South Dakota Narrative Report 2014-2015

> *Describe the major activities supported with State Leadership funds during the reporting period and the extent to which these activities helped implement the goals of the State Plan. Furthermore, specifically describe activities related to the implementation of career pathways.*

With a State ABE Leadership budget of approximately $140,000.00, South Dakota worked diligently throughout Program Year 2014 to provide effective guidance and quality professional development opportunities. In accordance with Section 223 of both the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, as well as in accordance with its Transitional State Plan, South Dakota expended Leadership monies for the following activities, programs, initiatives, and projects:

1) **The establishment or operation of professional development programs to improve the quality of instruction**

Summer Summit 2014
This 2014 conference delivered focused strands in both Adult Numeracy Instruction [as Institute I of the LINCS-supported initiative] and English Language Acquisition. The breakout-session topics included GED® 2014 Series, English Language Action Research Forum, National Career Readiness Certificate, PowerPath system of participatory learning, Integrating Technology into the Classroom, and Learning Centers. This 2 ½-day conference was attended by 67 agency directors, coordinators, instructors, and support staff from 9 sub-grantee providers and 2 [external] partners.

Adult Numeracy Instruction with LINCS
More than thirty directors, coordinators, and Adult Education instructors (from eight of nine sub-grantee providers and one external [tribal] partner) participated in the three ANI Institutes during PY2014. South Dakota's participation in the ANI initiative was also reinforced with a significant purchase of textbooks, workbooks, reference materials, and classroom manipulatives [as utilized throughout the training].

Because of the number of South Dakota residents in need of Numeracy remediation (and Numeracy's impact upon consumer, health, and financial literacy)—as well as many of the instructors' needs to brush-up on Adult Education methodology and upper-level mathematics, geometry, quadratics, and statistics—the ANI training was both necessary and well received.

Adult Education Instructor Development Program (AE IDP)
State Leadership funds supported a cohort of the AE IDP. This teacher training serves as an induction for new instructors, as well as a refresher for senior staff. (The structure of this IDP incorporated successful elements of the English Language Instructor Development Program [EL IDP] to include both mentorship and reflection components.) During the 2014-15 AE IDP, staff from four of Department of Labor and Regulation's sub-grantee providers reviewed assessment protocol (specifically McGraw-Hill's TABE), ABE/ASE instructional methodologies, program structures, NRS, CCRSAE, lesson planning, LD issues, and persistence-related topics.

<u>Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)</u>
Students at Adult Basic Education Intermediate Low and High [Educational Functioning Levels] comprised 44% of all reportable leaners for PY2014. Given the importance of STAR and its potential impact on statewide programming, South Dakota expressed interest in participating in the STAR Hybrid Training Pilot next program year; the State plans to continue its support of evidence-based reading instruction throughout the implementation of WIOA's first grant cycle.

<u>National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC)</u>
State Leadership grant monies paid South Dakota's 2014-15 membership dues in the NAEPDC.

<u>COABE National Conference 2015—Denver, Colorado</u>
State ABE Leadership grant monies (including planned carryover) supported the attendance of a South Dakota contingency to the COABE National Conference; the State's cohort was comprised of 40 directors, coordinators, and instructors from eight of DLR's nine sub-grantee providers. The potential to inform existing or future classroom-based research weighed significantly upon the decision to make this investment.

All COABE attendees will be required to submit a hardcopy report to the State and to briefly present upon the most salient session or topic from the COABE Conference at the following Summer Summit. The Reflection and Presentation guides, accompanying resources (web links, handouts, PowerPoints, etc.), and presentation materials will be collated and made available to all of the sub-grantee providers and affiliate partners after Summer Summit 2015.

2) **The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities in order to assist them in achieving the goal of continuous quality improvement**

State staff provided continuous technical assistance through telephonic and electronic correspondence, desk monitors, conference calls, webinars, video teleconferencing, and site visits. Furthermore, local administrators, instructors, and data specialists took advantage of the fact they could contact state staff with any questions regarding programmatic policies and data-quality issues with the assurance they would receive timely responses.

