

CONNECTICUT ADULT EDUCATION



EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF LIFELONG LEARNING



BUREAU OF CAREER AND ADULT EDUCATION

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Introduction

“A system of adult education that is well functioning, flexible and vibrant is essential if Connecticut is to achieve the basic skills levels that are so critical to its economic, societal and family health needs.”

*Position Statement on Adult Education
adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education
May 1997*

In 1996, we last presented a report on the status of adult education in Connecticut. Many changes have been made to the scope of services available to adults and the efforts within the Department to collaborate with a variety of agencies and organizations to ensure effective and efficient delivery of high-quality programs. However, in reviewing this report and our progress over these last five years, it became apparent that with each passing day our society and economy grow more complex and the adults in our state must have more opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

In many ways we are a state divided. On one side we have adults who have the skills and knowledge to find and keep good jobs, help their children at school and at home and play active roles in their communities. On the other, we find adults who lack basic skills, are unable to communicate in English and are not able to help their children succeed in school. In spite of major initiatives to address these issues, many adults and their families continue to fall behind.

This report provides information concerning our focus during these last few years on addressing the critical needs of our adult population. The young high school dropout, the recent immigrant to this country, the mother receiving welfare benefits, the unemployed adult, an individual needing educational enhancement to retain a job, and many others all need the services of Connecticut's adult education program.

We have been fortunate as a state to be able to afford a comprehensive statewide delivery system using state and local appropriations and the ability to direct federal resources to areas needing greater focus. This has helped Connecticut become a leader nationwide in adult programs. Much time and effort has been devoted to delivering effective programs while maintaining accountability and flexibility. Our assessment and instructional system, coupled with the data management system all programs use, has given us the means to document not only demographic information but student assessment, program management and accountability information. All of these provide valuable information concerning program successes and areas needing improvement.

This document contains a review of recommendations made in our 1996 report, our progress in addressing these recommendations, our assessment of these recommendations, and additional essential issues which need continued or renewed emphasis.

These recommendations can be categorized into three separate areas:

1. **Access:** All adults must have access to a well-defined system of adult education, language and literacy services.
2. **Quality:** We must continue to provide a system of high-quality education and support services which help adults meet their goals as parents, workers and community members.
3. **Resources:** New and existing resources – money, time and services – must be provided to create access to high-quality adult education, language, literacy and related services.

These three areas — access, quality and resources — form the core of an effective program at the local, state and national level. These are the priorities that must be addressed simultaneously, if we are to make significant progress. Several issues cut across these priorities.

- The need for our students to participate meaningfully in all aspects of the system.
- Greater visibility and recognition of the adult education field as a critical human resource.
- Collaboration is essential within the adult education, language and literacy system and between the system and its partners.
- Technology has increased the need for greater literacy while at the same time serving as an important tool for delivering it.
- Family and workplace programs address two of the compelling motivators for adults to seek our services: stronger families and a more highly skilled workforce.
- The need for expanded focused instruction to address the issues of English for speakers of other languages and learning disabilities is critical. Enrollment in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs consistently accounts for more than 40 percent of the total adult education enrollments in Connecticut.
- The population of 16- to 18-year-olds in programs has great need for literacy services because of low academic skills. This age group has become significantly larger in adult high school completion programs over the last five years.
- The correctional system deals with staggering numbers of individuals lacking basic skills and/or high school diplomas.
- Finally, the issues of poverty and the welfare structure require particular attention when providing services.

Postponing improvements in quality or access until programs receive more resources does not provide for the opportunity to reallocate existing resources or to choose to offer more comprehensive services to fewer students. However, the longer-term objective must be to secure adequate resources to meet the need so that programs will not be forced to choose between quality and access.

Finally, no program will succeed without improving quality. The need to provide uniformly excellent instruction that helps students meet their goals cannot be ignored.

As a state, we must recognize that literacy and adult education are not just important in the lives of individuals. A more literate population is key to addressing the most pressing issues of our time: jobs and the economy, the digital divide, health and our children's well-being. We must work together, not only within this agency, but with all the stakeholder groups to ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to our services and equal opportunities for success.

*Roberta Pawloski, Chief
Bureau of Career and Adult Education*

State and Federal Legislation

State Legislation

State adult education programs are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 10-5 and 10-67 et. seq., as amended. An “adult” is identified as any person, 16 years of age or over, who is no longer enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school program, or a student between the ages of 16 and 18 who is enrolled in school and is assigned to an adult class as an alternative placement following expulsion. Under the provisions of Section 10-69, “each local and regional board of education shall establish and maintain a program of adult classes or shall provide for participation in a program of adult classes for its adult residents through cooperative arrangements with one or more boards of education, one or more cooperating eligible entities or a regional educational service center.” Mandated instructional programs, Americanization and United States Citizenship, English for adults with limited English proficiency, and elementary and secondary school completion programs are provided free of charge.

Local school districts have the option of serving as a providing or a cooperating school district. A “provider” or “providing school district” is a school district or regional educational service center in which classes or programs are established and maintained. A “cooperator” or “cooperating school district” is a school district which does not establish or maintain classes or programs but which makes available such classes or programs through a written cooperative arrangement with a providing school district.

Federal Legislation

Adult education programs funded through federal resources are governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which recognizes adult education as a cornerstone for ensuring a well-prepared workforce. The methodological approach contained in WIA is drastically different from previous legislation in that it requires that each state set and document progress toward meeting *core indicators of performance* established under the new legislation to guarantee a comprehensive approach to literacy and employment. These *core indicators* must drive the performance of local programs to ensure the improvement of adult education and literacy services.

Title II of WIA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, focuses on strengthening program quality by requiring states to give priority in awarding funds to local programs that are based on a solid foundation of research, that address the diverse needs of adult learners, and that use effective instructional techniques and strategies. As a supplement to state and locally funded adult education activities, WIA allows for the enhancement of existing programming by:

- focusing on employability skills and links to employment and/or higher education;
- supporting the economic self-sufficiency of families through intergenerational literacy programs;
- supporting other eligible agencies to enable them to provide responsive literacy programs in an employability or life-skills context; and
- expanding opportunities for work site education programs that offer literacy through a customized curriculum.

State and Federal Legislation

Because of the flexible nature of these dollars, states are empowered to determine how funds will be expended at the local and regional level. Of the Bureau of Career and Adult Education's total FY 00-01 federal adult education allocation (\$5,007,265), 82.5 percent (\$4,130,994) is set aside for direct student services. Funds allocated for each area are based on the number of students without a high school diploma. These funds are distributed through a competitive proposal process.

Also mandated by WIA is adult education's active partnership in the One-Stop workforce development delivery system. The Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education has assumed an integral role, with other partners, in the One-Stop by providing direct and equitable distribution of financial support to all centers. Administrative funds have provided additional support for assessment tools and General Educational Development (GED) testing materials and staff training.

Related Legislation

Even Start

Even Start was designed to be a comprehensive program that integrates early childhood education with education for parents of young children in order to create a literate home environment. Targeting the state's most disadvantaged families, Even Start seeks to make sustainable changes while integrating the following primary components: early childhood and/or school-age education, adult education, parent and children learning together, parent time together and home consultations. The program is implemented through cooperative projects in order to supplement existing community resources. Adult education performance indicators and Even Start Family Literacy Program objectives have been aligned to ensure a consistency of program delivery and performance.

School Readiness

The School Readiness Program, funded jointly by the Connecticut Departments of Education and Social Services, establishes a grant program to provide spaces in accredited or approved school readiness programs for eligible children in priority school districts and districts with severe-need schools. As part of the continuum of services to meet the needs of children and families, the legislation identifies specific requirements including coordination of resources in order to facilitate full-day and year-round child care and education programs for children of working parents and parents in education or training programs; parent involvement, parenting education and outreach; and referral to family literacy programs that incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of literacy.

Program Overview

Adult education is rapidly changing as the challenges and demands of the workplace, community and family environment increase. More than ever, functional literacy skills such as reading, math, listening and writing are necessary for successful integration into today's society. Connecticut's adult education programs are designed to promote literacy at various levels so that all residents are afforded the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

During the last five years, the Department has worked to support the goals of each adult education provider and each student seeking services by making funds available for program enhancement, including the incorporation of technology, integration of intergenerational literacy, encouragement of program improvement and, support of personnel through an extensive menu of professional development opportunities.

Program Services

Connecticut state legislation requires that the adult education services described in this section be provided by local school districts, free of charge, to any adult 16 years of age or over who is no longer enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school program. Local school districts and other eligible agencies providing mandated adult education programs are reimbursed by the Connecticut State Department of Education on a cost-sharing, sliding scale based on the relative wealth of a district.

Federal adult education dollars used to fund adult education programs are distributed through a direct and equitable request-for-proposal process. Federal funds are awarded to a variety of eligible applicants including state and local education agencies, vocational-technical schools, volunteer literacy organizations and private nonprofit organizations.

Core Services

Core services are programs required under state and/or federal legislation. They are briefly delineated below.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Instruction is designed for adults who are unable to read, write and compute sufficiently well to meet the requirements of adult life and for adults who lack mastery of basic educational skills that will enable them to function effectively in society. Instruction can be individualized or offered in a classroom, or a learning lab. Persons completing ABE are prepared to benefit from secondary-level instruction.

Americanization/Citizenship

This classroom-based program provides instruction for foreign-born adults who wish to become United States citizens. Persons completing this program are prepared to pursue citizenship through the prescribed Immigration and Naturalization Service process.

Program Overview

English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English for Adults with Limited English Proficiency

Instruction is designed for adults who have limited proficiency in the English language or whose native language is not English. Instructional emphasis is on listening and speaking. Literacy skills (reading and writing) also are introduced at this level. Instruction is provided in English as a unifying means of serving the broad ethnic diversity of limited-English-speaking adults.

General Educational Development (GED)

Adults who have not completed high school must demonstrate, through a five-part examination that includes a writing sample, the attainment of academic skills and concepts normally acquired through completion of a high school program. Applicants for this examination must be at least 17 years of age and officially withdrawn from school for at least six months. Those who pass the GED are awarded a Connecticut State High School Diploma. GED instructional programs, provided throughout the state in local school districts and a variety of other instructional sites, help individuals to prepare for this rigorous examination. Beginning in January 2002, a new nationwide GED series test will measure higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete postsecondary education and/or find and maintain employment. Extensive professional development has been offered to all adult education providers and instructors in the state.

Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD)

Credits toward a high school diploma must be obtained through a prescribed plan that requires a minimum of 20 credits in academic and elective areas. Credits for work or military experience, independent study projects and self-paced curriculum packets are additional ways to obtain credit. An adult high school diploma is issued by school districts to adults who earn the required credits.

External Diploma Program (EDP)

This program provides an alternative secondary credential designed for adults who have gained skills through life experiences and demonstrated competence in a particular job, talent or academic area. The EDP is a portfolio assessment program that offers no classroom instruction. An adult who successfully completes the portfolio assessment, as required, is awarded a high school diploma by his or her school district.

Program Overview

Initiatives for Core Services

In addition to the state and locally funded core services described above, additional services are delivered through the following initiatives.

