

California Narrative Report 2013–14

This report describes the major initiatives supported with State Leadership Funds, significant findings from Performance Data Analysis, Integration with Other Programs, activities and service in the English Literacy and Civics (EL Civics) Program, state policy related to Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies, and progress toward implementation of Adult Education standards to fulfill annual reporting requirements of the United States Department of Education (ED), Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). The requirements apply to all states and territories receiving federal funding through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

Introduction

The California Department of Education (CDE) AEFLA funded programs provide educational opportunities and support services to one-fifth of the nation's adults enrolled in AEFLA programs. These programs address the unique needs of individuals and communities by providing adults with the literacy skills and knowledge necessary to become positive contributors to their families and local economies. California adult education programs help learners (a) gain employment or better their current employment; (b) obtain a high school diploma or high school equivalency (HSE) certificate; (c) attain skills necessary to enter postsecondary education and training; (d) exit public welfare and become self-sufficient; (e) learn to speak, read, and write the English language; (f) master basic academic skills to help their children succeed in school; and (g) become U.S. citizens, exercise their civic responsibilities, and participate in a democratic society.

The CDE is committed to maintaining and developing the adult education system that provides Californians with the necessary resources and tools to improve literacy and workforce skills. The Adult Education Students Succeed Web site at: <http://www.adultedlearners.org> highlights accomplishments of adult education students in California.

Overview of California Literacy Needs

Lack of basic and literacy skills continues to be an issue that affects millions of adults in California. A significant percentage of the population lacks English literacy skills and basic education to secure employment, obtain citizenship, pursue postsecondary or higher education, and participate in their children's education. The following section quantifies the literacy needs into four primary areas:

- **High School Diploma or Its Equivalent:** Approximately 6 million California adults do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent even as California's graduation rate continues to improve, which currently stands at 80.2 percent. Conversely, the dropout rate has fallen to 11.6 percent. Although graduation and dropout rates have improved, significant achievement gaps among student subgroups persist.
- **Labor Force:** Approximately 3 million California adults without high school credentials are unemployed or not in the labor force. The need for workplace readiness skills is significant. Many job candidates lack job-readiness skills required in the workplace, such as communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. California ranks forty-fifth with an unemployment rate of 7.3 percent according to the U.S. Department of Labor statistics published on September 2014.

- **English Speaking Ability:** More than 3.5 million California adults “do not speak English well or not at all.” More than one-fourth of the national non-English speaking population resides in California, and over 2.3 million of them lack high school credentials.
- **Economic Impact:** A projection of California’s economy shows a trajectory of steadily increasing demand for a highly educated workforce. However, with the recent recession and budget constraints, the state remains challenged in meeting this demand.

Source of statistics: U.S. Department of Education. 2013. *Tapping the Potential: Profile of Adult Education Target Population*. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/state-profiles/california.pdf>.

State Leadership Funds

The CDE Adult Education Office (AEO) contracts with three agencies to provide state leadership activities: (1) California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO); (2) Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS); and (3) Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN).

This report discusses 3 initiatives set forth in the California State Plan, namely, (a) establish and implement professional development (PD) programs to improve the quality of instructional programs; (b) provide technology assistance, including staff training, to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities; (c) provide assessments and accountability technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities. The goal of these collaborative efforts is to maximize resources and provide support to AEFLA funded adult education providers. To that end, the CDE has provided numerous opportunities through a variety of platforms – via face-to-face regional workshops and networking meetings, Webcasts, conference presentations, video-based workshops and training sessions, online courses, and electronic downloads. Highlights of successful activities conducted in the 2013-14 program year include the following.