Moreover, a number of DLR's sub-grantee partners have both the opportunity and the professional capacity to pursue classroom-based research; it has been the prerogative of the state staff to support these endeavors. Most notable during 2014-15, South Dakota's AEFLA program was represented by three individuals who presented at the 2015 COABE National Conference in Denver.

3) **Provision of technology assistance, including staff training, to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities to enable them to improve the quality of such activities**

South Dakota made available KeyTrain, GED Academy, and Teknimedia curricula to the sub-grantee providers as Distance Learning or hybrid-classroom offerings; these curricula address work-readiness, HSE test-preparation, and computer literacy (respectively).

These technological investments provided WIOA Title II students (ESL, ABE, and ASE) with more opportunities for digital-literacy tutelage, electronic assessments, and supplementary remediation. Vendor-delivered webinars were available throughout the program year to afford technical assistance on these sundry offerings. For example, a webinar from Essential Education on Quadratic Equations reinforced the material reviewed during Institute III of the Adult Numeracy Instruction initiative.

Some modest Leadership funds also went toward an additional investment in a number of Texas Instruments TI-30XS calculators for local AEFLA providers' GED® Test Preparation classes.

4) The support of State or regional literacy resource centers

Besides funding Distance Learning curricula and computer-based study supplements, the AEL Program continued to work closely with the South Dakota State Library's Electronic Resource Coordinators. The two coordinators provided the agency, local programs, and residents of South Dakota with assistance in accessing the State Library's vast electronic resources including World Book Discover, LearningExpress Library, SIRS Suite, ProQuest, Mango Languages, and Gale Virtual Reference Library. (LearningExpress Library has an online HSE Preparatory Program at no cost to library-card holders which is a welcome resource for individuals who cannot [or prefer not to] attend Adult Education.)

5) Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities

State staff evaluated local programs through desk monitors and annual site visits. Directors' meetings (both face-to-face and web-based) also provided opportunities to review participation rates, performance, data quality, policy changes, and program-goal updates. The Quarterly Reports assisted state staff with monitoring new or ongoing issues while concurrently providing agencies with more meaningful documentation and evaluative processes; the ongoing submission of quarterly data sets affords the local sub-grantee providers and the agency easy access to longitudinal comparisons across different points of the program year.

Furthermore, during PY2014, the State staff and the Professional Development Team (comprised of an ABE, ASE, and ESL [expert] representative) developed, honed, and published a robust, online Adult Education Survey of the AEFLA providers and Tribal partners. The survey evidenced a high response-rate; subsequently, these findings were used to map WIOA's four-year PD calendar in terms of topics, delivery-mode preferences, and priorities.

6) Incentives for program coordination, integration, and performance awards

No such incentives were awarded with Leadership grant monies during PY2014.

7) Developing and disseminating curricula and instructional materials

To complement the aforementioned technology-related projects, State Leadership funds again purchased GED Ready™ administrations to support student, teacher, and agency-level transitions to computer-based testing, as well as to the GED® 2014 Series. These pass-through monies were reimbursed to local providers as a Special Project. Furthermore, this new computer-based practice test seems to rather accurately predict students' likelihood of passing a subtest, as well as providing learners some test-format familiarity and topics for further study.

Because of the State's computer-based testing transition and its adoption of the GED® 2014 Series, a state staff specialist worked with a Title I colleague to make available Teknimedia's CBT100™ Module: Computer Skills for the 2014 GED® Test. This WIOA collaboration exemplifies the Department's commitment to adult learners' Computer Literacy and Workplace Readiness skills, as well as underscoring the importance DLR places upon the outcome of earning a High School Equivalency [across programming].

