

## **1. State Leadership Funds (AEFLA Section 223)**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Division of Adult Education (division) used federal section 223 state leadership funds to support a system of projects that provides services that address all activities required in section 223 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The system provides technical assistance and professional development opportunities and disseminates relevant information about resources and promising practices. The system supports relevant, job-embedded professional development that helps staff at local programs build capacity and assume the responsibility for implementation and evaluation of program improvement and professional development at their agencies.

### **Alignment with one-stop partners and related technical assistance**

The Workforce Project focuses its work on assisting local program staff to connect services to local, regional, and statewide workforce needs. The project also helps local programs to understand their role as partners in the workforce development system and one-stop centers and to develop relationships and partnerships with one-stop center staff, local workforce boards, training providers, employers, and other workforce partners to build a system that addresses both worker and employer needs. During this full year of the pandemic, as the one-stops closed to in-person services and then partially re-opened with limited in-person services, the project worked with programs to help them understand their role in the new virtual one-stops and how to work with partners in such a changeable environment. One area of increased success was career pathways work for re-entrants. The Workforce Project has become a statewide leader in this area and has led reentry workshops that were attended by teams that were a mix of partners and adult educators in 2020-21.

The Workforce Project lead represented Title II on Pennsylvania's team for the national Operationalizing Co-enrollment technical assistance activity. As part of the resulting state action plan, she was tasked with planning cross-training. She conceived of a series of on-demand modules aimed at improving one-stop partners' knowledge and understanding of each other's program and activities to support increased co-enrollment. In 2019-20, the Workforce and Technology Projects developed an online, on-demand module that is being used to cross-train workforce development system staff. In 2020-21, 303 people from WIOA partners across the state enrolled in this course; one local workforce board required it for all staff. Development of a second module, which will focus on shared case management among the partners, also began. As with the first module, this module will be developed with input from state staff from the division and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) as well as state and local subject matter experts from WIOA core programs. The division-required assessment trainings are also open to one-stop partner program staff members with a dedicated facilitator. In 2020-21, 71 Title I staff were trained. This work further supports co-enrollment and helps to ensure accurate assessment data for reporting.

The Workforce Project lead is a member of the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board's Career Pathways Committee, advocating for the inclusion of adult education services in career pathways. The state director of adult education participates in several inter-agency workgroups with WIOA and other program partners. The on-going participation in these activities has helped adult education be included in state-level planning activities and competitive grant opportunities.

### **High-quality professional development programs and provision of technical assistance**

The core of the professional development system (PDS) is the Professional Learning Opportunities Project, which is a team of six consultants. Consultants met with staff at assigned agencies for extended virtual visits two to three times a year in addition to frequent contact via phone, email, and webinar. Consultants helped agencies support continuous program improvement through professional learning and provided support for the implementation of standards-aligned lessons and integration of instructional advances into adult education classrooms. All agencies had professional learning communities focused on standards implementation. Consultants attended professional learning

community meetings at each agency to provide feedback and support on the implementation of this model for professional development. In addition, consultants worked with agency leadership teams to articulate evidence of teacher and student change and discuss the outcomes of their Program Improvement-Professional Development plans and to talk about evidence to support the outcomes. In 2020-21, consultants also focused on supporting instructors to become effective distance teachers and in adapting their lessons for remote instruction. Consultants developed statewide virtual professional learning communities that provided support for teachers as they created and shared resources and lessons during live webinars. Teachers provided valuable feedback during these webinars and learned how to implement new resources and strategies effectively.

In addition to supporting standards-based instruction (see the standards section), the PDS continued to focus on improving instruction in specific content areas by once again offering three year-long instructional institutes: Student Achievement in Reading (STAR); Algebra Across the Levels; and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). This was the first year that the PDS provided STAR using only Pennsylvania trainers. PDS staff and content experts also delivered the ELPS and Algebra institutes. The Algebra Across the Levels institute was developed as a direct result of the pandemic; the previously offered Adult Numeracy Instruction institute was difficult to convert to a fully distance offering, so the division made the decision to create a new in-depth professional development opportunity geared towards improving math instruction at a distance. STAR and ELPS were overhauled in the summer of 2020 to adapt the content to an online setting. All 2020-21 institutes culminated in action plans for the implementation of the new knowledge and skills in 2021-22.