CASAS (*Accountability and Assessment*)

1. Hosted more than 50 AEFLA mini-trainings/network meetings statewide covering 10 regions. The network meeting addressed state and federal updates related to accountability, the use of data to inform instruction and improve programs, and PD opportunities. CASAS, also facilitated more than 20 TOPSpro Enterprise network meetings to discuss software and data related topics.
2. Provided targeted technical assistance (TTA) to eight agencies to improve programs, data quality, and National Reporting System (NRS) performance on persistence, educational functioning levels (EFLs), and core performance indicators for entering and retaining employment, entering postsecondary education and training programs, and obtaining a high school diploma or a HSE. Agencies that did not show improvement suffered significant staff turnover. The newly implemented TOPSpro Enterprise helps agencies better monitor and track student and program outcomes. The software provides more detailed reporting and enhanced analysis capabilities for student-level data collection, management, and data integrity and monitoring processes.
3. Had more than 3,400 participants register online for 158 online training sessions and 45 statewide face-to-face trainings offered by CASAS. The trainings covered the following main topic areas – California Assessment Policy and implementation; NRS data

collection, policy guidelines; accountability; data validation, performance monitoring, and reporting.

4. More than 150 AEFLA agencies have implemented CASAS eTests® including 52 agencies that are testing online. Key advantages of computerized testing include placing students into programs quickly and accurately, generating test results and instructional reports immediately, eliminating hand scoring or scanning, and tracking student progress from placement to pretest, post-test, and program exit. More than fifty percent of the agencies are using the online version for data collection and reporting.
5. Provides an online (<http://www2.casas.org/dataPortal/>) tool that presents California NRS adult learner data at the state and local agency levels. Agencies can compare local performance with state goals, other local agencies, and counties in AEFLA programs.

CALPRO (*Professional Development*)

1. Provided opportunities for evidence-based instruction for California adult educators to interact regularly and to engage in collective learning on evidence-based instructional practice. This included:
 - Twenty-three regionally based professional learning opportunities using a Community of Practice model that served 515 participants on evidence-based reading, writing and math instructional strategies. Seventeen videos on math instructional practices were added to the CALPRO video library featuring field experts demonstrating their practice.
 - Nine facilitated asynchronous courses serving 171 participants on topics that address Understanding the Adult Learner; Designing Programs for Adults with Learning Disabilities; Lesson Planning; Optimizing ESL Instructional Planning; Evidence-Based Writing Instruction in the ESL Classroom; and Using Questioning Strategies to Improve Instruction.
 - Five facilitated synchronous workshops from the Teaching Critical Thinking series.
 - Seven self-directed online courses serving 105 participants were provided on learning and development, goal setting, learner persistence, instructional strategies for math and writing, and orientation for ABE and ESL teachers.
2. Provided technology-based PD delivery to more than 600 educators who attended several online trainings that spanned facilitated, asynchronous courses, workshops, and Webinars in real time and self-directed courses. Additionally, CALPRO served educators through its electronic CoP, three companion Virtual Workrooms, and two competency-based self-assessments. The competency-based self-assessments provide individuals with annual PD plans that recommend specific resources based on the results of their self-assessments. This will provide a foundation for the PD Plan required of AEFLA-funded agencies beginning in 2014–15.
3. Facilitated Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL), a two-year project sponsored by OVAE focused on evidence-based writing instructional practices. State staff and selected instructors participated in monthly training modules beginning in the fall of 2010 as well as a four-day institute in the summer of 2011. In September of 2012 CDE approved Research-Based Writing Instruction as the annual module development topic.

By January 2013 the facilitator's guide, PowerPoint presentations were developed for the two pilot training sessions. Trainings for the field began in 2014.

4. Provided several PD events to build the capacity of adult education program leaders and administrators. 1) The Administrators' Forum, a web-based venue to engage critically with their peers on topics that affect the development, management, and sustainability of their adult education programs. 2) The AE Leadership Institute, a six-day face-to-face institute designed to build the leadership skills of new and aspiring administrators facilitated by mentor and seasoned administrators in the field. 3) The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Institute is a face-to-face and online institute that engages program teams of administrators and teachers in a six-month process of developing and refining instructional practice.
5. Provided Postsecondary Transitions training in which agency teams prepare to establish or expand bridging or articulation programs based on best practices and collaborative approaches. This training was provided in two formats throughout the program year: as a regional Communities of Practice (CoP) and as a series of online courses. The CoPs focused on integrating workforce skills into the classroom.