8) **Activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

Management Information System
The Leadership funds supported the State's Management Information System for WIOA Title II under the National Reporting System. The monies covered the Hosting Fees, the Annual Maintenance Agreements for Local Providers, and the State's Annual Maintenance Agreement. The Leadership dollars also supported vendor-hosted webinar trainings.

Four plenary webinars were held during the program year. These trainings addressed both general and specific aspects of data collection, entry, follow-up, reporting, analysis, and security. In addition to the regular plenary webinars, a New Users Training was offered. Each sub-grantee provider and its satellites also had the opportunity to avail themselves of an agency-specific [45-minute] sessions with the State and the vendor to ask local questions (without their colleagues in attendance). This approach has afforded the state, the MIS trainer, and the respective agencies more context, specificity, trust, rapport, comfort, and candor—all without embarrassing or compromising any one particular provider or data specialist.

Data Matching | Statewide Longitudinal Data System
South Dakota data matched all four of the NRS follow-up outcome measures this program year; DLR used South Dakota Unemployment Insurance records and the Wage Record Interchange System (via the State's Bureau of Information & Telecommunications), Oklahoma Scoring, GED® Testing Service/Pearson VUE, and the National Student Clearinghouse to collect these data and ultimately report a valid, robust set of NRS Table 5 outcomes. Furthermore, the Adult Education program specialist attended quarterly meetings of South Dakota's Statewide Longitudinal Data System [workgroup].

9) **Coordination with existing support services, including transportation, childcare and other assistance designed to increase the enrollment and retention of adult learners and their successful completion of adult education and literacy activities**

In addition to bolstering the State's support of Distance Learning options for students needing flexible alternatives, the AEL program expended some nominal Leadership funds in its work with the TANF program, the DLR Local Office in Sioux Falls, Southeast Technical Institute, and the Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls to deliver ESL instruction, case management, and work-related activities in a Managed Worksite model.

10) **Integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training, and promoting linkages with employers**

All local programs and their students had access to ACT's KeyTrain curricula. Providers encouraged any learner who might benefit from the certificate, especially those students in the labor force, to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate. Furthermore, as an example of employer linkages, one of the sub-grantee providers delivered weekend ESL instruction on behalf of a processing plant for its existing non-English speaking [incumbent] workforce. The state agency hopes to highlight such promising practices during the coming program year at the Workforce Development Council meetings and at other stakeholder assemblies.

11) **Linkages with postsecondary education institutions**

Two of the state's four technical schools delivered AEFLA-supported adult education programming; these technical institutes are under the aegis of the South Dakota Department of Education. Additionally, ongoing discussions were held with The University of South Dakota's School of Education; this dialogue continued to focus upon the potential for a statewide Adult Education Certificate Program [as part of the Teacher Quality and Effectiveness initiative]. Both the South Dakota Department of Education and the Board of Regents have representation on the Workforce Development Council.

➢ *Describe any significant findings from the agency's evaluation of the performance data for the reporting period and efforts to improve outcomes for the core indicators of performance.*

For the second consecutive year, as per the Federal Register's Notice dated May 2015, South Dakota's Title II program again exceeded its federally negotiated state performance target-levels [for Program Year 2013-14]. However, the 2014-15 year presented new challenges in lean budgetary times. For instance, South Dakota's Unemployment Rate was one of the lowest in the nation; employers seem self-admittedly and anecdotally desperate for skilled and unskilled workers alike—sometimes regardless of the labor force's educational attainment and work history.

Moreover, the individuals needing and seeking AEFLA services had more significant barriers to employment and self-sufficiency than previous enrollments. Additionally, 40% of the ESL Reportables at the time of entry this reporting-year were functioning at the Beginning Literacy level; many of these preliterate [former] refugees were relocated from war-torn regions of the world after sometimes living for years in camps.