Program Improvement Projects

Connecticut's federally funded Program Improvement Project (PIP) initiative originated in 1990 to enhance programs and services for adults, especially those least educated and most in need. The project is designed to improve the literacy skills necessary for effective citizenship, productive employment, basic skills enhancement, effective parenting and the achievement of economic self-sufficiency. Adherence to rigorous accountability standards is required. PIP funds are disbursed through a competitive process to local/regional adult education programs, community-based organizations and other nonprofit entities.

PIP funds proposals that address the following priority areas: workforce preparation, work site education, family literacy services and nontraditional adult education instruction and services. Funding also supports the integration of adult education programs with Connecticut's One-Stop Centers so that individuals can obtain information, receive academic assessments and appropriate referrals to programs, have an opportunity to register for the GED, and have access to all One-Stop services including employability workshops and job training. In order to address the needs of clients and employers in the area and to link adult education to other employment and training services, the Department through the Bureau of Career and Adult Education has been and will continue to be an active partner in Connecticut's One-Stop delivery system.

The need to connect and integrate technology into instruction has been identified as a priority area within the request for proposal (RFP) process. Funds have been used to develop technology-based educational programming in an effort to bridge the digital divide and to enhance instruction.

Through PIP, adult education providers have been encouraged to develop programs that serve individuals with multiple barriers to education and to assist in their transition to the community, employment or continued education. Programs focus on adults with disabilities; individuals who live in shelters, public housing projects, group homes, or correctional institutions; or those who participate in sheltered workshops. Programs are designed to integrate literacy with functional life and employability skills and to incorporate technology as part of the instructional process.

Program Overview

Intergenerational Literacy

Intergenerational literacy programs help parents maximize their own potential, allowing them to participate, in a more meaningful way, in their children's education. Through the integration of adult literacy instruction, reading instruction for children, information on parenting and child development, and opportunities for parent-child interaction, intergenerational literacy programs seek to improve the literacy of educationally disadvantaged parents and children, resulting in a more successful educational experience. Program services focus on enabling parents to become full partners in the education of their children and are of sufficient intensity and duration to make sustainable changes in the family. Family literacy programs, offered through a variety of program providers and in collaboration with Head Start, Even Start and Family Resource Centers, require links with area K-12 schools, social service agencies and One-Stop Centers. Intergenerational literacy components have been successfully integrated into mandated adult education programs such as ESL, GED and Credit Diploma.

Workforce Learning

Workforce learning initiatives provide either literacy instruction in an employability context to promote job readiness (Workforce Preparation) or literacy instruction for employed individuals in order to support entry-level performance, job retention or career advancement (Work Site Education). Both of these educational approaches are being provided by various adult education centers throughout the state. As the needs of the labor force continue to emphasize the need for workers with essential skills, employers have increasingly sought to offer work site programs to employees.

English Literacy/Civics Education (EL/Civics)

English Literacy/Civics Education funds are distributed through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process. EL/Civics funds are used to supplement, not supplant, existing adult education programs and services offered through state and local funding. These funds provide educational services to immigrants and other limited-English-proficient individuals so that they might effectively participate in the education, work and civic opportunities of this country. EL/Civics funds provide the flexibility to either integrate services within existing English literacy programs or to create new services. EL/Civics dollars are received through a separate federal allocation.

Technology Grants

The need to connect and integrate technology with instruction was identified as a priority area within the request for proposal (RFP) process. Title II of the Workforce Investment Act requires that all programs address the issue of technology and its integration into instruction as a condition of funding. To meet this requirement, several important initiatives were introduced related to technology and its impact on student learning. Almost 30 districts received funding and professional development to assist them in creating a plan for integrating technology into their comprehensive programs; a competitive three year RFP for technology implementation was awarded to eight recipients; and the Program Improvement Projects RFP for 2002-2004 identifies two priority areas that include technology implementation and the development of a model for an adult diploma program via web-based learning.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Accountability

Connecticut Competency System (CCS)

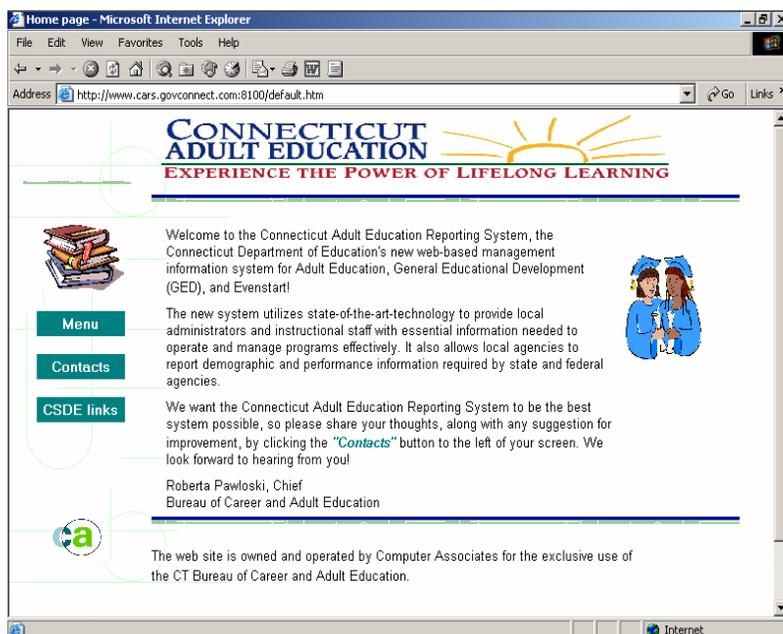
The Connecticut Competency System (CCS) is a uniform, competency-based assessment and instructional system shared by state agencies having a common client base. It provides a comprehensive framework for a common core of competencies that all adults served by the Connecticut Departments of Labor, Education and Social Services need in order to be fully proficient, lead productive lives and improve their ability to reach self-sufficiency. This flexible system provides a continuum of coordinated services for youth and adults through a variety of social services, employment and training agencies. Connecticut is the first state to have provided a common core of competencies in response to a greater need for program and learner accountability.

Adult Education DataBase Management System (AEDBMS)

The Department continued to improve its Adult Education DataBase Management System (AEDBMS) based on the needs of its users. The development and refinement of the system allowed local adult education programs to collect and report data on student, class and program information used for federal reporting requirements and the state required Strategic School Profiles. Working with colleagues in the Office for Workforce Competitiveness and the State Department of Labor, performance reports were also developed on programs funded through the State Department of Education system. During fiscal year 2000-2001, Department staff worked cooperatively with adult education programs and training providers to incorporate both design and data entry changes into the system, while anticipating the creation of a new state-of-the-art, web-based, integrated management information system for adult education, GED and Even Start programs.

Connecticut Adult Education Reporting System (CARS)

Beginning in July 2001, the AEDBMS system was replaced with a web-based reporting system called the Connecticut Adult Education Reporting System (CARS), which integrates adult education, GED testing and Even Start into one comprehensive database. The new system uses state-of-the-art technology to provide local administrators and instructional staff members with essential information needed to operate and manage programs effectively. It also allows local agencies to report demographic and performance information required by state and federal agencies.



Evaluation, Monitoring and Accountability

Program Monitoring

Program monitoring activities ensure compliance with state and federal law to determine the effectiveness of programs in meeting the needs of the adult population of Connecticut. Monitoring has enhanced program operations by providing direction for technical assistance, identifying problems, suggesting future goals and reinforcing accountability. Monitoring activities, which are usually conducted on site and include a peer review process, are intended to serve as a gauge for measuring each grant recipient's success in meeting the required indicators of program quality standards. In addition, recommendations are used by local program providers to strengthen program operations. During fiscal year 2001, the Bureau coordinated on-site monitoring visits to 81 programs, including 19 local education agencies and 62 PIP grant recipients.

Funding

Each regional or local board of education or regional educational entity that has submitted an adult education proposal to the Department is eligible to receive a state grant based on a percentage of eligible adult education costs. The reimbursement percentage is obtained by ranking each town in ascending order (from 1 to 169) according to the town's relative wealth (adjusted equalized net grant list per capita) and, based on that ranking, determining on a continuous scale a percentage from 0 to 65. Priority school districts receive a minimum reimbursement rate of 20 percent. The percentage is then applied to the total adult education program budget to determine the amount of the recipient's state grant. All eligible local costs are based on cash, not "in-kind" contributions.

The following example shows how the state and local grants for a local adult education program are calculated:

For fiscal year 2001, the city of Hartford submitted an adult education proposal with total eligible costs of \$4,031,986. The FY 01 reimbursement rate for Hartford is 64.61 percent.

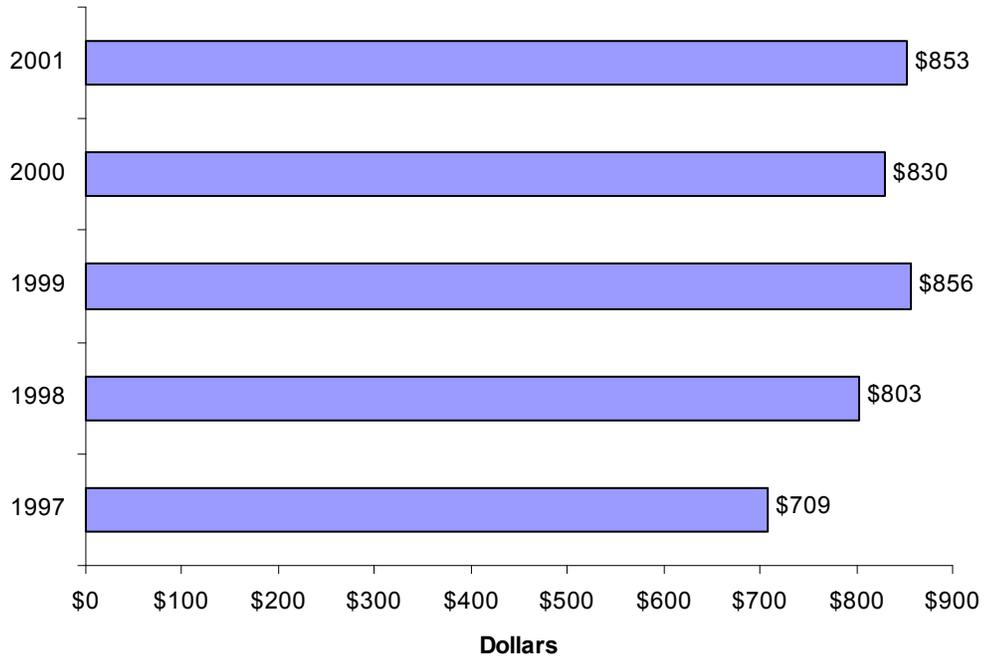
\$4,031,986	total eligible costs	\$4,031,986	total eligible costs
x .6461	reimbursement rate	<u>-2,605,066</u>	state grant
\$2,605,066	state grant	\$1,426,920	local costs

Table 1 illustrates federal, state and local funding patterns from 1997-2001

Table 1
Federal, State and Local Funding - 1997-2001

Year	State	%	Local	%	Federal	%	Total
1997	11,615,857	46	10,910,894	44	2,343,140	10	24,869,891
1998	13,058,527	47	11,941,439	43	2,921,564	10	27,921,530
1999	15,237,742	48	13,394,079	42	3,028,854	10	31,660,675
2000	15,133,012	47	13,407,239	42	3,534,624	11	32,074,875
2001	15,344,655	45	13,673,145	40	5,168,544	15	34,186,344

Figure 1
Per Pupil Expenditures (1997-2001)
(Federal, State and Local Expenditures – including prior year adjustments)



- The adult education expenditure per student increased by 20 percent from \$709 in 1997 to \$853 in 2001 (see Figure 1), while the minimum expenditure requirement (MER) for students in Grades K-12 increased by 16 percent from \$6,058 in 1997 to \$7,539 in 2001.
- The average per pupil expenditure for students in the K-12 school system for the four-year period from 1997-2000 was \$9,075 (*Profiles of Our Schools*, 2001).