The PDS worked with content experts, online course instructors, and other professional development facilitators to update and develop both online and in-person formal professional development activities, focusing on on-demand courses and the use of research-based external and facilitated resources. The system offers a robust selection of professional development options, including the areas specified in section 223(a)(1)(B). All courses had follow-up support built into the instructional design plan and an assigned course coach to provide targeted, specialized assistance to course participants that supported the implementation of new knowledge and skills and change in teaching practice. Course completion was 82% in 2020-21, which is only slightly lower than 2019-20 (83%) and only a 3% drop overall since the start of the pandemic. The use of online on-demand staff induction modules and tutor training modules increased sharply at the start of the pandemic and increased use has continued into 2020-21. The on-demand tutor training modules in particular saw a 30% increase in enrollment in 2020-21.

The Workforce Project serves as the PDS content expert in the development of professional learning opportunities related to WIOA, employer engagement, corrections, and postsecondary transitions. As the content expert for integrated education and training (IET) program development, the project provided technical assistance to section 243 programs in the development and improvement of their IET programs.

The Communications Project is the vehicle for disseminating information to the field. The project maintains a [website](#), which features resources provided by the division and the PDS or submitted by local programs. Programs access the on-demand modules via the website. The project also sends out monthly newsletters that provide links to research articles about models and promising practices in adult education and other resources that are relevant to adult educators. To meet accessibility requirements, the Communications Project began closed captioning all posted webinars in 2019-20. This took on added importance as the PDS offered more webinars to help programs find ways to continue services during the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, the project created a page on the website to be a single location to access vital, up-to-date information. This page was regularly updated in 2020-21 and was the source for up-to-date information about remote assessment training, webinars on remote instruction, and a variety of other pandemic-related issues. The number of visits to the website increased by 25% in 2020-21 over 2019-20.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Distance Education Technical Assistance Project has been the key to program support, as local programs grappled with challenges of remote instruction, services, and program administration. In addition to providing monthly webinars on topics such as the use of distance resources, facilitating engaging class webinars, and how to provide feedback remotely, project staff provided individual technical assistance to 18 programs. Project staff developed an observation tool for use in remote classroom settings because administrators and instructional leaders wanted to know what was happening in the remote classrooms so they could better support their staff. The project coordinated the first annual Technology in Adult Education Virtual Conference to facilitate idea sharing among the programs. The project also continued to review existing distance education products for recommendation to the division for approval for local program use.

In response to the pandemic, the leadership projects worked together to assist programs in improving the quality of services in a remote or hybrid environment. They devised a series of Friday lunchtime webinars that focused on topics such as digital literacy, distance learning, teacher support, and managing data. Although each project took the lead in their areas of expertise, many of the webinars were combined efforts of the system.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Using data for decision-making and for continuous program improvement is an ongoing focus of state leadership activities. The PDS provided technical assistance, training, and support to local programs in the collection, entry, reporting, use, and analysis of program data with the goals of ensuring accurate data and improving program services and student outcomes. To assist both the division and programs with monitoring progress and using data for decision making and program improvement, the MIS Project created and annually updates an Access database template, which is linked to the web-based data collection system. Program staff can produce reports for individual teachers and classes to evaluate the impact of program improvement and professional development activities. The MIS Project produced monthly agency data check reports for program staff and division advisors. In 2020-21, MIS created several new options for tracking remote and in-person hours and for appropriately labeling classes so that programs and advisors could better understand program services. MIS also standardized the database reporting functions so that programs and advisors were able to see data presented in the same way. (Prior to 2020-21, programs and advisors had separate report templates.) Having access to the same reports and having the data contain more detailed descriptions of services made desk monitoring conversations more effective.

In August 2019, the MIS Project held a data institute designed to increase local program capacity for data analysis and to promote improvement in data policy and practices at local programs. Forty-three agency teams, which included over 120 administrators and data quality specialists, participated in the institute and developed action plans for improved data practices. A division advisor conducted a formal review of programs' revised 2019-20 data policies; the results showed that most programs had improved their data policies and procedures following the completion of institute activities. Those that did not demonstrate improvement were required to continue the work in 2020-21. The MIS Project held a webinar for those programs that reviewed the effective elements of data policies and then worked individually with each program to help them improve and strengthen their policies.