A summative, annual evaluation of South Dakota's Adult Education and Literacy Program indicated both the agency and the sub-grantee providers are making quantifiable and qualifiable progress. More adoption of managed enrollment amongst local providers, data matching and improved reporting capabilities at the State level, a greater focus on EL/Civics professional development, the Instructor Development Programs, and consistent MIS/NRS trainings contributed to much of the progress highlighted in the following graphics:

Statewide AEFLA Participation and Performance

Measure	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Reportables	2,773 students	2,423 students	2,395 students	2,433 students	2,060 students	2,062 students
Completed Level Gain(s)	864 students	975 students	953 students	981 students	822 students	792 students
Completion Rate	31%	40%	40%	40%	40%	38%
Average Hours Per Student	64 hours	65 hours	67 hours	71 hours	72 hours	74 hours
Average Hours for Students with Post-Test	99 hours	92 hours	94 hours	96 hours	100 hours	105 hours
Total Hours of Classroom Instruction	176,620 hours	158,317 hours	161,310 hours	173,760 hours	148,081 hours	152,594 hours
Post-Testing Rate	45%	55%	56%	61%	59%	57%
Entered Employment	155 students	159 students	198 students	242 students	274 students	201 students
Retained Employment	100 students	52 students	126 students	416 students	582 students	596 students
Earned a GED® Test Credential	311 students	390 students	472 students	572 students	406 students	184 students
Entered Job Training or Postsecondary	72 students	58 students	45 students	94 students	94/147 students	33/125 students
Intermediate ABE Levels	1,544 = 56%	1,232 = 51%	1,192 = 50%	1,248 = 51%	1,001 = 49%	897 = 44%
ESL Learners	477 = 17%	467 = 19%	550 = 23%	620 = 25%	576 = 28%	672 = 33%

Figure 1. The table illustrates the State's participation levels and performance rates over the past six program years.
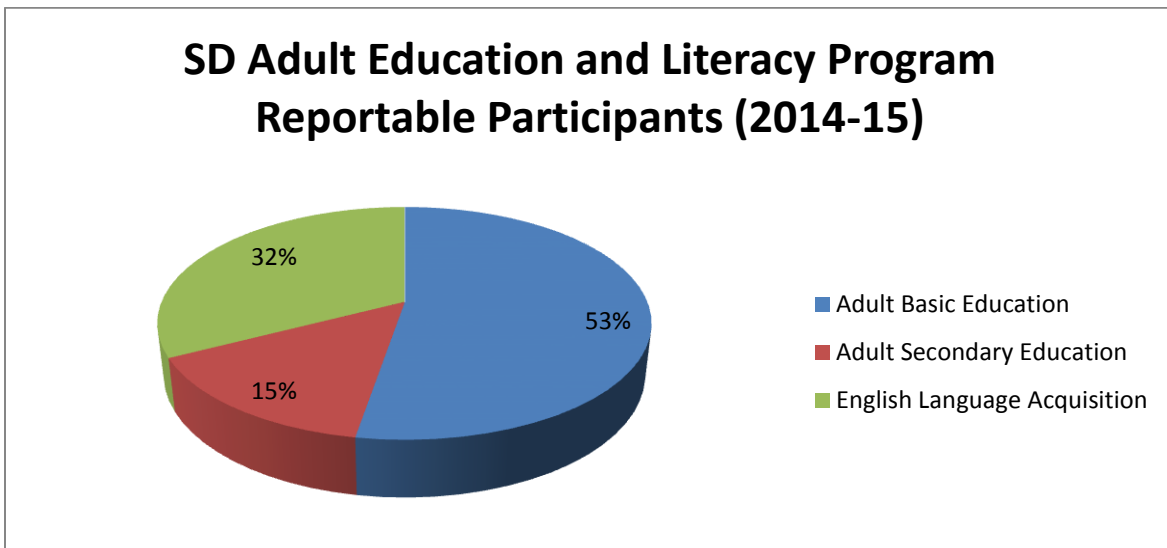