Funding

The priority school districts continued to account for the majority of the adult education expenditures and the majority of the adult education enrollment. For example, in 2000-01 the priority school districts accounted for \$19,540,866 or 67 percent of the total state/local adult education program expenditures, and served 25,925 or 65 percent of the state's total adult education enrollment.

Table 2
Priority School Districts' Target Population (2000-01)

District *	Target Population** 1990 Census	Adult Education Enrollment 2001	Reimbursement Rate FY 2001	State Grant FY 2001	Local Cost FY 2001	Total State/Local
Bridgeport	39,474	3,368	65.00%	1,094,773	589,493	1,684,266
Hartford	39,146	3,332	64.61%	2,605,066	1,426,920	4,031,986
New Haven	26,589	5,282	64.23%	2,286,395	1,273,304	3,559,699
Stamford	16,276	2,829	20.00%	188,642	754,568	943,210
Waterbury	26,398	2,462	62.29%	1,486,648	900,008	2,386,656
Bristol	11,277	503	52.62%	147,256	132,592	279,848
Danbury	11,916	1,282	28.63%	82,394	205,394	287,788
East Hartford	10,341	404	53.01%	78,227	69,343	147,570
Meriden	12,474	1,036	60.36%	854,327	561,059	1,415,386
Middletown	6,881	1,124	51.99%	919,773	849,361	1,769,134
New Britain	19,661	1,437	63.84%	702,743	398,045	1,100,788
New London	4,799	1,125	63.07%	893,031	522,906	1,415,937
Norwalk	12,519	1,136	20.00%	49,000	196,000	245,000
Windham ***	5,037	605	63.45%	173,598	100,000	273,598

* Urban priority districts listed first.

** 18 years of age and over without a high school diploma. 2000 census data unavailable. When data becomes available, table will be updated.

*** Part of an adult education region

Adult Education Statistics

The following charts and graphs demonstrate the breadth of adult education services throughout Connecticut and provide information on program growth, program expansion and students served. All charts reflect those students who participated in an adult education program for one hour or more (nonduplicated count).

General Statewide Statistical Data

According to the 1990 Census, Connecticut's total adult population (18 years and older) numbered 2,537,525. Of these individuals, 520,356 did not complete high school and 190,812 did not complete ninth grade.

The following numbers represent those programs that were funded during 2000-01.

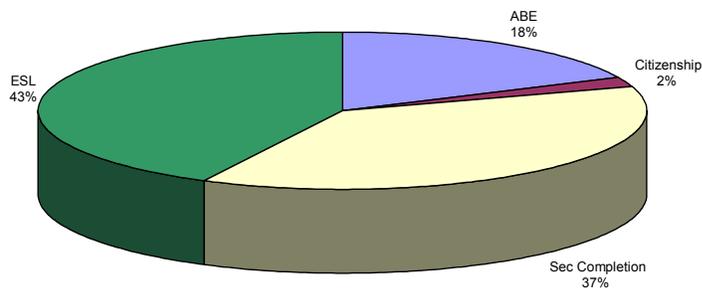
Statewide Program Delivery System

In 2000-01, 51 adult education providers, 98 districts that collaborate with the providing schools and 17 cooperating eligible entities provided mandated adult education programs to their adult residents.

Statewide Selected Statistical Data

During the period from 1997-2001, there were 185,587 enrollments in mandated adult education programs, as illustrated in Figure 2.

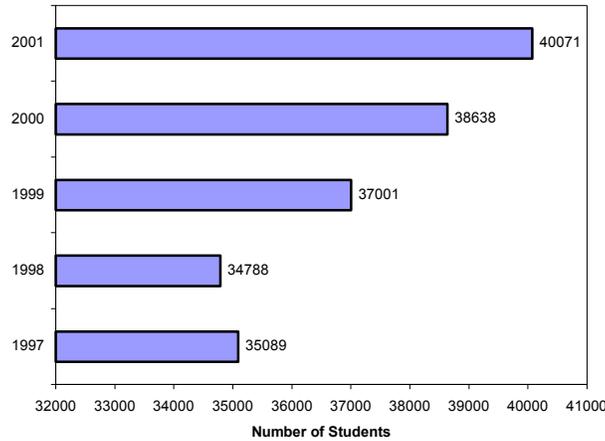
Figure 2
Total Enrollments by Program (1997-2001)



- 80 percent of students over the past five years were enrolled in either ESL or secondary completion programs.

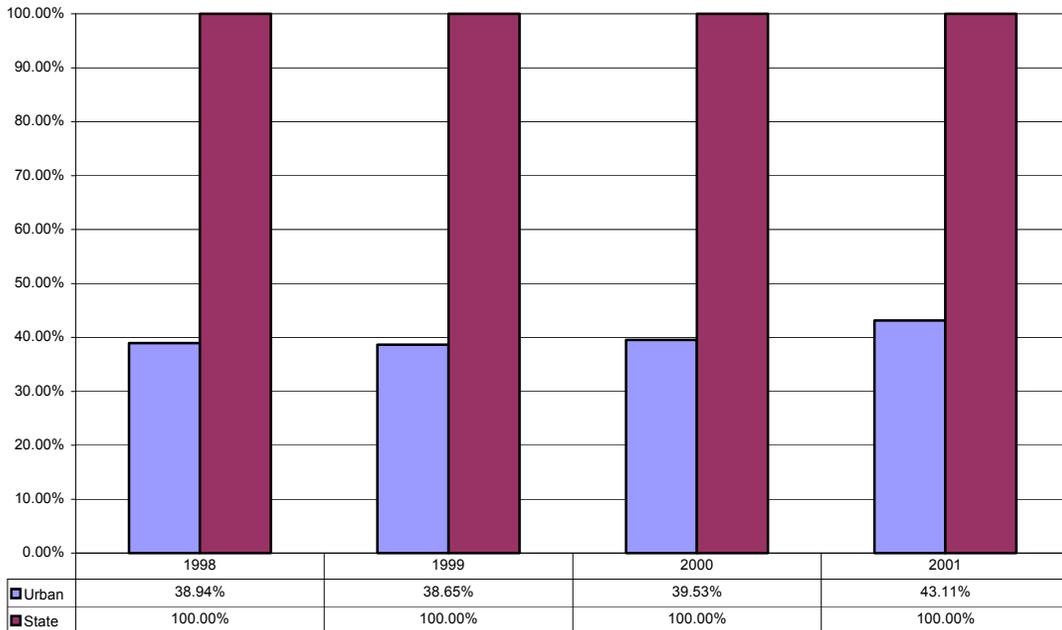
Adult Education Statistics

Figure 3
Trends in Total Enrollment (1997-2001)



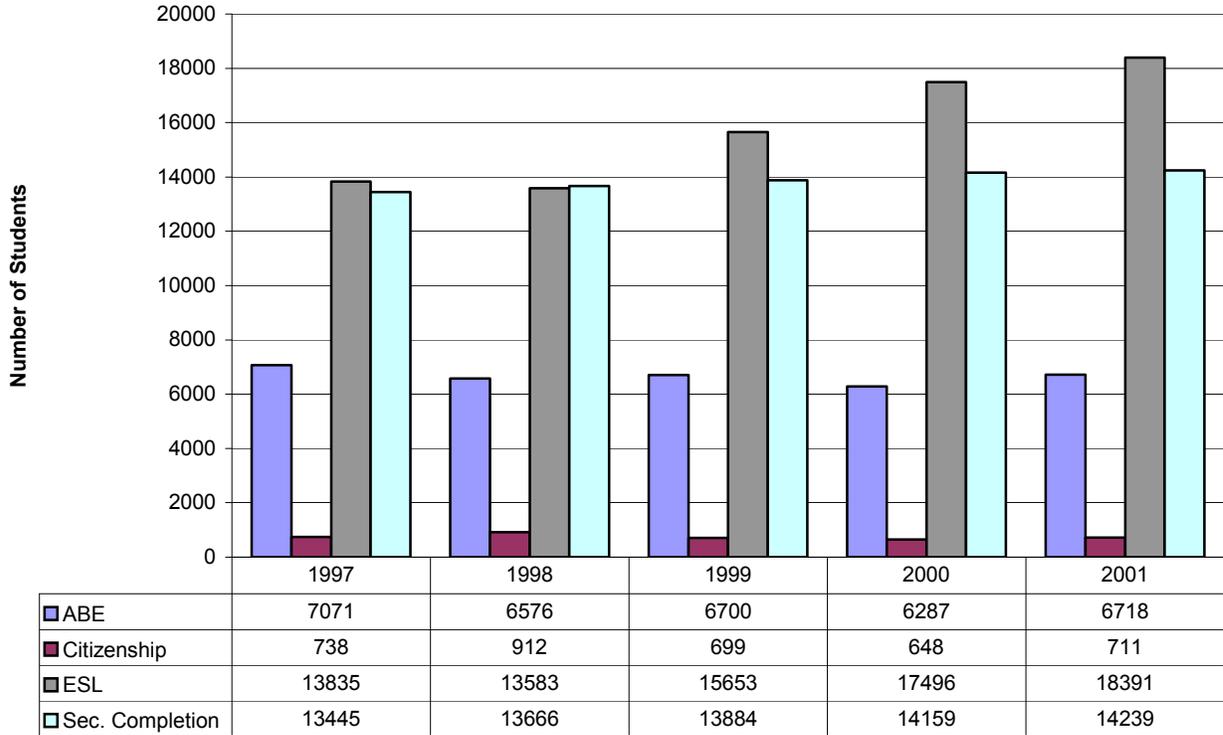
- With the exception of FY 1998, which saw a slight decline from FY 1997, enrollments have shown a steady increase each year. Over the five-year period, enrollment has increased by 14 percent.

