

## Massachusetts FY 2010 Federal Report Narrative

- 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.**

Massachusetts applies State Leadership funding to support state staff, to partially fund the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), as well as contract for services such as program/project evaluation, task force facilitation and participation, policy development, and to promote linkages with the workforce development system.

Massachusetts goals for adult basic education are:

1. Ensure That Adults Needing Basic Education Have Access to Services
2. Increase System Effectiveness and Quality
3. Prepare Students for Success in Their Next Steps: In College and Further Training, at Work, and in the Community

State staff support these goals through state leadership activities such as provision of technical assistance to local providers, policy development, standards development, provision of an orientation for new local program directors, and other efforts to build the capacity of the field to increase college and career readiness, improve student outcomes, and improve program performance.

Some highlights of FY 2010 accomplishments supported with both state and federal funds that will set the stage for success in future years include:

1. **MAPT development, including new score reports:** Massachusetts continued the development and implementation of the Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) in FY 2010. A new feature that we believe will be of great use to teachers in informing instruction are score reports for math and reading; state leadership funds have also supported training on the use of these score reports to improve and tailor instruction.
2. **Curriculum Framework Content Standards development, including the development of content standards for Level 1:** Massachusetts has also used state leadership funds to procure consultants to work on curriculum frameworks, to develop a curriculum framework in life sciences, and to develop Level 1 standards.
3. **STAR:** FY 2010 saw the first year of Massachusetts' STAR program, with a very successful initial degree of participation from the field. In FY 2010, 19 practitioners from 8 programs participated, usually in teams consisting of the program director and one or more teachers; 14 additional programs were added in FY 2011. While the cost of program participation is state-funded, state leadership funding supports state staff time in the trainings and in developing program policies.
4. **Development of professional content standards for math:** Since 2001, Massachusetts has been developing and refining content standards that outline what an adult student needs to know and be able to do, in English Language Arts, Mathematics/Numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Language, History/Social Sciences, and Health. The Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) is aligned with the English Language Arts and Mathematics/Numeracy standards. Massachusetts also has defined professional standards for ABE instructors, which outline what a teacher needs to know and be able to do to teach adults

effectively. However -- because the professional standards were developed before the content standards for learners -- they were not aligned with what students needed to learn in the content areas. In FY 2010, Massachusetts drafted professional content standards for teachers. These standards are aligned with the content standards in the Mathematics/Numeracy ABE Curriculum Framework, and informed by the NGA College and Career Readiness Standards. In FY 2011, these draft professional content standards in mathematics and numeracy will be circulated to experienced ABE math teachers for review and feedback, and revised. Also in FY 2011, SABES will be developing professional development activities and tools for practitioners based on the standards. In FY 2011-2013, similar professional content standards will be developed for ESOL, reading, and writing, together with related professional development and tools for practitioners.

5. **CAELA:** A state team of ABE/ESOL practitioners, SABES staff and a staff person from the state office received technical assistance from consultants at the Center for Applied English Language Acquisition (or CAELA). Massachusetts was one of 12 states nationwide selected for this TA. The purpose of the CAELA project was to create professional development for teachers to enable them to prepare ESOL students more effectively for college or careers. After a review of literature and an assessment of practitioner needs, Massachusetts' CAELA team members developed a checklist of competencies that students need for success in academic study, employment and general life skills. This list was organized according to the standards and benchmarks in Massachusetts' *ESOL Curriculum Frameworks*. Professional development based on the competencies will be offered to teachers in FY 2011.
6. **Research review and policy recommendations to support college and career readiness:** State staff conducted a review of and summarized research on Next Steps, and made recommendations for state policy, resulting in Massachusetts' STAR project and informing the group that designed our annual meeting of local program directors as well as the next open and competitive RFP we release.
7. **Connecting ABE-to-Community College Transition programs, housed in community colleges, back to local Community Adult Learning Centers/ABE programs in CBOs, LEAs, and correctional facilities:** The twelve community colleges participating in Massachusetts' ABE-to-Community College Transition initiative subcontract 10% of their grant awards back to their partnering ABE programs, to support professional development, curriculum alignment, and additional ABE coursework to bridge the GED-college curriculum gap. While these grants are state-funded, state leadership funding supports state staff time spent in policy development, including the development of performance standards for ABE-to-Community College Transition programs.
8. **Linkages with workforce development:** Massachusetts uses state leadership funds to promote linkages with the workforce development system and postsecondary education. State staff actively partner with workforce development representatives through administration of joint funding for workplace education, policy committees, our Policy to Performance task force, and through appointment of ABE representatives to the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs).
9. **Development of partnership capacity-building grant program:** State staff developed a small (state-funded) grant program to provide support for building and strengthening partnerships to support both family literacy (9 awards) and 14 career pathways (14 awards).