Figure 2. The pie chart illustrates the State's commitment to serving individuals who are "most in need" of literacy, numeracy, and oracy instruction.
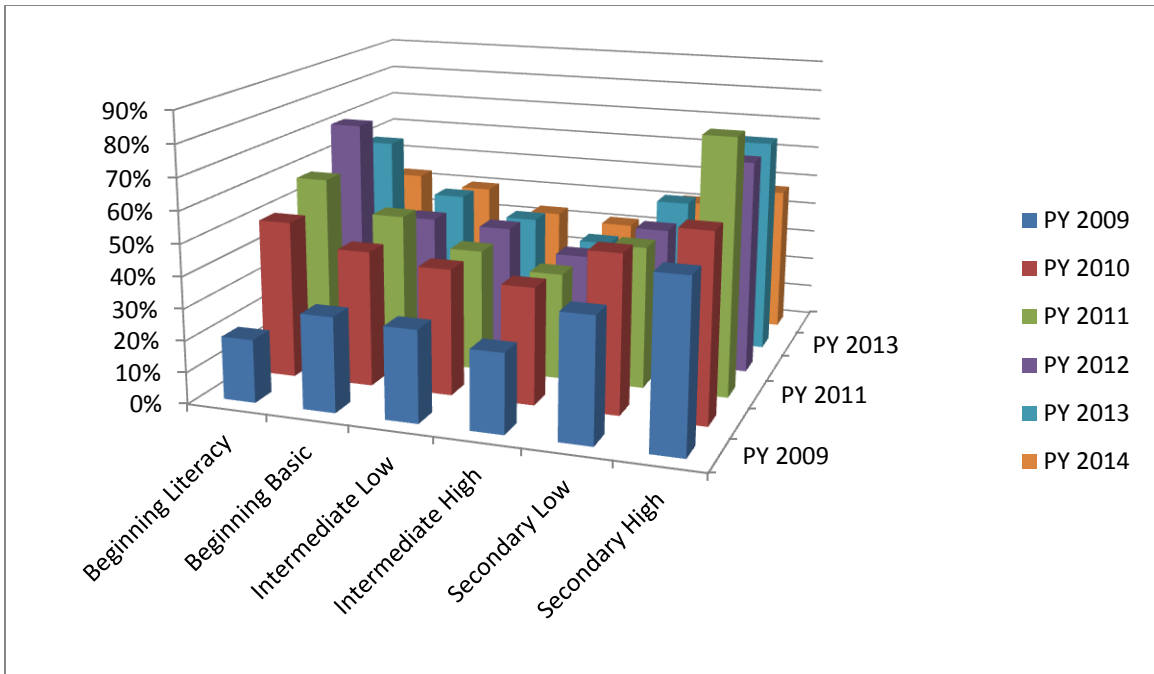
Figure 3. This graph illustrates the levels of performance in both Adult Basic and Adult Secondary Education (i.e., the percentage completing an educational functioning level [gain]).
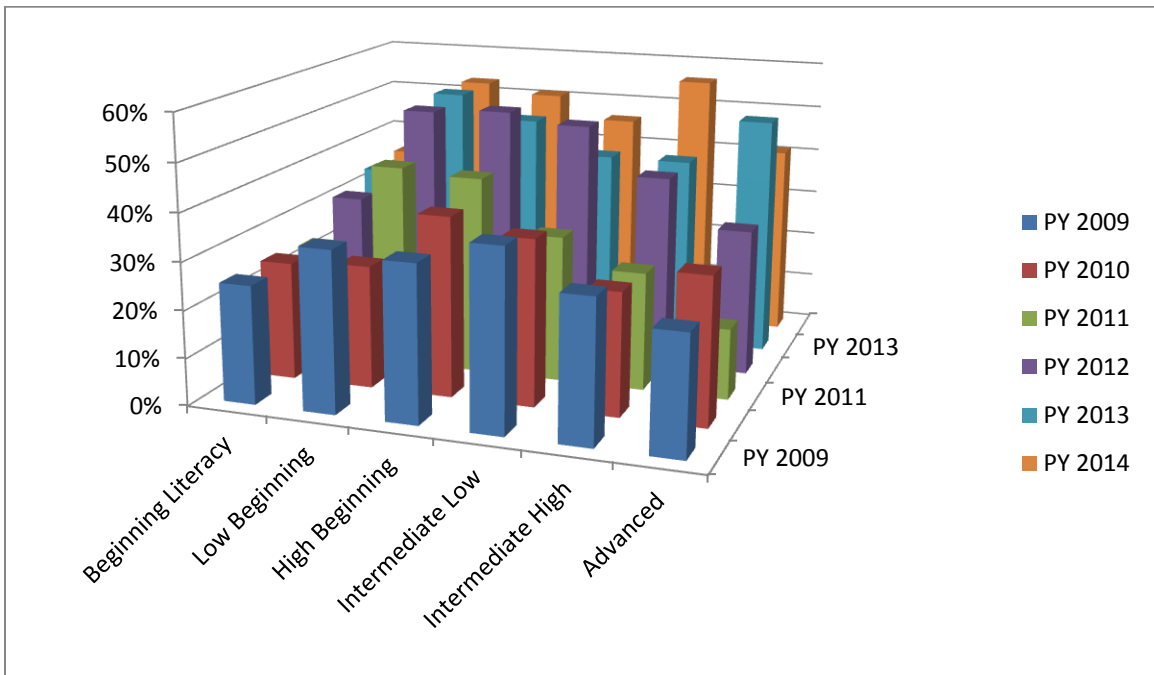