OTAN (*Data and Technology and Distance Learning*)

1. Provided workshops on technology topics and distance learning: 1,221 participants attended 152 online workshops and 369 participants attended 28 face-to-face workshops. One hundred and forty-nine agencies developed and submitted technology plans.
2. Facilitated the Online Teaching Academy (OTAC) to assist instructors in becoming competent, online teachers and mentors for other teachers at their respective agencies. The ten competitively selected participants learned about Moodle (an open source course management system), and implemented a project in collaboration with their administrator and agency. OTAN continued to offer online courses for teachers to use with their adult learners. Courses include EL Civics courses, an advanced ESL writing course and courses from the NROC Project including developmental math and basic algebra courses.
3. Piloted learning through Online Education (ALOE) training to increase the quantity, quality and effectiveness of online instruction for adult learners and to leverage online curriculum materials and PD opportunities. Ten pilot projects operated between February 1, 2012, and May 31, 2014.
4. Hosted Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) training for participants representing seven adult education agencies, for a year-long professional development project including several days of training in Sacramento, to become mentors and increase the effective use of technology in the classrooms. Projects included using technology to post videos of short lessons, create web sites, and expand the reach of adult schools through collaborating with community partners, among others.
5. Added new Teaching with Technology and Technology Integration Videos lesson plans including how to use mobile applications and electronic resources to the Teaching with Technology site. Videos archives are posted on the OTAN Web site.
6. Hosts Technology and Distance Learning Symposium (TDLS) each year and rotates between north and south geographic locations in the state. In the 2013-14 year, 40 workshops on topics ranging from how to build a personal learning network to integrate technology to enhance the adult learner's academic achievement.

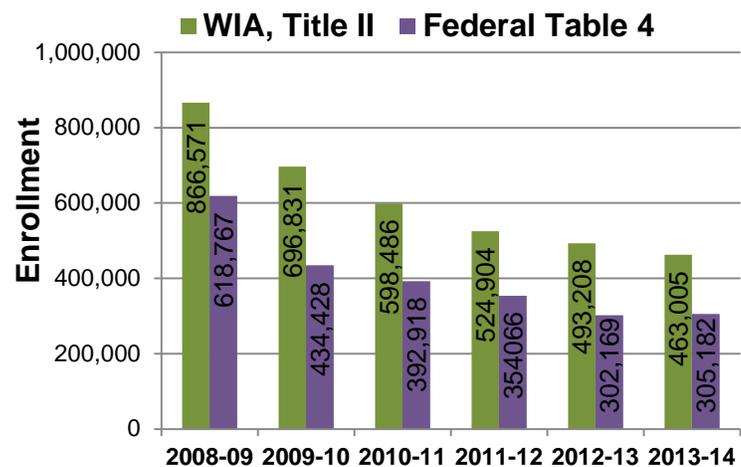
Performance Data Analyses

California is the largest adult education provider in the United States. The state served approximately **18 percent of the nation's adults** enrolled in AEFLA programs, according to the 2012–13 NRS data. Because the state is home to one-fourth of the national non-English-speaking population, the ESL program comprised 60 percent of California's AEFLA programs and 27 percent of the nation's ESL program that year. California also served more learners in ABE and ASE programs than any other state, comprising 11 percent of total learners enrolled in ABE and ASE nationwide.