Figure 4
Percentage of Enrollment in the Five Urban Districts



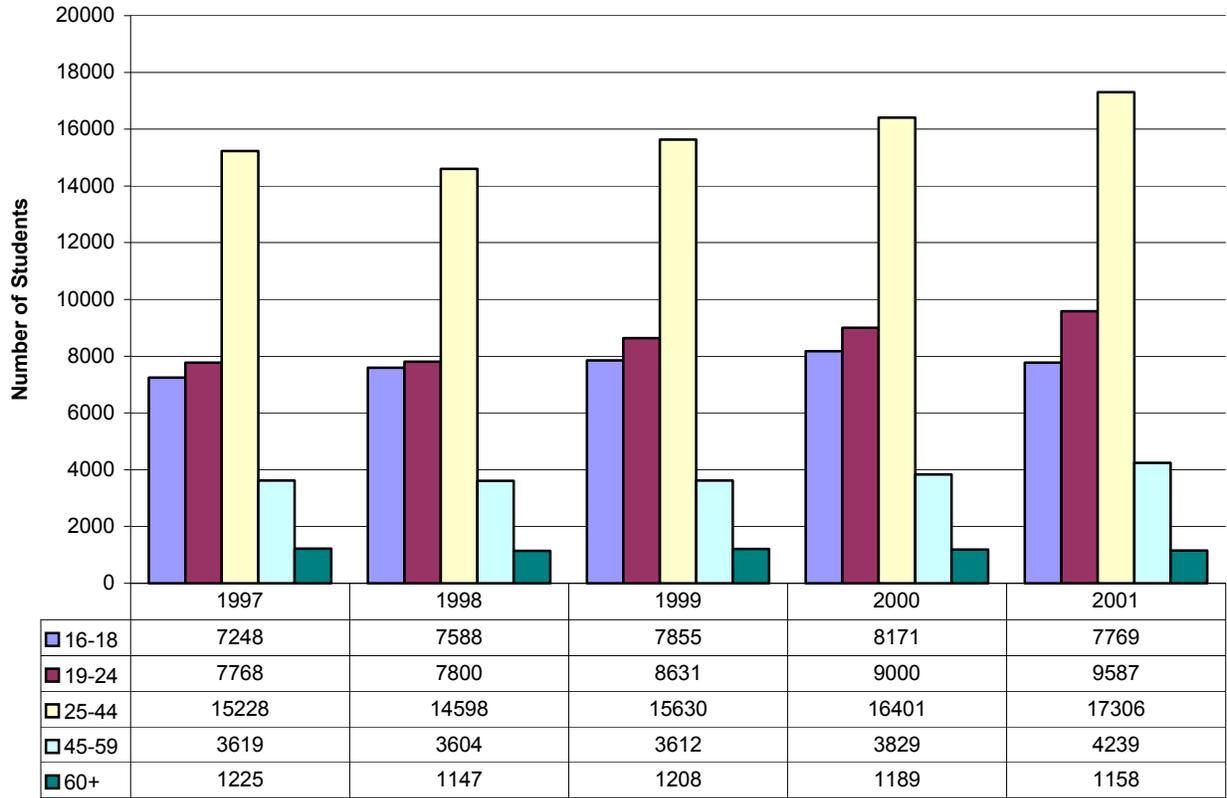
- During the past four years, about 40 percent of all students in adult education were enrolled in the five urban districts (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford and Waterbury).
- This percentage seems to be spread fairly evenly across the age groups. Specifically, over the past four years, about 40 percent of 16- to 18-year old students in adult education were enrolled in the five urban districts.

Figure 5
Trends in Enrollment by Program (1997-2001)



- Over the five-year period, enrollments in ESL have increased by 31 percent followed by an increase of 6 percent in Secondary Completion.
- During the same period, ABE and Citizenship programs declined by 5 percent and 4 percent, respectively.
- 1999, ESL enrollments showed a dramatic one-year increase of 15 percent.

Figure 6
Trends in Enrollment by Age Group (1997-2001)

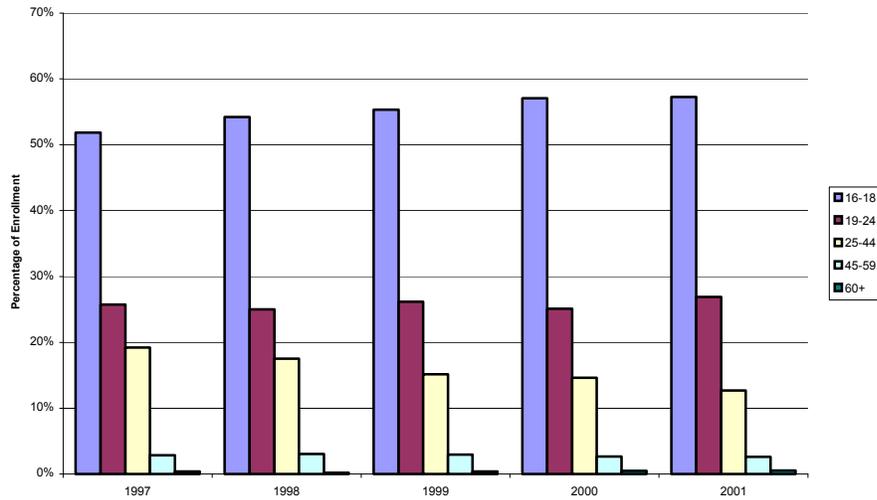


- All but one age group (60+) showed an increase in enrollment over the five-year period.
- The largest percentage growth over this period was seen in the 19-24 age group (23%). The 16-18, 25-44 and the 45-59 age groups showed percentage growths of 7, 14, and 17 percent, respectively.

Adult Education Statistics

Figure 7

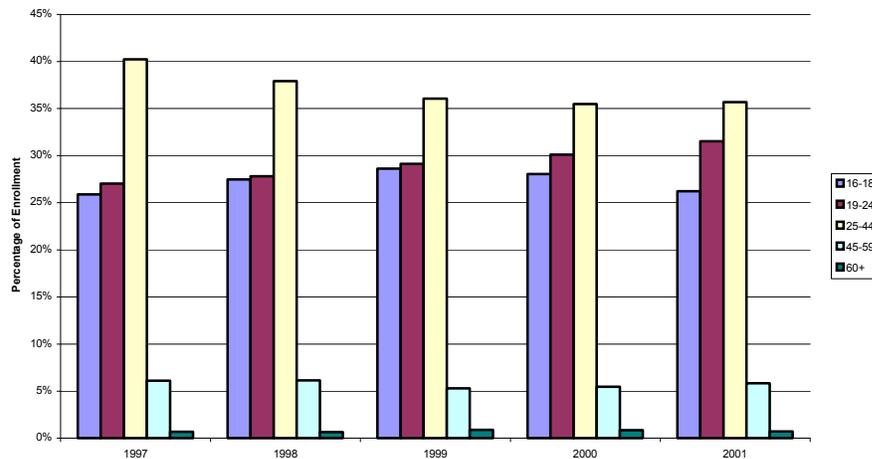
Trends in Enrollment in the Credit Diploma Program by Age Group (1997-2001)



- The percentage of students age 16-18 in the CDP has increased in each of the past five years.
- Conversely, the percentage of students age 25-44 in the CDP has decreased from 19 percent to 13 percent.
- In FY 2001, 84 percent of students in the CDP were under 25 years of age.

Figure 8

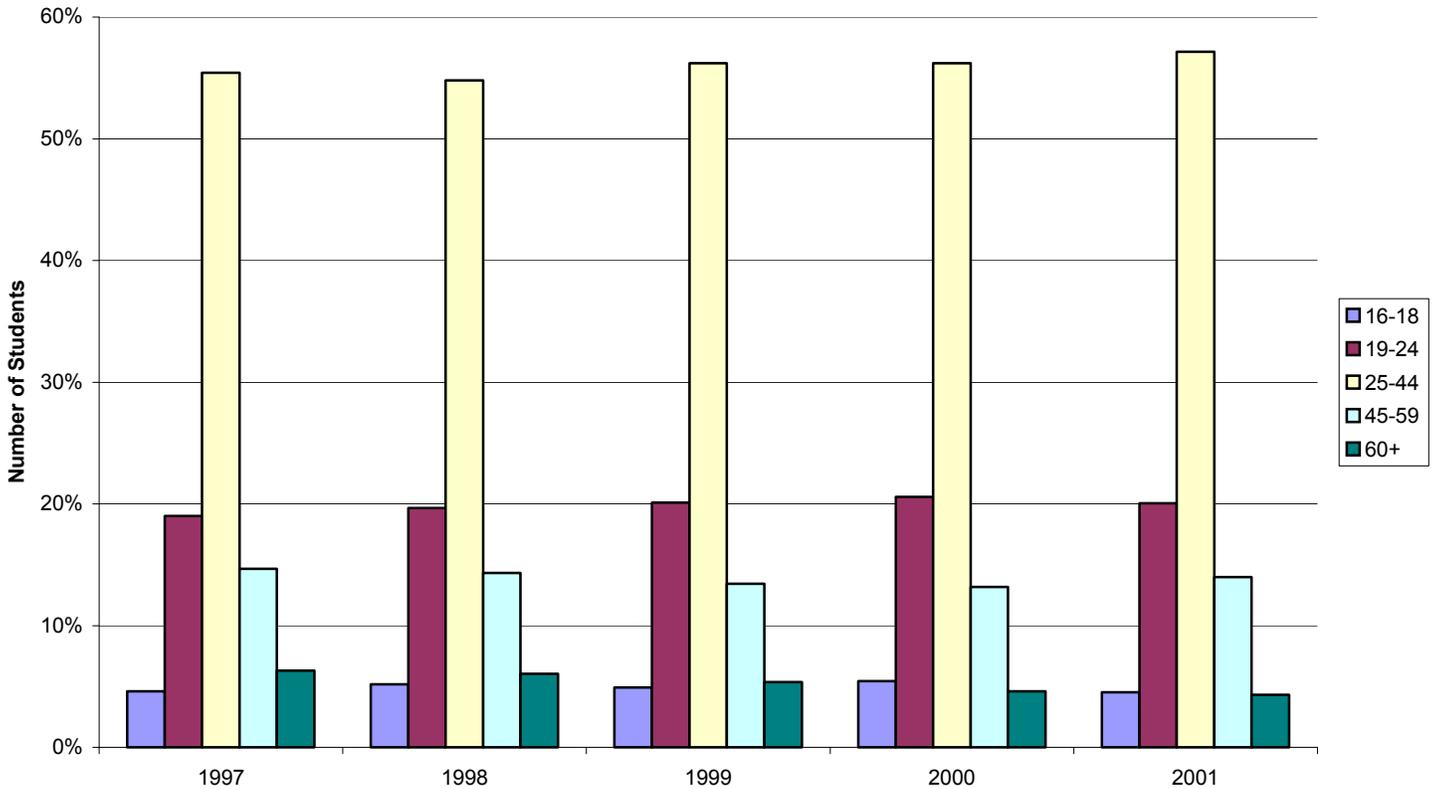
Trends in Enrollment in the GED Program by Age Group (1997-2001)



- The percentage of students age 19-24 in the GED program has increased consistently in each of the past five years.
- The percentage of students age 25-44 has decreased from 40 percent in 1997 to 36 percent in 2001.
- In FY 2001, 58 percent of the students in the GED program were under 25 years of age.