The capacity to develop, build, and sustain the partnerships required by both family literacy and career pathways is one we want to help local providers to develop and strengthen. State staff worked with external stakeholders to conceptualize this grant program as a way to build capacity at the local level, program by program.

10. **Family Literacy policy and partnerships:** State staff convene and staff the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC), a statewide initiative with the mission of forging effective partnerships among state agencies, community organizations, and other interested parties to expand and strengthen family literacy and support. In FY 2010, Massachusetts procured a consultant to review national & international models for family literacy in anticipation of Race To The Top funding, to prepare the State to implement a research-based design for family literacy within the context of family “wrap around zones”. State ABE staff actively partner with K12 staff within the Department, as well as with the Department of Early Education and Care, to promote family literacy and to support statewide and regional conferences. State funds support state staff time developing family literacy policy and providing technical assistance to and evaluation of the state-funded Pathways to Family Success program.
11. **Development of Community Needs and Assets Profiles:** In order to demonstrate how important family literacy services can be for children and their parents, state staff have developed individual community profiles for each of the 351 cities and towns in the state (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/mflc/>). The community profiles document indicators of individual and family need, as well as assets each community has available to respond to these needs (e.g., assets related to education, employment, poverty, social, and health characteristics). Community Needs Profiles provide a snapshot of education, family support, and general economic conditions using Census and state data; Additional Community Information provides users with links to other resources.
12. **ABE Distance Learning policy and technical assistance:** In FY 2010, Massachusetts modified our Distance Learning model, based on research conducted over the previous two years, in order to: serve students better and more cost effectively, promote the integration of DL into core ABE programs, increase the number of students served (the number doubled), and increase intensity for some students. New Guidelines for DL were released with an open and competitive RFP, resulting in # new programs funded. New curricula products were evaluated and approved for use; 6 new on-line professional development modules on ABE Distance Learning were completed for FY 2011 implementation.
13. **Task Force on Performance-Based Funding:** State staff convened a task force to investigate the possibilities for implementing performance-based funding in Massachusetts. Although the task force recommended not implementing PBF at this time, they did recommend an implementation of a new, performance-based model for Accountability and Assistance that consists of four tiers of program performance, targeted assistance for underperforming programs, and a policy to ensure timely data entry. The task force also expressed a strong commitment to, and support for the development of policies to strengthen, teacher quality. The task force members further recommended that if the new Accountability and Assistance model and other system reform measures do not improve state wide performance, a review and implementation of Performance Based Funding should be undertaken in 4 years (FY 2015).

14. **SABES:** In FY2010, SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support), the state professional development system, began a concerted effort to encourage use of professional standards and subject matter knowledge requirements. Each of five regional centers used sharing groups, self-assessment tools or other strategies to assess practitioners' knowledge of the standards. Related professional development included *Using Professional Standards to Improve the Quality of Teaching* and creation of a workshop entitled *Performance Standards for Teachers* to be offered in FY 2011. Additional trainings were related to the professional standards on the SABES online calendar and its annual catalog of activities, which indicated the standards that each training activity addressed. Other work that advanced state goals were new trainings such as *Foundations: The Art of Teaching* and *Math for Next Steps: The Health Connection* that each had a focus on contextualized curricula. To reflect increased emphasis on students' college and career readiness, SABES offered revised training in *Goal Setting for Next Steps in the Classroom*, and it developed resources to help its own staff embed career and college content throughout all trainings. One of most successful strategies for ensuring increased system effectiveness and quality was a shift in the delivery of professional development for FY 2010. At the request of the state office, SABES offered fewer individual workshops and more in-depth, site-based technical assistance to targeted underperforming programs. Of the 13 programs that received this customized assistance, 12 showed meaningful gains in their total performance points by the end of the year.

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

#### **CORE INDICATOR #1**

Overall, Massachusetts met the target for core indicator #1 – demonstrated improvement in literacy skills. The percent of enrolled students in each education level that completed the level, the target, and number of percentage points above or below the target is listed below. The ABE targets set were very accurate, since actual performance came in within one to four percentage points of the targets. Massachusetts met its target in all the ESOL categories. There was a large increase in the Beginning ESOL category; this warrants closer analysis of the data to determine targets when the ESOL categories are redesigned. More training was provided in inter-rater reliability for both ESOL performance tests, BEST Plus and REEP. A review of the data put a spotlight on flat learning gains at the pre-ASE level; Massachusetts initiated STAR training in FY 2010 to address this issue. While it is too early to discuss results, there is a high degree of enthusiasm for the project within the state office and among participating programs.