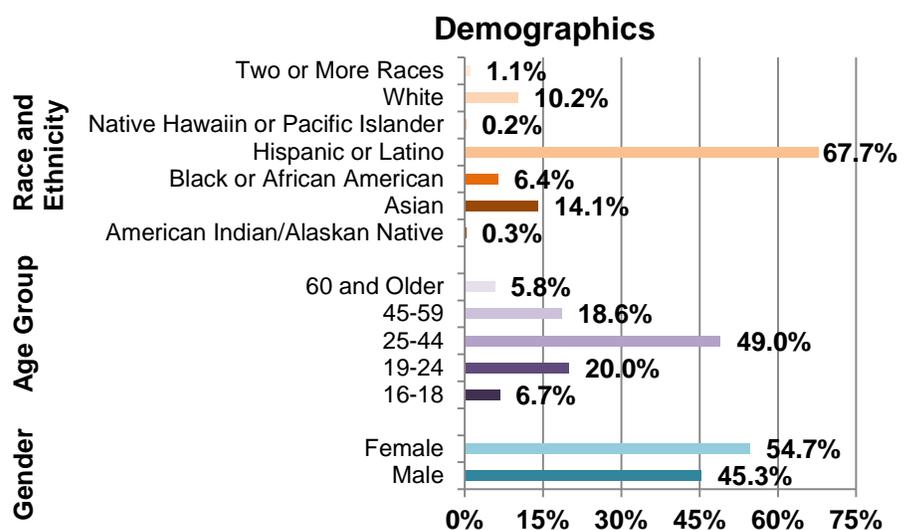
Enrollment 2013–14

In 2013–14, 202 local agencies served 463,005 learners in the AEFLA programs. Of these learners 305,182 (66 percent) qualified for NRS federal reporting. The California budget crisis that resulted in the significant reduction of the state's education funding and shifting of adult school funding decisions to the local school district has created unprecedented pressures on the adult school system. With a reduced funding base from the state, California's AEFLA programs have seen a significant decline in enrollment over the last several

program years—19.6 percent in 2009–10, 14.1 percent in 2010–11, 12.3 percent in 2011–12, and 6.0 percent in 2012–13 and 2013–14. Enrollment in all three AEFLA program areas—ESL, ABE and ASE—saw declines. Enrollment in ESL declined most by nearly 8 percent.



Adult learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting reflect the diversity of the state. The largest ethnic groups of learners are Hispanic (67.7 percent) and Asian (14.1 percent). Adult learners are more likely to be female (54.7 percent), and adult learners between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four (49 percent) comprise the largest age group.

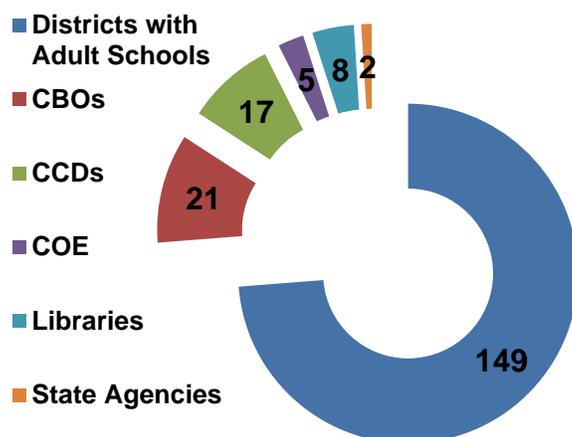


California adult education providers include 149 local school districts, 21 community-based organizations (CBOs), 17 community college districts (CCDs), 5 county offices of education (COE), 8 library literacy programs, and 2 state agencies.

There are 16 agencies serving institutionalized adults under Section 225 of AEFLA. These include 2 state agencies, one CBO, one CCD, one COE and 11 jail programs provided by local school districts.

Local school districts with adult schools comprise the majority of AEFLA agencies and enroll 69.5 percent of total learners served by California. Adult schools saw a significant drop in enrollment (7.4 percent). All other providers also saw a decrease in enrollment.