Division advisors monitor program data for issues in real time to assist programs to improve the quality and accuracy of the data that they report and to identify both positive and negative trends. They have frequent conversations with program staff to discuss progress towards meeting contracted enrollment and program performance targets and identify areas for improvement. In response to the pandemic, state staff developed tools and procedures to conduct fully remote in-depth monitoring reviews in place of onsite monitoring visits. State staff piloted these new tools during two fully remote monitoring reviews held in spring 2021 and will use information from these two reviews to inform monitoring procedures for 2021-22.

### **Leadership funds competition**

In spring of 2020-21 the Division of Adult Education competed section 223 funds to fund seven priorities. The priorities for this competition were similar to the existing priorities, with two main changes. The division added a new priority focused on support for developing IET programs and the distance education priority was expanded to include support for increasing program and staff digital literacy skills. Total funding awarded was \$2,090,000 for 2021-22 with optional renewal for three additional years. Funding for the renewal years will be negotiated annually.

## **2. Performance Data Analysis**

As noted above, advisors reviewed data throughout the year in desk monitoring activities and discussed observations with program administrators. In the first half of 2020-21, advisors focused on progress toward contracted enrollment, timely administration of standardized assessments used for reporting purposes, and programs' use of distance learning options. In the second half of the program year, they also focused on educational functioning level (EFL) gains of posttested students. When advisors identified anomalies and errors in monthly data check reports, they communicated with program administrators for explanations and resolutions. Advisors also looked for common issues and trends, which the division addressed in biweekly webinars. The division also used the biweekly webinars to highlight innovative practices that local programs had implemented, especially regarding the use of technology for remote services and program administration in a teleworking environment.

The pandemic had a significant impact on enrollment in 2020-21. Pennsylvania enrolled 10,534 participants in adult education and family literacy activities, compared with 14,764 in 2019-20: a decrease of 4,230 (28.7%). Corrections education participation was even more dramatically impacted: 125 participants in 2020-21 versus 619 in 2019-20 and 771 in 2018-19. An additional 97 individuals began corrections education services but did not achieve 12 hours of service.

When the pandemic started, the division expanded the allowable options for distance learning. The additional options were essential to the provision of services in 2020-21. Pennsylvania reports all participants with 12 or more hours of distance learning services on NRS Table 4c, regardless of the number of in-person hours. Eighty percent of all participants were included in Table 4c, and those participants accounted for 91.6% of all attendance hours. Of the 8,482 distance learning participants, 96% had more than half of their attendance hours through distance learning options. Among the 2,052 participants who were not included on Table 4c, approximately 10% nonetheless had more distance education hours than in-person hours. Only 8% of participants in 2020-21 had no reported distance learning hours.

Students in all ESL levels participated in distance learning options in greater proportions than did ABE level students. Overall, 90.1% of students at ESL levels 1-6 participated in 12 or more hours of distance learning, while 74% of students at ABE levels 1-6 did. Conversely, of the students who did not have any distance learning hours, only 15% were at ESL levels.

In 2020-21, Pennsylvania's measurable skills gain (MSG) outcome improved slightly to 32.85% from 28.59% in 2019-20, but it was still well below the target of 44.8%. At the beginning of the program year, programs struggled to administer standardized assessments and used informal assessments to determine individuals' eligibility for services instead. Most successfully implemented strategies for remote and safe in-person administration of assessments by the end of the first quarter. In the end, approximately 2% of participants were provisionally placed in an EFL based on informal assessments, so the impact on overall MSG was minimal. Almost half of those were at two agencies. The advisors for those two programs have been working to ensure that they have procedures in place to appropriately assess students moving forward. Pennsylvania did not implement any of the new MSG options in 2020-21.

ESL students had an MSG outcome of 37.43% compared with 29.99% for ABE students. While ESL students in Pennsylvania have traditionally had slightly higher MSG outcomes than ABE students, this year's 7-point difference is much greater than the difference in prior years. Similarly, while the overall percentage of pre-and posttested participants who showed an EFL gain declined slightly from 2019-20, the subset comprised of ESL students showed a 2.7 percentage point increase. These numbers suggest that ESL students' greater participation in distance learning likely had a positive impact on their outcomes.