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Above/Below Target</b>
Beginning Literacy ABE	27%	31%	+ 4 points
Beginning ABE	32%	33%	+ 1 point
Low Intermediate ABE	27%	28%	+ 1 point
High Intermediate ABE	22%	20%	- 2 points
Low ASE	20%	19%	- 1 point
Beginning Literacy ESOL	38%	39%	+ 1 point
Beginning ESOL	35%	52%	+ 17 points
Low Intermediate ESOL	37%	41%	+ 4 points
High Intermediate ESOL	27%	35%	+ 8 points
Low Advanced ESOL	23%	38%	+ 15 points
High Advanced ESOL	19%	29%	+ 1 point

## **CORE INDICATOR #2**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the state office) used wage record information provided by the state's Department of Revenue (DOR) for the employment measures. The state office requests the data from DOR quarterly to update wage information in the ABE data system. This year, timeframes consistent with Title I were used, and all targets were met.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Above/Below Target</b>
Entered post-secondary education or training	35%	38%	+ 3 points
Entered employment	48%	50%	+ 2 points
Retained employment	56%	59%	+ 3 points

## **CORE INDICATOR #3**

Again this year, Massachusetts implemented data matching with Oklahoma Scoring Service for the GED goal, downloading information monthly. Massachusetts' data matching protocols enable matching of several data fields regardless of whether a social security number is provided, assuring valid and reliable data. The survey method is used only for the secondary school diploma goal, which represents about 10% of the students for this core indicator.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Above/Below Target</b>
Obtained a GED or secondary school diploma	32%	53%	+ 21 points

In FY 2010, the state office introduced a new model for Accountability and Assistance consisting of four tiers of program performance, targeted assistance for underperforming programs, and a policy to ensure timely data entry. Local providers that fall into the lowest performance tier (tier 4) are referred to SABES for customized, site-based technical assistance. Of the 13 programs that received this customized assistance, 12 showed meaningful gains in their total performance points by the end of the year, and most moved from tier 4 to tier 3 or even tier 2.

From our reviews of both statewide and program performance data, Massachusetts has determined that we need to focus on building teacher capacity. As a first step, professional standards will be developed in key content areas and aligned with the content standards in the MA ABE Curriculum Frameworks (described above). In FY 2010, professional standards in mathematics and numeracy were developed, and the CAELA work over the past couple of years will inform the development of professional standards in ESOL. In future years, standards for teachers will be developed in reading and writing.

Other evaluations have included an extensive research project in Distance Learning in ABE and an evaluation of the state's 10-year old Community Planning for ABE initiative. The DL research project produced guidelines for assessing adult student readiness for DL, and 4 handbooks: two handbooks of screening and two handbooks of support, one each for ABE learners, and one each for ESOL learners. These materials have been incorporated into DL policies and RFPs, and into program practice. The Community Planning evaluation found that the CP initiative has been successful in assuring that students benefit from the broadest possible array of educational, employment and training, and health and human services available, and that in general, investment in community planning is a good use of ABE dollars, although some felt that it was hard to justify at a time of shrinking funds for direct services. The evaluation also identified characteristics of stronger community planning partnerships, elements of the state's policy and funding structure that have been more and less helpful, and what both the state and local partnerships can do to improve the community planning initiative.

**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 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the state office) maintained collaborative strategies with the state's workforce development system to assist students in attaining their goals related to employment and education/training.

In FY 2010, the state office received a second year of funding from the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation to continue Massachusetts' Bridges to Success Task Force. The second year of funding will support follow-up from the first round of funding in order to begin to implement policy initiatives and address previously identified barriers that inhibit the successful transition of ABE learners to post-secondary education. This effort has been enhanced by the Policy to Performance (P2P) Technical Assistance award by US DOE, which enables the Task Force to develop system-wide strategies to support the transition of ABE learners to post-secondary education, especially community college. Through P2P, members of this group convened in Washington to craft a collaborative strategy; representatives included the ABE state director, the newly appointed executive director of the community college association, the executive director of the MA Workforce Investment Board, a senior vice-president of a workforce development agency, and ABE program directors (local providers).