WIA, Title II Enrollment by Provider Type

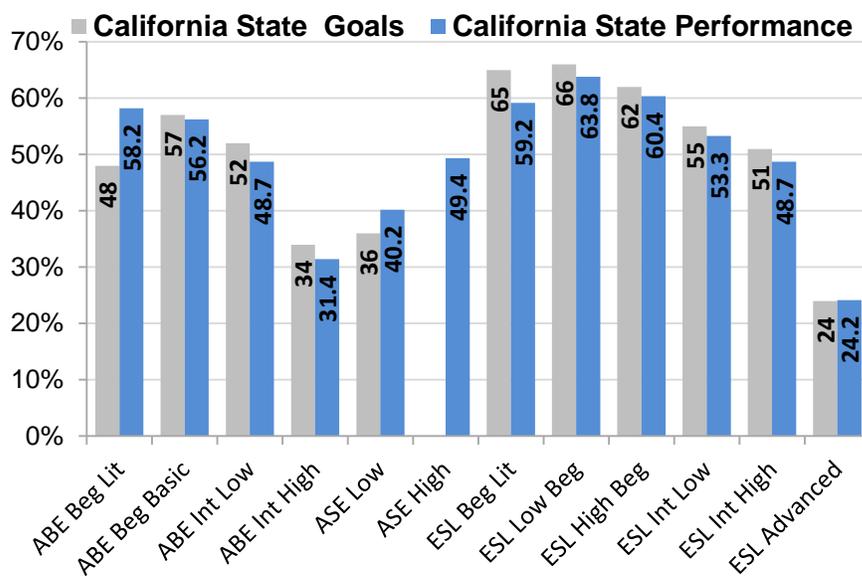


NRS Performance

The NRS data documents California's continued success in addressing the state's basic skills needs by improving student persistence and learning outcomes. In 2010–11 and 2011–12 California agencies exceeded all negotiated NRS state goals and also exceeded national performance in all ESL levels. In 2012–13 California exceeded national performance in first three levels of ABE and first four levels of ESL.

In 2013–14, California met or exceeded state goals in ABE Beginning Literacy, ASE Low, and ESL Advanced. Of the 305,182 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting, 138,415 (45.4 percent) completed an EFL, and 95,230 (31.2 percent) advanced one or more EFLs. More than 60 percent of the learners who persisted completed an EFL. The total persistence rate achieved in 2013–14 was 71 percent, exceeding the California state goal of 50 percent.

NRS EFL Performance 2013-14

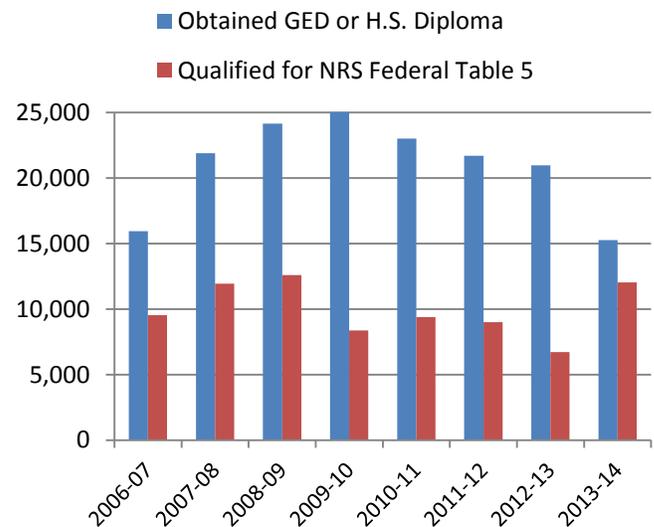


California had steadily improved its performance from 2006–2007 through 2011–2012 on persistence, EFL completion, and advancing one or more levels. In the 2013–14 program year persistence remained the same while EFL completion and advancing one or more levels improved compared to 2012–13. The 305,182 learners who qualified for NRS federal reporting averaged 192 hours of instruction. The 216,696 learners who persisted in the program and took pre- and post-tests clocked more than 230 hours of instruction. The state economic downturn and budget reduction has continued to force local providers to cut costs and downsize programs.

California measures local performance and pays local providers when students accomplish specific learning gains and attain high school diplomas or HSE certificate. California uses core indicators of performance for benchmarks as the basis for federal grant funding. Agencies can earn the following benchmark payments per student for student achievement within the program year: (1) completes an NRS EFL; (2) advances one or more EFLs; and (3) attains a high school diploma or HSE certificate (4) attains outcomes in EL Civics Citizenship Preparation and Civic Participation. Agencies are also rewarded when students participating in the random sample surveys achieve outcomes in employment and postsecondary education and training related core performance follow-up measures.

California showed a steady increase in the number of learners who obtained a secondary school diploma or GED® certificate from 2006–07 to 2009–10. In the past several years, programs showed mixed results in high school diploma and GED® certificate recipients. The decreases may be attributed to a significant overall decrease in student enrollment.

California implemented random sample survey methodology starting program year 2012–13 for employment and postsecondary education or training core follow-up outcome measures. The survey response rate has improved compared to the data reported in 2012–13 for entered and retained employment and for postsecondary education or training, although the response rate is below the NRS requirement of 70 percent.