Adult Education Statistics

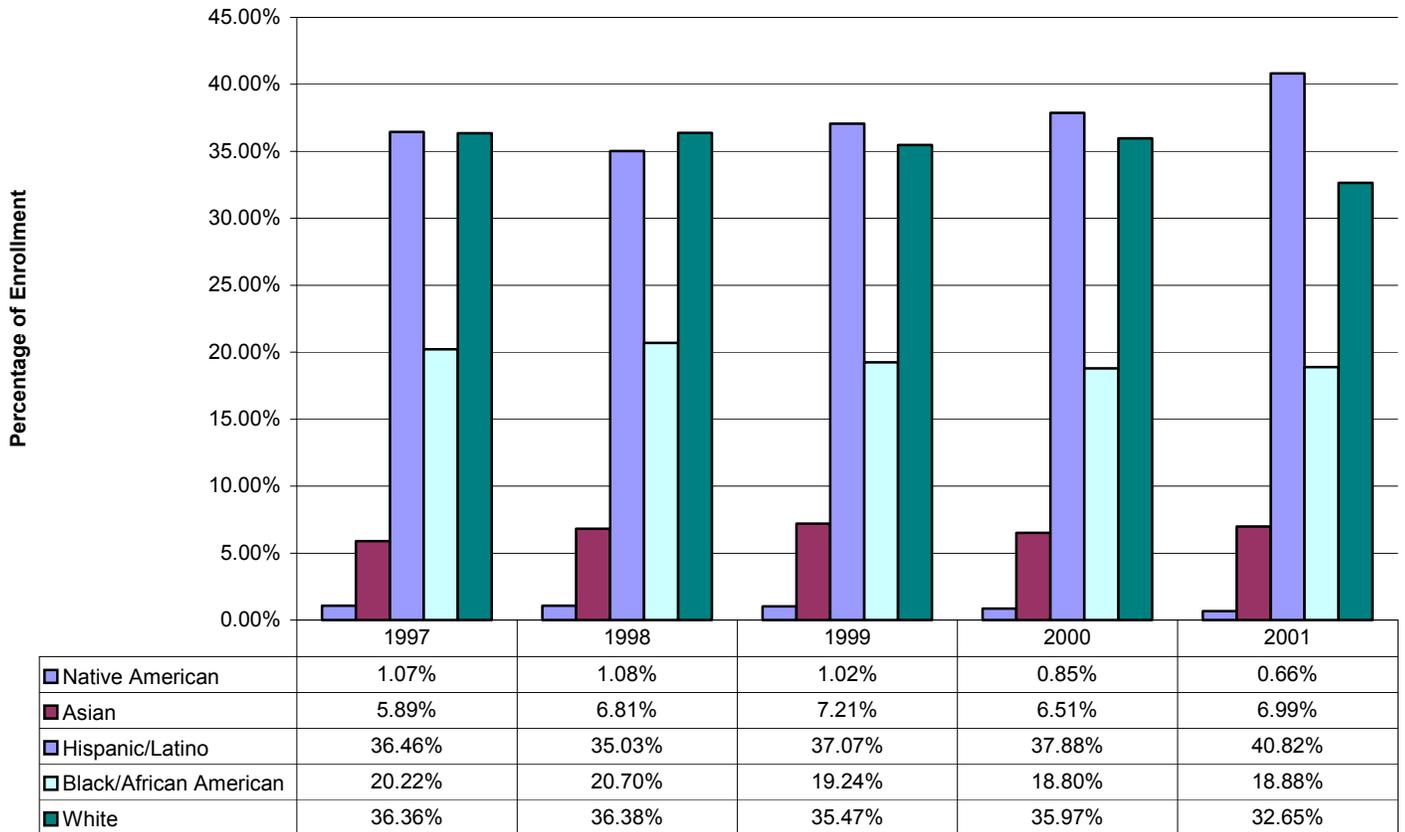
Figure 9
Trends in Enrollment in ESL by Age Group (1997-2001)



- The composition of the age groups over the years has remained fairly consistent while enrollment in the ESL program has increased by about 31 percent over the five-year period. This indicates that growth in ESL been fairly even across the age groups.
- In FY 2001, 75 percent of the students were 25 and over, in complete contrast to the Credit Diploma Program, where only 16 percent of the students were in that age group.

Adult Education Statistics

Figure 10
Trends in Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (1997-2001)

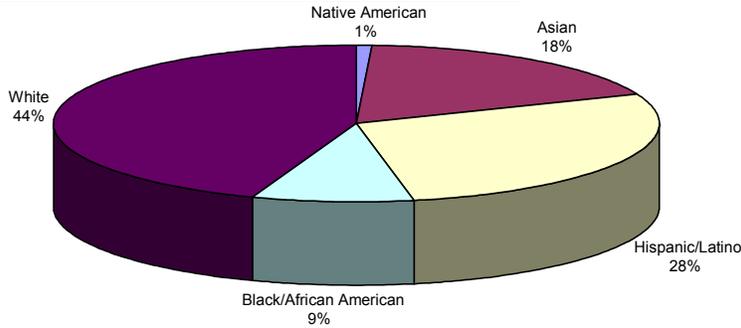


- In 1999, students of Hispanic/Latino background emerged as the largest population group served. This continued in the 2000 and 2001 program year, while overall enrollment for the Black/African-American segment has shown a small decrease.

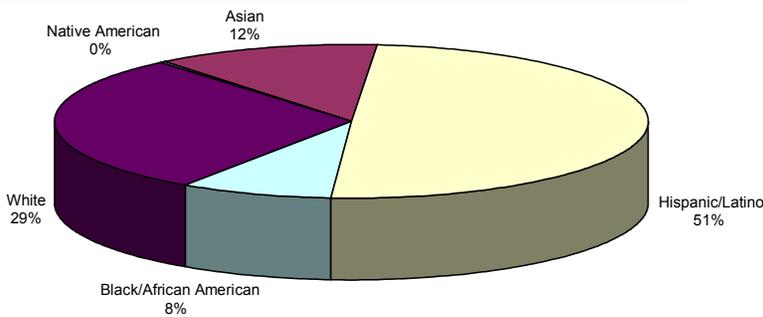
Adult Education Statistics

Figure 11
Total Enrollment in Programs by Race/Ethnicity (1997-2001)

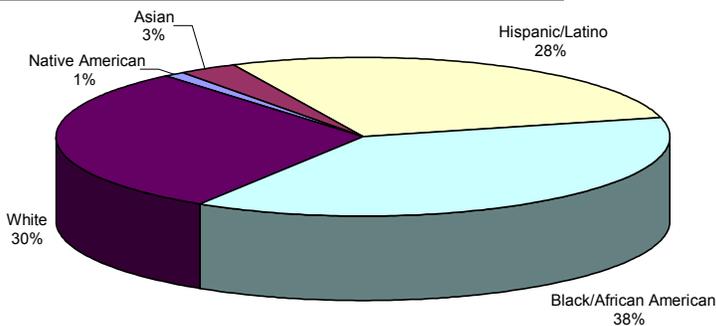
Americanization/Citizenship (N=3708)



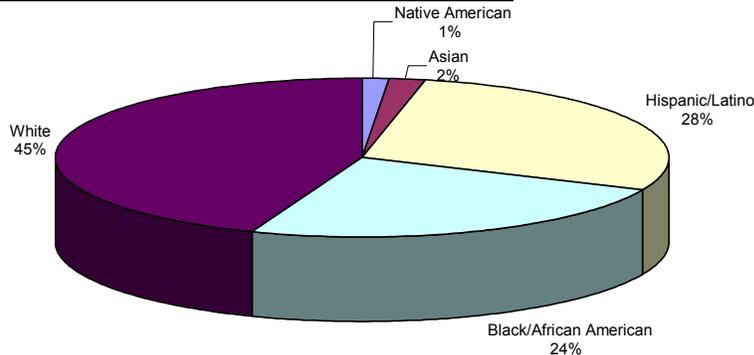
English as a Second Language (ESL) (N=78,987)



Adult Basic Education (ABE) (N=33,373)

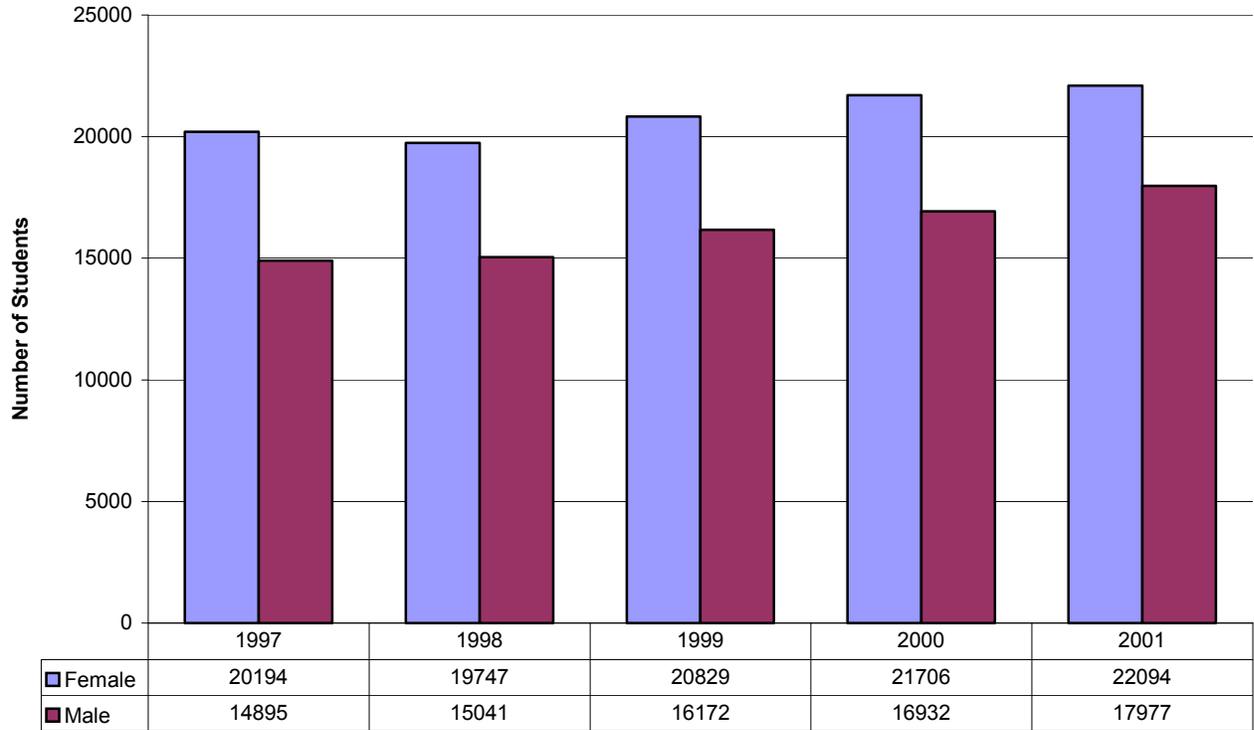


Secondary Completion (N=69,519)



- Students of Hispanic/Latino background accounted for more than 50 percent of ESL students served in the past five years.
- In ABE, the cohort of Black/African American students was the largest.
- Students coded as White accounted for almost half the students in both Citizenship and Secondary Completion.