On exit-based outcome measures, Pennsylvania did not meet its negotiated levels of performance for employment outcomes for the second and fourth quarters after exit. The negotiated level for both outcomes was 50%; actual performance was 45.83% for the second quarter after exit and 46.73% for the fourth quarter after exit. However, given the impact that the pandemic had on overall employment in 2020, which is the period for wage data used to calculate the levels of performance, the division believes the outcomes are better than expected. Furthermore, median wages increased by \$300 and exceeded the target. Also of note is that the labor force distribution for participants in 2020-21 changed only slightly from the previous year. The percent employed on entry decreased by 2 percent from 46.8% to 44.7%; unemployed at entry increased from 40.2% to 43.2%; and not in the labor force dropped to 11.4% from 13%. Given the upheaval in employment and the workforce since the beginning of the pandemic, these changes seem relatively mild.

Pennsylvania improved its credential attainment outcome, although it fell short of the target of 39%. October 2021 credential attainment reporting reflected the first year that providers offered IET programs that led to postsecondary credentials. It also reflected implementation of a standardized process to collect postsecondary credential attainment data in the web-based data collection system. The division continues to work with programs to improve data collection for postsecondary credential attainment.

As noted above, programs successfully implemented strategies for remote and safe in-person administration of standardized assessments. However, these strategies require a greater investment of resources than previous procedures. Fewer students can take assessments at the same time and location. Programs must purchase appropriate technology. Staff members must spend time preparing the technology for each assessment administration and helping students understand the assessment procedures. Program staff travel to off-site locations to provide devices to students who do not own devices appropriate for taking assessments. The division is making additional funding available to programs to improve their capacity to administer assessments under these new conditions.

### **3. Integration with One-stop Partners**

#### **Required one-stop roles**

PDE delegates the required one-stop roles and responsibilities to local providers. All programs that receive federal Title II funds through an *Adult Basic Education Direct Service* grant or an *Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program* grant must be one-stop partners and signatories to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and contribute to infrastructure and other costs. The rationale for this decision is that the division requires all funded programs to be full-service providers whose participants can benefit from the one-stop system. The delegation of roles is established in *Division Policy G.100 Adult Education and the Workforce Development System*, posted on the [PDE website](#). It is also included in the Request for Grant Application documents; the grant application includes a narrative question in which applicants describe how they will meet the roles and responsibilities of a one-stop partner. In local areas with only one adult basic education provider, that provider is the sole Title II partner and must meet all the roles and responsibilities itself. In local areas with more than one adult basic education provider, providers, including subgrantees, must work together to agree on how each agency will be involved and to what extent. Involvement and contributions vary depending on the

size of the program and its proximity to a one-stop center. Family literacy programs funded with state funds are allowed, but not required, to be one-stop partners. The division requires programs to report infrastructure cost contributions in the final expenditure reports and report on their activities as one-stop partners through an annual survey. The division also reviews grantees' success in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities during [monitoring reviews](#).

PDE works with L&I to ensure that each of the 22 local boards has at least one representative from an entity receiving Title II funds. In 2020-21, fourteen of the Title II representatives were staff members directly affiliated with a division-funded adult education program. Six representatives were senior management at entities that receive Title II funds, four from grantees and two from subgrantees. In all six cases, the individual is a dual representative. Two local boards did not have representatives from a Title II-funded program. L&I is working to resolve that. Program staff also serve on board committees and subcommittees.

### **Access and career services**

Despite intermittent one-stop center closures in 2020-21, 21 grantees and 10 subgrantees reported having adult education program staff physically located at the one-stop center. At many of those locations, adult education staff were onsite only part time, and the providers relied on trained partner program staff or direct linkage to ensure access at other times. Nine grantees and six subgrantees did not have staff at the one-stop centers at all; five of those used a combination of training partner program staff and direct linkage. Two reported only training partner program staff. Eight reported only using direct linkage.

Agencies that depend on trained partners provide annual training plus updates on services at one-stop staff meetings. Several providers reported that all one-stop partner program staff located onsite are cross-trained and are therefore able to provide meaningful information on all the programs. Other Title II provider agencies also administer Title I or Perkins programs, so those agency staff provide information about Title II services. In one local workforce area, all one-stop centers have "CareerLink Navigators," who are trained to provide information on all partner programs. For direct linkage, the most common method is via designated phone lines for one-stop customers, which connect the customers to staff at the adult education provider during one-stop hours. Several providers also report using Zoom, Live Chat, Google Chat, and texting. L&I built a referral process into its Commonwealth Workforce Development System by which Title I and III staff at the one-stop centers can refer clients to partner programs, including division-funded programs.