California has continued to make data quality a top priority. The CDE continues to provide online and regional training as well as individualized targeted technical assistance to increase the local agencies' understanding of accountability requirements and to improve data collection. Local agencies submit data to CDE on a quarterly basis, permitting continual analysis and early identification of incomplete or inaccurate data. At the end of the program year, the statewide NRS EFL goals and performance are compared with agency-level performance. The longitudinal data are analyzed to track improvement in persistence and performance. The CDE staff and CASAS program specialists jointly provide targeted technical assistance to low performing agencies and agencies with newly appointed program administration teams.

Integration with Other Programs

California Workforce: The CDE continued to participate on the State Working Group in the implementation of a California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) statewide strategic workforce plan. The plan identifies goals and priority actions for the following core areas: Business and Industry, Adults, Youth, and System Alignment and Accountability. The CDE is the lead for a key action item supporting adults and will participate collaboratively in additional groups addressing other action items. The goals of the CDE Adult Education strategic plan, *Linking Adults to Opportunity*, align with the proposed collaborations outlined in the CWIB plan.

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB): When local agencies were asked about involvement with their local WIB, 56.8 percent indicated some type of involvement. Forty-five percent indicated they collaborated very effectively or somewhat effectively with local WIBs. Agencies reported specific ways they interacted with their local WIB, and the most frequently cited responses included (1) staff attended WIB meetings (53.1 percent); (2) the agency has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the WIB (47.8 percent); (3) the agency is represented through a consortium (46 percent); and/or (4) an administrator served on a local WIB board (35.4 percent).

One-Stop Systems: As in previous program years, more than 50 percent of the agencies indicated they collaborated effectively with local One-Stop centers. Agency enrollment size reflected patterns in relationships. More than 90 percent of the large agencies interacted effectively with One-Stop systems, followed by medium-sized (56 percent), and small agencies (45 percent). A large majority (74.9 percent) of agencies reported receiving or providing student referrals, 33.2 percent indicated they provided classes or training at the One-Stop, and 17.6 percent stated they had assigned a staff liaison to the One-Stop center. In addition, 23.6 percent of agencies reported interaction with One-Stop systems by providing testing and assessment services for the One-Stop center; tracking referrals (23.6 percent); and conducting workshops, conferences, or informational meetings (22.1 percent).

Points of Entry (POE): The project was a joint venture between OVAE and the Open Society Foundation. Its objective was to promote the development of career pathways and transition programs for low-skilled adults and prisoners in re-entry. Two California educational agencies participated in this project. The Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) Parolee Education Program, a computerized literacy center with 21 locations, introduced training for teachers to promote behavioral change interventions and soft skills development for parolees. Elk Grove Adult and Community Education (EGACE) established a referral system whereby they connected Rio Consumes Correctional Center parolees to educational opportunities at EGACE Adult Education programs, local community colleges, and local Sacramento Work Career Centers. Both CCCOE and EGACE have continued to sustain the POE activities, although the funding stream has ended. Areas of sustainability include program services that support: partnerships; career pathways; re-entry; persistence and personal growth; transition from correctional institutions; data collection and review; and funding for sustainability and expansion.

Additionally, the State Budget appropriated twenty-five million dollars and tasked the CDE and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to allocate funding for two-year planning and implementation grants to regional consortia of community college districts and school districts. The purpose of AB 86 Section 76, Article 3 is to provide grant funds to regional consortium to create and implement a plan to better provide adults in its region with all of the following:

- Elementary and secondary basic skills, including classes required for a high school diploma or HSE certificate
- Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for education services in citizenship and English as a second language and workforce preparation classes in basic skills
- Education programs for adults with disabilities
- Short-term career technical education programs with high employment potential
- Programs for apprentices

The initial report to the legislature was submitted in March 2014 by the AB86 Work Group. The final regional comprehensive plan is due on March 1, 2015.