A major innovation in FY 2010 was the realization of a joint strategy to fund workplace education through the Learn at Work program. Prioritized by the ABE/ESOL subcommittee of the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board, with strong participation by state office staff and program representatives, the Learn at Work grant program combines funding from the state adult education office and the workforce system to fund twelve workplace education programs at Massachusetts' employer sites. The development of the Learn at Work grant program required coordination between the Secretaries of Education and Labor and Workforce Development.

Also in FY 2010, the Massachusetts workforce system continued to fund expanded education and training opportunities through funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); although ABE did not benefit directly from such funds, many local workforce boards prioritized ABE/ESOL in the services they funded and utilized state ABE office-funded programs to deliver those services.

In addition to these initiatives, the Massachusetts state ABE office continues to foster strong collaboration with the workforce system in the following ways:

- 1. Funding ABE programs through Workforce Regions:** For over 15 years, the state adult education office has funded ABE services in each multi-year funding cycle through a regional approach. A portion of the regional funding flows through the workforce region, giving workforce representatives a voice throughout the cycle in services that lead most closely to employability. The funding cycle has been extended pending the reauthorization of WIA, and these arrangements continue to be in effect.
- 2. Appointments of ABE Representatives to Local Workforce Investment Boards:** With Chief Elected Officials in each workforce region, and with local Workforce Board executive directors, the state ABE office appoints representatives of ABE to the 16 regional boards, ensuring that ABE has "a seat at the table". An ABE Program Director is chosen to participate on the WIB and to keep other ABE program directors in the region informed of workforce development activities. The state convened these representatives last year to share state-level and local information about initiatives and strategies. In FY 2010, the topics addressed included updates on the Learn at Work program (described above), and discussion of ARRA funding strategies in the workforce regions.
- 3. Collaborating with One-Stop Career Centers:** Massachusetts invests Title II funds in support of the state's One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) network, and funds ABE providers to have out-stationed ABE staff conduct intake, assessment, and referral services in 13 of 16 career center regions (Berkshire, Bristol, Brockton, Cape Cod, Central Mass, Franklin Hampshire, Hampden, Greater Lowell, Lower Merrimack Valley, New Bedford, North Central, North Shore, South Coastal). Because of funding constraints, the Boston and Metro North regions are not participating in this strategy. The state adult education office partners with Local Workforce Investment Boards to support collaboration between ABE providers and career centers. Memoranda of Understanding exist between the state office and the 16 workforce development regions. The MOU identifies intake, assessment, and referral as the areas where the state's adult education and workforce development systems overlap. Out-stationed ABE staff in One-Stop Career Centers help OSCC customers who need basic skill development improve their prospects for employment.

4. **Prioritizing Workforce Development Strategies in the FY 2006 to FY 2010 grant cycle:** Massachusetts prioritized Workforce Development in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the most recent (current) multi-year funding cycle, to encourage ABE programs to integrate and/or coordinate services with training vendors, workforce boards, and career centers in order to help students improve their readiness for employment, move up on the job, identify career paths, and/or build their occupational skills and awareness. A primary coordination strategy is to direct 12% of regional Title II funding for ABE programs through the regional workforce system. ABE programs are jointly monitored by the state ABE office and the regional workforce office. In FY 2010, the continuation RFP again prioritized coordination with workforce development. Local providers were encouraged to focus more on “next steps for students”, including integration of services with an occupational training provider or a career center, coordination of services with a workforce development agency/entity, or integration of work readiness and career awareness content into the ABE/ESOL classroom.
5. **Professional Development/State Leadership Activities:** Massachusetts provides professional development opportunities through SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support), the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, and the Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable. Each of these organizations supports ABE programs in areas related to workforce development. Each SABES center has staff dedicated to this priority area. Workshops and other activities were offered in 2010 to help local providers understand and be ready to implement services that would be integrated or coordinated with the workforce development system. SABES staff coordinated meetings to acquaint ABE program directors and staff at One-Stop Career Centers with each other, to facilitate development of better understanding of career center services and stronger relationships with career center staff.
- a. **SABES** develops the capacity of local providers to engage in the workforce development coordination by offering workshops on targeted topics (*Integrating Job Readiness in the ABE/ESOL Curriculum*), convening meetings with ABE program staff and workforce development staff, and by offering technical assistance to specific programs. A new guide book and a revised training were developed this year on *Integrating Career Development in ABE/ESOL Classroom*. SABES has worked with ABE programs to introduce both the Job Readiness and Career Awareness concepts and classroom strategies on a program-wide basis. In FY 2010, continued trainings on this guide book were promoted and delivered. In addition to recruiting practitioners to learn about the tool at workshops, SABES worked to deliver this training to individual programs where all teachers and counselors would benefit from learning how to infuse career awareness throughout the program.
  - b. **The Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable** provides workshops and technical assistance to better enable ABE providers to engage in effective delivery of workplace education services and to inform labor organizations and businesses how to identify whether workers require basic skills instruction in order to improve their performance on the job, and how to deliver effective workplace education programs.
  - c. **The Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education** delivers an annual conference for adult basic education teachers, counselors, directors, and other staff. Each year, the conference dedicates a workshop strand to workforce development. The state office also offers a strand each year that includes one session highlighting promising practices related to workforce development.



