remote area of Idaho. It was a cooperative venture with a regional nonprofit organization. This region also reports supplementing existing grammar lessons with grammar lessons on the computer so that students gain some computer literacy at the same time they gain English skills. This was especially important for mid-level learners who had limited experience with technology and live in remote areas of Idaho.

The Southwestern part of the state partnered with Joint School District No. 2, the largest school district in the state of Idaho. EL Civics classes were offered to the community at two elementary schools that have the largest percentage of ELL students in the district. More than 60% of the students were parents of children enrolled in the Meridian school district, a district serving high risk students. The schools provided child enrichment activities and homework assistance for the children while parents attended civics classes.

With local government elections taking place this past fall, EL Civics programs were able to integrate excellent learning lessons in reading, writing, speaking, and listening with content that included political opinions, newspaper commentaries, governmental processes, and local voting processes. Students set up voting booths and voted for candidates of their choice. There were lively debates and local elections that also provided off-site activities and materials for the classroom.