English Literacy and Civics Education (EL Civics)

In 2013–14, the CDE EL Civics program awarded funds to 158 agencies to provide EL Civics educational services to 122,981 adult learners. Of the 122,981 learners, 18,747 enrollees in Citizenship Preparation and 111,669 were in Civic Participation. More than 9,000 learners passed the CASAS Government and History for Citizenship test, and 3,146 passed the oral CASAS Citizenship Interview Test. In the 2013–14 AEFLA survey, more than 90 percent of EL Civics agencies reported enhanced or improved literacy instruction, and 74.1 percent reported improved teacher and staff collaboration.

Civic Participation programs assess students through use of performance-based additional assessments that measure student attainment of civic objectives. Agencies may select from a list of 47 pre-approved civic objectives grouped under competency areas such as consumer economics, community resources, health, employment, and government and law or may develop their own. For example, in 2013–14 a new civic objective for digital literacy and online communication was developed by an agency and added under the community resources as an approved civic objective. This new objective is to assist students in effectively using online tools to communicate and collaborate, and search for and evaluate online content. Pre-approved civic objectives used in Civic Participation programs must meet the following criteria:

- Integrate English language and literacy instruction into civics education.
- Focus on helping students understand the government and history of the United States; learn the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and participate effectively in the education, employment, and civic opportunities this country has to offer.
- Integrate active participation of the learners in community activities.

More than 70,000 students throughout the state took Civic Participation performance-based additional assessments, and more than 90 percent passed one or more of them. WIA, Title II AEFLA agencies that have implemented innovative activities that carry EL Civics lessons from the classroom into the community are displayed under EL Civics “Making a Difference in the Community” web page on the CASAS Web site. Below are descriptions of activities supported with PY2013-14 EL Civics funds.

- Development and maintenance of an EL Civics Web site that provides a single online location for all California EL Civics information. Agencies have immediate access to EL Civics online resources, including an alignment of CASAS QuickSearch Online information to EL Civics language and literacy objectives and a database of pre-approved Civic Participation objectives. By using the Web site local providers can select, and customize, their own program objectives online based on the identified needs and goals of their students. The Web site facilitates and streamlines communication among agencies, the CDE consultants, and the CASAS program specialists.
- Training and technical assistance for all aspects of implementing the EL Civics program. CASAS program specialists work closely with the CDE adult education regional consultants to provide comprehensive PD and capacity-building technical assistance for accountability, program implementation, and continual program improvement. Program staff can attend regional training workshops and network meetings, access Web-based trainings, and use online training modules.

Secondary School Credentials and Equivalencies

On March 13, 2014, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved the use of three HSE tests. The approved tests are the General Educational Development Test (GED[®]) provided by GED Testing Service, (GEDTS), The High School Equivalency Test (HiSET[®]) provided by Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC[®]) provided by CTB/McGraw-Hill.

The GED[®] test is only offered in a computer-based format except for test takers requiring accommodations and inmates at correctional facilities participating in the Transitional Waiver Program. That paper-based option will end June 30, 2015. Both HiSET[®] and TASC[®] are available in paper-based and computer-based formats.

Currently GED[®] and HiSET tests are being offered at local California testing centers. An MOU between CTB/McGraw-Hill had not been established at the time of this report. Ultimately, testing centers will be allowed to offer any or all of the three tests. A test taker who passes any of the three tests will be awarded a Certificate of High School Equivalency from the CDE.

Adult Education Standards

The CDE has not formally adopted a validated set of College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for adult education. However, AEO has made progress toward educating local adult educators about CCR standards by providing professional development opportunities for AEFLA funded agencies.

The AEO is currently providing funding support for two CCR standards professional development modules using the State Leadership portion of the AEFLA grant. CALPRO, a partner in this effort, developed the module series to support teachers, administrators, and programs align curriculum and assessments to CCR standards.

Module one, Introduction to the CCR standards (scheduled for spring 2015), provides an introduction to and an in-depth exploration of, the CCR standards to ensure acquisition of the appropriate background knowledge and to establish a common vocabulary. The second module, titled CCR standards Implementation Strategies (scheduled for October 2015), focuses on the alignment of lesson plans and instructional materials to the CCR standards.

To access a webinar series on CCR standards, visit the following URL:

<http://www.calpro-online.org/researchwebinars.asp>.