As full-service programs, all adult education programs provided all five of the career services applicable for Title II. Division policy requires programs to complete an orientation, intake, and initial assessment of skills in literacy, numeracy, or English language proficiency with all students prior to assigning them to instructional services. Programs must use one of the approved standardized assessments to determine educational functioning level. During the orientation and intake process, programs are expected to talk to students to identify any potential barriers to successful participation in adult education activities and to provide information on and refer the students to resources to help them address any barriers that are identified. Students may also be referred to other core programs, especially Title I Youth activities, as appropriate. While students are receiving adult education and literacy services, program staff continue to provide information and referrals to support services as needed. Staff work with students to help them identify their abilities and interests and to develop plans to successfully complete adult education services and transition to their next steps. As part of this planning, program staff help students who are interested in postsecondary education or training to research their options and evaluate the pros and cons of each option. When students are ready to transition, program staff help them complete the necessary paperwork and make the appropriate referrals.

Title II funded programs continue to work with their one-stop partners in other ways. Thirty providers reported having some instructional services co-located at a one-stop center. Six reported providing assessment services for one-stop customers. This is a sharp drop from 2019-20, caused by limited in-person services at the one-stop centers. Programs reported working with their one-stop partners to develop processes and resources to increase access to and improve one-stop services under pandemic conditions. In one local area, Title I and II staff coordinated on a pilot of a digital literacy module intended for individuals with basic skills needs. In another local area, the Title II program worked with EARN and Title I Youth staff to create a shared report and tracking system for weekly updates about shared clients.

### **Infrastructure costs**

Funded programs reported a total of \$130,242.01 in federal funds and \$51,445.57 in state funds used for infrastructure cost contributions in 2020-21, a drop of approximately \$35,000 from 2019-20. The decline was largely a result of reduced operating costs due to closure of one-stops due to the pandemic. Three community colleges with adult education programs used college funds to cover infrastructure costs. Three agencies report providing space for the one-stop center or for off-site services as an in-kind contribution. Ten agencies reported using local, non-division funds to cover some or all infrastructure cost contributions.

All infrastructure costs contributions were agreed to at the local level. For one-stop centers at which Title II staff are co-located or have dedicated classroom space, the most common methods used to determine proportionate use and relative benefit were full-time equivalents (FTE), square footage, and a combination of FTE and square footage. For one-stop centers that did not have any Title II staff or classes onsite, programs agreed to nominal contributions ranging from \$300-\$1,200.

Title II program involvement in determining contributions varied greatly among local workforce areas. In some local areas, Title II programs report that they participated fully in the process of determining operating costs, allocation methods, and partner contributions. In many local areas, local board staff or the one-stop operators presented the one-stop budgets and infrastructure funding agreements to the one-stop partners for review and discussion; three agencies report that they were able to negotiate lower contributions than originally presented to them. Providers in one local area said that contributions were determined in 2017 and have not been revised since then.

Local boards submit the MOUs with operating budgets to L&I for review and approval. Division staff are not involved in either the local negotiations or in the MOU review and approval processes.

## **4. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program (AEFLA Section 243)**

### **Competition, grant cycle, and grants**

PDE held its second competition for section 243 funds in 2020 for three-year grants awarded effective July 1, 2020. Section 243 funds were competed separately from basic grant funds. Six eligible providers were awarded grants totaling \$1,604,479. Grants ranged from \$159,639.00 to \$400,000. As part of the grant approval process, successful applicants had to submit the IELCE and IET checklists that they completed while preparing the grant application. The division held a grant cycle kickoff webinar in July 2020 to review WIOA and division requirements for section 243 program providers. Agencies had written their grants prior to the pandemic, so many of the proposed activities had to be implemented differently than originally imagined. The division had individual meetings with each grantee to discuss implementation changes as well as agency plans for addressing common issues such as remote assessment and low enrollment.