Figure 12
Trends in Enrollment by Gender (1997-2001)



- Over the five-year period, the percentage of males has increased by 21 percent and the percentage of females has increased by 9 percent.

Adult Education Statistics

Figure 13a
Trends in Enrollment of Males by Race/Ethnicity (1997-2001)

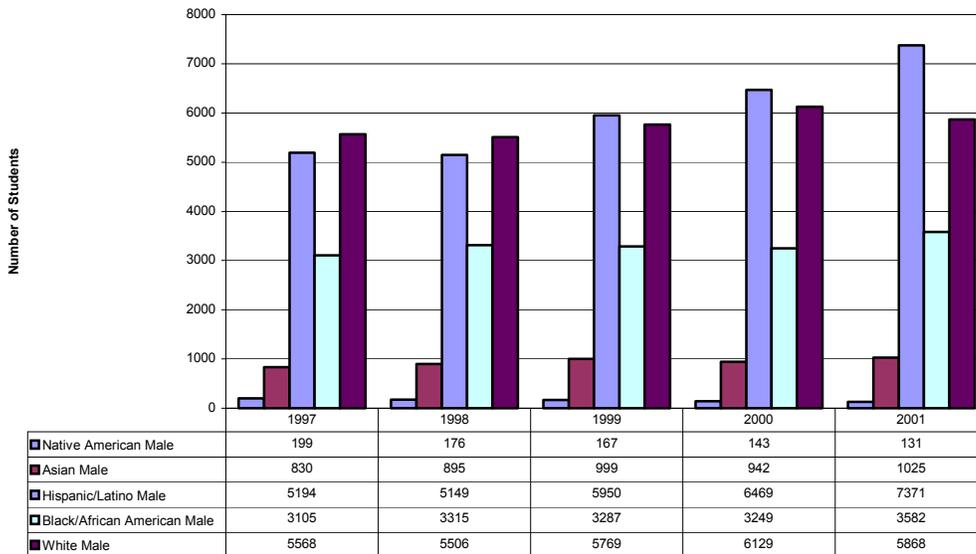
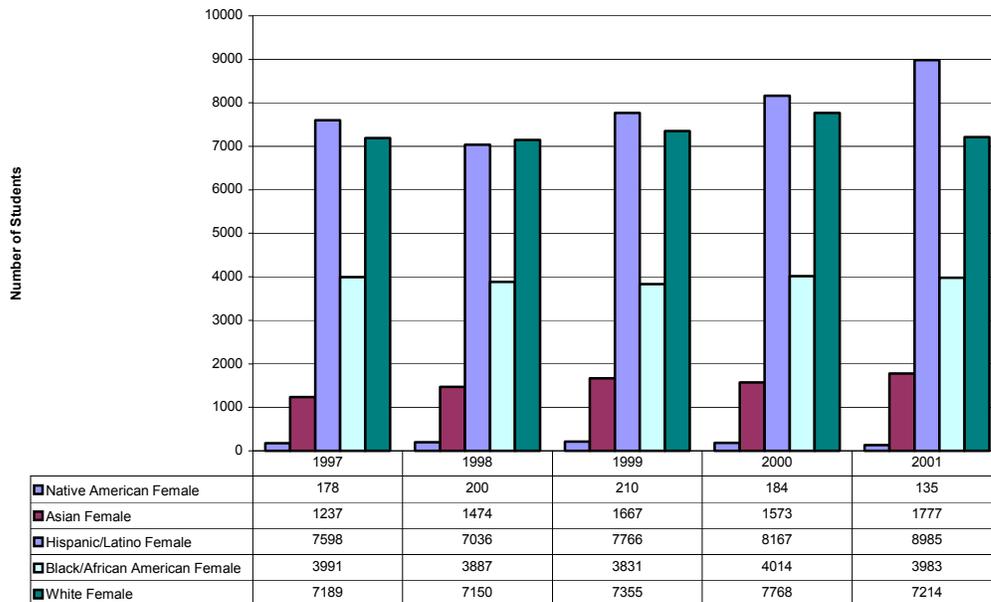


Figure 13b
Trends in Enrollment of Females by Race/Ethnicity (1997-2001)



- Over the past five years, the cohorts showing growth were: Asian Female (44%), Hispanic/Latino Male (42%), Asian Male (23%), Hispanic/Latina Female (18%), Black/African American Male (15%) and White Male (5%). The female cohorts of Black/African American and White showed no growth. The Native American male cohort declined each year and resulted in a 34 percent decline over the past five years. The Native American female cohort remained steady until FY 2000, but a large one-year decline in FY 2001 resulted in an overall five-year decline of 24 percent.

Adult Education Statistics

Table 3

Enrollment By Last Grade Completed and Race/Ethnicity (2000-2001)

	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Asian	Hispanic/ Latino	Black / African American	White	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	Total
Grade 6 or less*	6	166	1,311	400	358	3	2,244
Grade 7	2	39	369	112	113	2	637
Grade 8	19	124	1,258	555	791	4	2,751
Grade 9	45	190	2,350	1,370	1,613	9	5,577
Grade 10	63	244	2,188	1,764	2,592	20	6,871
Grade 11	78	159	1,902	1,676	2,524	13	6,352
Grade 12 and up**	35	1,574	6,282	1,350	4,615	41	13,897
Unspecified	6	120	414	210	340	4	1,094
Total	254	2,616	16,074	7,437	12,946	96	39,423

* Grade levels are self-reported.

** Reflects large number of ESL students with degrees from their native countries

Adult Education Statistics

Table 4

Reasons for Enrollment (2000-2001)

Reasons for Enrollment	Male	Female	Total
Enter Employment	699	807	1,506
Retain Employment	2,272	2,387	4,659
Parent/Child Education Activities	1,001	3,418	4,419
Vote/Complete Citizenship Coursework	446	725	1,171
Used Community Services	527	812	1,339
Improve Basic skills (ESL, ABE)	11,303	14,303	25,606
Progress Toward High School Diploma (GED, CDP, EDP)	5949	6,895	12,844
Earn High School Diploma	1,154	1,299	2,453
Enter College or Post Secondary Level	216	241	457

Table 5

Participant Achievements (2000-2001)

Achievements	Total
Entered Employment	7,905
Retained Employment	6,570
Parent/Child Education Activities	4,502
Voted/Completed Citizenship Coursework	769
Used Community Services	3,016
Improved Basic skills (ESL, ABE)	18,561
Progress Toward High School Diploma (GED, CDP, or EDP)	9,446
Earned High School Diploma	*5,612
Entered College or Post Secondary Level	** 513
Retained at the Same or Higher Educational Level	23,193

* Fifty-two percent (5,612) of secondary-level students received a local high school diploma or GED

** Sixty-nine percent (513) of those students *whose goal at program entry* was to enter postsecondary education or training were successful, as determined by student post-program follow-up surveys (weighted average percent).

Table 6

Reasons for Leaving Before Completing Objectives (2000-2001)

Reasons for Leaving	Male	Female	Total
Health Care	143	288	431
Family	261	578	839
Transportation	116	171	287
Relocation	676	479	1,155
Location of Class	81	112	193
Class Schedule or Time	661	734	1,395
Job/Work Time Change	1,226	907	2,133
Child/Dependent Care	73	482	555

Accomplishments

Since the last report on adult education was presented to the State Board of Education in 1996, significant progress has been made toward improving the quality of adult education programming and services in Connecticut. Efforts have continued to strengthen its competency-based basic skills remediation and assessment system. It has made the transition from a stand-alone PC management information system to a web-based design that focuses on longitudinal tracking of individuals from all adult education programs. It has developed a comprehensive monitoring process that stresses program quality as well as compliance to ensure ongoing learner and program accountability. In strengthening its link with the K-12 system, it has become a significant partner in the entire Connecticut educational system. In its promotion and expansion of intergenerational literacy, it has assisted adults in the process of becoming better parents, better citizens and better workers. Through its involvement with Connecticut's eight workforce investment boards, it has forged partnerships that will serve to provide a full spectrum of services for those individuals needing educational, employment and training services.

In July 1998, the Bureau of Career and Adult Education assumed responsibility for integrating adult education activities with school-to-career and Carl D. Perkins vocational education activities. This merger allowed for maximum coordination of education, training and employability activities and strengthened collaborative efforts within the State Department of Education and with other departments.

Since professional and organizational development is essential to improving the factors that directly impact teacher effectiveness, program success, student retention, and student learning and achievement, the Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education has provided resources to adult education programs and educators for the last several years. By using a centralized, coordinated approach to service delivery through its training arm, the Adult Training and Development Network (ATDN), a division of the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), the Department has ensured high-quality, increasingly integrated training in all programmatic areas, not only to support instructional objectives, but also to successfully implement the goals of its State Plan.

The Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education has been successful in implementing the goals of its five-year state plan as mandated by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). Federal funds have been used to expand adult education programs in order to provide school districts, community-based organizations, family literacy centers, worksites and other agencies with the opportunity to offer locally responsive programming to state residents while supporting the concept of continuous program improvement.

In support of these continuous improvement efforts and to document a successful return on investment, federal legislation under Title II established a state performance accountability system with annual levels of performance. These *core indicators* require demonstration of the following:

- Improvements in all literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement; and
- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Accomplishments

By augmenting state and local dollars with federal dollars, adult education has been able to assist adults in achieving their educational goals, obtaining or advancing in their jobs, or entering postsecondary education.

Accomplishments, as outlined in this section, are divided into the following categories:

- **Implementation of WIA (Workforce Investment Act)**
- **Program Quality and Accountability**
- **Planning and Program Management**
- **Accessibility**
- **Collaboration**

Implementation of WIA

With the passage of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), the role of adult education changed dramatically. The guiding principles of the new law mandate coordination with the employment and training community through involvement in the one-stop system and with the workforce investment boards. WIA encourages a spirit of partnership, flexibility, accountability, and improved quality of services in order to provide comprehensive education, career development and employment and training activities for its citizenry.

Based on Title II of WIA, performance standards were developed that demand high expectations of students, increased program accountability of service providers, and a unifying strategy for the collection of student and program achievement.

Accomplishments with respect to the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act are noted below:

- Collaborated/co-sponsored workshops with workforce development board directors to provide information on WIA legislation.
- Served on all subcommittees of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) for implementation of WIA and has maintained continuous membership on newly revised committees.
- Developed the state plan, which was subsequently approved by the State Board of Education and endorsed by CETC.
- Developed new performance indicators in compliance with federal requirements and designed strategies for program staff with respect to meeting performance indicators.
- Designed an equitable funding formula for distribution of federal funds to service delivery areas which was based on the number of individuals without a high school diploma as reflected in 1990 census. This approach afforded greater coordination with WIA Title I and responsiveness to regional priorities.
- Aligned workforce investment board priorities with the Department funding priorities and included workforce investment boards in the proposal review process.

Accomplishments

- Allocated set aside funds on a formula basis to each of the service delivery areas for One-Stop activities.
- Worked on the development of a computer-based appraisal test to not only provide a vehicle for meeting the mandates of the Workforce Investment Act but also to obtain baseline initial assessment information for One-Stop customers.
- Sought appointments for Bureau of Career and Adult Education staff to serve on all workforce investment boards.
- Developed Memoranda of Understanding with each workforce investment board regarding the roles and responsibilities of adult education as a One-Stop partner.

