

An Overview of California's Adult Education System

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented to:

Assembly Higher Education Committee and
Senate Education Committee

Hon. Das Williams and Hon. Carol Liu, Chairs





Background: Instructional Programs and Providers

- Adult Education Has Multiple Purposes**
 - Primary purpose is to provide adults with the precollegiate knowledge and skills they need to participate in civic life and the workforce.
 - Other purposes include offering enrichment classes to older adults and providing instruction on effective parenting techniques.

- Adult Schools (Run by School Districts) and California Community Colleges (CCC) Are the State’s Main Providers**

- Community Colleges Can Offer Adult Education on “Credit” or “Noncredit” Basis**

Adult Education Includes a Wide Array of Instructional Areas			
Instructional Area	Adult Schools	CCC Noncredit	CCC Credit
Adults with disabilities	X	X	X
Apprenticeship	X	X	X
Vocational education ^a	X	X	X
Immigrant education (citizenship and workforce preparation)	X	X	
Elementary and secondary education	X	X	X
English as a second language	X	X	X
Health and safety ^b	X	X	X
Home economics	X	X	
Older adults	X	X	
Parenting	X	X	

^a Also referred to in statute as career technical education.
^b Includes exercise and fitness classes.



Background: Funding

- Adult Schools Have Historically Been Funded Through a Restricted Categorical Program
 - In early 2009, the Legislature allowed school districts to use adult education categorical funds for any educational purpose.
 - During this period of categorical flexibility, only between 40 percent to 50 percent of the \$635 million in the categorical program likely was actually spent on adult education. School districts effectively determined their own per-student funding rate.

- CCC Adult Education Instruction Is Funded Through Apportionments
 - In 2012-13, CCC spent approximately \$1.4 billion in apportionments on adult education—about \$1.2 billion for credit instruction and about \$200 million for noncredit instruction.
 - CCC currently receives \$4,636 per student for credit instruction, \$3,283 per student for “enhanced” noncredit instruction, and \$2,788 per student for regular noncredit.

- The California Department of Education (CDE) Administers the Federal Adult Education Program
 - In 2012-13, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provided the state with a total of \$91 million to support adult education programs at 157 adult schools and 17 community colleges (as well as various other providers).
 - The CDE allocates federal adult education funds to providers based on student learning gains and other outcomes.



Background: LAO Assessment



Key Strengths of Adult Education System

- Two large segments with extensive experience working with adult learners.
- Testing and data system that can measure student learning gains for providers in WIA program.
- Longstanding state policy that allocates WIA funds to providers based on student performance.



Problems With Adult Education System

- Overly broad mission.
- Lack of a clear and consistent distinction between adult education and collegiate education at CCC.
- Inconsistent and conflicting state-level policies for adult schools and CCC.
- Limited intersegmental coordination.
- Gaps in data systems, which make oversight difficult.



2013-14 Budget Charts New Course for Adult Education

- Eliminates Adult Education Categorical Program and Folds Funds into K-12 Formula
 - Contains a requirement for school districts to maintain at least their 2012-13 level of state spending on adult education in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

- Provides \$25 Million in Planning Grants for Adult Education Consortium Program
 - The CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office are charged with jointly awarding grants to school districts (through their adult schools) and community college districts to form local consortia.
 - Other providers (such as county libraries and community-based organizations) can be part of consortia.
 - Members of each consortia have 2013-14 and 2014-15 to use planning monies to document existing services, identify unmet needs, and develop integrated program plans for core instructional areas.

- Includes Reporting Requirements and Intent Language on Funding for 2015-16
 - Requires CDE and CCC Chancellor's Office to provide progress report to Legislature and Governor by March 2014 and March 2015.
 - Contains intent language for the Legislature to (1) "work toward developing common policies" affecting adult schools and CCC, and (2) provide funding to consortia beginning in 2015-16 to implement the integrated program plans.



Recommended Next Steps

- Use Next Two Years to Tackle Implementation Details
 - Decide whether to focus all state funds on core adult education instruction.
 - Provide clear and consistent delineation for CCC between adult education and collegiate instruction.
 - Resolve conflicting state-level policies at adult schools and CCC.
 - Create a comprehensive and linked data system.
 - Determine methodology for allocating future funds to consortia.