- 6. Interagency Pilot Projects and Policy Groups:** In 2010, the state office participated in the development of two projects through interagency collaboration (and funding) with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Commonwealth Corporation, the Division of Career Services: the Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative and the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. In each project, industry sector initiative education and training designs support skill development initiatives for youth or for incumbent workers.
- 7. Highlighting Workforce Development at the Annual ABE Directors' Meeting:** Massachusetts' 2010 Adult Basic Education Directors' Meeting continued the "next steps for students" theme introduced at the 2009 meeting; workforce development was integrated prominently into sessions. A One-Stop Career Center Director from the Hampden Region provided the keynote speech, and other workforce representatives were prominently featured among the presenters.
- 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.**

In FY 2010, the Massachusetts Department provided EL/Civics instruction grants to ten ESOL programs. Grant recipients included both local education agencies and community-based ABE programs across Massachusetts. Funded programs are located in both urban and rural settings with the predominant populations served found in urban and suburban settings with high immigrant concentrations. Nine hundred and ninety seven ESOL students were served.

**Some specific program activities are listed below:**

**Visits by political leaders:** Many programs hosted visits by elected officials including a US Congressional Representative. One program arranged a debate forum for two mayoral candidates. The questions posed to the candidates during the 90 minute event were entirely created by ABE students in the program.

**Civic Engagement:** Statewide, a number of programs made effective use of the Massachusetts special senatorial election to teach lessons on the issues debated in the campaign and to introduce and review the structure of the U.S. Federal government as well as the role of the electorate in the governing process.

**Financial Literacy:** One agency collaborated with a local community action program to provide mini-courses in financial literacy. This was an adapted curriculum to help students better understand the current challenging economic environment. Another agency hosted students from a local college to participate in lessons on taxes and discuss tax preparation. Another program offered a "money and shopping" unit that included guest speakers from the Bank of America. The presentation included information on how banks make money, interest on credit cards and a definition of credit.

**Public Information:** Many programs visited the Massachusetts State House on Adult Literacy Awareness Day and on Immigrants' Day. Many students visit their representatives at the state house during these events. All programs participating in these events prepare students for their visit through lessons that teach a deeper understanding of the political process. One program contacted the National Lawyers Guild to arrange for "Street Law Clinics" to be offered at their program. These classes focused on workers' rights.

**Understanding the significance of the Census:** Most Massachusetts programs engaged students in preparation for the 2010 Census. Staff from the Census Bureau visited the programs to speak about the importance of the Census and being counted; how to fill out the forms and how to verify the identity of anyone claiming to work for the Census. Teachers accessed the Census website and were able to get maps and other lessons to use in teaching students how the census is used by the government. Sample census forms were distributed to students to practice filling them out. Many programs specifically addressed student concerns regarding confidentiality in the census process.

**Some unique curriculum projects are listed below:**

**Literacy and Civic Engagement:** One program participated in a citywide reading project by reading the book, Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. This allowed students to be part of a city wide learning and literacy initiative. Lessons developed in the program relating to the book fueled rich discussion about America's participation in the Vietnam War as well as the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Health Literacy:** One program partnered with a local teaching hospital to create a breast health learning community. The goal of the community was to articulate and understand barriers to breast health practices among immigrant women by fostering better understanding of cultural beliefs, perceptions, and myths among students regarding breast health. The group then addressed early detection and screening techniques, as well as health care resources in the community. Students were trained as peer educators and shared their knowledge with the greater program community.

**Nutrition and Fitness:** Classes in one program toured an urban garden to learn about the benefits of gardening, composting, the local food movement, plants that grow in the local region, the safety of public drinking water and activities and resources for families and children. This program also organized an "urban hike" where students hiked their own neighborhood and collected notes about the urban environment, expanding their vocabulary about local flora and fauna, as well as the five senses. In addition, this program participated in its city "Shape-Up" campaign by having a speaker come to present to program students the nature of the campaign and how to access healthy resources in the local area, including parks and recreation, restaurants and markets.