Figure 4. This graph illustrates the levels of performance in English as a Second Language.

> *Describe how the agency has integrated AEFLA-supported activities with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Describe the agency's efforts to develop or advance career pathway systems that include career and technical education, postsecondary education, employers, and economic and workforce development.*

<u>Integration of Activities</u>
The Department of Labor and Regulation considers adult education a key component to workforce development and has increased its prominence by integrating adult education services/opportunities into all its recent workforce programs, including the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP); through this integration, partnerships were formed to best serve residents of South Dakota. Many of our clients have not been in school for years, and they often need brush-up or remediation in Reading and Mathematics to have success in job training or postsecondary education.

Local field offices and the adult education programs have worked closely to meet the needs of these clients. The partnership between Labor and Adult Education is especially evident with the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) initiative. The WorkKeys and KeyTrain programs are available at the adult education centers; instructional staff members offer KeyTrain as a supplemental Workplace Literacy curriculum.

<u>Workforce Investment Board</u>
The Workforce Development Council serves as both the State and Local Workforce Investment Board. With the Council's support, adult education issues are addressed and program initiatives are integrated with other state efforts.

Labor and Regulation's workforce training director serves as the executive director for the Council, and the Cabinet Secretary sits on the Council as a voting member. Through the Council's efforts, local offices provide assistance with job searches, employment guidance and counseling, as well as referrals to appropriate services which benefit individuals under all WIOA Titles. The local offices support not only those seeking jobs and training, but also employers.

<u>The One-Stop System of Delivery</u>
The One-Stop system does not comprise a specific budget item; indirect costs from WIOA Titles I – III support the One-Stop system. Time is allocated according to function and an established percentage approved by DLR, as well as approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education.

The Adult Education and Literacy Program emphasizes that the responsibilities established by Title I of WIOA are not secondary or subsidiary to the responsibilities and requirements established by Title II of WIOA (i.e., AEFLA); the WIOA Title I and AEFLA requirements must both be satisfied. The Titles I and II program specialists work together to coordinate

professional development and training activities, communicate performance expectations and procedural understandings, and collaborate to best assist the mutual program participants.

As a continued example of the aforementioned, at the onset of Program Year 2014-15, the DLR Local Offices and the Adult Education Providers revised their existing Memorandum of Understanding. This working document actualized a shared framework to articulate local expectations and to formalize policies for the improvement of WIOA [Titles I, II, and III] activities, instruction, and services.