### **IELCE in combination with IET**

The division requires each section 243 grantee to use a portion of the grant funds to establish and conduct at least one IET program for participants in the IELCE program who are interested and can

benefit from the activity; grantees may provide more than one. IELCE participants may also enroll in other IET programs at the same agency or a different agency, if interested. Programs must provide a continuum of leveled, managed enrollment IELCE activities that support participants to prepare for and transition successfully to the associated IET program. As part of the grant application, providers proposed enrollment numbers for IELCE activities and for the subset of those participants who transition into the IET program. Final enrollment numbers were negotiated for 2020-21 as part of the grant approval process.

The division must approve IET programs before grantees can offer them for the first time. Providers use the [\*Integrated Education and Training Proposal\*](#) form, which includes the single set of learning objectives. In 2020-21, section 243 programs conducted 10 IET activities. Seven were in the allied health sector: home health aide, direct care provider, pharmacy technician, and social service assistant. One grantee conducted two sessions of a Microsoft Word IET program. The final IET program was for foundational culinary arts. Of the 52 participants who started an IET program, 47 completed. Two of the programs lead to industry recognized credentials; 21 participants earned one or more. No IELCE participants enrolled in IET programs offered under other funding sources or by other agencies.

Programs reported many challenges in 2020-21 as the pandemic continued to disrupt services. None of the programs reached their contracted enrollment. One program reported that student recruitment was greatly impacted when referrals stopped because workforce system partners were limiting operations. Retention and regular attendance were also issues. There were logistical concerns such as class locations and times: one program had to move its IET program training location 15 miles away because the original facility was closed. Technology was another challenge; students struggled to find good connectivity and access to devices to participate in remote instruction. The digital literacy skills of instructors also impacted services. In one program, an IET adult education instructor had to spend significant time working with the occupational trainers to modify presentations to be interactive and engaging via Zoom. These factors impacted the quality and consistency of program service delivery: classes took longer; planning took longer; and there were several added layers of complexity to providing services. The consensus from the programs was that everything was taking longer with remote learning. The division expects that, while some of these challenges will persist into 2021-22, lessons learned in 2020-21 will help programs to mitigate them.

Despite the challenges, Pennsylvania's section 243 programs had many successes in 2020-21. All of them were able to adapt IELCE and IET curricula to work well with remote instruction. As noted above, all provided at least one IET program during the program year. One program reported that they began adjusting services during the initial shutdown order and continued to adapt and improve as they figured out what worked and what did not. Most students in the program had never experienced online learning before, but many noted how comfortable they felt participating virtually. Students gained valuable skills in technology as they navigated Zoom, used Schoology for class resources, completed Internet research, and delivered class presentations. All programs plan to incorporate effective practices adopted due to the pandemic in future planning. Most plan to continue offering remote and hybrid classes. They also plan to continue to offer student support services remotely because students participated at higher rates when the meetings were held virtually. One program reported that they will continue to hold instructor meetings and professional learning communities virtually because attendance rates were higher and there was greater participation. Another program touted its use of Schoology because it enabled students to have access to all materials that they needed for the course in one place. The program envisions using it as a template for future courses, as a one-stop shop where all the relevant information is available in an organized manner for students.

During the year, state leadership projects provided targeted technical assistance to section 243 programs. The Workforce Project worked with grantees to develop and strengthen their IET programs.

A consultant from the Professional Learning Opportunities Project worked with instructors who are new to the IELCE program to help them write and teach integrated and contextualized lessons.

### **Preparing and placing program participants in employment**

All section 243 grantees have student support specialists, who help students plan and prepare to transition out of the program and into employment or postsecondary education or training. Grantees reported that 24 of the participants who completed an IET obtained jobs that required them to use the skills and knowledge acquired in the IET. Two others are preparing to continue their education in the career pathway associated with the IET.

### **IELCE program integration with the local workforce development system**

All section 243 grantees consulted with the local workforce board to identify trainings that aligned with local workforce goals. Three worked closely with the local one-stop center to help students find employment. Participants in IELCE programs had higher median wages than did participants in other adult education and family literacy programs.

## **5. Adult Education Standards**

Pennsylvania continued to use the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* (CCRS), which are fully aligned with the *Pennsylvania Core Standards*. Local programs are required to use the CCRS to guide lesson planning and instruction; lesson plans must have CCRS-aligned learning objectives. Pennsylvania has also incorporated the English Language Proficiency Standards. All resources in support of instruction that are developed by the division reference the CCRS; professional development activities in support of instruction are CCRS-aligned.