Program Quality and Accountability

To provide for quality adult education programs statewide and to ensure that a full complement of educational opportunities were available statewide, the following was accomplished:

- Trained examiners on GED testing procedures and instructional staff on content materials.
- Developed formalized student follow-up procedures to determine the percentage of students who continued on to postsecondary education.
- Conducted a study on Connecticut's adult high school credit diploma program to review its current structure and practices and to make recommendations for program standards and improvements.
- Conducted a formal review of the Adult Training and Development Network in order to evaluate the efficacy of the existing professional development opportunities that were being offered statewide.
- Revised and improved current training and workplace assessments in order to better prepare Connecticut's adult education practitioners to serve the needs of Connecticut businesses.
- Developed the Connecticut Adult Reporting System — a web-based management information system — that integrates adult education, Even Start and GED testing into one comprehensive data base design.
- Developed formal Strategic School Profiles for adult education programs in cooperation with other bureaus within the State Department of Education. These reports, which highlight accountability, are used to provide local adult education program providers with individual demographic, assessment, and other outcome data results. Analogous statewide data is also provided for analytical purposes.
- Instituted a Program Development Initiative (PDI), created to train and assist the state's adult education programs in meeting accountability requirements for the new Workforce Investment Act. A total of 13 school districts have completed a comprehensive needs assessment that identified priority program and instructional needs and developed a multi-year action plan for program improvement that fully integrated assessment, curriculum and instruction.

Accomplishments

- Conducted two Connecticut Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) studies on measuring student performance. The first study, *Connecticut Adult Learners: A Portrait of Entry-level Skills*, was developed to provide a better understanding of the skills levels of individuals served in a variety of adult education programs. The second study, *Understanding Our Past to Prepare for the Future*, was designed to help the Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education develop data reports to assist in negotiating performance indicators with the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Developed a report card on adult basic education for the state legislature.
- Redesigned monitoring instruments for program evaluation to ensure program quality and compliance.
- Piloted performance indicators for Even Start that were aligned with those used for adult education programs in order to ensure a consistency of program delivery and performance.

Planning and Program Management

In order to implement effective and coordinated management of adult education programs, the following has been accomplished:

- Assumed responsibility for oversight of the Even Start Family Literacy programs in 1999 in order to promote and strengthen the connection between family and child learning.
- Revised the mission statement for adoption by the State Board of Education in 1997.
- Created the Institute for Technology Planning (ITP) to provide needed systemic professional development to Connecticut's adult basic education programs in the area of technology planning. The overall goal of the ITP is to help programs develop a plan to acquire and integrate technology into instruction to reduce the digital divide. Thirty (30) programs have participated to date.
- Continued the Learning Disabilities Task Force to address the needs of teachers who work with students who have learning disabilities.
- Created a Reading and Language Arts Task Force to offer reading awareness workshops to adult education practitioners. The Task Force created a reading tool kit, which was distributed to school districts in the fall of 2001, and which offered instructional strategies and assessment tools that provided a comprehensive resource for improving adult reading skills.
- Developed a writing policy requiring districts to report on student writing progress. In connection with this policy, comprehensive writing training has been provided through the Adult Training and Development Network. Thirty districts have participated in the one and one-half day training as well as Bureau staff, literacy volunteer organizations, Department of Correction, vocational-technical system and proprietary schools.
- Distributed English Literacy/Civics Education funds through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process in FY 01. These funds were used to provide effective educational services to immigrants and other limited-English-proficient individuals so that they might effectively participate in the education, work and civic opportunities of this country. The State Department of Education allocated additional federal dollars in order to fund

Accomplishments

proposals submitted from 35 lead education agencies throughout the state and the Department of Correction. More than 6,400 individuals participated in EL/Civics activities in all program areas including adult basic education, English as a second language, the credit diploma program and GED.

- Developed operational manuals and policy guidelines for the Connecticut Competency System (CCS) and the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS).

Accessibility

With the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), ongoing changes to the welfare system, target population demographics, and the higher level of skills needed in the workforce, the importance of adult education has increased dramatically. Through a statewide media campaign, efforts addressed the need to market adult education programs. Working with local operators in the development of locally targeted marketing strategies, the campaign not only reached out to business and industry but also established marketing strategies that focused on recruitment activities targeting populations most in need of literacy services.

In order to provide quality, accessible programs, the following was accomplished:

- Provided direct and equitable distribution of financial support to all statewide One-Stops equal to 3.9 percent (\$160,000) of its federal adult education appropriation. The Department has and continues to be an active partner in Connecticut's One-Stop delivery system, assuming an integral role with other partners in the development of a statewide performance reporting system for all programs offered through the One-Stop.
- Increased services to adults with special learning needs primarily through formalized contractual arrangements with the Adult Training and Development Network (ATDN).
- Increased student enrollment from 35,089 in 1997 to 40,071 in 2001. The bulk of this increase was in the 25- to 44-year-old age group.
- Increased service delivery to Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino males statewide over the five-year period from 1997 to 2001 by 32 percent (from 8,299 to 10,953).
- Intergenerational learning programs were implemented by providing program improvement grants and formalizing the collaboration with the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services.

Collaboration

Through successful collaborative relationships with workforce investment boards, One-Stop Centers, bureaus within the State Department of Education and other agencies, formal systems of

Accomplishments

service delivery have been developed to increase participation in adult education programs and to broaden the reach of these services to the citizens of Connecticut.

Examples of successful collaborations are delineated below:

- Participated in a 1997 Adult Literacy Task Force and provided essential program information on adult literacy to the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Education.
- Developed A Guide to Adult Education in Connecticut containing adult education program information for use in the One-Stop Centers.
- Collaborated with the State Department of Education's Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services, Office of Priority Schools, and Bureau of School-Family-Community Partnerships in order to enhance school family partnerships and to ensure, wherever possible, that programs operate in concert.
- Entered into a memorandum of understanding with the State Department of Labor to provide objective data matches with wage record information for those students whose goal at program entry was to enter or retain employment. Data match methodology has resulted in significant increases in these categories. This matching process provides a more reliable means for obtaining employment-related student achievements.
- Conducted a needs assessment survey to determine which skills were defined as critical for adult learners. The survey, ***Targeting Education: The Connecticut Adult Basic Skills Survey***, collected information on the skills learners were trying to acquire, the skills employers were seeking, the skills educators were teaching, and the skills program operators were setting as the focus of their efforts. The study was instrumental in providing direction in the prioritization of instructional objectives.
- Developed collaborative relationships both within the Department and with other agencies to greatly expand educational, support and training services to the target populations in the state. Currently, the Department has formal agreements with the State Department of Labor for data matching, with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services for special needs and with the workforce investment boards for services to the One-Stop Centers.

Recommendations

Previous Recommendations

The 1996 report to the State Board of Education identified a series of significant issues facing adult education and made recommendations that the Department believed formed the foundation for continuous improvement. The status of those recommendations is discussed below, along with recommendations for future directions that should be considered.

Planning and Program Management

Strategic Planning

The Issue: With the exception of a 1991 Adult Education Summit and a 1990 Roundtable with state superintendents of schools to discuss alternative adult education delivery systems, little formalized strategic planning had taken place prior to the last Board report.

Previous Recommendation: In fiscal year 1997, form a strategic planning committee to develop a long-range plan for adult education beyond the year 2000. This committee should be convened during the second half of FY 97, with final recommendations to the Board not later than September 1997.

Action Taken: This recommendation was not implemented because the Connecticut General Assembly convened an Adult Literacy Task Force in 1996 and published a final report *The Recommendations of the Adult Literacy Task Force* in January 1997. This strategic document, which focused on the need for literacy, the availability of services, program effectiveness and conditions promoting literacy, developed seven key recommendations for the legislature to consider. The Adult Literacy Task Force obviated the need for additional strategic planning. The new WIA compelled the Department to develop a needs assessment and instructional strategies as part of its state plan. The advisory committee provided input and direction in this process. In 1997, the State Board adopted a Position Statement on adult education which emphasized its commitment to the delivery of quality adult education to all Connecticut adults.

Future Direction: The Department should consider forming another strategic planning committee to develop a five-year plan for adult education. The committee should be convened during FY2003 in order to incorporate recommendations into the new state plan when WIA is reauthorized in FY2004 or when new federal adult education legislation is enacted. A planning committee would be vital in helping to develop proactive strategies to address critical issues such as program accountability, workplace literacy, family literacy, program delivery, adequate teacher preparation, and adult education's role in Connecticut's economic vitality.

Recommendations

Accessibility

The Issues: Historically, adult education students have not enjoyed equality of access to programs throughout the state. Nowhere in the Connecticut public school educational spectrum is equal educational opportunity more disparate than in adult education. Depending on where an adult resides, he/she may be subject to widely varying educational services with respect to types of educational programs available, times of day or year programs are accessible, number of hours that programs are offered, length of program year, or a host of differing degrees and levels of support services such as counseling, transportation, and child care.

Previous Recommendations: Programs should provide at least one other high school diploma option in addition to the General Educational Development (GED) preparation program, as no one secondary completion option is appropriate for all adults. Programs should be required to operate minimally for 180 calendar days per annum and have additional summer operations, especially in larger districts. Additionally, adults should have access to programs during morning, afternoon, and evening hours, with classes operating for 150 hours minimum per class. Effective certified counseling, child care and transportation services should be made available for all who require it. Districts should be encouraged to regionalize to provide a more comprehensive array of services and mandated services should be made available to all adults who require literacy services (Currently, waiting lists exist throughout Connecticut).

Financing adult education services provides yet another disparity among districts. The current sliding scale reimbursement formula for adult education has been reduced from 30 to 70 percent to 0 to 65 percent. Since the adult education statutes are for a broad program mandate, not a student specific entitlement, the lowering of the reimbursement rate may limit the ability of districts to provide sufficient instructional and support services.

Action Taken: The State Board proposed several unsuccessful legislative proposals which would have required school districts to provide at least one additional secondary completion option. In spite of this, the Department has encouraged districts to reduce accessibility barriers. Adult education program data has been incorporated as an overall component in the Department's Strategic School Profiles (SSPs) and other performance reporting such as reports to Connecticut's One-Stop System. Both of these highly visible reports allow for program comparisons between and among programs. Monitoring recommendations to adult education providers have been effective in reducing barriers to program accessibility.

The Board has also sought legislative changes to increase the funding formula to 30 to 70 percent. In concert with the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education, however, statutory changes were made to provide at least 20 percent state reimbursement to priority school districts.

Recommendations

Future Direction: The Board should continue to seek legislation to provide minimum operational standards and additional state aid that would address:

- Inequitable access to programs;
- Limited access to program operations and services through establishing minimum operational standards;
- Increased consolidation of programs to provide more comprehensive services;
- Access to classes for all who need them; and
- An increase in the state reimbursement formula (30 to 70 percent) for adult education.