> *Describe the activities and services supported with English Literacy/Civics funds, including the number of programs receiving EL/Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.*

During PY2014, the EL/Civics instructional monies went to three sub-grantee providers. The primary recipient, a faith-based organization, serves as the region's primary refugee-resettlement agency; the other recipients included a community-based organization and a technical institute. Additional ABE Instructional funds supplemented these agencies' EL/Civics instruction, activities, and services. The statewide number of enrolled ESL adult learners in 2014-15 totaled 807; of those 807 adult students, 672 were deemed NRS reportable. Moreover, South Dakota expended the EL/Civics Leadership and Administrative funds as efficiently as possible to provide professional development, coordinate services, develop linkages with employers, and build capacity with other state and local entities.

The English Language Instructor Development Program (EL IDP) was in its fourth year during PY2014. The state agency, along with Lutheran Social Services' Center for New Americans, delivered another two cohorts of training which included a two-day, face-to-face training of mentorship, collaboration, classroom practice, observation, and evaluation. Additionally, multiple BEST Plus Administrator Trainings were delivered throughout the year for both new and senior ESL staff.

The state staff responsible for EL/Civics also assisted the South Dakota Director of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with a Managed Worksite project. Furthermore, EL/Civics funds supported site visits, technical assistance/guidance, monitoring, and assessment training. In addition to supplementing the COABE National Conference attendance, some EL/Civics funds were expended to send a cohort of five ESL professionals to attend the 2014 Minnesota English Learner Education Conference.

Quite possibly the most rewarding use of EL/Civics Leadership monies during PY2014 was again the funding of EL/Civics Field Trips. These investments afforded three providers the opportunity to bring approximately 110 EL/Civics students to the State Capital during Legislative Session. The students visited the Cultural Heritage Museum, toured the Capitol, and applied their classroom content to the law-making procedures they observed in Pierre. Some of the

groups also met with State Representatives and Senators, the Cabinet Secretary of Labor and Regulation, and even Governor Dennis Daugaard. The largest group was publicly recognized by the Lieutenant Governor, and at least one student group filmed a video of their field trip to show their classmates (who were unable to attend).

Again, it must be noted that South Dakota's EL/Civics allotment was heavily supplemented with AEFLA's ABE funds, as well as state general funds and local match, to serve the needs of our state's non-native speakers, former refugees, and immigrants. The EL/Civics allotment comprised about 6% of the overall federal grant; however, nearly 33% of the state's total Reportables in PY2014 were adult ESL learners.

> *Describe your state's policies related to how it awards a secondary school diploma or its equivalent to individuals who are no longer enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law.*

Currently the only high school diploma-equivalent [metonymically] articulated within South Dakota Codified Law (Title 13-27-1) is the GED® credential from GED Testing Service®. Because GEDTS is now a joint venture between the American Council on Education and Pearson VUE, the State's policies regarding HSE exams for individuals who are no longer enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law generally emulate standard protocols promulgated by GED Testing Service®.

It should be noted South Dakota has no residency requirement for the obtainment of a GED® credential. Furthermore, at the end of PY2013, nearly all official testing centers had made the switch from the 2002 Series to the 2014 Series, as well as the transition from paper/pencil to computer-based testing. The only remaining exception to the aforementioned is a division within the South Dakota Department of Corrections (which currently participates in the Transitional Waiver Program with GED® Testing Service).

> *Describe your state's progress toward implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, including whether your state has formally adopted a validated set of CCR standards.*

The State will formally adopt the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education for its WIOA Title II program; the tentative deadline for full implementation, per WIOA mandate, is July 01, 2016. State Leadership funds will be used in PY2015 to deliver (in conjunction with LINCS) further CCRS training for both English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards. A hybrid model of face-to-face and web-based instruction/interaction will facilitate the understanding, adoption, application, and implementation of standards-based Adult Education in South Dakota.