Pennsylvania has used the College and Career Readiness-Standards-in-Action (CCR-SIA) process to support implementation of CCRS-based education. Programs work in professional learning communities to increase CCRS implementation at their programs by creating standards-based lessons, using the lessons in the classroom, and then returning to the professional learning communities to revise the lessons. To sustain implementation of the CCRS despite a predominantly part-time workforce with high staff turnover, the CCRS trainings are available online as on-demand professional development modules on the [Pennsylvania Adult Education Resources website](#). The modules cover key CCRS content that helps instructors write CCRS-aligned lessons. In addition to the online modules, the division uses technology to offer training at a distance with additional support from the CCRS coaches.

In 2019-20 a team from Pennsylvania participated in the *SIA 2.0 State-Based Curriculum Review Pilot for Mathematics*. The team assessed the degree to which a commonly used distance curriculum, Khan Academy, is aligned to the CCRS. The team found areas of alignment and some gaps in alignment using the tool provided. The team developed a three-year sustainability plan, which includes filling the curriculum gaps in Khan Academy, reviewing additional curricula, and disseminating the reviewed curricula to local programs. Work on this initiative continued in 2020-21. The team trained additional members and began working on the curricula. The initial plan used Khan Academy as the base curriculum and added other resources to fill the gaps. As the team delved into the project, they decided that the open-source curriculum *Illustrative Mathematics* would be a better base curriculum. *Illustrative Mathematics* is a large K-12 curriculum, so the team is paring it down to ensure it is relevant and usable in the adult education context. The team also began reviewing another math curriculum, *CK12*. The products of both efforts will be packaged for program use in 2021-22. A Pennsylvania team also began reviewing a commonly used ELA resource using the SIA tools and the process learned in the math pilot.

In late 2020-21, a team of professional development specialists and program staff with expertise in mathematics or ESL participated in *Implementing Standards-based Education for English Learners* and will continue to build capacity for this work in 2021-22.

Pennsylvania state staff continued their participation in the *NRS Evaluation Learning Community*, investigating the relationship between teacher participation in CCRS professional development and EFL gains. The study asked if the students of teachers who participated in formal CCRS professional development were more likely to make EFL gains than other students and if the relationship between CCRS professional development and EFL gains is different for ABE 1-6 and ESL students. The study looked at four years' worth of data on teachers' participation in CCRS professional development and four years' worth of student data. State staff wrote a formal report of the findings and presented it at a national meeting in December 2020. The results indicate that ABE students who had at least one teacher participate in CCRS professional development were more likely to have an EFL gain and to have greater gains than students who did not take a class with a teacher who had the professional development.

## **6. Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (AEFLA Section 225)**

Pennsylvania uses both federal and state funds to provide adult basic education services in correctional facilities. In 2020-21, eight grantees and three subgrantees provided adult education and literacy activities, predominantly ABE Levels 2-5, in 14 county jails and one state correctional institution to 126 participants. Only 25 participants were reported as having been released from incarceration during the program year. Six of these providers also reported working with jail staff to help participants prepare to access educational services post release.

The pandemic greatly impacted local providers' ability to provide corrections education. Nine entities that had previously done corrections education reported that they were unable to provide those services during 2020-21 due to restrictions imposed by facilities in response to the pandemic. The eleven providers that were able to offer corrections education also faced restrictions that impacted intensity and continuity of services. They used a variety of instructional options to provide services when possible. The most common option was paper-based distance learning assignments. A few programs were able to offer in-person classroom instruction for short spans of time. Three jails worked with the provider to support remote real-time instruction using Zoom, either with small groups or one on one. At four jails, agencies provided one-on-one instruction in the visitation rooms; they communicated with the students via telephone or through the glass and passed assignments back and forth.

PDE was not able to calculate a relative rate of recidivism for criminal offenders in corrections education in 2020-21. Pennsylvania does not have a uniform definition of recidivism and does not have centralized collection of corrections system data. The state correctional system tracks recidivism but does not report by facility. Of the 14 county jails in which corrections education services were provided, eight report that they track recidivism; however, the processes and definitions are not standardized across the facilities. The most common definition is a return to the same facility for new charges within three years of release. Some facilities also include parole violations. General recidivism rates for those county jails that define and track recidivism range from 20 to 60 percent. None of the facilities provided relative rates of recidivism for corrections education participants.