Program Quality and Accountability

The Issues: At the time of the 1996 Board report no assessment standards for ABE and ESL students had been developed relative to the frequency of pre-/post-testing or the percentage of students tested. Variations in adult education program operations, along with the transitory nature of some adult learners, made establishing a rigorous policy on this difficult.

The functioning level of adult high school credit diploma program students is another serious problem. Nearly 40 percent of students entering adult secondary completion programs are functioning at an ABE (pre-secondary) level, yet they come to adult education with high school credits. This presents a major dilemma for adult secondary program operators because students with credits believe that they are functioning at a level commensurate with the number of credits they have earned. Adult education is faced with an agonizing decision of continuing to move them through the system or to provide the student with the necessary remediation needed to be functioning at a secondary level. The latter option often poses a significant risk of student attrition.

Previous Recommendation: The Department should establish standards requiring districts to provide a minimum level of pre- and post-student assessment data and should determine an appropriate exit measure for adults in order to assure minimum graduation proficiencies.

Actions Taken: The Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education set as a goal that, at a minimum, 40 percent of ABE and ESL students would be pre- and post-tested. Fiscal Year 2001 data results reflect that 41 percent of ABE students and 47 percent of ESL students have both pre- and post-assessment results. Additionally, WIA Title II requires that all programs funded with state and/or federal resources meet core performance measures as a condition for funding. This new federal legislation with its focus on rigorous accountability standards has also reinforced a heightened need for program/learner accountability.

Recommendations

During FY 1998, a formal evaluation of adult high school credit diploma programs, *Toward a First Class Second Chance: Recommendations for Improving Connecticut's Adult High School Credit Diploma Programs*, was conducted by Holt, Wexler, and Farnum. This study reinforced the need to develop quality control measures to ensure that adult graduates have minimum secondary-level proficiencies. In response to the adult high school credit diploma study, Connecticut developed recommendations for minimum proficiencies (CASAS Scale Score 235) for entry into secondary level completion programs. Individuals failing to meet this standard should be enrolled into remedial language arts and/or math classes for elective credit to address deficiencies.

Future Direction: The Department should continue to stress the importance of matched pair assessment data to determine program efficacy.

The Department's staff should work closely with districts providing Adult High School Credit Diploma Programs to assist them in setting high performance standards in compliance with the new minimum standards for graduation legislation (Section 10-223a), Promotion and Graduation Policies. Additionally, the Bureau should provide guidance to adult education programs by assisting them in developing responsive remediation strategies and procedures to address skills deficiencies of their secondary completion students.

With the advent of the challenges of the new 2002 series GED test, the Department should coordinate extensive technical assistance efforts to ensure that local programs restructure their GED preparation programs for the rigorous standards of the five-part examination.

Use of Technology

The Issue: At the time of the 1996 Board report, few actions had been taken to promote the use of educational technologies. This was partially due to a legislative cap on allowable expenditures for computer equipment. By state statute, adult education programs are not permitted to spend more than five percent of the total adult education budget on computer equipment. Because adult education budgets tend to be rather small except for the largest programs, this restriction impedes the purchase of necessary educational technologies.

Previous Recommendations: The five percent ceiling on adult education expenditures for computer equipment should be eliminated to stimulate growth in computer-assisted instruction. Incentive monies should be available for adult education programs, especially regional programs, to encourage distance-learning technologies. The Department of Education should consider expanding cable television instruction and other broadcast technologies to provide basic skills to adults who need such services.

Recommendations

Actions Taken: During FY1999 and FY2000 the Bureau implemented an initiative, the Institute for Technology Planning (ITP), which provided systematic training including on line courses to 30 adult education programs. The purpose of ITP was to provide funding to districts to assist them in developing a technology plan and to identify means for securing funding to support such a plan. Since 1996, numerous staff development opportunities, including workshops, product development, and statewide technology conferences, have been sponsored by the Bureau in conjunction with regional educational service centers and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium.

Additionally, the Bureau used some of its federal monies to fund eight three-year technology implementation grants through a competitive process. These grants are intended to enhance teaching and learning through the significant use of technology. The total funding projected to support this three-year project exceeds three million dollars. EL/Civics federal funds further encouraged the use of technology especially the use of video technology. All federal requests for proposals require that districts address technology as a condition of funding.

The Board should seek legislative modifications to eliminate the five percent cap on instructional computer equipment

Future Direction: The Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education should continue to sponsor sustained staff development opportunities for teachers, especially given the high turnover of adult education professionals. The Bureau should continue to explore ways to promote greater access to technology resources through state and federal grants that require programs to integrate technology. The Bureau should establish and coordinate an on-line high school diploma program to enhance program offerings and to promote increased access to secondary completion opportunities. Finally, the Bureau should invest in a formalized process for identifying, documenting, and disseminating best practices in the use of technology in adult education programs.

Collaboration

The Issues: Collaboration is critical for adult education in a variety of different arenas which include: employment and training, workforce literacy, family and intergenerational literacy and support services for adults with special needs. Many of Connecticut's unemployed and underemployed residents lack essential skills to either secure or retain employment. Employers need basic skills instructional programs that are integrated with the actual work employees perform, a critical role that adult education can and should play. Children of functionally illiterate families are twice as likely to become functionally illiterate as their peers; hence, additional family literacy programs are needed—in conjunction with early childhood programs, family resource centers, Head Start, and Even Start Programs. Additionally, adult education has traditionally had very limited resources to support the requirements of special needs adults in overcoming learning difficulties.

Recommendations

Previous Recommendations:

1. ***Employment and Training:*** The Board Report cited the need to expand CETO to strengthen the connection between education and employment.
2. ***Workforce Literacy:*** The Department should expand current efforts to assist local adult education providers to develop responsive workforce basic skills programs to assist the Department of Labor and the workforce investment boards to ensure a well-trained Connecticut workforce.
3. ***Family Literacy:*** The Department should expand its current family literacy initiative by appropriating additional resources to support Head Start, Title I, School Readiness, early childhood, and adult education and expanding family resource centers' collaboration.
4. ***Adults with Special Learning Needs:*** The Department should expand current efforts to support regional adult basic skills programs that provide educational services to adults with disabilities. The Bureau should work with staff within the Department and with local school district personnel to ensure appropriate referrals into adult education programs.

Actions Taken:

1. ***Employment and Training:*** Many of the recommendations surrounding employment and training involved CETO, a Department initiative that set aside various funding from education, welfare, and labor for regional workforce boards to support employability-focused basic skills and training programs. CETO ceased to exist at the end of FY2000 because allowable activities in using federal funds under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act changed; the Department could no longer sustain this important initiative. The Department has nevertheless continued to maintain the vital linkage between education and employment and training. Each workforce investment board provides input to the Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education in setting RFP priorities. Federal dollars are distributed to each service delivery area (SDA) on a regional basis to provide for more equitable access to funding. Additionally, a Bureau member serves on each workforce investment board as well as on local One-Stop implementation committees. The Bureau has also negotiated a memorandum of agreement with each workforce investment board that provides some federal funding to support One-Stop system operations. Lastly, the Bureau has developed employability basic skills assessments for use in the One-Stops to determine whether job seekers require basic skills interventions prior to getting a job or entering a job training program.
2. ***Workforce Literacy:*** The Department's Bureau of Career and Adult Education has continued to promote workforce literacy training providers through its sponsorship of formal workforce literacy training opportunities at least annually. More than 25 Connecticut adult education providers have been trained and are actively engaged in customized workforce literacy training in business and industry around Connecticut. Workforce literacy is one of the key categories for the federal RFP. Programs funded under this category must have gone through formal training or be willing to undergo

Recommendations

training. The Bureau is currently developing, in partnership with the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System Foundation, a variety of assessments for use in the workplace. These assessments not only address employment-related basic skills such as reading, mathematics and writing, but also critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork, all of which employers often cite as major deficiencies of current employees.

3. **Family Literacy:** The Department has continued to expand its focus on family and intergenerational literacy programs and services. In 1999, the Even Start program moved to the Bureau of Career and Adult Education. This proved to be fortuitous because Even Start parents must be enrolled in adult education, so this reinforces the relationship between parents and their children. Additionally, the Bureau has, through its federal RFP process, continued to expand the number of family literacy programs throughout the state. Currently there are 18 family literacy programs and nine Even Start programs in Connecticut funded with federal dollars. Adult education is also a partner in various levels of collaboration with the state's 61 family resource centers.
4. **Adults with Special Learning Needs:** Through the Technical Assistance Model, training has been provided regarding disability and learning disability awareness; screening and assessment; instructional strategies; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and universal instructional design. Additional activities have included disability data collection through the statewide database (CARS), the Learning Differences/Disabilities Resource Kit, and collaboration with the Reading and Writing Initiatives to ensure inclusion for adults with disabilities and other learning difficulties. In the last five years, more than 500 individuals with special learning needs have received special accommodations when taking the GED test.

Future Directions:

1. **Employment and Training:** Continue to support the One-Stop operations in Connecticut both financially and through fostering closer collaborations between local adult education programs and local One-Stop centers. Adult education programs should assist students in becoming familiar with and using the vast array of employment services presently available. Bureau staff should continue to be contributing members to the workforce investment boards as well as to One-Stop planning teams. Adult education programs should be encouraged to provide staffing to the One-Stops to provide educational counseling, GED preparation classes and other services to support One-Stop operations. The Bureau should continue to train One-Stop personnel in using basic skills assessments and in interpreting the results.
2. **Workforce Literacy:** The Department should maintain the current emphasis on the importance of providing workforce literacy programs through its continued inclusion in RFPs and through the provision of quality training programs. It should strive to refine the workplace assessments under development, and when completed, provide extensive training to adult educators in how to use them effectively in workplace education. Finally, it should continue to promote the role adult education can and should play with such agencies as the Departments of Economic and Community Development and Labor.

Recommendations

3. **Family Literacy:** Planning should continue to more fully integrate Even Start with the adult education database (CARS). It is essential to develop a longitudinal data collection system that will document the positive impact on families that a multi-generational, multi-interventional approach can have on breaking the cycle of illiteracy in Connecticut.

The Department should continue to foster intra-department collaboration in order to align initiatives such as “Reading First,” “Early Reading First” and other Title 1 programs authorized under the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (H.R.1). The Act expands options for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Adult education must help parents improve their basic skills so that they are empowered to exercise their rights under H.R.1.

4. **Adults with Special Learning Needs:** Many adults with special learning needs may find the educational process a struggle because of an undiagnosed disability. While it is not the legal responsibility of adult education programs to identify and diagnose such students, continuing to train districts in disability awareness, appropriate services, instruction and/or accommodations for each student based on individual strengths and weaknesses will ensure that districts meet the needs of adults with disabilities.

Conclusion

Over the last five years, adult education programs have developed successful strategies for serving those individuals most in need of literacy and basic skills education. Concurrently, effective methods have been implemented for ensuring increased program quality, ongoing planning and program management, expanded and accessible adult education services, and enhanced collaboration.

As the challenges of the workplace, the community and the family increase, so too must the efforts of adult education programs in order to ensure that life long learning opportunities exist for everyone. With ongoing support from the State Board of Education and the State Legislature, the Department will continue to provide the programs that are vital to Connecticut's future.

